**Presentation Day 2018**

**Fiona Walsh**

Welcome special guests, parents, students and staff.

During 2018 West Wallsend High School has once again been the setting for impressive student achievements.

Students and staff have ventured along a diverse range of teaching and learning paths, with new challenges and exciting opportunities. The year has seen a continuation of our focus on Teaching, Learning and Leading that has ensured better learning outcomes for our students. The very face of our school has been transformed and we have an aesthetically pleasing front office and high quality staff boardroom. Accompanying our front office is a stunning new mural designed by local Aboriginal artist Elsie Randall. Many members of our school learning community had the opportunity to contribute to the design of the mural, including [Names] and our Director Educational Leadership, [Name]. Pavers, purchased by our school community for the 50th Year celebrations are finally being laid to accentuate the front office build. I look forward to officially opening the front office and its surrounds in 2019.

There have been many highlights for our school this year. West Wallsend has been featured in social media for many of its most outstanding accomplishments. Some of the highlights have been:

**SHOUT – Our new student leadership team.** At the beginning of the year the SRC was reinvigorated into what is now known as SHOUT. Members of SHOUT have been very busy fulfilling various leadership roles throughout the year, including ushering for formal assemblies and ensuring parents felt welcome during parent-teacher interviews. Through their excellent organisation and teamwork, the group ran successful fundraisers for Red Nose Day, Jeans for Genes day and Halloween.

The team raised $1800 through hard work and commitment. $200 of this total came from the SHOUT environmental subcommittee who successfully began the ‘Westy Recycle’ program, focusing on recycling student drink containers. The SHOUT leadership team will purchase a chilled bubbler for student use ready for installation early 2019.

Students in SHOUT also got to experience a fun and inspirational day at the GRIP leadership event, coming back with many exciting ideas for 2019! SHOUT finished their year on a high, supporting and promoting the “It’s in the bag” campaign. As a school, we were able to collect enough items to fill 53 bags, which were then donated to women-in-need for Christmas. While 2018 has been a busy and successful year for SHOUT, there’s lots to look forward to for 2019!

**Extra tuition.** As staff we have seen increased student engagement as a result of fantastic initiatives that continue to be offered across the school. For example, Maths and Milo, Kickstart, The English Breakfast Club, Year 12 student/parent interviews and senior hub support and numerous workshops for students, staff and the community such as John Joseph and Safe on Social Media. The extra tuition has shown school commitment to empowering our students and inspiring them to dream big!

**Our CAPA faculty** has excelled this year with two very successful showcases with record numbers of parents attending and enjoying the exhibitions and performances. Our dancers have also been very busy performing at the Hunter Dance Festival and Star Struck as well as the showcases.

Some individuals have received particular success:

* [Name of student] has been selected as part of the Star Struck Student Direction Team in 2019.
* [Name of student] has had her HSC Body of Work accepted for the exhibition First Class 18, at Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery
* Year 8 student [Name of student] has been busy in our community busking to raise money for many worthwhile causes as well as performing at many local venues. [Name] is also an accomplished writer who has published both online and in the Newcastle mirage Magazine.
* [Name of student] will be performing in Reprise in February – one of only 16 HSC music students selected as the very best in the Hunter/Central Coast area. [Name of student] has also been nominated for Encore as a top performing HSC student.

**Our P&C** has had a brilliant year thanks to fundraiser [Name of parent], who has organised numerous events including McDonald's fundraisers, Brickfest and a pie drive. [Name] and her helpers have raised record amounts this year that help support our school, with the last fundraiser being a Bunnings BBQ on Saturday 15 December at Glendale.

**Cancer Sux.** We had a significant amount of money raised again as part of our annual trip up Sugarloaf. We as a school community raised $5,800, which has recently been donated to the Mark Hughes Foundation on our Monday assembly.

**Year 12 HSC results.** Last year’s HSC results were a significant improvement on past HSC results for quite some years. We look forward to continued improvement this year. Already our Year 12 students have been given early entry into university. For example, [Name of student] has been given a choice to study Mechatronics Engineering, Bachelor of Science or Aerospace engineering through Newcastle. [Name of student] has been offered study via the Wollutuka Institute Newcastle and [Name of student] has had an early entry offer into a Bachelor of Science with a Major in Astronomy and Astrophysics at Macquarie University. I’m sure there are more offers so we are looking forward to catching up with Year 12 at breakfast next Thursday.

**Our GATS program** for the junior school has enabled fantastic project-based learning as well as the opportunity for two hard working Year 10 students to complete a first year university course. [Names of two students] both received credits for the efforts. An outstanding achievement.

**High quality professional learning.** One of the absolute highlights of our school is the high quality, embedded suite of professional learning we offer to our own staff and to staff of our neighbouring partner primary schools. Quality professional learning supports staff in educational improvements so that they can be the best teachers and leaders possible. One of our outstanding teachers, [Name of teacher], relieving head teacher English, was shortlisted for the Commonwealth Bank Teaching Award from 400 applicants. This is a huge achievement and honour, recognising [Name]’s outstanding ability as a teacher and leader.

In 2019 our key areas of focus will be literacy with the development of the ‘Obliterate’ program, numeracy, student aspiration initiatives, Aboriginal Education, GATS, formative assessment and reporting, KLA review implementation and continued HSC improvement strategies. In addition, we will be targeting stage four through the expansion of our middle school class to year 8 as well as an interdisciplinary approach to stage four curriculum designed to increase the engagement of students.

Congratulations to our many students who have achieved outstanding results in key learning areas, cultural initiatives, sporting pursuits, leadership and citizenship throughout 2018. Many of you have already been recognised for your efforts throughout the year. Thank you for your commitment to our schools PBL focus, your courage in meeting challenges and your dedication to being the best you can be. This year our teachers have awarded a total of:

* 15,869 Electronic GOTCHAs
* 917 Excellence Certificates

which have converted into:

* 443 Bronze Awards
* 273 Silver awards
* 132 Gold Awards
* 56 Platinum Awards

And for the first time this year we will be awarding 13 Diamond awards to students who have exceeded all expectations this year.

I’d like to take this opportunity to thank my staff who continue to work very hard, and our community for your ongoing fantastic support and respect. In closing, I would like to wish students, staff and parents a wonderful Christmas and a relaxing and safe holiday. I look forward to working with you all again in 2019.

**Contributor details**

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Fiona has been Principal of West Wallsend High School since 2014. Currently she is also President of NSWSPC Hunter Region, Leader of the Professional Learning Reference Group and a Member of the SPC Executive. The focus of Fiona's PhD was professional learning. Her current interests include sport.