

Principal's Message

Dear Parents/Carers and Community Members

Earlier this term I had the privilege of attending a wonderful liturgy with other school Principals, Ministry Coordinators, and Student Leaders, presided by Bishop Michael Kennedy. Under our theme, "Follow me," Bishop Kennedy spoke profoundly about the word dignity. His words resonated deeply, reminding us of the essence of our Catholic faith and our own responsibilities to ourselves and to others.

Dignity is rooted in the fundamental truth that every person is created in the image and likeness of God. What does this mean? Each one of us possesses an inherent worth no matter what our background, what our beliefs, what we have done wrong, who we are, this inherent worth and love for us as human beings is always there and cannot be broken. Recognizing this truth calls us to live our lives in a way that honours this sacred dignity.

First and foremost, we must recognize **our own inherent worth**. We all deserve love and respect. We must make choices that reflect our God-given worth. Hold respect for ourselves. Do not lower our own standards. Strive to be the best version of yourself. For our students, this means pursuing excellence in their studies, in their sport and in their own character. We all need to be known as a person of integrity which means aligning our actions with our values even when the going gets tough.

Recognizing our own dignity is only part of our calling. Jesus taught us to love our neighbours as ourselves. Our College Mantra has the call to "Be respectful". We have a shared responsibility of **upholding the dignity of others**. We must be the voices for justice and inequality. What do we do when others are mistreated or disrespected? We have a responsibility to make others feel valued and respected. To be kind and compassionate and to build the wonderful College community we maintain.

Reconciliation Week

Recently I had the wonderful opportunity of joining our Year 9 students on their community day at the Minimbah Teaching Centre. It was an enriching experience where students engaged deeply with Aboriginal history, learning about the environment and culture. This day not only enhanced their understandings but also deepened their respect for the rich heritage of Indigenous Australians. This day tied in nicely with Reconciliation week.

Reconciliation week provides us with a platform to reflect on our history, acknowledge the painful truths, and celebrate the rich cultures and contributions of Indigenous Australians. It is a time of learning, listening, and coming together as a community to honour the journey towards reconciliation.

This year's theme is "Now More Than Ever," and it serves as a powerful reminder of our ongoing commitment to justice and the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The fight for justice and the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is far from over. Despite the progress we have made, significant challenges remain. Systemic inequalities, discrimination, and historical injustices continue to impact Indigenous communities. As a Catholic school community, we are called to stand in solidarity with our Indigenous brothers and sisters, advocating for their rights and working towards true equality.

Now more than ever, we must commit ourselves to this cause. The message of "Now More Than Ever" is our call to action. It reminds us that the pursuit of justice is not a one-time event but an ongoing journey that requires our active participation and support. It calls us to be courageous in confronting injustice and compassionate in our efforts to bring about change.

Jesus taught us to love one another and to stand up for the oppressed. Going back to my words on dignity, Our Catholic values compel us to fight against inequality and to promote the dignity of every person. We all have a role to play here. We need to actively listen to Indigenous voices, learn about their histories and cultures, and work alongside them to address the issues they face.

Reconciliation Week cannot be the only time we think about these issues. We need to carry forward the lessons we learn and integrate them into our daily lives. We need to continue to strive to create a more just and inclusive society so we may honour the spirit of reconciliation and uphold the values of our faith.

So, for each of us we can reflect on the word **dignity**. Know our own inherent worth and strive to do our best. Remember the responsibility we all have in upholding the dignity of others. Now more than ever, we are called to be advocates for change, allies in the struggle for equality, and champions of justice. Together, we can make a difference.

Parent Forum

Thank you to the parents/carers who attended our Term 2 Parent Forum Meeting on Monday 27 May commencing at 6.00pm. At this gathering we welcomed our new Parent Representatives **Tonee Summerville** and **Michelle Burns**. **Lizzie Watkin**, our Parent Engagement Officer from the diocese was also in attendance. The key-note speaker was our Learning Support Coordinator, **Chris Stevens**, who gave an overview of our Learning Support at St Mary's. Below is a summary of the meeting.

The Term 3 Parent Forum will be at 6.00pm on Tuesday 20 August in the Cafe. We welcome all parents/carers to this meeting.

Tell Them From Me (TTFM) Survey

A reminder for all Parents and Carers to please support the College by completing the Tell Them From Me Survey. Your insights are invaluable. By completing the TTFM survey, you help us understand and improve the educational experience for all students. Please take a few minutes to share your thoughts and help us make our school better. You will find the link to the survey in this newsletter.

Brett Donohoe
Principal

PARENTS/CARERS

Your attention is kindly requested.

If your personal details have changed (ie. mobile number, address, emergency contacts, etc) please email admin@gatesheadsm.catholic.edu.au to update us.

Thank you.

PARENT FORUM



27 May 2024

Venue: College Cafe

Time: 5.45pm – 7.00pm

Tea/coffee served from 5.45pm. The meeting commenced at 6.00pm for those attending online and in person.

AGENDA AREAS:

1. Acknowledgement of Country & Prayer (5 mins): De-Anna Addicoat

2. College Leadership Report (20 mins):

Brett Donohoe (Principal)

- Welcomed all present and introduced the Leadership team, Parent representatives and Diocesan Family Engagement Officer (Lizzie Watkin)
- Communicated this Parent Engagement Model is different to the traditional Parents and Friends (PNF) model. There are no sub-committees and nominated positions such as treasurer.
- Outlined purpose of the meetings was to engage parents in matters pertaining to their child, keep parents updated on College matters and provide opportunity for feedback and questions.
- Communicated norms for the meetings which all agreed to and had no additional suggestions for input.
- Discussed the Vision and Mission of the College
- Discussed the new leadership positions that are internally appointed to the College and will commence in their roles later this term following the successful recruitment of new teacher positions. These leadership positions include the following:
 - Leader of Curriculum
 - Leader of Data Analytics and Growth
 - Three Stage Coordinators
 - House Coordinator
- Discussed the current review of the College timetable. The College currently operates under a four period (76 minutes) day and is considering a five period (60 minute) day. A committee is formed and all staff and select students will be surveyed. A decision will be made by early in Term 3 and communicated to the community.

De-Anna Addicoat (Ministry Coordinator)

- Discussed student formation experiences across each year including the recent success of the Year 12 Retreat.
- Importance of staff formation as Catholic leaders
- The newly established Mission Team at the College. The Mission Team will play a crucial role in ensuring that the Catholic identity and mission of the school are a vibrant and integral part of the school community's life and culture.
- College will be reviewing and redesigning the house structure
- College to review/plan iconography and religious visual culture
- Discussed the Student leadership opportunities at the College

Belinda Flood (Acting AP Teaching and Learning)

- Strong focus on **literacy**- spelling, reading and non-fiction writing and **numeracy** in all KLA's (not just Math)
- Growth in the **capabilities** of critical thinking, creativity, collaboration and communication
- Building the capacity of educators – assessment competent teachers
- Positive and safe climate for learning:

- ✓ *Become me* Careers program for Year 10 discussed
- ✓ Moving student capacity to deep and transfer skill and understanding
- ✓ Guiding practice and understanding Artificial Intelligence to develop discerning learners

Ben Frize (AP Wellbeing and Engagement)

A disciplined and supportive learning environment"

- College has received significant government funding for student wellbeing (Wellbeing BOOST). Much of the funding is going towards various wellbeing programs to support students.
 - [Danielle Miller](#) from Enlighten Education to talk to girls in Stage 4 and Stage 5. Possible parent session. Date TBC.
 - Jack Ellis from Enlighten Education to talk to boys across Stage 4 and Stage 5. Date TBC.
 - [Top blokes](#) program to be run for select students in Year 8 in Term 3
- Stage Coordinators to create an Integrated Wellbeing Program which will be embedded in the school timetable.
- College focus on Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) and Restorative Justice Practice.
- PB4L is an educational approach to addressing student behaviour at school to focus on positive learning outcomes.
- Restorative Justice practice is a whole school teaching and learning approach that encourages behaviour that is supportive and respectful. It puts the onus on individuals to be truly accountable for their behaviour and to repair any harm caused to others because of their actions
- Year 7 Camp 2025 is confirmed to go ahead at Point Wolstencroft towards the end of Term 1. Two nights.
- [School TV](#) excellent resource available to parents and free. Available via the College website under the Parent Information tab. This award-winning resource helps build relationships, foster connections, enable understanding and break down barriers to navigate a pathway towards better mental health and wellbeing for young people. Endorsed and features Michael Carr-Gregg, one of Australia's highest profile psychologists, author, broadcaster and specialist in mental health, parenting, children and adolescents

3. Parent Representatives Report (5 mins): Michelle Burns, Tonee Summerville

Tonee Summerville - has a child in year 7 new to SMCC and has a couple of primary aged children still to come in following years. Has a keen interest in sports and is the President of the soccer club.

Michelle Burns - has children in year 7 and year 10, is a counsellor and has a keen interest in children and parent wellbeing and creative arts.

Both very excited and feel privileged to be holding the position of Parent Engagement Officer for SMCC and look forward to meeting with other parents to discuss what it is they would like to see happening in SMCC, learning more about how we as parents can positively engage with the school so that we can support and encourage our children in their learning journey. We are very approachable and would love the opportunity to chat about and support any ideas or concerns you have that can be addressed at the PEG meetings to come.

4. Educative Items (15 mins):

Learning Support: Chris Stevens (Learning Support Coordinator)

- Discussed the inclusion model for Learning Support
- Discussed the Learning Support Team and its structure

7. Questions (15 mins)

- Raised that student leaders have requested a long sleeve shirt option as part of an optional winter wear. Parents agreed. The College is to communicate to the Uniform shop.
- Week 2 each Term 8am-8.45am Coffee available in the College Café on a morning to be confirmed to meet with the College Leadership Team and parent representatives. Opportunity to also give questions for the next Parent Forum on the Tuesday in Week 5 Term 3.
- Next educative item to be discussed with Parent representatives

Assistant Principal – Wellbeing & Engagement

Tell Them From Me Survey

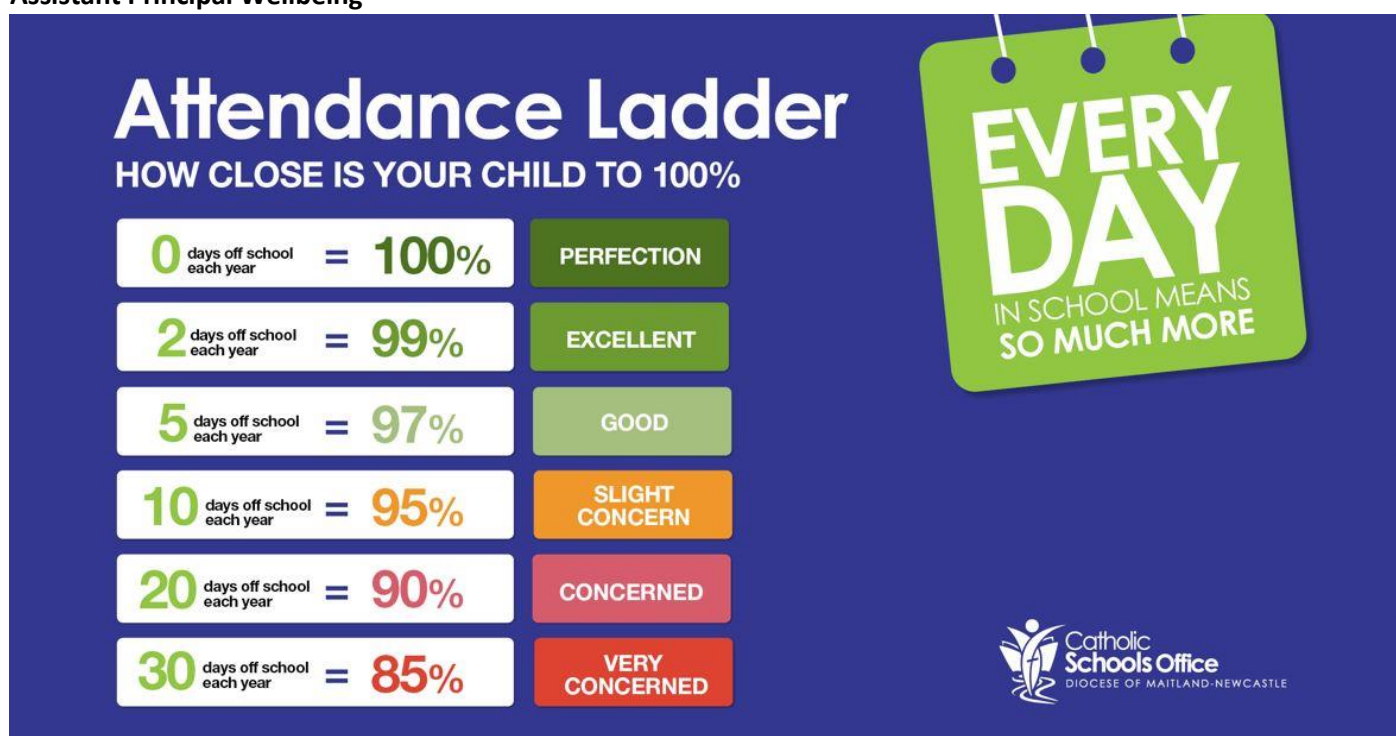
You will have received a Compass notification about the Tell Them From Me Survey last week. The results from the survey will help to reinforce the important relationship between parents and carers and our school. If you are yet to provide your valuable feedback, it's not too late. You can do so now, by clicking on the link below. Please note, your responses are anonymous.

Tell Them From Me Survey

Thank you to those who have completed the survey. The school communicate the results once the survey closes and the results they have been collated.

Benjamin Frize

Assistant Principal Wellbeing

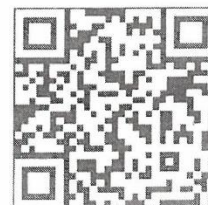




ST MARY'S
CATHOLIC COLLEGE
GATESHEAD

NSW SCHOOL VACCINATION PROGRAM 2024

Each year NSW Health works in partnership with schools to offer the vaccines recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) for adolescents as part of the school vaccination program.



In 2024 the following vaccines will be offered:

Years	Vaccine	Number of Doses	Date of vaccination
Year 7	Human Papillomavirus (HPV9) vaccine	Single dose	Wednesday 12 June 2024
	Diphtheria-Tetanus-Pertussis (whooping cough) vaccine	Single dose	
Catch-up vaccinations for all years will occur on 20 November 2024			

Please find below URL and a QR code above for all Year 7 parents to access the online Parent Information, privacy statement and consent form.

To consent to the vaccination of their child, parents/guardians are asked to:

- Enter the URL into your browser, select the School Vaccination Program tile and follow instructions.
- read all the information provided
- complete the online consent form and give consent for which vaccine/s they would like their child to receive
- ensure that their child eats breakfast on the day of the school vaccination clinic.

To improve vaccination completion, students whose parents/guardians have provided consent while in Year 7 or Year 10 and who miss vaccine doses at any clinic, will be opportunistically offered these vaccines at each clinic visit throughout 2024 (Year 7 or 10) & 2025 (Year 8 or 11).

Parents/guardians who wish to withdraw their consent for any reason may do so by amending their student's online consent. The Procedure for Withdrawal of Consent is available on the NSW Health website at http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/Pages/withdraw_consent.aspx

A Record of Vaccination will be provided to parents by SMS once a student has been vaccinated. Parents/guardians should not assume that their child has been vaccinated if they do not receive this SMS notification.

NOTE: If you experience difficulty with accessing the online consent package, please speak with Student Services for a paper form.

Sr Denise Edmunds rsj



St Mary's were saddened by the news that Sr Denise Edmunds (Sr M Bernadine) died peacefully in the Calvary Mater Hospice, Waratah, on Friday, 24 May, 2024, in her 92nd year, the 71th year of religious profession.

Sr Denise was born in Maitland, the eldest child and beloved daughter of Tom & Joan (both decd.), much loved sister of Ian, Graham (decd.) and Mark. Cherished sister-in-law, aunt and great-aunt.

Sr Denise was appointed to St Mary's circa 1975-1976 and 1985. She was a wonderful musician and produced a production of "Godspell" and the annual school concert which included every student in the school. Sr Denise's funeral was held on Wednesday 5 June at Christ the King Catholic Church Mayfield with the Rite of Committal taking place in the Sisters' section of the Catholic Cemetery, Lochinvar afterwards.

She was a dedicated educator who was generally concerned for the welfare of her students as people and as learners.

Eternal rest grant unto her, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon her.

National Reconciliation Week – 'Now More Than Ever'

Students across Years 7-11 have been participating in lessons exploring the significance of Nation Reconciliation Week. **Roo, Levi and Mr McKay** have been helping students better understand some important historical events and their own attitudes towards racism.

Students then created an artwork reflecting their own values and actions they can take. The level of understanding and insight has been impressive. It looks like the future of Reconciliation is in good hand.

Paul McKay
Aboriginal Education Teacher



Year 9 Leader of Wellbeing & Engagement

Year 9 Formation Day

Year 9 Formation Day occurred on Monday May 27 at Minimbah Teaching Place, Bulga. The Year 9 students had a great day and wonderful experience on the 116-hectare pristine bushland setting. We explored the theme of Respect and celebrated Reconciliation Week through bushwalks, art activities and a wonderful Aboriginal artefact talk/ display run by Les Atkinson, an Aboriginal elder and teacher. The students were able to get to know each other and make new friends also.

None of this would have been possible without the incredible support from all staff – thank you to all staff who supported us. The staff who accompanied and supported Year 9 at Minimbah facilitated the day for Year 9 with enthusiasm, positivity and participation. Thank you – **Nicole Abell, Vanessa Dews, Jo Meagher, Adele Weekes, Leanne Field, Steve Burns, Daniel Houston, Declan Meagher, Paul McKay, Julia Calver, Jenni Whitehead and Levi Briggs!**

The students have created a wonderful mural and some "postcards" of the day, with the expertise of **Paul McKay** and **Julia Calver**.





Ruth McCrae – Leader of Wellbeing and Engagement Year 9

Landcare

Tuesday was World Environment Day. The theme for 2024, "Our Land, Our Future. We are #GenerationRestoration," emphasising the importance of restoring land and enhancing resilience to climate change.

Thank you to all our wonderful students who volunteer to regenerate our creek ecosystem. It is becoming a wonderful ecosystem.

Have a look at the frogs that joined us at Landcare.

Make a difference today - pick up litter, recycle, reduce your energy or water use.....



Last Friday, the official State and Territory Landcare 2024 Awards were held. 139 submissions were received across 9 categories. St Mary's were one of three finalists in our category "Woolworths Junior Landcare". Unfortunately, although highly commended, we were just pipped to the post. However, during the evening there were some fantastic networking opportunities with the Lake Macquarie Landcare Volunteers association who are looking forward to sharing their wisdom with our Landcare community later in the year.

Maryanne Murray and Katrina Piper
Landcare Coordinators

SPORT

NSWCCC

Congratulations extend to **Ruby Jones** who scored eight goals over the day and two in the Grand Final to win the NSWCCC Title. **Elizabeth Savovski** and **Loretta Baker** were the coaches of this team from our Diocese. This title has been won by Elizabeth and Loretta for the past 3 years! Amazing achievement.



OZTAG

Last week, the St Mary's Ozttag juggernaut travelled to Tomaree to compete in the Hunter Regional Ozttag Championships. Throughout the day, all four teams were extremely competitive with many exhilarating tries, dazzling defence and tightly contested games.

In the **9/10 Girls** division, our team was drawn in a strongly competitive pool. Despite the challenges faced, the girls were tenacious throughout the day, eventually walking away with two exhilarating wins.

In the **7/8 Boys** division, the team had a momentous day as well. After starting the tournament with a narrow loss, the boys rallied themselves to finish the pool phase with two exciting wins and two nail-biting losses.

In the **9/10 Boys** division, the team commenced the day with a tightly contested loss. However, as the temperature began to heat up, so too did our senior boys with the team rising from the ashes to go on a thrilling winning streak, securing three tremendous wins in the pool stage before achieving an exhilarating win in their Quarter Final. Unfortunately, the boys were unable to secure the victory in their Semi-Final.

The Year **7/8 Girls** were the standout performers for the day. After going undefeated in their pool with four dominating wins, the team then had two thrilling wins in their Quarter Final and Semi Final with the girls displaying amazing attacking masterclasses. Unfortunately, they were unable to secure the final victory in the Grand Final. Due to making the Grand Final, the Year 7/8 Girls have now qualified for the NSW Champions of Champions Tournament to be held in Term 3 where they will test themselves against the best of the best from across the state. All players and teams demonstrated exceptional skill and tenacity throughout the day and are to be commended for their sportsmanship, commitment and school spirit. It was also great to see the many parents and family members who came along to support our students throughout the day.

Finally, a huge thank you to **Mrs Avery**, **Mrs McInherny** and **Mr Houston** for their support in coaching the teams. I am sure they will agree how amazing it was to see our students thrive outside of the classroom and display their many skills and talents.

Final placings for the tournament:

- Jnr Girls – 2nd Overall
- Jnr Boys – 10th Overall
- Snr Girls – 9th Overall
- Snr Boys – 3rd Overall

Kieren Knight – Ozttag Coordinator



← Girls 7/8

↑ Boys 7/8



↑ Boys 9/10

↑ Girls 9/10



BILL TURNER SOCCER

On Wednesday 29 May, our Under 15's Bill Turner Soccer boys played Lambton High. Lambton were huge, we felt like we had arrived at an Under 18's rugby match. Despite this, our boys stayed composed and played brilliantly. The courage shown by our Year 8 players was outstanding and the leadership from our Year 9 students, especially **Max Lonergan** and **James Doolan**, was exceptional.

The match was intense and ended in a 1-1 draw at full time. We then proceeded to 20 minutes of overtime, with a player from each team being taken off every five minutes. Despite a few attempts from our boys, no additional goals were scored, leading to a penalty shootout with our remaining five players. We didn't win, but the exceptional athleticism and sportsmanship displayed by our players throughout the game was commendable.

The team are congratulated for their outstanding performance, teamwork and spirit. They were excellent representatives of our College.

Louise Hatcher
Team Organiser

TENNIS

Parent, Mrs Rebecca Little, attended the diocese tennis tournament on 21 May at Singleton to watch her daughter Lacey compete. Mrs Little reports: "All the girls did very well representing St Mary's. Lacey came 1st and was the junior girl champion. She played six games to make it to the finals. She was down three games to love in the finals and displayed persistence and determination to claw her way back to win four games all and 5-4 in the tie breaker! It was a nail biter!!"

Congratulations extend to Lacey and all the girls that took part.

Thank you Mrs Little for taking the time to provide us with a report. If any other parents or carers have student achievements they would like to share, please email admin@gatesheadsm.catholic.edu.au – we would love to highlight them in our newsletter.





Newcastle Junior **Chess Club**



Newcastle Junior Chess Club runs Friday nights for all school aged kids interested in chess.

Where: Newcastle PCYC, located on the corner of Young Road and Melbourne Road Broadmeadow.

Time: 6.30pm – 9pm during the school term
(except public holidays and Newcastle Show week)

Cost: First session is free.
\$15 yearly membership and \$9 weekly paid to the PCYC.
The Newcastle Junior Chess Club is run by volunteers.

Beginners and advanced players are all welcome.



Find us on Facebook.



Want \$500 to help you with school costs?



Saver Plus is a financial education program for families and individuals on a tight budget to develop life-long savings habits.

To join Saver Plus, you must:

- ✓ Have a current Health Care or Pensioner Concession Card **AND** an eligible Centrelink payment*
- ✓ Be studying yourself **OR** have a child in school (can be starting school next year)
- ✓ Have regular income from work (either yourself or your partner)*
- ✓ Be 18+ years old

*Many types of income and Centrelink payments are eligible

Here are some of the school costs the \$500 can be used for:



laptops & tablets



uniforms & shoes



books & supplies



sports fees & gear



lessons & activities



camps & excursion

For more information, please contact your local Saver Plus coordinator:



Cynthia Culhane



cynthia.culhane@thesmithfamily.com.au



0418 699 646

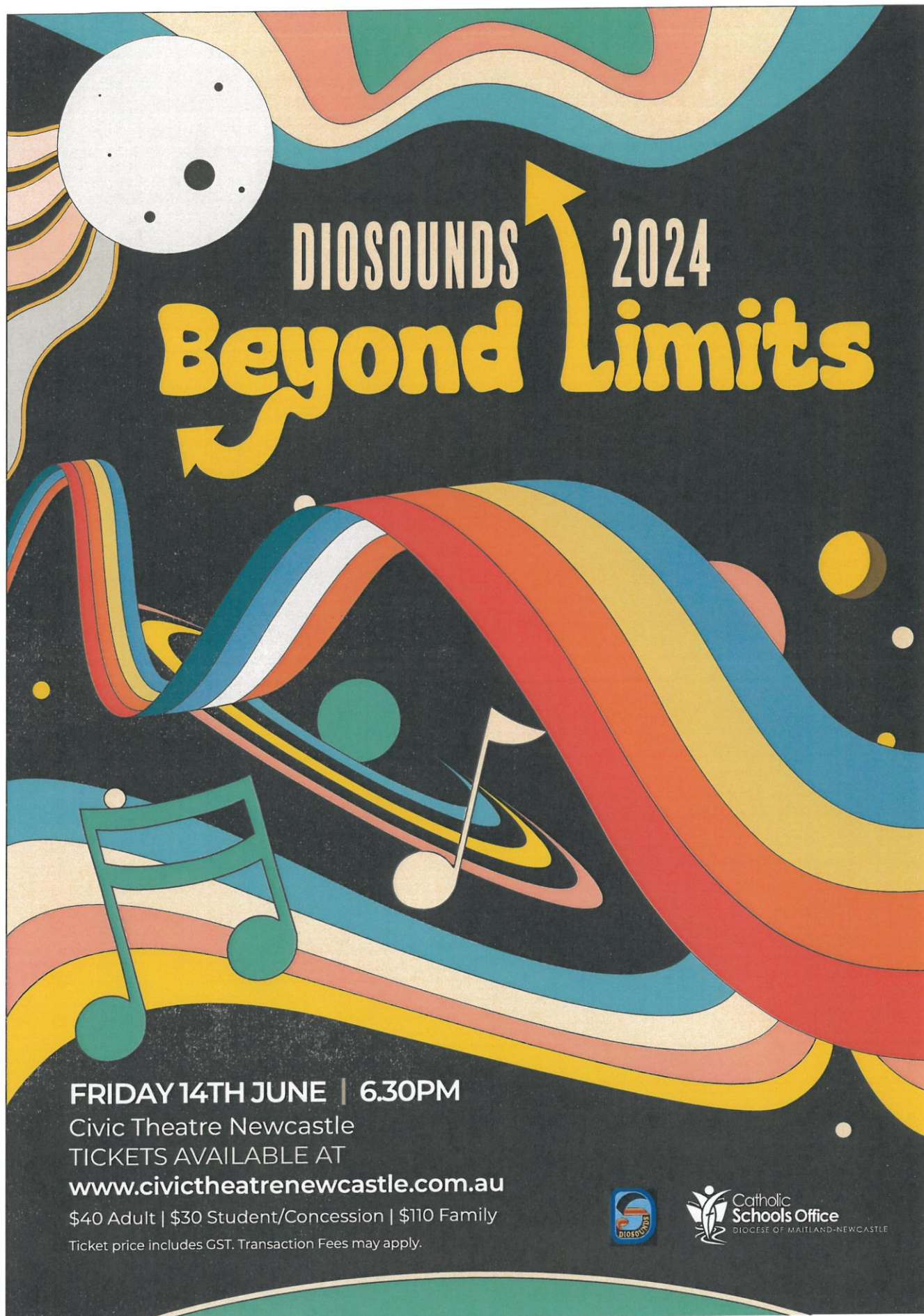
Saver Plus is an initiative of the Brotherhood of St Laurence and ANZ and delivered in partnership with local community organisations. The program is funded by ANZ and the Australian Government Department of Social Services.

DELIVERED BY





everyone's family

Find out more at saverplus.org.au



DIOSOUNDS 2024
Beyond Limits

FRIDAY 14TH JUNE | 6.30PM
Civic Theatre Newcastle
TICKETS AVAILABLE AT
www.civictheatrenewcastle.com.au
\$40 Adult | \$30 Student/Concession | \$110 Family
Ticket price includes GST. Transaction Fees may apply.



Catholic
Schools Office
DIOCESE OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE

CALENDAR – TERM 2 - Week 4 – (B Week)	
Week 7 – (A Week)	
Mon 10 June	Pupil Free Day - Public Holiday – King's Birthday
Tues 11 June	Year 10 (Year 11 2025) Subject Selection Evening 6pm
Wed 12 June	Year 7 immunisations Wollotuka Emerging Day – Ourimbah Campus - TBC
Thurs 13 June	DioSounds Tech Rehearsals
Fri 14 June	Year 12 Geography excursion DioSounds Performance
Week 8 - (B Week)	
Mon 17 June	Year 7 Junior Lovebites presentation no. 1
Tues 18 June	Studies in Catholic Thought Assessment Task
Wed 19 June	14 Yrs Rugby League Grand Final & selected spectators
Thurs 20 June	Year 7 Junior Lovebites presentation no. 2 Enviro Sustainability Bushland fieldtrip
Fri 21 June	Newsletter 10.24 published
Week 9 - (A Week)	
Wed 26 June	U14 & U16 Girls Rugby League Catholic Championships
Week 10 - (B Week)	
Mon 1 July	Acceptance of Offer of Enrolment 2025 and deposit of \$100 due to St Mary's – please contact Finance Office on 4944 4804
Wed 3 July	Solar Buddy Light incursion
Thurs 4 July	Aboriginal Community Netball Day
Fri 5 July	Newsletter 11.24 published
HOLIDAYS	
Mon 8 July to Fri 19 July	U14 & U16 Girls Rugby League Catholic Championships
TERM 3 – Week 1 (A Week)	
Mon 22 July	Pupil Free Day – Staff Professional Development Year 7 (2025) Booking period for interviews open
Tues 23 July	Usual Classes Resume for Years 7 to 12
Thurs 25 July	Landcare Year 7-10 PST Conferences – 3.30pm to 7pm
Fri 26 July	Year 7-10 PST Conferences – 8am to 2pm Classes as usual for Years 11 and 12
Week 2 (B Week)	
Tues 30 July	Extended PLM – Students released at 2.40pm
Fri 2 August	Year 7 (2025) Booking period for interviews close
Week 3 (A Week)	
Wed 7 August	Year 7 2025 Interview week (to Wed 14 August inclusive) Year 7 Participate in St Paul's Primary School 60 Years Celebration



**St Mary's
Year 10
(Year 11 2025)**

**Stage 6 Course
Information
Evening**

11 June 6pm TJC