



The Audience

Term 3 | Weeks 4 & 5 | 2016

Performing At Our Best.

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Assessment schedules can be downloaded [here](#). Stay in touch via our [free app](#) and [Facebook page](#).
Subscribe to this fortnightly Yr 7-12 newsletter via the HSPA website. Contact the office for more information.

Week 4

8/8	HSC Dance Exams World of Maths Primary/Secondary Excursion: Luna Park NAIDOC Celebrations
9/8	World of Maths Primary/Secondary HSC Dance Exams
10/8	SRC & Leadership Meeting Lion King Rehearsal – All day
11/8	Whole School Assembly NAIDOC Celebrations Year 12 Meeting Pd 1
12/8	NSW Chess Challenge Regional Semi Final Lion King Rehearsal – All day

Week 5

15/8	HSC Dance Exams
16/8	HSC Dance Exams Excursion: BHP Year 10 to B Street Smart Art Gallery Excursion
17/8	HSC Dance exams
18/8	Whole School Assembly Robocup Junior Competition
19/8	HSC Dance ExaMS Touch Football Gala Day 60 Ss Maths Inspiration at Newcastle Con

From Centre Stage

New Principal Announced

Many will have heard by now that HSPA's new principal is Ms Joanne Gray. Ms Gray is currently the principal at Singleton High School and will commence at HSPA at the start of Term 4, 2016. We look forward to welcoming her to our wonderful school.

Stronger HSC Standards – Key Changes

The NSW Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standard (BOSTES) recently announced a number of key changes to the HSC. These include the achievement of strict literacy and numeracy standards before a HSC will be awarded, less assessment tasks in Yr 11 and 12, and new senior courses. These changes will affect the current Year 8 cohort. See the last few pages for details.

National Award for Mrs Portelli

Congratulations to Mrs Portelli, HT Maths, who was announced as one of only 10 winners nationally of a Choose Maths Teaching Award. Citation: for inspiring students and enhancing their mathematical learning experiences. We agree!

Yr 12 Trials Completed

Well done to all students for their commitment and conduct during the Trial exams. The next 7 weeks are critical and

provide a great opportunity to work towards getting higher HSC exam marks. Thanks to Mrs Brenda Powell and team for their exam supervision.

HSC Project Submission Dates

Students are well aware of these key dates and should be planning their time efficiently. See later in this newsletter.

Congratulations to all involved in the Hunter Dance Festival. HSPA was represented well once again. My thanks to all the teachers for their outstanding commitment to providing these types of opportunities for our students.

Well done to Tessa Tamplin, who secured a place in the Young Matildas, the Australian women's national under-20 soccer team. This is an incredible achievement. The world stage (field) beckons!

HSPA hosted a group of students from **Shanxi Province, China** over the past two weeks. I'm sure our international visitors had wonderful time. My thanks to Mrs Burns, our student hosts and their families for making this possible.

Congratulations to a number of our students who enjoyed a three-week tour of Europe with the **Hunter Singers** during the holidays. See later in this newsletter for a report.

Finally, all the best to our HSC dancers over the next two weeks as they complete their HSC dance exams.

Marcus Neale
Acting Principal



Topping the Charts

Maths

MoneySmart tips for August

Money Health Check: <https://goo.gl/JpMEu3>

Saving Money on Food Expenses: <https://goo.gl/hphmvk>

Pi Day

Congratulations to all the entrants in the Pi Day competitions this year. Cash prizes have been funded by the sale of 'Pizza Pi' at lunchtime, and will be distributed next whole school assembly. Thanks to Mr Price and the Canteen for their organisation and help on the day.



Year 9 Leadership Team organized a fund raising event for Harry's House at the end of term two. It was a Year 9 School

Dance called "The Blackout". Most of the year group attended and a great night was had by all. It was a 'win-win' situation as Year 9 and staff danced the night away and raised \$500 for an excellent cause. Harry's House retreats are available to families that have a child living with cancer and to families grieving the loss of their child to cancer within the past 2 years. Thank you to the Year 9 SRC and Leadership Team for their inspiration and effort.

PDHPE Snow Trip 2016

A great four days at Perisher were enjoyed by Year 9 and 10 PASS and Year 11 PDHPE students. Students engaged in ski and boarding lessons each morning and refined these skills in the afternoon sessions. 41 great ambassadors for HSPA and a big thank you to Mr Fletcher, Mr Byrne, Ms Hodgson and Mr Rees for making the trip an unforgettable experience!



Welcome Back to Yr 12 PDHPE and CAFS students after trials! The countdown is now on to the HSC and maintaining regular attendance and revision is very important in the quest for better marks. Thursday morning study sessions in both subjects recommence next week.

Teaching and Learning

Year 11 and 12 Breakfast Club, the HSC study preparation program for Term 3 will recommence Wednesday Morning, Week 4 at 8:15am in the staff common room. Run by Mrs Maher and Mr Pettett, with some exciting guest presenters. Bring your own cup for a hot chocolate and warm muffin! Week 4 will unpack the Trial HSC experience and help students plan for improvement in all the subjects they study. Students should check their school email for further details and to access the link to confirm attendance for catering purposes.

The Library

Important dates to remember this term:

- Week 5 - Friday 19th August (NSW Premier's Reading Challenge finishes for 2016)
- Week 6 – Monday 22nd August to Friday 26th August (Book Week)
- Week 9 – Monday 13th September (marks 100 years since the birth of Roald Dahl)

More information will be available as each of these dates approach.

Book returns: Thank you to those students who have returned books to the library this week. Please remember, we are always happy to receive overdue library books or English textbooks that you may have lying around your home. Keep checking your emails for overdue notices.

One final note: Ms Hannigan will be on Long Service Leave for Terms 3 and 4. I will be relieving her as Teacher-Librarian and Distance Education Coordinator. I'm looking forward to working with the students and teachers.

Ms Melanie Walker

Aboriginal Education

Millabah: performed at Glendale High for their NAIDOC assembly, with plenty of praise from the school and community. Students are also learning a new dance for the HSPA NAIDOC Week, led by our senior students. Ms Gordon is assisting with language and traditional dance movements. Well done to all students for their positive involvement in Millabah, supported by Ms Edwards and John Schultz. We thank Ms Miller for her commitment to Millabah over the past two years.

Junior AECG: planning for our NAIDOC Week in Week 4 - to celebrate Indigenous culture.

Language class: students are really enjoying learning some language from the local area with Aunty Sharon.

Year 12 students: involved in trial HSC exams during week 2/3; as well as major projects in Industrial Technology and practical exams for Music. We wish them well for these important exams and in their preparation for the HSC in October/November.

Year 11 Aboriginal Studies: students are completing their community case study to be submitted in Week 4. Topics include ATSI health; education; aged care; art. Our Distance Education Aboriginal Studies student has been studying an International Indigenous Community Comparative Study. **Indigenous Book Swap:** will be held Friday 26 August during recess and lunch. Students and staff are encouraged to bring along a book they have read and want to swap for another book, with a gold coin donation. This will raise money for the Indigenous Literacy Foundation as well as promoting reading in our school.

Canteen

THE NOSH PIT is seeking volunteers to fill two vacancies in our roster. Due to new work commitments, we have lost three awesome volunteers and we are hoping someone is keen to fill the spots!

First vacant position is on a Monday. The dates required are: 15/8; 12/9; 10/10; 7/11 and 5/12.

Second vacant position is for a Tuesday. The dates required are: 16/8; 13/9; 11/10; 8/11; and 6/12.

Third vacant position is on a Wednesday. The dates required are: 27/7; 24/8; 21/9; 19/10; 16/11 and 14/12.

Our fourth vacancy is on a Friday. There are only 4 dates left for the year... 12/8; 9/9; 4/11 and 2/12.

If you are available for any (or all!) of these dates, please contact the Canteen, or Emma on 0410219972. We try to make our volunteers' day in canteen a fun one, so feel free to drop in and check us out!

Primary

The Primary P+C have decided to run a gold coin donation second hand uniform stall in Term 4. We are happy to collect washed uniforms for high school as well. Could you please spend a bit of time sorting and cleaning uniforms and send them in to the relevant offices at school.

Getting To Know...Ms Bree Harvey-Bice.



What do you teach and where did you teach before HSPA? I am an English and Drama Teacher and directly before HSPA I was the Head Teacher English at Callaghan College Wallsend. But I have taught at schools in Sydney West and East, Illawarra and South Coast.

Where did you go to school? Redhead Public School and Whitebridge High.

What made you decide to become a teacher? I missed out on law by 2 points and my Dad told me teaching was a good job for a woman. I didn't really commit to the idea of being a teacher until I had my first year 10 class in my first year of teaching and from that point I was hooked. It helped that I had some incredible role models in my own teachers at Whitebridge High too.

What do you like to do in your spare time? Belly dancing, yoga, the gym, reading, eating and most recently catching Pokemon.

What did you want to be when you were younger? A dragon tamer.

If you were a super-hero, what powers would you have? Omnipotence and fire breathing, maybe shape-shifting as well so I could be a dragon.

What was the last book you read? "The Creative Habit" by Twyla Tharpe.

What was your first job? Jazz Ballet Teacher at 13 and then I worked in Handbags and Hosiery at David Jones when I was 15.

What is your favourite all-time movie? I did film-studies at Uni so I am a bit obsessed with films but if I had to narrow it down to three they would be in no particular order; "Rocky" (mainly for the script), "Moulin Rouge" (for Baz Luhrmann's postmodern interpretation of that time- so beautifully done, so much going on in that film and The Shawshank Redemption because of Morgan Freeman.

What would you tell your 15 year old self? Continue to be as brave and wicked as you are now. Don't listen to people who tell you, you can't or shouldn't do things that are right and good for the world. You are kind and intelligent so don't dumb yourself down to suit others, lift them up to your level. Black is your colour, don't get the rude girl haircut it will make you look like a bogan and you are not fat.

What is your favourite song? Ruby Tuesday by the Rolling Stones, Alexander Beetle by Melanie.

What would you name the autobiography of your life? Building Xanadu and there would be intertextual references to my favourite poem "Kubla Kahn" by Samuel Taylor Coleridge all the way through it.

If you could live anywhere in the world, where would you live?

Byron Bay or Nusa Lembongan.

Do you have a special talent? I have been told I can make people smile when they watch me dance because I look so happy.

Do you ever wish you could be someone else, if yes, who? I wish I could be 17 year old me but with my current level of wisdom.

Early Warning Network Weather Facility App available.

Parents and Caregivers can access free of charge (depending on the Local Government Area in which they live) the NSW Early Warning Network weather facility on their mobiles by searching for EWN in the iOS App Store or Google Play Store. These alerts are directly linked to the Bureau of Meteorology and are endorsed by local government associations. These alerts may assist HSPA families and others, in times of need. An email and sms/mms subscription service is also available by visiting: www2.ewn.com.au/register.

NSW School Vaccination Program 2016

School vaccination clinics continue into Terms 3 & 4.

What if my child has missed a vaccine?

If your child has missed any vaccinations they will be offered any missed doses at the next clinic at their school – which will be Friday 2 September 2016.

What if my child has not received all hpv vaccines before the end of 2016?

Any year 7 student with missed doses of HPV vaccine can be caught up in 2017.

Additionally – any year 8 student who commenced HPV vaccination while in year 7 and are yet to finish all 3 doses of HPV (and who has not received any from their local doctor) can still receive these at the next clinic at their school.

Don't forget a Record of Vaccination is given to each student for each vaccination. Parents/guardians should ensure that this record is kept for future reference and should not assume that their child has been vaccinated if they do not receive this Record of Vaccination. Any questions, visit the NSW Ministry of Health website at:

<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/Pages/schoolvaccination.aspx>



Important Opal information from 1 August 2016

From 1 August, magnetic strip tickets (MSTs) will no longer be sold or accepted for travel within the Opal network. For easy access to public transport and lower fares, customers need to plan ahead and acquire the appropriate Opal card before 1 August 2016.

What other ticketing options will be available for customers from 1 August 2016?

Opal is the easiest and cheapest way to get around on public transport, but as a last resort, customers can buy an Adult or Child/Youth Opal single bus ticket on board bus services (excluding prepay services). These are single-use tickets only, valid for travel from the point of purchase.

Who is eligible to buy Child/Youth Opal Single Bus Ticket?

The eligibility criteria are the same as a Child/Youth Opal card:

- Children aged 4 – 15 years (inclusive)
- Full-time NSW/ACT school students aged 16 years and older with a NSW Senior Secondary Student Concession card, issued by their school, as proof of entitlement.

NSW/ACT Senior Secondary Student Concession Card



School Student Photo ID's will no longer be accepted as from 1st August 2016.

Students 16 years and over must carry and show Senior Student Concession Card as shown.

See your School Administration for details.

Holders of this concession card are entitled to half-price fares and can apply for a Child/Youth Opal card.

Eligibility

You must be a school student aged 16 or over who is:

- enrolled in a NSW or ACT secondary school or non-government secondary school, or
- registered with the Board of Studies as a full-time home-schooled or distance education (OTEN) secondary student.

International school students who meet the criteria also get the same entitlements.



First activity on Newcastle's Famous Tram for HSPA's visitors from Shanxi Province, China.

STRONGER HSC STANDARDS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



GENERAL

WHAT HAS THE NSW GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED?

The NSW Higher School Certificate (HSC) will undergo wide-reaching reform to support all students achieving a minimum standard of literacy and numeracy, to reduce excessive student stress, to remove opportunities for plagiarism and pre-prepared responses, and to motivate and challenge students to achieve at their highest possible levels.

HOW WILL THESE PROPOSALS IMPROVE THE CURRENT HSC?

The establishment of a minimum standard of literacy and numeracy for the award of the HSC will give students the essential skills they require for their daily lives, expand their career options and give employers confidence in their capabilities.

Syllabuses will place more emphasis on depth of learning and analytical skills, which will provide students with the solid foundation of knowledge and skills that can be applied after school in further studies and the workplace.

A stronger emphasis on the mastery of knowledge and skills, instead of a broad overview of content, will ensure that students have the space to engage in more complex content and skills.

Providing a new Science Extension course will motivate and challenge students to achieve at the highest levels.

Streamlining assessment will reduce excessive stress, and give students greater scope to demonstrate what they know.

WHO DESIGNED THESE PROPOSALS?

The Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards NSW (BOSTES) has developed these proposals across three broad areas of reform – curriculum, assessment and a minimum standard for the HSC credential.

These proposals have been informed by frequent consultation with the NSW education community (including principal, parent, sector, teaching and union representatives) during 2015-16 and research and data from local, national and international high-performing education systems and experts.

MINIMUM STANDARD

WHAT HAS THE NSW GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED?

The NSW Government has announced that all Year 12 students must reach a minimum standard of literacy and numeracy to receive the HSC from 2020.

WHAT IS THE MINIMUM STANDARD?

The standard is set at the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF) Level 3, a nationally agreed standard of functional literacy and numeracy.

The ACSF has been endorsed by federal and state governments. It describes the core literacy and numeracy skills required in personal, community, work and training contexts. The minimum standard for the award of the HSC will be set to a functional level of literacy and numeracy necessary to succeed in everyday life and work. The BOSTES Board has endorsed this standard for the award of the HSC at ACSF Level 3.

More information about the ACSF can be found at <https://www.education.gov.au/australian-core-skills-framework>

WHO HAS TO MEET THE NEW REQUIREMENT OF A MINIMUM STANDARD OF LITERACY AND NUMERACY?

Any student who wishes to receive the HSC from 2020 will be required to meet the minimum standard.

Students with disabilities undertaking Life Skills courses, and students from a non-English speaking background who have been learning English for less than one year will be exempt from meeting the standard.

HOW CAN A STUDENT MEET THE STANDARD?

Students can demonstrate they have met the standard by achieving:

- a Band 8 in each of their Year 9 NAPLAN¹ reading, writing and numeracy tests; or
- a pass in the online literacy and numeracy test in Years 10, 11 or 12.

A demonstration test indicating the level of skills required is available at hscliteracynumeracy.bostes.nsw.edu.au.

WHEN WILL THE LITERACY AND NUMERACY STANDARD APPLY TO STUDENTS?

The BOSTES Board has determined that the literacy and numeracy standard will apply to Year 12 students completing the HSC from 2020. These students will be undertaking Year 9 NAPLAN in 2017, which will be the first opportunity to satisfy the standard.

HOW MANY OPPORTUNITIES ARE THERE TO ACHIEVE THE LITERACY AND NUMERACY STANDARD?

The first opportunity to meet the standard is Year 9 NAPLAN. This gives students, their teachers and schools time to improve their literacy and numeracy skills well before the HSC. This early opportunity also prompts a focus on literacy and numeracy in the earlier years of school, and on students meeting their progressive milestones in these core skills. This focus will help all students, not just HSC students. Those students who do not reach the standard in Year 9 will have sufficient time with their teachers, parents and schools to work on strategies and measures to improve their performance.

It is fair to provide students with multiple opportunities to reach the standard. Students mature at different stages, and may master essential literacy and numeracy concepts at different times.

The key purpose in introducing a standard is to ensure that students who complete secondary school and are awarded an HSC have a functional baseline of literacy and numeracy skills.

WHY HAS BOSTES INTRODUCED A MINIMUM STANDARD FOR THE AWARD OF THE HSC?

Literacy and numeracy are indispensable to function effectively in society. The best indicator of success in life after school – including in employment, higher salaries and good health – is a student's literacy and numeracy skills. Improving students' literacy and numeracy prepares them for life beyond school by providing better access to jobs and further training.

NSW NAPLAN data shows that about 24% of Year 9 students are at or below the national minimum standard for Reading and about 19% are at or below the standard for Numeracy. These students are already at risk of not attaining the skills they need in life unless they receive targeted intervention and support.

The HSC does not directly measure students' literacy and numeracy skills or require minimum standards to be met for the award of the credential.

However, the community, business and employers require an assurance that students have the literacy and numeracy skills they need when they leave school.

The minimum standard will prompt a whole-of-school focus on

literacy and numeracy to benefit students in all school years, including those who leave school without an HSC.

IF STUDENTS DO NOT REACH THE LITERACY AND NUMERACY STANDARD BY THE END OF YEAR 10, WILL THEY HAVE TO DO MATHS IN YEAR 11?

All students should complete high school with a functional level of numeracy for everyday life and employment.

There will be no mandatory requirement to take maths for the HSC. But students who do not meet the standard by the end of Year 10 will need to complete further work in numeracy courses or maths topics in Years 11 and 12 until they pass the online literacy and numeracy test.

Schools may choose to deliver short courses, topics or additional tutoring in numeracy skills. Some students may choose to continue studying maths as the best means of improving their numeracy skills to meet the standard.

WHAT HAPPENS IF A STUDENT DOES NOT MEET THE LITERACY AND NUMERACY STANDARD BY THE END OF YEAR 12?

Year 12 students who do not reach the standard and qualify for the HSC will receive the Record of School Achievement (RoSA). The RoSA was introduced by the NSW Government to replace the out-dated School Certificate. The RoSA is a record of a student's academic results and other achievements provided to those who leave school before finishing Year 12.

Students who do not demonstrate the standard will have five years after leaving school to meet the literacy and numeracy standard and receive an HSC.

HOW WILL BOSTES, SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS SUPPORT STUDENTS TO ACHIEVE THE STANDARD?

Support materials, including resources from BOSTES, will emphasise the early identification of students in primary and high school at risk of not meeting the standards. Strategies and materials will be available to assist teachers in supporting students to reach the standard.

English and maths courses in Years 11 and 12 have been redesigned by BOSTES to include units in literacy and numeracy linked to the standard, which will help ensure students develop the skills they need.

The minimum standard is part of a broader NSW Government strategy to support vulnerable citizens to succeed in life and work. The minimum standard complements a new cross-sectoral, statewide strategy to boost literacy and numeracy. More detail about the strategy will be released later in 2016.

HOW MANY STUDENTS WILL BE AFFECTED?

Every student will be affected by the introduction of a minimum standard, with every student benefiting from the resulting stronger focus on literacy and numeracy.

A whole-of-school focus on literacy and numeracy will help improve these essential skills for all students from the early years through to the HSC.

Even those students who leave school before completing Year 12 will benefit from a stronger emphasis on literacy and numeracy. BOSTES data shows that about 20,000 students already leave school between Year 10 and the end of Year 12 without an HSC.

HOW MANY STUDENTS WILL MEET THE MINIMUM STANDARD AND RECEIVE THE HSC IN 2020?

Of the 70,000 students who complete the HSC annually, the vast majority will meet the minimum standard of literacy and numeracy.

Based on an analysis of NAPLAN results, BOSTES forecasts that at least 50% of HSC students will pre-qualify for the minimum standard in Year 9, by achieving Band 8 in their NAPLAN reading, writing, and numeracy tests.

Students at risk of not meeting the standard will be supported to improve their literacy and numeracy skills through early intervention, tailored resources, and curriculum focused on these skills.

THE LITERACY AND NUMERACY STANDARD IS A MINIMUM. HOW DO THE HSC REFORMS RAISE STANDARDS FOR ALL STUDENTS, INCLUDING HIGH ACHIEVERS?

The minimum standard places a premium on the development of literacy and numeracy skills, which will lift achievement across the range of student ability. Introducing a standard in Western Australia, for example, is credited with lifting the proportion of students in the top two NAPLAN bands. Even advanced students will benefit from an increased focus on literacy and numeracy to develop more sophisticated skills.

The changes to the HSC foster the development of more complex knowledge and skills, reduce excessive student stress, decrease opportunities for plagiarism and pre-prepared exam responses, and motivate and challenge students to achieve at their highest possible level.

Standards set for the HSC influence teaching and learning priorities in the earlier years of school. Every student will benefit from a greater focus on the mastery of knowledge and skills as they move through school. The HSC is not the end of learning for students, but preparation for the next stage of a student's life.

CURRICULUM

WHAT HAS THE NSW GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED?

BOSTES will release draft new syllabuses for public consultation in English, maths, science and history for Years 11 and 12.

The draft syllabuses focus on students developing mastery of skills and understanding, rather than a broad overview of content.

Syllabuses will be kept up to date through a more efficient review cycle.

A new one-year extension course in science is proposed, starting for Year 12 students in 2019.

WHAT NEW SYLLABUSES WILL BOSTES RELEASE?

BOSTES is releasing 17 draft syllabuses for Year 11 and 12 students in English, maths, science and history for public consultation.

English

- English (Standard)
- English (Advanced)
- English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D)
- English Studies
- English Extension and English Extension 2

Mathematics

- Mathematics General 1
- Mathematics General 2
- Mathematics
- Mathematics Extension 1 and Mathematics Extension 2

Science

- Biology
- Chemistry
- Earth and Environmental Science
- Investigating Science
- Physics

History

- Ancient History
- Modern History
- History Extension

There will also be public consultation on draft Life Skills outcomes and content in English, maths, science and history.

The six-week consultation period on the draft syllabuses is the last, formal opportunity for the community to provide feedback on the new courses.

For more information on public consultation on draft syllabuses see: www.bostes.nsw.edu.au

WHEN WILL STUDENTS BE TAUGHT THE NEW SYLLABUSES?

The Year 11 students of 2018 will begin their senior secondary studies with the new syllabuses in English, maths, science and history. The Year 12 students of 2019 will be the first to complete HSC exams in these subjects.

WHAT ARE THE OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES IN THESE NEW SYLLABUSES?

The principles that apply to English, maths, science and history will apply to the renewal of the remaining syllabuses. These include:

- a focus on 'depth' of content studied rather than 'breadth' of topics covered
- online syllabus, rather than static, paper copies
- interactive e-syllabus linking new courses to teaching and assessment resources, such as lesson plans and assessment tasks

WHY ARE ONLY THE ENGLISH, MATHS, SCIENCE AND HISTORY SYLLABUSES BEING UPDATED?

English, maths, science and history are the first subject areas to be revised in line with NSW's commitment to align the syllabuses with Year 11 and 12 Australian Curriculum content. BOSTES will progressively review and update the remaining Years 11 and 12 syllabuses, starting with a review of technology and some Asian language syllabuses from 2017.

WHEN WILL THE NEW COURSES BE TAUGHT IN SCHOOLS?

The new draft syllabuses are now subject to public consultation, and will be finalised by the end of 2016.

BOSTES understands that teachers need time to adjust their teaching practices and process the new content. Schools and teachers will have all of 2017 to familiarise themselves with the new content, and to plan lessons, prior to implementation in 2018.

Introducing new syllabuses in English, maths, science and history for Years 11 and 12 students will require careful planning for everyone involved in secondary school education.

The 70,000 students who complete the HSC each year are required to study English; therefore changes to the English syllabus content and assessment alone will have a big impact. Maths, science and history are some of the most popular courses studied each year.

The process allowing teachers a year of familiarisation is well established in NSW.

HOW WILL THE SYLLABUS REVIEW PROCESS BE IMPROVED?

The HSC was last reviewed 17 years ago. Technological advances, changing national priorities and workplace expectations have affected NSW's social, economic and educational environment.

The Year 11 and 12 syllabuses need to be responsive to these advances in knowledge and technology to remain current and relevant.

Digital technologies allow a more regular and efficient syllabus review cycle. Online syllabuses can be easily updated for minor changes while the interactive e-syllabus links courses to teaching programs, assessment tasks and lesson plans.

ASSESSMENT

WHAT HAS THE NSW GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED?

School-based assessment will be capped to reduce excessive student stress from over-assessment and allow a greater focus on teaching and learning.

HSC exam questions will be redesigned to reduce the opportunity for formulaic responses and cheating. Stricter guidelines will be issued to assure the authorship of take-home assessments and projects.

A common scale will be introduced for the maths courses, giving students in advanced courses better recognition of their efforts and encouraging students to study the level of maths best suited to their ability. This removes the incentive for students to take easier courses in an effort to gain higher marks.

WHEN WILL THE ASSESSMENT CHANGES BE INTRODUCED?

Changes to assessment will be introduced as appropriate across all courses from 2018 (Year 11 students) and 2019 (Year 12 students).

WHY IS BOSTES CHANGING ASSESSMENT?

The HSC mark comprises 50% school-based and 50% external BOSTES assessment. School-based assessment was originally introduced to evaluate outcomes that are not as effectively measured in the final exam, and to reduce the stress and pressure experienced during the HSC exams.

Over time, this balance has shifted. Assessment is not simply a measure of the progress students have made; it is also part of the learning process and provides important feedback to teachers and students. These changes will shift the emphasis of assessment to allow a greater focus on teaching and learning.

Students feel over-assessed, experience relentless assessment regimes, and some resort to undesirable practices such as plagiarism and pre-prepared responses.

Resilience and an ability to cope with change are vital skills for a student to develop at school. However, students should not be subjected to assessment regimes that are endless, repetitive, and only mimic the HSC exam questions.

A greater focus on teaching and learning, and assessment as part of the learning cycle (and not simply a measure of the progress students have made), will increase student engagement and improve their learning.

HOW MANY SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENTS WILL THERE BE IN YEAR 11 AND IN YEAR 12?

BOSTES will cap school-based assessment to:

- a maximum of three assessments per course in Year 11
- a maximum of four assessments per course in Year 12, including the HSC trial exam.

The final HSC exams held in October and November each year will continue. These exams form 50% of a student's final HSC mark.

WHY CAP ASSESSMENTS?

In BOSTES consultations on the HSC over the past three years, teachers, parents and students have reported that Year 11 and 12 students experience assessment fatigue.

Some schools are using school assessments as a way to motivate students, or to ensure they attempt work. This means students can have up to six assessment tasks per course in each year. For example, a student with five 2 Unit subjects can have 25-30 assessment tasks over three terms - which equates to an average of one per week. In reality, assessment tasks are clustered at similar points of the school year.

From the student perspective, every assessment task counts, whether it is worth 5% or 25%. The assessments are not always single tasks, such as one essay, and often comprise sub-tasks that require a substantial amount of work to complete. Students often feel compelled to choose to do "what's due next", or "what's worth more".

Some assessment tasks replicate previous HSC exam questions, either in the form of an essay, or mimicking the exam. This limits the variety of tasks used to assess student knowledge.

Fewer assessment tasks will allow schools to spend more time on the knowledge and skills in a course, and shift the focus from superficial learning just for the exam.

WHY SHOULD BOSTES HSC EXAM QUESTIONS CHANGE?

Some HSC exam questions are very similar, year on year. Teaching and learning can become formulaic in reflecting this. Courses with a large number of options have a limited number of exam-type questions that can apply across all topics.

Students repeatedly practise their essay (particularly in English and History), resulting in pre-preparation and memorisation of essays. Some schools set the previous HSC essay questions for homework tasks, or under exam conditions for the HSC trial exam.

Memorising key facts and skills, such as times tables, formulas and quotations, is important. But memorising entire essays to adapt and reproduce in an exam is a narrow demonstration of a student's application of knowledge and skills.

BOSTES needs to shake up these negative learning practices by requiring HSC exam questions to be less predictable, so students are required to apply their knowledge and skills in

response to the exam question. Changing HSC exam questions will reduce opportunities to cheat and plagiarise.

WILL THERE STILL BE FINAL, WRITTEN HSC EXAMS?

Yes. The final HSC exams held in October and November of each year will continue. These exams will continue to form 50% of a student's final HSC mark.

The proposals relating to school-based assessment and the final exams aim to create a more complementary relationship between the two modes of assessment. They provide students with equal and appropriate opportunities to demonstrate what they know and can do.

WHY SHOULD THERE BE A COMMON MARKING SCALE IN MATHS?

Maths courses, like English, will be on a common scale, which will allow comparison of students doing easier or harder courses.

Placing maths courses on a common scale will act as a disincentive for capable students who deliberately choose easier courses for a perceived ATAR advantage.

The common scale will allow better recognition of student efforts and encourage them to take a maths course that better suits their ability.

HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THESE HSC REFORMS?

BOSTES will keep parents, students, teachers and the broader community informed of progress via the website www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/stronger-hsc-standards

BOSTES will continue to use existing communication channels and committee structures, including the BOSTES Board, to monitor these reforms and update the community as required.



Hunter Singers

**Tour to London, Wales,
Paris and Fromelles
July 4th-21st, 2016**

The regional high school choir, Hunter Singers travelled on an international tour during the July school holidays, performing in competitions, schools, churches and even battlefields of the Western Front. The choir participated in a number of significant events such as the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod in Wales, Disney Performing Arts OnStage at Disneyland Paris, and the French premiere of composer Paul Jarman's work for the Hunters Singers, "Fromelles" in the parish church in the village of Fromelles in the Western Front of France. Hunter School of the Performing Arts was well represented by Dakota Dunlap, Brooke Kentish, Sara Kentish, Yasmin Parsons, Martha Reece and Taylor Reece.



The tour began in London, with the choir hosted for a concert at a London secondary school, the Bushey Academy in Hertfordshire. The students in the audience enjoyed choir's colourful Australian repertoire, as well as arrangements of catchy pop songs. The Hunter Singers were then privileged to

hold a concert in the unique church of St Stephen Walbrook, in the heart of London. The acoustics of this Christopher Wren-designed church, constructed in the round, created an amazing resonant sound for the Singers' voices, an unforgettable performance experience for the young musicians.

There were a number of essential London adventures that the group also undertook, including dinner and a musical at the West End, walk through Hyde Park, visits to Westminster Abbey and Houses of Parliament, and a sing on the steps of St Pauls Cathedral. There were shopping visits to Harrods, excursions to Abbey Road, and explorations of the British, Victoria & Albert, Natural History and Science Museums.

The Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod is the world's biggest Eisteddfod, held each year in the timeless village of Llangollen in Wales. The Hunter Singers competed in the Youth Choir section of the competition, amongst very high standard of international college and senior school choirs with impressive repertoire. The Singers scored in fourth place, earning high praise from the adjudicators for their expression and articulation of sound. A highlight of the Eisteddfod is the Procession of Nations, where all performing groups, including orchestras and dance groups, parade through the town. The Hunter Singers walked, sang and waved Australian flags to the cheers of thousands residents and visitors, and left feeling like super stars.



A train journey brought the Singers to Paris, much to the joy of many excited travellers, with days of sightseeing and adventures, including river cruises on the Seine, visits to the Eiffel Tower, Sacre Coeur, Montmartre and art museums galore. The choir sang in the beautiful La Madeleine Church, performing sacred music in the original spaces for which it was written, where the notes echo out for seconds, blend together and fade away. This was another musical marvel for the young musicians.

Disneyland Paris was a different kind of highlight for many, with a choir performance on the CinéMagique stage preceding an exhausting day of rollercoasters, tea-cups and character parades. After two weeks of sightseeing and performing, it was time to make the final journey to the Somme and its battlefields, to take part in the WWI Centenary Commemorations and perform the commissioned work, *Fromelles*.

The landscape became dotted with small cemeteries in the fields, soldiers buried where they fell in battle. The Singers visited the Australian Memorial in Villers-Bretonneux, laying Australian flags and poppies on graves of family members and Hunter soldiers. The choir sang a quiet song at the steps of the memorial wall, where thousands of names of lost Australian soldiers are engraved. A sign at the Victoria School in the village reminds local children of the sacrifice of Australian soldiers, and the historical fundraising efforts of Victorian primary school children in the 1920s.



The history lessons continued for the Singers, with a battlefield tour conducted by a sprightly 85-year-old retired British RAF pilot. He led the choir to significant sites of the battle of the Somme, including Adelaide Cemetery, La Hamel, Pozieres and Bullecourt. Here the choir sang to the statue of The Digger, performing Paul Jarman's "The Soldier" in the presence of the composer. Many tears were shed by singers, supporters and Australian pilgrims, visiting the sites in preparation for the memorial commemorations.

In 2015, the Hunter Singers received a grant from the Federal Government Anzac Centenary Arts and Culture Fund to commission and perform a piece of music of cultural significance about the battle of Fromelles, the first major battle fought by Australian troops on the Western Front. Here, the worst 24 hours in Australia's history saw almost 2000 Australian men killed in action. Prominent Australian composer Paul Jarman wrote a piece for the Hunter Singers, featuring words inscribed on gravestones in Fromelles. This emotional piece was premiered in Newcastle, and finally, the Singers had a chance to perform the work in its heartland, as a tribute to the Australians who died in battle. The Fromelles concert was attended by the village mayor and many local citizens, many of whom were touched by the artistry of the piece.



The choir visited the newly-identified graves of some of the soldiers killed in battle, those bodies who had been missing for nearly 90 years. The Singers had researched the names and stories of local soldiers, and laid tributes on behalf of Hunter families. A fitting finale to the tour was the group's participation in the Battle of Fromelles Centenary Commemoration, an Australian televised event attended by over 2000 people in the grounds of the Pheasant Wood Fromelles Military Cemetery. Such an epic journey undertaken by a group of talented young musicians and their supporters could not have been possible without the vision and dedication of the group's musical director and tour organiser, Kim Sutherland OAM. The Singers and supporters are indebted to her for arranging such a life-changing experience for all involved.