



## HSC RESULTS 2015

I want to start with the important things. The HSC is a journey for our young people, and so too for each one of the 109 girls at SCEGGS in 2015. They all had different abilities and interests, different backgrounds and home lives, different aspirations and goals. And I want them all to achieve those hopes and desires. But I also want them to be good people; to live their lives with integrity and purpose; to look after themselves and their friends and families; to stand up for what they believe in; to live with honour, and passion and kindness; to know what are the important things in life.... I want them to have a broad, liberal education, and to know how to learn and grow further at universities, in their professions, in their lives thirty or forty years from now. I want them to have skills to make them eminently employable and to be successful in their chosen careers.

I want the Class of 2015 and the whole school community to know how proud I am of each and every one of our Year 12 girls from last year. They are people of optimism and good humour, spirited and independent, confident and articulate, determined and energetic. They are courageous leaders and there is no doubt that they inspired so many of us with many of their initiatives and actions throughout their time at school. The Class of 2015 are great young women who are well-educated and thoughtful, care deeply for ideas and causes, able to live life to the full and wanting to make a difference to our community.

Leagues tables (and this sort of summary information too) do not capture any of these important qualities in our girls – and it is these qualities that really count for every one of our girls in life, certainly long after people have stopped asking them how they went in the HSC! Having said that, I know that the SCEGGS community is always interested in knowing a little more generally about how we have gone.

Most importantly, I think most girls and their parents are happy. There are lots of different results, in many different ways, but we seem to have done well.

This summary provides an overview of some of the different statistics for the different courses and highlights many successes - but naturally there is still a lot more work for us to do to understand them all thoroughly.

### **Top All-Rounders:**

Sixteen of our girls made the state's "Top All-Rounders" list this year, having gained a mark of at least 90% in ten or more of their HSC units, which is a great achievement for these girls.

They were:

- Valentina Antonatos
- Eleanor Armstrong
- Scarlett Armstrong
- Romane Boyden
- Nericia Brown
- Sophie Coleman
- Ella Crowley-Burrows
- Eliza Davis Beard
- Kara Harris
- Aurora Hawcroft
- Tan-Nia Koh
- Eloise Mack
- Eva Moretti
- Isabella Priestley
- Jane Spencer
- Siri Wingrove

This is an excellent result for each of those girls! Well done!

In individual subjects, we had 278 mentions in the Distinguished Achievers lists from 91 different girls. This means that 91 of our girls gained in the top band with a mark over 90% in one or more of their subjects – this is an excellent achievement for each of them in those subject areas, showing a particularly strong performance in one or more of their subjects.

Of particular note in individual subjects:

- Jane Spencer came 1<sup>st</sup> in the state in German Beginners. This is the 15<sup>th</sup> “Top of the State” for Frau Petrosian over the years, and wonderful that she could go to the award ceremony this year in place of Jane, who was in New York.
- Eleanor Armstrong came 5<sup>th</sup> in Modern History and Imogen Harper 12<sup>th</sup>.
- Susannah Keene came 3<sup>rd</sup> in Music 2.

You can see Frau Petrosian in the blue in the second row on the right (published on [www.smh.com.au](http://www.smh.com.au))!!!



Students who came first in their HSC subjects at Australian Technology Park on Tuesday. Photo: Janie Barrett

### Percentages in the top two bands in 2015:

The table below represents the number of students, as a percentage of the SCEGGS candidature, who have achieved a mark in one of the top two bands for the course. For comparison, the state percentage achieving in the top two bands is also provided. In a 2 unit subject, such as Ancient History, a mark in one of the top two bands means a mark over 80%.

| Subject               | SCEGGS Candidature | State Percentage in top two bands | SCEGGS Percentage in top two bands |
|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Ancient History       | 30                 | 32.6                              | 90.0                               |
| Biology               | 30                 | 27.96                             | 86.7                               |
| Business Studies      | 17                 | 35.88                             | 82.3                               |
| Chemistry             | 38                 | 41.05                             | 81.6                               |
| Design and Technology | 12                 | 35.98                             | 83.3                               |
| Drama                 | 18                 | 42.36                             | 100                                |
| Economics             | 11                 | 45.85                             | 63.6                               |
| English (Standard)    | 12                 | 8.31                              | 58.3                               |
| English (Advanced)    | 97                 | 57.81                             | 94.8                               |
| English Extension 1   | 43                 | 94.08                             | 100                                |
| English Extension 2   | 12                 | 82.37                             | 100                                |
| Geography             | 5                  | 41.30                             | 60.0                               |
| IPT                   | 6                  | 32.03                             | 100                                |
| Mathematics General 2 | 28                 | 25.64                             | 85.7                               |
| Mathematics           | 64                 | 52.31                             | 87.5                               |

| Subject                 | SCEGGS Candidature | State Percentage in top two bands | SCEGGS Percentage in top two bands |
|-------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Mathematics Extension 1 | 35                 | 84.11                             | 88.6                               |
| Mathematics Extension 2 | 5                  | 86.14                             | 100                                |
| Modern History          | 49                 | 43.65                             | 93.9                               |
| History Extension       | 10                 | 78.14                             | 100                                |
| Music 1                 | 5                  | 61.84                             | 100                                |
| Music 2                 | 2                  | 88.03                             | *                                  |
| Music Extension         | 1                  | 94.15                             | *                                  |
| PDHPE                   | 16                 | 29.62                             | 75.0                               |
| Physics                 | 14                 | 28.75                             | 50.0                               |
| Visual Arts             | 49                 | 53.40                             | 100                                |
| French Continuers       | 18                 | 66.29                             | 100                                |
| French Extension        | 2                  | 90.95                             | *                                  |
| German Beginners        | 10                 | 54.05                             | 90                                 |
| Japanese Continuers     | 5                  | 54.46                             | 60                                 |
| Japanese Extension      | 2                  | 87.97                             | *                                  |
| Latin Continuers        | 3                  | 82.04                             | *                                  |
| Latin Extension         | 3                  | 96.92                             | *                                  |

\* *Please note:* the data for small candidature subjects will not be reported in accordance with the school's Privacy Policy

It is clear that our percentages in the above table are overall much better than the equivalent NSW statistics.

#### **ATARs:**

As you would all be aware, we do not receive any information from UAC about the ATARs (Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank) achieved by our girls. These were released to the girls directly online but we do ask girls to email or ring in and let us know how they went– we love to hear from them all – whatever mark they achieved. So a big thank you to all the girls from the Class of 2015 who have already been in touch to let us know their ATAR – we really appreciate it!

Our top ATAR was a tie with two girls on 99.90 – Eleanor Armstrong and Jane Spencer! We will ask both of them back to our first assembly of the year. This is an outstanding performance from both of them! I love the fact that they did different subjects – with high levels of Mathematics, English and History, Chemistry and Biology, Languages, Music all included in their different subjects in Year 12, as well as balancing their academic work with other activities they enjoy – like Gold Duke of Edinburgh, Speech and Music!

We have again used an external consultant to estimate the ATARs and help us analyse the results so that we can advise students in future years, and to build up our knowledge base of processes and procedures.

It is important to remember:

*The ATAR is a rank, not a mark, so for example an ATAR of 90 indicates that the student has performed well enough in the HSC to be placed in the top 10% of their age group. It definitely does NOT mean that the student scored a mark 90% in all their different subjects!*

Overall, it appears that we gained the following ATAR rankings:

- 7 girls over 99
- 17 girls over 98
- 42 girls over 95
- 70 girls over 90
- 98 girls over 80

#### **Leagues Tables:**

Each year in this analysis, I write about leagues tables and just how misleading they are – whether the information is favourable or not! The drive to analyse school results and rank schools from meaningless Leagues Tables sickens me. Let me explain more....

These Leagues tables are constructed around the media's definition of "success rate" (their terminology for students gaining a mark of 90 or more in a course). What does this mean....? Is a mark over 90 a good thing....?

- What if these students achieved these results over 90 by encouraging them to take lower level courses - say General Mathematics rather than Extension 1 Mathematics - would that still be what we want for our students? Is that a measure of success?
- Or perhaps it means that we encouraged students to study fewer subjects, to attempt fewer units, to study the minimum, to narrow their education - is that what we would want for our students and for their future?
- Or perhaps it does mean actually that our girls did really well - balancing challenge with success, keeping a breadth of subjects that will really help them in the world ahead, and that we helped them be good people with integrity and purpose too.

Could a student achieve a mark of 89% in all of their subjects, not be recognised at all in the Leagues tables, but still achieve an ATAR well inside the top 10% of NSW, and hence an ATAR over 90? The answer is absolutely yes, particularly if they are attempting challenging courses where there is no doubt that 89% is a very strong result. I want to congratulate all of these girls too – even if they have not appeared in any of these Leagues Tables!

The problem with reducing something as complex as education and schooling to a single measure such as this 'success rate' is that we cannot differentiate between any of these situations! And I know that there are great schools out there who feel that they have to justify to their community that they "went down" in the rankings, or who do a wonderful job in a disadvantaged area. I know that somehow a mark of 90 has now taken an unrealistically important position in many young people's minds. When you read that SCEGGS has a success rate of 43%, placing it 13<sup>th</sup> in the state – please do not think it means anything!

I want our girls to strive for excellence and to achieve their own personal best - whatever that might be. I want them to have a broad liberal education, studying a range of subjects to encourage them to grow as people and to broaden their thinking. I want us as a community to be just as proud of an 89% in a higher-level course that really challenged a student, rather than encouraging them to give up along the way and know they can achieve 90% at a lower level. I want all our girls to keep trying right up until the end, striving for 93, 94, 95 ... not just be satisfied with being 'over 90'. I want our community to value excellence, and the challenge of academic rigour and most of all - striving for and achieving your own personal best.

#### **Where to from here:**

We will continue to undertake a more careful analysis in the next couple of months of all the data we can acquire. So, we will look at how individual girls performed against their ability level; we will construct graphs of Year 10 results against HSC results, comparative information of how different subjects did against each other and so forth. We will look at the ATAR each student gained, which subjects counted in the calculation of her ATAR and which did not. We will look at which options and electives we chose within courses, and how our students performed in each of these. We will use all of this to help us assess how this group of girls performed against their potential. And next year, as with all years, we will identify the areas that we can do even better for the following year. And of course we will continue to work on all aspects of our programs to ensure we are delivering the best education possible in every area.

Our full analysis of all the results has yet to be completed, and of course each year's cohorts are different – they select different subjects based on their differing interests, strengths, talents and abilities, and hence there will always be variation between years, but overall the Class of 2015 appears to have done very well, and we are all very happy.

Jenny Allum