



HSC RESULTS 2013

Congratulations to the Class of 2013! We are so proud of each and every one of the girls - of their HSC results, of their academic and co-curricular achievements throughout their 13 years of schooling, and particularly their spirit and character. I know that many of the girls are thrilled with their HSC marks in individual subjects and in their Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR) and are excited about their pathway ahead in the next few years - whether that is a university course, a GAP program, a cadetship or some other adventure. And we are so pleased for them too!

Every year in this edition of *Behind the Green Gate*, I write about my dislike of the leagues tables used by the media based on HSC results and much of this dislike has to do with the nature of the overly simplistic measures used. And this year is no different - you will see some more detailed comments later in this article! I know that, in some of these measures, perhaps this year SCEGGS was not ranked as highly as in some previous years. As I have said in the past, these tables are all constructed on the premise that getting a mark of 90% in a subject is something to be celebrated, but that a mark of 89% is not - even if that 89% is a significant personal best for a student who has challenged themselves and worked diligently to improve. Where in our society do we say publicly to our young people that we value their diligence, their perseverance, their willingness to take on challenges, to work at them and to strive for excellence? Where do we help them see that these are such important qualities that will help them flourish throughout their lifetime?

At Speech Night last year, I spoke a little about this same theme - of the desirability of hard work, of striving and struggling with intellectual pursuits, of the importance of determination. I think the Class of 2013 demonstrated its agreement with that sentiment. They continued to work hard, and did not take 'the easy option'. I think their major projects - in English, History, Visual Arts, Drama, Design and Technology will be enduring reminders of their efforts. And I know that the deep knowledge and skills they have gained through their study, and their personal resilience and well-being that has been enhanced by the journey, will benefit them too - now and in their future lives.

And I know that the results of our Class of 2013 are a reflection of their hard work and showed just how far many of them had travelled during Year 12, and indeed from Year 11, from Year 7, from Kindergarten. They all did so well - from the most academically able students who maintained their excellent standard, to those that struggled but showed such wonderful resilience and made great gains and deep learning. These girls enjoyed learning and all worked so hard.

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

Nine 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:

- Sophia Benjamin
- Georgie Dowse
- Elisabeth Enright
- Isabella Hellig-Smith
- Rosemary Menzies
- Nell Morgan
- Isobel Rowe
- Anna Salier
- Hannah Wade

In individual subjects, we had 231 mentions in the Distinguished Achievers lists from 95 different girls. This means that 95 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:

- Isabella Hellig-Smith came 3rd in the state in German Beginners.
- Nell Morgan came 7th in Modern History.

Depth of Performance

In addition, the following statistics give an indication of the depth of the performance of our students, taking into account the different percentages of students across the state who achieved in the top band (a mark in the subject of at least 90%) in the different courses:

- 45% of Ancient History students scored above 90 (compared with 8.36% in the state)
- 51% of Visual Arts students scored in the top band (compared with 12.24% in the state)
- 42% of Modern History students scored above 90 (compared with 10.77% in the state)
- 53% of Drama students gained a mark over 90 (compared with 13.8% in the state)
- 43% of English (Advanced) students gained over 90 (compared with 11.96% in the state)
- 27% of Business Studies students scored above 90 (compared with 7.95% in the state)
- 41% of Chemistry students gained over 90 (compared with 12.08% in the state)
- 50% of Music 1 students gained over 90 (compared with 15.06% in the state)
- 16% of PDHPE students scored above 90 (compared with 5.38% in the state)
- 15% of Biology students scored above 90 (compared with 6.63% in the state)
- 39% of Mathematics students gained over 90 (compared with 18.4% in the state)
- 50% of English Extension 1 students gained over 90 (compared with 24.65% in the state)

Congratulations, also, must go to the girls who studied a variety of external courses through providers such as the Saturday School of Community Languages, Open High School, Vocational Education and Training (VET courses) through TAFE. These provide a wonderful opportunity for students to add greater breadth to their overall subject choice for the HSC, with students this year electing to study subjects such as Italian Beginners through the Open High School and a Tourism and Events course at TAFE.

Percentages in the top two bands in 2013

The table on the following page 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	40	34.44	82.5
Biology	26	32.93	73.07
Business Studies	26	34.85	69.22
Chemistry	22	41.63	95.44
Design and Technology	12	37.02	91.66
Drama	19	43.51	94.73
Economics	13	43.11	53.84
English Standard	22	6.83	68.18
English Advanced	86	53.01	97.67
English Extension 1	36	88.34	100
English Extension 2	14	77.89	100
Geography	11	39.77	90.9
Information Processes and Technology	7	36.6	85.7
Mathematics (General)	37	20.83	59.45
Mathematics	77	49.24	72.72
Mathematics Extension 1	33	83.54	93.93
Mathematics Extension 2	6	87.17	83.32
Modern History	50	47.17	96
History Extension	13	73.93	100
Music 1	6	58.89	100
Music 2	4	85.31	100
Music Extension	1*	98.21	*
PDHPE	19	28.39	68.41
Physics	11	33.36	72.72
Visual Arts	39	51.44	97.43
French	25	66.94	96
French Extension	6	97.11	100
German Beginners	13	57.14	92.3
Japanese	2*	54.62	*

* *Please note:* the data for small candidature subjects will not be reported more publicly 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 and our averages are significantly above the state average also.

ATARs:

As you might be aware, schools are not provided with any information from UAC about the ATARs (Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank) achieved by our girls. These are released to the girls directly and we do ask girls to ring in and let us know how they went – we love to hear from them all – whatever mark they achieved. Their teachers really do want to know! We also use an external consultant to estimate the ATARs and help us analyse the results - we do this so that we can advise students in future years, and to build up our knowledge of trends, changing candidatures, processes and procedures.

It is very important to remember that the ATAR results are a very different measure from the HSC results.

- **HSC results** are marks, so for example, an HSC mark of 90% in a subject means that the student achieved a combined mark of 90% in a range of assessments and the HSC examination for that course.
- **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 whole HSC to be ranked in the top 10% of their age group.

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

- 4 girls over 99; i.e. 4% of our girls in the top 1% of the state overall
- 10 girls over 98; i.e. 9% of our girls in the top 2% of the state overall
- 28 girls over 95; i.e. 26% of our girls in the top 5% of the state overall
- 57 girls over 90; i.e. 53% of our girls in the top 10% of the state overall
- 91 girls over 80; i.e. 84% of our girls in the top 20% of the state overall

Congratulations to *Isabella Hellig-Smith* who gained the highest ATAR at SCEGGS - 99.75. What a great achievement!

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 2013 appears to have done well.

Leagues Tables

Each year in this analysis for you and in our feedback to the wider school community, I write about leagues tables and just how misleading they are – whether the information is favourable or not!

There are many reasons for this:

- The most important thing to discredit the information is that it takes no account of the ability level of the students. Of the 111 girls in Year 12 this year, 43 sat Modern History and 28 of them gained over 90 in that course. Is that a fair reflection of their ability? Maybe 30 or more of them should have achieved over 90 and we did not do well for our girls. Or maybe only 18 would have done so at another school and we have helped them exceed their expected level of achievement significantly? Perhaps some of the girls would have achieved even better results if they had studied Ancient History instead, or added a unit of Extension History? The leagues tables do nothing to address this sort of analysis.
- Another issue concerning league tables is the lack of comparison of the difficulty of the subject. For example, they equate a mark of 90 in Extension 2 English with a mark of 90 in Standard English, and obviously Standard English is an easier course to undertake. It is important that we all are aware of this.
- And lastly, following on from my speech at Speech Night and the commentary in the Herald in response, I also wrote to the Herald the following letter (which did not get published):

Dear Sir,

The Sydney Morning Herald and the educational community seem to agree that we should encourage students to study courses which challenge and stretch their abilities and deepen their knowledge. For many students this will include some of the harder subjects and higher levels of study within subjects. And then the SMH publishes tables which equate 90 in Beginners French with 90 in Extension 2 English (or Physics or History or Extension Mathematics). What a disappointment!

I congratulate all of the young men and women in this year's cohort, in every single school in NSW, who have tried the subjects which have challenged them as much as possible (whether that is Extension Mathematics or General Mathematics), for the long-term good - for their education, their career, their personal resilience and well-being, and the nation's prosperity. Your 89 (or 79 or whatever) mightn't have counted for these shallow Leagues Tables published today, but if you struggled and strived and worked really hard, you will have gained far more - now and in the future.

*Jenny Allum
Head of SCEGGS*

Where to From Here

We will undertake a much 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 School Certificate 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.

Nevertheless, we are all really proud of the girls, generally pleased with their results and congratulate the Class of 2013, every single girl, on achieving their Higher School Certificates and being the fine young women they have become.

Jenny Allum