

Heads Held High

NAPLAN testing was conducted at the College throughout the week, with the boys in Year 5, 7 and 9 undertaking national assessments in literacy and numeracy, respectively. In all, approximately four hours of tests were conducted in Language Conventions, Writing, Reading and Numeracy across three successive days so the boys responded to an intense assessment framework. While the College believes that the testing regime is important to establish school profiles against state and national profiles, it does not specifically teach to, or focus on the testing, as a formal and dedicated emphasis in the educational program. It was obvious that the boys approached the assessments in a serious and measured manner, the results of which will be analysed to inform key areas of improvement into the future.

Year 12 students participated in the second of a sequenced set of study skills seminars aimed at *examination excellence*. It consulted and promoted key revision techniques and memory retention exercises in order to assist the boys' acquisition of skills to best prepare them for the Trial HSC examinations during Term 3, and to build upon central priorities and emphases that formed part of the first seminar earlier in the year. Following the forum the boys returned a 98% approval rating; high praise indeed for the quality of the session conducted by high achieving graduates who delivered the workshops in conjunction with *Elevate Education*.

One among many of the year's highlights was enacted under azure autumn skies out at Olympic Park on Saturday; namely the AAGPS Athletics Championships. The robust competition in track and field events that occurred in the centre of the stadium was matched by the colourful pageantry of the war cries and animations in the stands, with thousands of students participating in an event that embraced entire school communities. As always, Riverview held its head high in both domains: the athletes gave of their very best after a long season of early morning training and weekend competition, while over one thousand boys in the stands bellowed their support and spirited encouragement to those participating out in the arena. On Saturday evening the Athletics Dinner will profile the fine achievement of the boys and their coaches but the entire community takes pride in the way our young men represented the College in the public domain.

House Masses have taken centre stage over recent weeks with Smith, Teresa, Cheshire, More and Champion all occurring over the last fortnight. As the new integrated pastoral unit for the entire secondary school, it has been a sheer delight to welcome the Year 7 and 8 boys and their families into the House system, one that will see their ongoing association and relationship over the entirety of their secondary years at the College. Designed to strengthen the interface between pastoral care in a specifically Ignatian context – *cura personalis*, and to embrace the faith and sacramental life of the College, each gathering has been extremely well attended and generated its own inimitable dynamic associated with the House patron. Following the Mass, an opportunity is afforded for either a dinner or some refreshments where some of the boys' talents and passions can be shared with all in the House. As these gatherings required considerable coordination, thanks are extended the Heads of House and their Assistants for the time and zeal expended and to the families who carve time out of busy personal and professional schedules to attend these important school events. An example of the latter is one family who flew down from Hong Kong to spend time with their son over the weekend, and also to attend the Champion House Mass last Monday.

Students from schools across the north shore of Sydney came in their hundreds to the Careers Expo on Monday evening, which took up all of the floor space in the Gartlan Centre. A wide range of organisations, businesses, universities and complementary tertiary education providers gathered to offer advice and support students and their families in the critical decision making process that is confronted in senior secondary. Over the coming weeks Career Seminars will be held on successive Friday evenings to

provide contemporary insights into respective professions, with time allocated for questions and answers of those who are working in the field. Students and families are strongly encouraged to attend in order to begin the discernment that will clarify career paths over the months and years ahead.

Out of the sight line, the 155th meeting of the Saint Ignatius' School Council took place in the Companions Room on Wednesday 6 May. Members of Council give generously of their time and expertise to assist the College respond to strategic futures, policy development and the rigours of the regulatory environment beyond the school. Chaired by Mr John Wilcox (OR 75) and comprising members of considerable experience and expertise, the Council provides the necessary advice to enable the College to continue to forge its place as one of the most respected providers of Catholic and Jesuit education across Australia, and indeed, throughout South East Asia. Members of Council will join other Council members of Jesuit schools across Australia next weekend for a Province Retreat in Sevenhill South Australia, where the nativity of Jesuit ministry began in Australia back in 1850. This promises to be an important time of formation and discernment for each Jesuit school as Principals, Rectors and Members of Council consider key priorities of governance over the next two years.