# THE WAY

**TERM 1 | THE WAY NEWSLETTER | FRIDAY 13 MARCH 2026**



## FROM THE PRINCIPAL

**This week was NAPLAN week.** NAPLAN affects students in both Junior and Senior School and is intended to provide a snapshot of learning skills of students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. It is a helpful diagnostic tool to assess students current understanding across different areas whilst helping teaching staff to identify gaps and inform next steps in the learning process.

Importantly, NAPLAN is not a measure of future academic success as it is skills based not content specific. Importantly it is also not a measure of a student's intelligence as it is not designed to assess creativity, critical thinking, resilience or personal strengths. It is about literacy and numeracy skills at a single point in time. Sometimes, however, data like NAPLAN can be misused to make assumptions about a student or school's performance which can distort classroom practice and create an unhelpful competitive environment.

At Thomas Hassall we take a much broader view. We use multiple points of data to understand how each student is making progress. NAPLAN is only one part of a much richer picture. Students demonstrate their learning growth every day in class discussions, practical tasks, informal activities as well as through the more formal setting of exams. To understand learning accurately and fairly we must consider all these elements together.

Reflecting on NAPLAN has prompted me to think more about the HSC. Many of you will be familiar with the way that some newspapers report on results and create lists that rank schools in terms of performance. What you might not know is that these lists are based on only the top few students in each school. Highly selective schools are naturally over-represented. More comprehensive

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schools like ours, focus on the whole student and their learning journey, not just marks.

I am regularly asked about academic results at the College. While it was wonderful to see last year's class recognised for outstanding achievements where we moved more than 100 places in the newspaper rankings, it remains a limited measure of success. These lists acknowledge only the students who score above 90 in a subject, overlooking the 80% of students who work diligently, achieve personal bests and often complete exams in their second or third language.

What truly makes me proud is not a rank, but the consistent effort of our students and teachers: meeting every learner where they are, tailoring strategies to help them grow, and nurturing character, resilience and curiosity.

If your child sat NAPLAN this week, please congratulate them. Encourage them to do their best, to recognise their own progress and to understand that their worth is not measured by marks or comparison with others. What matters most is that they keep learning, keep growing and keep moving forward.

> *For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works.*
> *- Ephesians 2:10*

**Mrs Karen Easton**
Principal

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