



2021 News

Farewell to our Year 12 Students

As the senior year of our time as Northcote High School international students came to an end, we were welcomed warmly to a banquet at Jade Restaurant in Kew, celebrating not only our achievements, but also the friendships we have forged with each other and the teachers who have been with us every step of the journey.

The VCE exams are finally over and the farewell dinner was a perfect opportunity for international students to celebrate the end of one whole year of constant hard work. It is acknowledged that the experience of studying, and then taking exams during the COVID-19 pandemic, away from our homes at that, was not at all easy. However, with the help of many friends, teachers and our own resilience, we have managed to pull through. Seeing people's faces as they smiled and laughed at memories they have made throughout the year and beyond, filled us with joy, knowing that we have accomplished something truly amazing.

The food was delicious, and Jade Restaurant provided us with an amazing environment to share our memories as a special group of international students, together with teaching and office staff. International Student Captains Samuel Tran and Ivy Nguyen both gave heart-warming accounts, congratulating our efforts and wishing us good luck in the future. The dinner was also an opportunity to celebrate many students' birthdays. Some are turning 18, some 19, but every single one of them is walking through a door to many new responsibilities, opportunities and challenges as high school graduates and adults.

The experience was made complete with attendance of our amazing teachers and staff members who have helped us throughout the year. Principal Chris Jones, despite not having been acquainted with us for long, gave a speech and shared a special moment with the students, who were very grateful. The students were able to show their gratitude to the beloved teaching and office staff with many positive messages and gifts, signaling the forgiveness of every mistake we have made as their students.

In closing, I would, again, on behalf of all Year 12 international students at Northcote High School, sincerely thank the school for giving us the special



chance to celebrate our achievements and memories together with our friends and teachers. It is also to note that the dinner might be a farewell to our time as high school international students but it is not the end of the friendships among ourselves and with our beloved teachers.

Gigi Le Year 12



Our last day of Year 12 at school

First of all, we would like to thank the school for allowing us to celebrate our last day at school and for making it a memorable day despite school openings and closures. We are experiencing such mixed feelings after ending our last day of classes and the last assembly.

We have all gone through a very unique and challenging year, but particularly for year 12 students, we had to deal with not only stressful workloads at school but also social restrictions that keep us from meeting up with friends. However, our amazing teachers and International Students Office have been incredibly supportive and patient, they've helped us a lot with our study and encouraged us to believe in ourselves despite hardships we are facing.



The last day of school – the closing of one door and the opening of another. We are going to be off on our own, having different pathways and maybe living at different places across the globe. But when we reflect on the past for years to come, we're able to tell people what a unique year we experienced, what amazing friends we had, what remarkable adventures we shared. We are so grateful for the beautiful memories we had together in this school.

Putting aside the pressure, family expectations and stressful things, I just want to say well done, a very big well done to all of you for trying hard, pushing yourself to go forward and not giving up. We will make it!



Moreover, we cannot say thank you enough to Ms Hill, Ms Fiona and Ms Kim for your care, support and enthusiasm towards each one of us. Your kindness and love throughout the year, on special occasions, or even a simple call are the things that make high school feel like home. On behalf of international students, we are so grateful to be a part of Northcote High School where we can grow and explore.

Heylia Nguyen – Year 12



Wellbeing Workshop : looking after our mental health

Last week, the international office in our school kindly invited all international students to join the wellbeing meeting with Kat Brissett, our Northcote High School Mental Health Practitioner, Sabatine Balasooriya, one of our Student Wellbeing Coordinators, Ms Hill, and Ms Fiona.

It was such a great opportunity for everyone to talk and share lots of care and love to each other especially in this lockdown when all of us are going to have to face and prepare for our year 12 final exams in the very near



future! During the meeting, all the students were able to listen to helpful advice and ways to improve our mental wellbeing in this hard time where we are under pressure of preparing for our studies. Especially for students like me who sometimes face anxiety and stress after studying for a long period of time or stay up late to revise for SACS. Besides the tips that were given to us, I feel so grateful to have the school staff to show care and support to each student and I'm pretty sure that those tips are now actually helping me a lot in my sleep and study routine.

We would love to give many thanks again to Ms Fiona and Ms Hill for always being such great and supportive people. We appreciate having you beside us and listening to our concerns and challenging us supportively all the time especially to us as Year 12 students who are well on our way in preparing and practising for final exams. Thank you!

Cynthia Nguyen - Year 12

Enjoying a pizza night

In the last week of Term 2, the international students were able to have a pizza night after school thanks to Ms Hill and Ms Fiona. This was a great chance for us, young people who are living in unfamiliar environment, to socialise with their close friends. Sadly, due to the current COVID-19 situation, the International Student Office (ISO) has not been able to organise as many dinner evenings with us as we normally would have.

We enjoyed delicious pizza, as much as we wanted, and some even had the chance to take some home. All of the types of pizza were delightful and appetising. The International Student Office staff also organised the celebration of our birthdays. We were given birthday presents to celebrate our 18th birthday, the last birthday we will ever have as a high schooler.

The international students would once again like to thank the ISO and its staff, Ms Fiona, and Ms Hill for organising such a wonderful place for the students. We all know that they are doing so much for us and we are very

grateful and appreciating the work they are doing during the challenging times of Covid.



Joint birthday celebrations

For young people, birthdays are an exciting time of year, especially for teenagers who are finding themselves at the gate towards adulthood – something they are both excited and nervous about. International students are no exception. As young people who are both discovering themselves and living in an unfamiliar environment, we feel like we have new possibilities and opportunities to shine, fly, and leave our old selves behind; and our birthdays are a milestone to celebrate. Northcote High School understands this and wishes to share it with us.



On Thursday, March 18, we jointly celebrated the international students' whose birthdays fell within the first quarter of 2021. We shared delicious cup cakes with candles and a room full of laughter, and we felt this much needed sense of belonging, where, in this country so far away from home, we could find ourselves surrounded by the friends that have somehow become that home we so dearly missed. Some of us are turning 17 and some of us are turning 18, with our dreams already coming to fruition in a future not far from where we are. Thank you for the fun decorations and lovely gifts and all the organising done by our International Student Captains, Samuel Tran, Ivy Nguyen, Ringo Bach, Shelley Yu and Ivy Vo. Our captains work hard throughout the year organising many events for our International Student cohort.

On behalf of all the international students we would also like to thank the staff and teachers who are always taking care of us and paying attention to

the way that we feel and think. Once again, we are very grateful for the efforts that every one is paying to make us happy and fulfilled.

Kylie Le Year 12

Enjoying co-curricular activities

The International Student Office has provided a range of activities for us to enjoy our life here in Australia and socialise with our fellow students. The activities have included: The badminton club on Monday, school-based basketball club on Friday and the EAL tutorial on Wednesday.

The badminton and basketball club allows student to relax after a long exhausting day at school. They can play against each other, and with the teachers as well! (p.s: Thank you for all the teachers who are willing to play with us). In addition, these clubs also help us to maintain our wellbeing and have a healthy lifestyle besides our intensive year 12 studies.

Everyone is welcome to come to the gym on Monday and Friday after school to play with us!



We have invited one of the graduates from the class of 2019, Brian Vu to teach the EAL tutorial class. As international students, we have to get a prerequisite of around 30-35 study scores of EAL for us to access all tertiary pathways. This class assists students who needs additional help in EAL, providing them strong support and preparing them to achieve their desired ATAR.

Furthermore, the international student captains are also organising a debating team for our Year 11 international students. The debating team allows students to improve their English speaking skills and become more confident in their communication. Thank you Mr Wall for helping us in organising these events!



On behalf of all international students, we sincerely thank Ms Hill, Miss Fiona and Miss Jessica from the International Office for organising these amazing activities.

Sammi Yiao

Understanding Tertiary Pathways

The Year 12 international students recently attended a 'Pathway Orientation' presented by Ms Booma-Karen Burgess who is our careers practitioner. In her presentation, Booma went through a lot of important information that we need to keep in mind as we head towards our Tertiary Pathway selection later in Term 3.

As an international student, it's extremely valuable for us to discuss our desired career path with someone who is so knowledgeable about that area and to hear of other students' personal experiences when they applied for a university pathway. Also, most of the Year 12 students have been staying in Australia less than 3 years, and this can make it even more challenging to understand how the VTAC system works and how different it is for applying to interstate universities. Having a chance to know about

different types of prerequisite exams such as UCAT and ISAT and how to prepare beforehand, was helpful for students wishing to pursue a medical career, as well.



After the presentation, students were able to have a clear understanding about what they need to focus on at the present time and how they can be well-prepared and productive throughout this what can become quite a stressful year as we are working towards achieving our best learning outcomes.

All of the international students very much appreciated the time with Booma and thanks to her and our other international staff for being supportive and encouraging us. We hope every one of us can enter pathways that we want and remember that a bright future is waiting for us at the completion of our secondary schooling this year.

Monica Jang

Happy Lunar New Year!

First of all, we want to wish everyone a happy Lunar New Year. We hope you and your family have a very successful new year. Please stay safe and beat the COVID pandemic with new energy.

Due to the current situation, international students weren't able to go back to our home countries to celebrate Lunar New Year with our families. Lunar New Year is one of the most important family celebrations in both

the Vietnamese and Chinese calendars. Luckily, our Northcote family was always by our side. On Thursday night last week we celebrated the new year with a warm and cozy dinner, joined by some of our Northcote High School teachers.



We enjoyed delicious Vietnamese food which was served in a seemingly never ending, banquet style. All of the dishes were appetizing and flavourful. We also received a small gift from the school to acknowledge the celebration.

Special thanks to Ms Hill, Ms Fiona, and Ms Jessica for arranging such an amazing dinner. Your generosity and thoughtfulness are very much appreciated. Thanks to everyone who attended the party. Remember the good moments we had last year, and let's make some better moments this new year!

Ivy Nguyen

Summer Holidays in Australia

As the COVID-19 pandemic continued to sizzle in Melbourne, as international students we did our part to stop the virus from spreading by choosing to stay in Australia. As a reward from Northcote High School, we

had the opportunity to embark on two summer trips to the Great Ocean Road and Phillip Island, both of which were equal parts entertaining and educational.



On January 13, the sky was gentle and the sun was clear, the weather was perfect for us to enjoy our day on the famous Great Ocean Road. By popular demand from the international students, the bus made an unplanned stop by the beach for us to be able to enjoy the softness of the golden sand and laughter of having the waves hitting us on our shoes. We had a pleasant walk up to the majestic lighthouse and enjoyed the fantastic view of the sea and the saline scent of the winds. In the afternoon, we had a short but memorable lesson about Aboriginal Australian artifacts and were taught how to throw a boomerang. We also had the chance to try out kangaroo meat for lunch, which for a lot of us, was delightful.

The trip to Philip Island was just as much fun as we tried to catch up to the rising sun early in the morning. International students at Northcote were joined with another group of students from a neighbouring school – Strathmore College and through that chance, many new friendships were forged. We took our time in awe at the Philip Island chocolate factory and the fascination of seeing how these sweet treats are made. The bus then took a scenic route along the coast so we could see the clear seawater and hear the sounds of the protective seagull mothers hovering above our head. We had BBQ for lunch and went to an open zoo where we could see and interact with various Australian wildlife animals and were taught about the koalas, the dingoes and the snakes.



Summer holiday in Australia has ended for us but we are truly thankful for the happy memories the school has generously provided us with during our time away from home.

Ringo Bach