

ST CATHERINE'S SCHOOL

# ACHIEVEMENTS



Sydney



# THE CLASS OF 2023, A TRUE INSPIRATION

A beloved St Catherine's tradition, every Year 7 student fills a time capsule with hopes and aspirations for the future during their first week with us. Six years later, students gather together on The Cloisters Lawn to open them.

A sense of accomplishment filled the air as the Class of 2023 unearthed their time capsules days before graduation. Through much laughter and a few tears, our girls shared memories, struggles and triumphs of their time at St Cath's. It was clear how much every student had matured and grown throughout their school years. Although results and rankings are important, it was that moment that told us we had done our jobs as educators. It was evident that each girl would be leaving us as a unique young woman of character, ready to make her mark on the world.

During their time at St Catherine's, our 2023 graduates were always keen to celebrate each other's achievements

and band together in times of trouble. Their determination and enthusiasm remained undeterred by pandemics and other global calamities. In fact, these adversities only seem to strengthen their resolve to work harder and achieve new things.

They have also been wonderful role models to our younger students. Every morning, our Year 12 students have assisted with our Junior School Carline, helping junior students with their bags and walking them into school. These

treasured moments will stay with our younger students.

At St Catherine's, we foster an environment that encourages students to explore their interests and passions, evident in the diverse achievements highlighted in this report. The hard-working Class of 2023 has aimed high and the personal excellence of the girls make us proud.

Although we encourage our students to challenge themselves in their learning to build tenacity and a resilient mindset, we understand the importance of a balanced

approach. We are proud that the majority of our 2023 graduates continued to take part in cocurricular programs during their final year of school, reinforcing habits that set them up for future success.

Our dedicated staff have worked in partnership with each student guiding them through their time at St Cath's culminating in their HSC journey. We extend our heartfelt thanks to each staff member for their hard work, knowing that our girls also share in this gratitude.

At St Cath's, we value what is important: developing a good character and an open mind, living and growing as part of a community. Our commitment to community service, grounded in the Anglican ethos, is demonstrated by the Class of 2023. It is encouraging to see that our girls understand some of the challenges facing our world and have worked hard to raise awareness and lead school action to positively address these issues.

As we celebrate these accomplishments, all of us at St Catherine's look forward to witnessing the continued success of our girls in the exciting chapters that lie ahead. We wish the Class of 2023 success in their future endeavours.

Mrs Judith Poole  
**Headmistress**

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The hard-working Class of 2023 has aimed high and the personal excellence of the girls make us proud.

# OUR 2023 HSC RESULTS



**2023 TOP ATAR**  
**ATAR: 99.9**  
Isla King



**ATAR ABOVE 99.00**  
71% of students



**EARLY ENTRY UNI OFFERS**  
50% of students



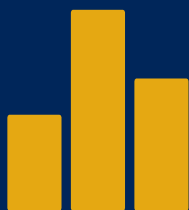
**ATAR OF 90 AND ABOVE**  
49.6% of students



**CREATIVE ACCEPTANCES & NOMINATIONS**  
18 students



**STUDENTS WHO ACHIEVED ATAR ABOVE 80**  
77% of students



**SMH STATE RANKING**  
21st in New South Wales



**PROXIME ACCESSIT AND DUX**  
**ATAR: 99.75**  
Elenor Craven



**ALL ROUNDERS 90+ IN AT LEAST 10 UNITS**  
9 students

\* Information is based on ATAR eligible students and outcomes that were disclosed to the School.

# WONDERFUL ACHIEVEMENTS ALL ROUND

The tremendous results achieved by the Class of 2023 truly encapsulate the diversity that defines our school. We celebrate the individuality of each and every St Cath's girl.

The achievements of the Class of 2023 extend far beyond the academic realm, showcasing a profound love for learning and an ability to push boundaries to attain exceptional achievements.

The Class of 2023 also worked together to ensure the collective success of the entire year group. This collaborative effort resulted in a remarkable 91 students out of 114 achieved marks exceeding 90 in at least one subject, with an impressive 49.6% of students securing an ATAR above 90, surpassing the NSW state average of 71.05. These achievements are a testament to the entire cohort's diligence and commitment.

Our nine All Rounders: Jordan Alp, Alana Brennan, Elenor Craven, Solange Fadel, Sophie Kelley, Isla King, Sienna Price, Jasmine Ruffa and Sarah Sassine achieved a mark over 90 in at least 10 units of study. Rather than simply playing to their strengths, these students dedicated themselves across a wide range of subjects to achieve extraordinary results.

Our nine Top Achievers; Leila Carr, Evie Cook, Lies den Hollander, Samarah Issa, Isla King, Xinyan Lu, Jasmine Ruffa, Sarah Sassine and Yumeng (Amy) Xin, also deserve congratulations. Achieving recognition as a top student among a statewide cohort of 76,839 individuals is a remarkable accomplishment, and each should take great pride in their success.

We must also highlight the 18 students who received state-wide nominations for

Drama, Design and Technology and Visual Arts. These nominations demonstrate the extremely high calibre of work produced by our students in their unique major projects. It is wonderful to see everything our girls achieve as they explore their passions.

Beyond the classroom, the Class of 2023 engaged in impactful service activities such as the 40 Hour Famine, Bread of Life, Red Shield Appeal, Pink Ribbon Day and Genes for Jeans. Additionally, they raised over \$5,000 for their chosen charity, Orygen, contributing to vital new mental health treatments for young people.

In sports, 50% of the cohort participated consistently in at least one cocurricular sport throughout five years of senior school. In 2023, students from the Class of 2023 excelled in various competitions, including the Henley Royal Regatta, Australian Rowing Championships, NSW All Schools Basketball Tri-Series, NSW CIS Swimming Championships, NSW CIS Golf Championship, Head of the River and Independent Schools Representative AFL.

We congratulate each student on their success this year - and can't wait to see everything the future holds for you all.

## 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

- Eight students received an ATAR above 99.
- 50% of students received an early entry university offer.
- Median ATAR of 89.7, compared with a NSW median ATAR of 71.05.
- 67.3% of students achieved an ATAR above 85, compared with 26.3% across NSW.
- 49.6% of students achieved an ATAR above 90, compared with 17.5% across NSW.
- 31% of students achieved an ATAR above 95, compared with 8.8% across NSW.
- Leila Carr ranked third in the state in English (Advanced) and 14th in Legal Studies.
- Yumeng (Amy) Xin ranked 7th in the state in English EAL/D and received a nomination for an AISNSW International Student Service Award.
- Erin Kara, Siennah Morgan, Sophie Castellias and Jade Bliss raced at the Henley Royal Regatta.



**2023  
HIGHEST  
ATAR**



**ISLA KING**  
ATAR: 99.9

**Q. What would you say went into achieving your results?**

A. A lot of self-discipline to maintain my focus and determination over the two years. I did my HSC Mathematics in Year 11 as part of the accelerate program, which helped me get into the habit of working hard. My study just became a routine for me. I saw my hard work pay off for my mathematics mark, so I knew I just had to do the same in my other subjects. But, in saying that, I never envisioned I was gonna get the top mark. I didn't want that pressure.

**Q. What has been your family's response to your result?**

A. My mum cried and my dad was just in shock, just so happy for me. My parents have been the best throughout my HSC, helping me with anything that I needed.

They also saw their hard work pay off in that regard. If I didn't have such understanding parents, then I don't think I would have achieved this result.

**Q. How important do you think it is for students to find a study-life balance?**

A. You really need to find that balance. I danced at a local dance school doing five classes a week during Years 11 and 12. I found that dance was a great way to have a break from studying. It also kept me focused because I knew that if I had dance class, I needed to study before it and I'd feel more refreshed after it. You can't study all the time, you need to have a balance.

**Q. What do you think you will remember most about your time at St Cath's?**

A. The community, not just my friends, but also my teachers and the support they gave us all. If I needed something, I could go up to any of my teachers. By the end of Year 12, they felt more like mentors. I'll

also remember the connections between the other years. I was a Vice Captain for Patterson house and being a part of the leadership team helped build an even stronger sense of community.

**Q. What is the most important lesson you have learnt at St Cath's?**

A. I think the most important lesson I have learnt here at St Cath's is that hard work pays off, but it is important to maintain friendships to really succeed.

**Q. What are your career aspirations and what steps are you taking toward these?**

A. I'm going to Queens College at The University of Melbourne to study Commerce and then a Juris Doctor of Law. Unfortunately, they don't do double degrees. I'm not studying law to become a lawyer. At this stage, I would rather work in business and apply my legal understanding while working for a company. But I'm not sure what that will look like yet.

**GETTING  
TO KNOW  
ISLA**

Isla started St Cath's as a Year 5 student. She loved her time in Junior School, taking part in everything from Football to the Student Representative Council and Maths Olympiad. In Senior School, she continued to balance her studies with a wide range of cocurricular activities, including Basketball, da Vinci Decathlon and Netball. Her favourite subject is Mathematics, especially her classes with Dr Bose. Isla also actively participated in house activities and served as the Vice Captain of Patterson house during her final year of school.



**LEILA CARR**  
 ATAR: 99.7

**Q. What would you say went into achieving your results?**

A. A lot of hard work went into achieving my results, not just from myself but also from my teachers. I put in a lot of time studying, but it was my teachers marking all that extra work that really helped me. You can't do all that on your own. I'm never going to get teachers like that ever again. They were so invested and involved. They cared so much about how I did, not for themselves, but just because they wanted me to be proud of myself. I wanted to do well for myself, but I also wanted to do well for my teachers because I knew how much work they put into it. They put so much work in so I wanted to match it.

**Q. How important do you think it is for students to find a study-life balance?**

A. I feel like that balance is quite hard to achieve. But I know I need it to be able to keep going. In Year 12, I studied a lot but I also made time for friends and family, even just going on a walk to do something for myself. Since I came to the school in Year 4, I've done so many cocurricular activities. I loved the sport at school. I made so many friends through sport, especially through Netball and Water Polo carrying through all my years. It really helped me maintain a balanced approach to study.

**Q. What do you think you will remember most about your time at St Cath's?**

A. I will definitely miss the teachers, especially our Headmistress, Mrs Poole, who was my academic mentor. That relationship is something I value so much. I am so grateful for her, she helped me so much. No matter what, I always had someone who I could go to and talk to who could actually help me. We didn't just have to talk about things going wrong, we could work towards a solution. It is a really unique program; most schools don't have anything like that at all.

**Q. What are your career aspirations and what steps are you taking toward these?**

A. I'm going to The University of Sydney and I'm studying double degree in Commerce and Law. I don't necessarily have a career goal. But I just feel like it's a very broad degree that will give me a lot of options. Sydney University doesn't do early entry, but I got into early entry at The University of Technology and also into The University of Melbourne with a scholarship. But as soon as the results came out and I found out I had the marks to get into The University of Sydney - that made the decision for me.

**Q. What has been your family's response to your result?**

A. They were very proud. But they were also a bit shocked because I never expected to do that well. They're very proud but also a bit shocked. But I was very shocked as well, especially when it came to the state rankings. I didn't think that getting a state rank would even be possible. I was so happy when I found out. I was very surprised, but also, obviously very happy and relieved.



**ELENOR CRAVEN**  
**PROXIME ACCESSIT**  
 ATAR: 99.75

**Q. What would you say went into achieving your results?**

A. A lot of study went into achieving my results. I tried to work continuously throughout the year rather than only doing concentrated work directly before an exam. I also think it helped that I had a genuine interest in my subjects. I concentrated on both achieving a good ATAR and also dedicating myself to other pursuits, such as winning sports tournaments, so I had varied goals to motivate balance.

**GETTING TO KNOW ELENOR**

After joining St Cath's in Year 1, Elenor embraced every opportunity; taking part in everything from Representative Gymnastics to Robotics. In Year 11, Elenor ranked in her Mathematics Advanced and Extension 1 HSC courses, which she studied as an accelerate. In Year 12, she was named Dux of the School; receiving academic prizes in everything from Physics to English Extension 2, Mathematics Extension and Biblical Studies. Elenor is planning to study a combined degree in Science and Law.





# CREATIVE ENDEAVOURS THRIVE AT CATH'S

At St Catherine's, creative students are encouraged to transform their ideas into reality, supported by world-class resources and expert mentoring. We foster a dynamic creative community where every student is free to explore their passions and develop their skills.

We are delighted by the outstanding creative achievements of each of our Year 12 students, showcasing their remarkable talents in Drama, Music, Design and Technology and Visual Arts. Each student's success not only reflects their dedication and hard work but also underscores the school's commitment to fostering a vibrant and varied learning environment.

In Drama, our 2023 students presented a diverse range of dramatic pieces, covering topics from private schoolboy culture to generational trauma. The volume of nominations our Drama students received truly showcases their versatility and depth as actors. But beyond this, it illustrates our girls' abilities to grapple with intricate themes and ideas, presenting them in a way that resonates with audiences.

In Music, our Year 12 students have proven themselves to be maestros in the making. Their performances, both instrumental and vocal, have been nothing short of spectacular. The mastery of musical theory, coupled with inventive compositions, has left an indelible mark on our school's musical

landscape. Whether in solo performances or collaborative ensembles, our students have consistently demonstrated a high level of musicianship and creativity.

The achievements of our Year 12 students in Design and Technology are equally commendable. Their innovative projects and technological solutions showcase a deep understanding of modern tools and methodologies. From designing cutting-edge architectural landscapes to implementing sustainable solutions, our students have embraced the challenges of the technological landscape with enthusiasm and ingenuity. Their projects not only reflect technical expertise but also a keen awareness of the societal impact of technology.

In Visual Arts, our students presented a wide range of creative projects, demonstrating clear technical skills as well as an ability to translate ideas into moving and meaningful works of art. Many of their projects were concerned with issues that face our world, demonstrating our students' deep engagement with the wider community and a desire to lend their voices to amplify the struggles of disenfranchised people from across the globe.

The creative achievements of our Year 12 students stand as a testament to their dedication, passion, and the nurturing environment provided by our school. We take pride in their accomplishments and look forward to seeing how these talented individuals will continue to contribute to the world of arts and technology in the future.

## CREATIVE ACHIEVEMENTS



### Individual OnSTAGE nominations

- Madison Clifton
- Seraphine Cullen
- Lies den Hollander
- Dimitra Mavrocordatos
- Jamie O'Sullivan
- Madeleine Parshall

### Group OnSTAGE nominations

- Madison Clifton
- Emily Dingle
- Madeleine Parshall
- Layla Sheppard
- Pati Harbilas
- Jamie O'Sullivan
- Zoe O'Sullivan
- Mackenzie Wiseman

### ArtEXPRESS nominations

- Sky Cohen
- Olivia Giuffrida
- Alice Uhd

### SHAPE nominations

- Ava Croker
- Lucy Haydon
- Kayla Heng
- Paige Kluck



**Alice Uhd**  
**ArtEXPRESS**

I was inspired to create my major work while watching my family at Christmas playing a game of cards together and the joy that was brought by the simplicity of it. I spent a lot of time choosing the right reference photos that authentically captured each individual and didn't seem posed or unnatural. I wanted to capture the people I love and allow their personalities to shine through the artwork. I'm proud that I managed to achieve that. I was ecstatic to be nominated for ArtEXPRESS. It was my only goal for the year and the fact that I achieved my goal was really special.

**Dimitra Mavrocordatos**  
**OnSTAGE**

My monologue is adapted from Tom Stoppard's 1966 post-modern play, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. There were definitely moments where I considered changing my monologue because I found the Absurdist performance style to be challenging and confronting because of the emptiness it encapsulates. Nevertheless, I'm proud I decided to persevere and embrace Absurdism as opposed to fearing it. Throughout my time at St Cath's, my teachers and peers have empowered me to venture beyond my comfort zone and encouraged me to pursue my passions and interests. I learnt that I am capable of achieving incredible feats when I believe in myself.



**Lucy Haydon**  
**SHAPE**

I designed a golf club for junior golfers that would be able to grow with each user. It was a lot of trial and error with the 3D printer to create my final design. It was especially tricky to make the connections for the golf club work. When it finally worked, I felt very proud. I felt really happy knowing that all my hard work had paid off. I learnt to never give up on something you want to succeed and to always ask for help when you need it. My teachers were always there to help me through the challenges.



**Madeleine Parshall**  
**OnSTAGE**

I was in shock when I found out I had been nominated for both my individual and group projects. My individual project was a monologue about a criminal defence barrister, Tessa, who has been sexually assaulted. The monologue follows Tessa's crisis of faith as she finds the legal system, which she has been a part of, has failed her and countless other victims. I loved moving audiences through the sudden shift in the story. My group piece focused on four pageant mums. The inspiration for *Pageant Mums* came from seeing the impact of reality television on young children, and how the media manipulates what audiences see.

**Kayla Heng**  
**SHAPE**

My inspiration for my project came from my brother who has Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). I created garments for individuals with ASD who struggle with sensory processing issues and fine motor skills after seeing the difficulties my brother often faces with everyday clothing. I'm so proud of my final product as I can now see that all the difficult times or problems encountered were worth it and paid off. Being nominated for my design was such an honour.





**KAYLA HENG**  
ATAR: 92.1

**Q. What achievement are you most proud of this year?**

A. I'm most proud of making it through Year 12 and being able to balance everything throughout the year. Finding the right balance between my cocurricular activities and Year 12 responsibilities was difficult at some points. On top of that, creating a major work was also extremely time-consuming. I'm so proud I made it work.

**Q. What is the most important lesson you have learnt at St Cath's?**

A. One of the most important lessons I've learnt at St Cath's is to put yourself out there and try new things. Even if it may be frightening at first, the support from teachers and friends within the St Cath's community is so strong that regardless of the outcome, you will always be encouraged and supported by those around you.

**Q. What do you think you will remember most about your time at St Cath's?**

A. What I'll most remember will be the connections I've made over my years at St Cath's. I will especially remember my friends, teachers and St Cath's community. I'll also remember all the fun house events I took part in as well as all of the different Cadet camps that I enjoyed over the years.

**Q. What advice would you share with students beginning their HSC journey?**

A. Honestly Year 12 is such a big year so my advice would be to recognise the need to have a balance between studies and other cocurricular activities. It's also really important to keep a calendar or a diary to help you find a balance between everything. Just remember you've got this! Good luck and don't forget to take everything piece by piece.

**GETTING TO KNOW KAYLA**

Kayla didn't know anyone at St Cath's when she started in Year 7. But she quickly found her feet in our Cadet program with Waverley College. Kayla rose through the ranks to become the first female Senior Cadet Under Officer in the Unit's history, while also leading our school as Head Girl.



**ALANA BRENNAN**  
ATAR: 97.8

**Q. What would you say went into achieving your results?**

A. A lot of hard work went into achieving my results. I really pushed myself to work harder, especially when I struggled

with a lack of motivation. But the most important thing was believing in myself.

**Q. How important do you think it is for students to find a study-life balance?**

A. You need to find a balance. I found it helpful to make a plan each week. It is important to visualise how many hours you have that you can divide between study and cocurriculars.



**YUMENG (AMY) XIN**  
ATAR: 99.1

**Q. What has been your family's response to your result?**

A. My parents were so pleased with my results, especially because I did it all without their care and support in person. I'm an international boarder and haven't been home to see my family in three years because of COVID.

**Q. How important do you think it is for students to find a study-life balance?**

A. It's important to have balance when it comes to studying. I found that concentrating when I needed to study and having good time management helped me have free time to do cocurricular activities. I volunteered for over 200 hours with St John's Ambulance to give back to my community.

# WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS

As our 2023 graduates prepare to embark on the next phase of their journeys, we know they are ready to face the challenges of our changing world.

As artificial intelligence, globalisation, and digital technology continue to shape the modern workforce, we know our students are preparing for careers that may not even exist yet. However, the Class of 2023, have been undeterred by this rapidly changing landscape. Instead, they have approached their futures with determination, focus and genuine excitement. These graduates are well-rounded and enthusiastic learners, eager to explore their passions and utilise their unique gifts to bring about positive change in the world. In the face of future uncertainties, our students exhibit adaptability and a readiness to take on challenges.

While some are opting for a gap year to broaden their horizons as global citizens, 87% of students have enrolled to attend various Australian universities, while two adventurous souls are spreading their wings for study overseas. Remarkably, 50% of our students who applied to university received an early offer. Of those, 71% accepted that offer.

The diversity of academic pursuits among the Class of 2023 is impressive, reflecting the diversity of the cohort. The field of Health, Medicine and Nursing has taken the lead this year claiming 16.4% of our students. Also prominent are Law and Commerce, both attracting approximately 12% of students. The Natural Sciences attracted 7.8% of students, while Arts claimed 9.4% and disciplines such as Psychology, Social Sciences, including Economics and Politics, Business and Communications attracted between 6% to

7% of students, offering a diverse academic landscape. Notably, over 24% of our students are planning to undertake double degrees, reflecting a trend towards combining traditional fields like Medicine and Law with Commerce, Science, and Economics to expand future employment opportunities.

Additionally, 11 students from this cohort have been honoured with a scholarship, ranging from the prestigious Dalyell Scholars Program at The University of Sydney to Elite Athlete Scholarships. Noteworthy recognitions include the Chancellor's, National Merit and Alan D Latham Scholarships at The University of Melbourne, the Teacher Education Scholarship Program, the Vice-Chancellor's International Scholarship at The University of Sydney and the Women in Engineering Scholarship at The University of Technology. The diverse range reflects the exceptional talent within our cohort, poised for success in various fields.

As our graduates venture into the next chapter of their lives, my hope for the St Catherine's Class of 2023 is that they embrace each new challenge with open minds and hearts. Armed with their unique skills and passions, these young women have the power to shape their own paths and contribute their talents to create a brighter future for all of us.

Ms Ramona Lobo  
Tertiary Advisor

## VOCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

- Lies den Hollander has been accepted into Utrecht University in the Netherlands to study Philosophy, Politics and Economics.
- Alexandra Oliver received an Elite Athlete Scholarship to study Exercise and Sports Science at The University of Sydney.
- Leila Carr and Jasmine Ruffa both received National Merit Scholarships from The University of Melbourne.
- Isla King received both a Chancellor's Scholarship and the Alan D Latham Scholarship from The University of Melbourne.
- Elena Caredes was awarded a Vice Chancellor's Merit Scholarship to study a Bachelor of Advanced Sciences (Pre-Medicine) at The University of Technology.
- Flora Qi received a Women in Engineering Scholarship from The University of Technology.
- Ashleigh Doran has been awarded a Teacher Education Scholarship to study a combined Bachelor of Education and Science at The University of New South Wales.
- Angel Cody will be travelling to the Paris Olympics as a Ballkid.





**St Catherine's School**  
Sydney

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- **Our Story**
- There is so much to the
- story of St Catherine's School.
- Scan the QR code to read and
- experience our wonderful School.