

# SCEGGS Darlinghurst 2019 HSC Report

Ms Jenny Allum

I want to start with the important things. The HSC is a journey for our young people, and so too for each one of the 111 girls at SCEGGS in 2019. They all had different abilities and interests, different backgrounds and home lives, different aspirations and goals. And I want them all to achieve those hopes and desires. But I also want them to be good people; to live their lives with integrity and purpose; to look after themselves and their friends and families; to stand up for what they believe in; to live with honour, and passion and kindness; to know what are the important things in life. I want them to have a broad, liberal education, and to know how to learn and grow further at universities, in their professions, in their lives 30 or 40 years from now. I want them to be strong, whole, flourishing people, comfortable in their own skin and able to manage the complexities of life. I want them to have skills to make them eminently employable and to be successful in their chosen careers. As I tweeted the day before the results came out: “You are so much more than a mark!”

I want the Class of 2019 to know how proud I am of each and every one of them - they are girls I am proud to call SCEGGS girls! I have included a few quotes later in this report to demonstrate the insight they have into what being a SCEGGS girl has meant to them, and I know you will agree that we are all proud of them too!

Having said that, I know you will want to know a little more generally about how we have gone!

Firstly, there are some outstanding individual achievements I would like to particularly celebrate:

- 20 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:
  - » Grace Apted
  - » Niamh Brazil
  - » Georgia Brogan
  - » Jessica Cassimaty
  - » Eliza Chew
  - » Phoebe Cridland
  - » Emmanuelle Dunn Lewis
  - » Louise Godhard
  - » Charlotte Grbin
  - » Molly Johnson
  - » Chloe Kneebone
  - » Madeleine Kowalenko
  - » Jacqueline Lee
  - » Margot Lee
  - » Sabrina Liu
  - » Sascha Noble
  - » Teya Phillips
  - » Cindy Purvis
  - » Charlotte Robinson
  - » Zoe Spencer



- In individual subjects, we had 267 mentions in the Distinguished Achievers lists from 94 different girls (including our Year 11 Accelerants). This means that 94 of the girls who sat one or more HSC examinations in 2019 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.
- Five girls received outstanding results in individual subjects across NSW:
  - » Louise Godhard topped the state in Chemistry, came 2nd in Latin Extension and also 3rd in the state in Latin Continuers!
  - » Madeleine Scott came 4th in the state in IPT.
  - » Emmanuelle Dunn Lewis came 3rd in the state in French Extension.
  - » Margot Lee came 5th in the state in English Extension 2.
  - » Hiroi Migita came 2nd in the state in Japanese in Context which she studied through the NSW School of Languages.
- Four girls were nominated for ARTEXPRESS:
  - » Grace Apted
  - » Georgia Brogan
  - » Grace Guthrie
  - » Ava Lagoon-Robinson
- Six girls were nominated for inclusion in SHAPE (the Design and Technology Exhibition):
  - » Grace Barr
  - » Grace Campbell-Avenell
  - » Emilia Doohan
  - » India Hobbs
  - » Sascha Richards
  - » Mia Robson
- Five girls were nominated for ENCORE (the Music Concert and Exhibition):
  - » Zoe Biggs and Thareni Parameswaran for Composition
  - » Elizabeth Armour, Diana Sideris and Hiroi Migita for Performance
  - » Zoe Biggs for Musicology

### Percentages in the top two bands in 2019

The table below 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	22	35.5	68.2
Biology	30	31.3	70.0
Business Studies	26	33.0	80.8
Chemistry	33	45.9	78.8
Design and Technology	14	46.5	92.9
Drama	12	33.7	83.3
Economics	23	51.7	82.6
English (Standard)	16	11.8	6.3
English (Advanced)	94	61.8	89.4
English Extension 1	31	93.9	100
English Extension 2	8	79.8	87.5
Geography	14	43.2	57.1
IPT	7	34.6	100.0
Mathematics Standard 2	32	23.1	43.8
Mathematics	67	49.2	77.6
Mathematics Extension 1	39	80.1	100
Mathematics Extension 2	11	85.8	100
Modern History	28	39.3	85.7
History Extension	18	76.6	100
Music 1	8	65.9	100
Music 2	2	92.0	*
Music Extension	1	97.8	*
PDHPE	20	31.3	85.0
Physics	13	36.9	61.5
Science Extension	3	68.4	*
Visual Arts	42	62.5	100
French Continuers	11	64.6	90.9
French Extension	8	88.1	100
Japanese Continuers	2	60.2	*
Japanese Extension	1	89.2	*
Latin Continuers	5	89.3	100
Latin Extension	2	100	*
Spanish Beginners	19	36.2	47.4

\* Please note: the data for small candidature subjects are not reported in accordance with the school's Privacy Policy.

When you run your fingers down those two last columns, you can see that the percentages of SCEGGS girls in the top 2 bands are significantly better than the equivalent NSW statistics in nearly every case.

## ATARs

As you would all be aware, we do not receive any information about the ATARs (Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank) achieved by our girls. These were released to the girls directly online but 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.

We have again used an external consultant to estimate the ATARs and help us analyse the results so that we can advise students in future years, and to build up our knowledge base of processes and procedures.

It is important to remember:

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 HSC to be placed in the top 10% of their age group.

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

- » 15 girls over 99
- » 20 girls over 98
- » 41 girls over 95
- » 63 girls over 90
- » 83 girls over 80

Congratulations to Louise Godhard who gained the highest ATAR at SCEGGS - 99.95. This is also the maximum possible ATAR – the highest in the state! What a great achievement!

But, as I said at the beginning of this report, there are 111 different stories of the 111 girls which make up the Class of 2019. I thought I would share just a few quotes from the girls who wrote to me when they received their HSC results:

*I'd like to begin by expressing my profound gratitude to the school. I am incredibly proud to call myself a SCEGGS girl. My high school journey has been unforgettable. This is no doubt attributed to the vibrant and tight-knit community, comprised of incredible people and brilliant opportunities, and, a great testament to your inspiring leadership. I will always cherish my time spent behind the Green Gate. The skills, experiences and memories gained whilst at this school will remain with me forever. I have gained much more than a great academic education. The HSC was a lengthy, challenging and rewarding experience. I received an ATAR score of 98.95. Although I am disappointed to have just missed out on achieving 99, I am nonetheless pleased with this result. I was particularly proud of my improvement in the English Advanced course, ultimately achieving an examination mark of 98. Importantly, I cannot thank my wonderful teachers enough. Their unwavering hard work, dedication and concern for their students, was immensely appreciated and integral to the success of each and every student.*

*I have attached the ATAR advice we received yesterday – I received 92.75 which I was quite happy with! Thank you so much for your kind email, and for the continuous support I have received from SCEGGS in the short time I got to spend there. Making the decision to move in Year 11 was genuinely life changing and I recognise the significance of this opportunity which I am extremely grateful to have had. From meeting some of the most supportive teachers, brilliant and kind people, my time at SCEGGS has been one I will never forget. Your leadership of the school especially has been one which I admire and have a great amount of respect for. I hope that all I have learnt at SCEGGS, beyond the curriculum stays with me for a very long time.*

*I apologise for only getting back to you now, I only just saw your email. I ended up receiving an ATAR of 97.80. Whilst it was not what I was hoping for, I don't think I can place a number on the value of lessons I have learnt from the school on how to be a passionate, diligent young woman. I thank you for the experiences I have gained being at SCEGGS for the last five years.*

*I just wanted to email you regarding my results from HSC. I am so so happy to say that I received an ATAR of 90.30. I could never have imagined last year or any year throughout my high school journey that I would be able to get this mark. I pushed myself so hard this year and worked harder than I ever thought I could. I am finally very proud of my work and determination this year and I couldn't have done any of it without my amazing teachers and the entire SCEGGS community who pushed me to do my best. Thank you so much.*

*Hope you're having a nice holiday. As requested... I gained an ATAR of 96.85. And I just wanted to say thank you for all the support and attention you have given us behind the scenes, myself and everyone all appreciates it. I've enjoyed going to SCEGGS for the past 13 years and have learnt so many life skills and lessons. I've been very lucky to grow up, learn and be part of a school that is so forward thinking. So again, thank you for everything and have a lovely holiday. Wishing the best for the class of 2020.*

*I received a 99.30 ATAR and am very happy with this result! Next year I have applied to do a double degree at ANU of Medical Science and Commerce. (The ATAR for this course is 86, and I have already received a placement). I really love Economics and Science and am excited to continue learning. I also want to thank you for everything that the school has given me over the past six years. I am so grateful for my time at SCEGGS and how it has helped me develop my morals and passions. I couldn't have asked for a better community and education. SCEGGS has played a formidable role in shaping who I am today and I am sure that I will continue to be involved in the community in some shape or form. In particular, I would like to thank you for being an empowering role model. I have long admired your strong sense of integrity. I am happy that I'm leaving SCEGGS with more than just an ATAR. SCEGGS has allowed me to develop a wide range of passions, friendships, lessons and memories.*

*I wanted to say a massive thank you to you for allowing me to come to SCEGGS in Year 11 as well as to all my dedicated teachers who pushed me to achieve the best results I could. I got an ATAR of 96.3 and although it is not the highest, I am really proud of myself because I was only aiming for an ATAR of 95. I am so happy that I was part of a school that fostered collaboration amongst its students and a culture of hard work - without that I would not have achieved the results that I did. I hope to study Commerce/Advanced Studies at the University of Sydney next year but I am now considering Business Law at UTS as an option too.*

## **Leagues Tables**

Each year in this analysis, I write about leagues tables and just how misleading they are – whether the information is favourable or not! The drive to analyse school results on solid information is praiseworthy, and something we do very seriously and systematically. But the desire to rank schools on the meaningless data used to construct leagues tables sickens me. Let me explain more.

These Leagues tables are constructed around the media's definition of "success rate" (their terminology for students gaining a mark of 90 or more in a course). What does this mean? Is a mark over 90 a good thing?

- Can you compare a mark of 90 in one subject with a mark of 90 in another subject? Over 16% of students studying Chemistry gained 90, but only 7.3% of students studying Biology gained over 90.

- What if students gained results over 90 by taking lower level courses - say Mathematics Standard rather than Ext 1 Mathematics - would that still be what we want for our students? Is that a measure of success? (I was interested to see the high percentage of students studying Mathematics Standard in some schools as reported in the newspapers).
- What if students were encouraged to study fewer subjects, to attempt fewer units, to study the minimum, to narrow their education - is that what we would want for our students and for their future?
- Or perhaps it does mean actually that the student did really well - balancing challenge with success, keeping a breadth of subjects that will really help them in the world ahead, and that we helped them be good people with integrity and purpose too?

The problem with reducing something as complex as education and schooling to a single measure such as this “success rate” is that we cannot differentiate between any of these situations! And I know that there are great schools out there who feel that they have to justify to their community that they “went down” in the rankings, or who do a wonderful job in a disadvantaged area. I know that somehow a mark of 90 has now taken an unrealistically important position in many young people’s minds. I have spoken to a number of girls who gained or 88 or 89 in a subject and feel somehow they have failed! And now, with the publication of such detailed results in the media, it also feels quite visible too – not, I think, something our society should tolerate.

So, when you read that SCEGGS placed 16th in the state – please don’t think it means a single thing!

I want our girls to strive for excellence and to achieve their own personal best - whatever that might be. I want them to have a broad liberal education, studying a range of subjects to encourage them to grow as people and to broaden their thinking. I want us as a community to be just as proud of an 89% in a higher-level course that really challenged a student, rather than encouraging them to give up along the way and know they can achieve 90% at a lower level. I want all our girls to keep trying right up until the end, striving for 93, 94, 95 not just be satisfied with being “over 90”. I want our community to value excellence, and the challenge of academic rigour and most of all - striving for and achieving your own personal best.

### **Where to from here?**

We will continue to undertake a 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 Year 10 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 didn’t. 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 this year, as with all years, we will identify the areas that we can do even better for the following year. As usual, we will continue to work on all aspects of our programs to ensure we are delivering the best education possible in every area.

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 variation between years, but overall the Class of 2019 appears to have done well, and we are all very happy, and proud of them all.

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