

# Student Spotlight

MAY '24 ISSUE 2



## “WE ARE ELUSIVE”

The Youthful Story of a School Band

## *Piranhas or Petunias?*

*Thoughts on the Transition to High School*

*Film Reviews*

**Student of the  
Month**

*Gabriella Francis*

## *Foreword*



Pak Chan  
Founder and Chair  
NTSS

**A**fter months of work, it is amazing to see the vast number of young students who are interested in our literature-related work. As more student journalists joined in, we were able to broaden our horizons and learn more about the friends and peers they look up to. These are the stories that fuelled our motivation to strive for a better student community in the schools of the Northern Territory and to inspire many more students to succeed in their endeavours.

It is important to acknowledge that the Student Spotlight is not just about the overachievers or the teachers' pets, but for all young and passionate students who are brave, smart and daring enough to walk into the spotlight and show the world what they've got. Through the work of our magazine, we hope to inspire more passionate and talented students to step into the spotlight and write their own youthful story in history's page that will inspire even more.

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# Sunset

Music and Arts

Artwork by Kim Nguyen



# The Two-Week Minecraft Phase

By Elora Pizanias

**P**eople, unsurprisingly, are simple people. We procrastinate, we jaywalk across the street despite it being a crime (because it's a dumb one), we only play Minecraft for a surprise two-week period. This two-week phase is somewhat of a global phenomenon, where someone who may have completely forgotten about the highest-grossing game to date has the sudden indescribable urge to play Minecraft.

Everyone gets the urge to play Minecraft. Whether it be nostalgia, boredom of other titles, because you damn-well feel like it, or any other miscellaneous options. The fact is that Minecraft is completely limitless and only ever meaninglessly expanding, so everyone has their limit. This is one of the leading factors to the two-week phase; everyone grows bored of Minecraft.

Minecraft is simple block game. You punch tree, you collect wood. You mine diamonds, you make sword. You look up tutorial online, you make automatic sorting system. This gets incredibly repetitive incredibly easily. Minecraft's only real appeal is that it's a complete sandbox game with no limit in sight, yet this is both blessing and hindrance. There's nothing stopping you from putting down the game after your two-week bout of creativity.

What's more is that it seems as though Minecraft is always adding something new, unexciting, and completely useless. Such is the fault of Microsoft, adding and adding away to their pay-to-win video game they bought from Mojang in 2014. Did you know that there are camels in Minecraft now? And what do the mountain goats even do?

Oh, but our entire 'generation' grew up with Minecraft – we're nostalgic to a fault. We were all around a ripe young and impressionable age by the time that Minecraft first hit popularity, with everyone and their second cousin being stuck to their devices and watching a range of Minecraft youtubers. I'm not talking the likes of the current 'age' of Minecraft youtubers, I'm talking about the classics. DanTDM, Stampylonghead, PopularMMOS, CaptainSparklez, and so many more (some of which being incredibly weird people, gross. Which is an odd and unfortunate trend now that you think about it).

Okay, point is, Minecraft. Two-week phase, everyone's bored of the limitless possibilities of the notorious block game. Everyone goes back, because there's a sudden bout of creativity and you remember "Hey, Minecraft! That's a fun game, I used to love it, how about I play it. Wonder what they've added?", yet in two weeks' time it's more of a chore than a game and you remember you've got that English essay due on Tuesday and you haven't done anything yet.

# Piranhas or Petunias?

## *Thoughts on the Transition to High School*

By Lucy Tinapple

**I**t's our own unique little Territorian challenge, where we have to pack ourselves up and out of one school and start a new school afresh in year 10.

Whether you'd prefer to liken it to going from being the big fish in a small pond to being the small fish in a massive pond teeming with piranhas, or are less pessimistic and more poetic, choosing to see the transition as "*a flower bud slowly blooming and growing into a more mature plant,*" (Evlyna Boby, Darwin High School) - high school is certainly a journey!

But piranhas and petunias aside, it seems to be the consensus that moving to high school is like starting a new chapter.

A year 10 student from Essington said she "*prefers high school because while the... work is harder, there's more extension and you can choose your subjects, so you're interested in the things you're learning.*"

Evlyna Boby from Darwin High School (DHS) said that "*all the students are more mature, and the teachers treat you like adults...you get more work, but the teachers are very supportive and very chill.*"



For year 10 isn't without its challenges. The work is harder. There is more pressure and more things to juggle. Tessa Hampshire from Haileybury said that high school is like "*a parallel universe where everything looks really similar but it's kind of just eerily different. But you've taken a group of people with you, so they are all experiencing it at the same time – it's weird.*"

***"The assignment load has just doubled. So we've gone from not many assignments, like one from each subject each semester, to at least 8 assignments on the go. It's pretty crazy!"*** Said a student from the Essington School.

Similarly, Kian Lynn from DHS said the "*biggest challenge would probably be on the academic side*" where he noticed "*there was quite a big jump on expectations especially if you're wanting to do top level of stuff.*" A student from Essington astutely likened the challenge of year 10 to "*salmon migrating up a river, dodging all the bear claws.*"



Darwin High School Year 10 Student Kian Lynn said that high school allowed him to express himself in more ways.  
(Student Spotlight: Arkana Triwidodo)

And yet, like Evlyna Boby expressed, there are beautiful parts to the transition such as "*students becoming more mature people like a flower bud maturing into a flower.*"

High school is a hub for learning and growth. It encompasses opportunities for self-exploration and expression where we can all find our own type of flower to bloom into. Kian Lynn from DHS said that his "*favourite part of high school is probably the ability to express [himself] in ways that you couldn't within middle school*" and that the no uniform policy at DHS helps with self-expression because "*you find your community within your clothing and fashion trends.*"



The transition to year 10 wasn't ever going to be an easy one. It seems to be filled with highs and lows, ups and downs - bear claw tests one day and friendly flowers the next. For all of us, it's tricky to find footing in the swirling, turbulent parallel universe of year 10. But the next chapter in the book awaits and I suppose you could see the transition to year 10 as a catalyst for your own writing process. I know I personally want to be able to look back on this year and say, "*I wrote the best version of my year 10 self that I possibly could.*"

# Off and Away All Day: A Review of the Phone Ban Policy

By Pak Chan

**I**t has been a year since the phone ban for Secondary School Students in the Northern Territory. Following national policies, cell phones are banned during class time, lunch and recess at primary and secondary schools. In an interview with ABC Darwin, Education Minister Eva Lawler said, “I firmly believe that by banning mobile phones we'll see our students, our young people, engaging socially more, having those interactions at recess and lunchtime instead of spending their whole time on their phone.” Notwithstanding, how effective is the Phone Ban Policy at schools in reality?

*“The phone ban wasn’t as effective as it should be,” said a student from Darwin Middle School, “A lot of my friends were ignoring the policy despite the possible consequences they may face.”*

However, while some students see the phone ban as an ineffective policy, many complain about the inconveniences it causes students.

Hanna, a member of the Darwin High School Student Representative Council (SRC), believed that the ‘grey areas’ are needed for the convenience of students. “It’s a good thing [that students are allowed to use their phones at school before and after the bell],” said Hanna, “[It allows] students to check their emails for announcements and Compass (A school management application that provides real-time updates on classes and announcements) before school starts.”



Eva Lawler says the phone ban will give educators more time for teaching. (ABC News: Michael Franchi, 2023)

Additionally, all mobile electronic devices except for laptops are also banned. This included tablets, smartwatches and earphones. Raymond, a Darwin High School Student Representative, said it is sometimes difficult for students to get on task without certain electronic devices. “The Library is always crowded, and without headphones, it becomes difficult for me to stay focused and get on with my work.”

Furthermore, actions carried out to deter the use of phones on campus also cause inconveniences in some instances.

*"A great number of people would use their phones in bathrooms," said a student at Darwin High School, "this made teachers more reluctant to allow students to use the bathroom during class at times."*

Nonetheless, as the phone ban led to greater consequences for students who used their phones during school hours, the positive changes in class were most apparent to teachers. Mr Whitty, a teacher at Darwin High School, said that the phone ban was beneficial to teachers and students



Mr Whitty says that the phone ban was needed to calm students down (Student Spotlight: Arkana Triwidodo)

*"I think the phone ban was something that is needed," said Mr Whitty, "Phones were causing distractions in class in too many instances. Now that the phone ban is carried out, students are calmer than before, making phones less of a problem for teachers."*

The phone ban in secondary schools, although being a nationwide policy, is only a framework for schools to follow. Its scope and effectiveness are highly dependent on teachers and individual schools. Ms Evans, the staff who wrote out the phone ban guidelines for Darwin High School students said that there are inevitable difficulties when implementing the phone ban. *"It's hard to implement the policy while considering all the possible negative impacts it could have on students,"* said Ms Evans.

Phones and the internet have become essential in the daily lives of youths. According to research by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Most Australian Children spend over 10 hours per week on their phones. Aside from vision problems, the excessive use of phones and the internet among teenagers also causes other problems such as phone addiction, cyberbullying and social insecurity. These negative impacts, however, are believed by teachers and students to be mitigated by the phone ban despite difficulties in enforcement and implementation. Overall, most students and teachers when being interviewed, agreed that the phone ban had tightened the connections within the school community.

# Ramadan and Eid-al-Fitr

By Zafeera Jahana

**R**amadan is the ninth month of Islamic Hijri calendar, a lunar calendar which marks the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)'s migration to Medina, Saudi Arabia in 622 AD, commonly known as hijra. Each month lasts from the sighting of one new moon, a waxing crescent, to the next, making them 29 or 30 days long. During Ramadan, Muslims across the world fast from dawn to sunset, consuming no food or drink, not even water.

The duration of their fast is dependent on their city, for example in Darwin, a day's fast is around 13 hours, whereas in Glasgow, Scotland, Muslims had to fast for almost 16 hours. At sunset, a meal referred to as iftar is eaten, beginning with water and dates due to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)'s tendency to do so, and a date's many health benefits.

Ramadan commemorates the revelation of the Qur'an, the holy book of Islam and is also a time to abstain from sinful acts such as smoking and fighting. This allows one to engage in acts of worship or kindness, such as prayer or volunteering. Many Muslims attend the mosque every night for additional prayers, called taraweeh, where the Qur'an is recited from beginning to end over the course of the month.

Observing Ramadan by fasting is obligatory for men and women who have reached puberty, as it is the 3rd pillar of Islam, but younger children are encouraged to observe "half fasts" during the day in preparation. Those exempted from fasting include the sick and elderly, who may compensate through charity if they are able to, and those who are pregnant, breastfeeding, menstruating, and travelling, who are required to 'make up' their fasts at a later time, outside Ramadan. The 4th pillar is Zakat, to give 2.5% of one's wealth in money or food to the poor on a yearly basis, if eligible, and experiencing hunger during Ramadan makes Muslims more inclined to give this. Additionally, Zakat-al-Fitr is paid in the monetary value of a staple food such as rice and must be given before the end of the month as a donation to the hungry. Zakat-al-Fitr is mandatory for any Muslim who has a surplus of food (not required for imminent survival) and is paid by the head of the household.



Ramadan Prayers in the Darwin Masjid (ABC News: Henry Zwartz)

There are two celebrations each lunar year, called Eid, Arabic for feast or festival, and the one celebrated after Ramadan is Eid-al-Fitr, meaning ‘festival of the breaking of the fast’. Fasting is prohibited on Eid, and the day usually begins with an additional congregational prayer. Before the prayer, it is customary to eat dates to signify that the fasting is over and wear one’s best clothes without intending to show off.

*“On Eid, I enjoy eating traditional Pakistani meals, pasta and desserts. For me, Eid is a time to spend with family and friends, commemorate the end of Ramadan and celebrate our accomplishments from the month.” said Zahra\* who originated from Pakistan.*

To celebrate, people may visit their relatives after the prayer or attend community gatherings. Eid-al-Fitr is on the first day of the 10th month, Shawwal, and like Ramadan, is determined by the sighting of the new moon. Eid in 2024 was on the 10th/11th of April depending on the country. Adults and children alike enjoy this day, often exchanging gifts, money and greetings.

*“For me, Eid marks the end of a commitment, which allowed me to refocus on Islam, reminding me of Allah (God) altogether.” said Nubaid\*, who originated from Indonesia.*



‘Ramadan Kareem’ or ‘Ramadan Mubarak’ is used as a greeting at the beginning of the month and ‘Eid Mubarak’ is said on Eid. Kareem, meaning generous, signifies the increased generosity during this month, and Mubarak translates to blessed.



A Muslim gathering during Eid in Darwin  
(Student Spotlight: Zafeera Jahana)

# Film Reviews

By Matilda Wilton, Erin Dejager and Claudia Wyles



## Civil War 2024

★½

Watched 12 Apr 2024

Civil War is a film of zero substance, directed by Alex Garland.

On the surface this film seems to be daringly political, however the team behind the film were clearly frightened by the reactions that would come with deep diving into such a controversial topic.

The Acting by the three main actors Kirsten Dunst, Wagner Moura and Cailee Spaeny is nothing of note.

However, I must commend the soundscape within this film, the use of silence really adds to the limited atmosphere.



## Wicked Little Letters 2023

★★★★ ❤

Watched 13 Apr 2024

Wicked Little Letters directed by Thea Sharrock is a hilarious film with a strange storyline that is based on a true story.

Set in the 1920s, about how Rose Gooding (Jessie Buckley) is convicted about writing 'foul mouthed' letters and sending them to her odd friendly neighbour Edith Swan (Olivia Colman).

This film is a must-watch for those who want to watch a comedy with a humorous feel-good ending.



## The First Omen 2024

★★★½ ❤

Watched 8 Apr 2024

The First Omen directed by Arkasha Stevenson is an American supernatural horror prequel to the 1976 film The Omen, and the sixth instalment in the franchise. I found that the storyline was oddly similar to Immaculate, but I believe that The First Omen was executed better than Immaculate.

The acting portrayed by the leading cast, especially the youngest actor was incredibly enhancing to the film and its horror aspects. The film uses classic horror camera angles to draw the audience in before the jump scares whilst simultaneously having beautiful cinematography.

The effects on this film really are what make it to be a better film than immaculate.



## Dune: Part Two 2024

★★★★ ❤

Watched 4 Mar 2024

Is Dune: Part Two better than the first one? Directed again by Denis Villeneuve, the film has been perfectly accomplished with its engaging and super interesting character tension of the main character Paul Atreides (Timothée Chalamet), the love of his life, Chani (Zendaya), and the universes diverse group of clans. This film withholds amazing sound editing and special effects (destined to get them an Oscar nomination), and the costuming of the Fremen looking like 'Call of Duty' characters. Dune: Part Two is unbelievable and it's been my favourite out of the series so far with its adventure and action. It's totally a must watch for 2024.



# Change is Often Difficult

By Maya Purdon

**C**hange is often difficult. We are creatures of routine and habit, comforted by familiarity and consistency. To adapt is no simple feat for the human mind. And yet, it has been done, time after time. And yet.

Sometimes we facilitate a change, whilst other times change is flung upon us with no prior consultation. Often, we grow indifferent, noting the bad things in life whilst taking the multitude of wonderful things experienced by us every day for granted, oblivious to their grandeur until one day – one small, seemingly insignificant day – those things are taken from us. All that was bad is forgotten, and all that was wonderful becomes apparent, its absence a physical ache that we cannot ever seem to shake. Some people live in constant fear of that day. They command themselves to not waste the time they have, to not take anything for granted, concurrently loading a ten-tonne brick onto their shoulders. The brick is not easy to carry. In order to walk without it crushing you, every step must be small, careful, closely monitored. In some cases, the pressure is so great one can barely move, one small shift in balance causing the weight to come crashing down. A stream of commands scroll on repeat before your eyes, their bold capital letters blasting your retinas.

*“Treat others how you want to be treated. Don’t wait for an opportunity – create it. Be the best version of yourself that you can be. Carpe Diem. When given the choice between being right and being kind, choose kind. Expect nothing, appreciate everything. Viva La Vida. If you love life, life will love you back. Let us make our future now and let us make our dreams tomorrow’s reality. Who you are tomorrow begins with who you are today.”*

You tell yourself these quotes are helping you continue. They are inspirational, you say. But the quotes add to your pressure, each one another brick upon your shoulders, a reminder that you must always try your very hardest to do the best, be the kindest, do well in life, appreciate life and always, always do the right thing.

The quotes make you afraid.

Your will to succeed brings a friend, and the friend is called Fear of Failure.

Change is often difficult. We are creatures of routine and habit, comforted by familiarity and consistency. Some people are oblivious to the chance of their lives falling apart. Others live in constant fear of it. Do not fear it, for when it comes you must be strong enough to overcome it. Strength can be earned – by being brave enough to stand up after falling, and by acknowledging that our mistakes are not our downfall.

Find silence in your life. A moment, entirely belonging to you, to stop and listen. Truly listen. Hear the wind whispering through the gumtrees, the intermittent creaking of their trunks. Hear the rustle of the spear grass and the distant song of a drongo. Hear the resilient droning of the cicadas and the gentle lap of a wave against sun-warmed sand.

Listen, and the world will answer.

# NT Netball

By Hanna Eastick

Sports

**D**uring the last school holidays, 2 teams of 12 talented netballers went to Melbourne to play in the National Netball Championships. The 17 and under and the 19 and under teams both fought very hard against the other states and territories of Australia and the 19 and under team even walked away with two wins against the ACT team under their belt.

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The National Netball Championships is Australia's largest netball pathway event. This annual event offers an opportunity for developing athletes, coaches, umpires and officials. The competition spans six days and includes representatives from every state and territory. Going away to national competitions is always a challenging experience, especially for NT athletes.

In the NT the population nearly half as large as the second smallest state/territory in Australia and has about 1/30 the population as the largest state of NSW. This already means that the amount of people we have to select from in the NT is lower. Expectations going into Nationals are along the lines of a 70-6 loss to Queensland, NSW, Victoria, WA and South Australia, at least, that's how it was last year when the event was hosted in Darwin. Our teams often don't get past 10 goals in most games. This year, however, was a true estimate to the commitment these girls have put in over the last few months. They only had one game where they didn't get over 10 goals and had many that they got over 20.



"It's great to see a lot more people joining the trials for the NT netball team this year," said Ms McConnell, the manager of the Northern Territory Netball Team and a science teacher at Darwin High School. "It's great to see their dedication and teamwork outside the classroom and participating in extracurriculars."

Darwin High School student Maddison West, who is part of the NT 17 and under team, had recently gone on a trip to compete in the 5 day National Netball Championships with her teammates. "It was a fun experience," said Maddison, "and I have faith in myself that I will perform the best I can."

The grit and determination these players showed during this tough competition is inspiring, a true representation of the Northern Territory spirit and being "Territory Tough". The improvement they displayed over the week was tremendous. They'll continue working hard all year to keep that improvement going and get ready for next year along with all the exciting opportunities between now and then. Congratulations to these extraordinary girls and their coaches and managers who made all this happen.

# The Importance of Legal Information Accessibility to Teenagers

By Pak Chan

**“Respecting, protecting and promoting the rights of individuals improves the welfare of the whole community.” (Australian Human Rights Act (2004), Preamble (2))**

Above is the quote taken from the Human Rights Act 2004 of Australia, summarising the importance of promoting human rights protected by the law. Any democratic country in the world must allow its citizens to have a clear understanding of the law as it ensures the rights of individuals are protected. This is also vital in lowering crime rates as it is proven by research that people without proper legal knowledge are more likely to become either victims of crime or criminals. By strengthening the legal knowledge of the public, a community with a lower crime rate and greater awareness of everyone's rights is expected.

Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to criminal activity as they are undergoing physiological and psychological growth. Without proper legal education, they are more likely to become criminals. This is because criminal law is tightly connected to the daily lives of teenagers in aspects such as alcohol consumption, sexual consent, smoking, and legal rights after arrest. Without appropriate knowledge of the law, the legal rights of teenagers are less likely to be exercised, thus leading to teenage offenders being more likely to end up in prison.

Such a phenomenon is also evident in the Northern Territory, where teenage crime rates are the highest among all states and territories according to the latest data. Therefore, this shows the urgency of more accessible legal information for teenagers.

Another advantage that is likely to be brought by widespread and accessible legal information is a community with greater awareness of everyone's rights. The rights of individuals are protected by the law, and it must be known by everyone for the rights to be exercised properly. Relating this to teenagers with limited legal knowledge, they are more easily exposed to illegal actions, particularly in the workforce, where most young workers are exploited or harassed in their first jobs. By increasing the legal knowledge of teenagers, workplace exploitation is also expected to be minimalised to ensure the well-being of new generations.

The importance of legal education is established upon the protection of teenagers as they are undergoing mental and physiological development, which makes them vulnerable to exploitation and negative influences in their daily lives, leading them to make inconsiderate choices. By successfully providing comprehensive legal information about their rights and responsibilities, teenagers are more likely to make the best decisions for them and hence improve the welfare of the whole Northern Territory community.

# “We Are Elusive” The Youthful Story of a School Band

by Freddie Mannion

Fresh on the scene is the up and coming band Elusive, performing for the first time at Happy Yes on Saturday the 23rd of March. The band is made entirely of year 11 students at Darwin High School. Erin DeJager as the Lead vocalist, Jake Bowering and Lionel Ortega on guitar, Milo Vanhaeften on bass guitar and Nicoletta ‘Detta’ Cotis on drum kit.



The band started with just Erin and Detta wanting to do battle of the bands together. As they went more people joined to form the current roster of talented students. They picked the name Elusive ironically because they’re loud and to highlight the fact that the band is not any set genre and can perform anything.

As time went on the original plan changed and instead, they were able to secure a gig at Happy Yes after a long wait and they began to work on the songs they would be performing. They decided to make an original song to perform titled ‘Jump,’ a song dedicated to good times and having fun.



Erin DeJager (right) and Nicoletta Cotis (left) first started the band in 2023

In the future, The band looks forward to performing at more events and growing their popularity.

*"For me, our gig at Happy Yes was definitely one of my best memories in the band," said Erin, "It was great seeing all those people and the vibe was just so exciting!"*

*"Although we all have our own plans for the future after high school, we still hope to get together sometime and play music together in the future," said Lionel Ortega, the rhythm guitarist in the band.*

*"Always give it a shot and don't be scared," said Erin, "Because making your own art is beautiful."*

On the night they also performed 3 covers. 'Up In The Clouds' by Skegss, 'Zombie' by The Cranberries, and 'Jungle' by Tash Sultana. 'Jump' reportedly took around a month to make and the band are currently in the process of making more original songs.

*"It's challenging to create new songs while having to balance with school work," said Erin, the lead singer of the band.*

Not long after their gig at Happy Yes, the band performed another gig at the Nighcliff Seabreeze Festival, where their music was heard by even more people, allowing them to reach more opportunities in the future



(Left to right) Milo Vanhaeften (Bass), Jake Bowering and Lionel Ortega (guitar) performing at the Nighcliff Seabreeze Festival in 2024



# Student of the Month

## *Gabriella Francis*

by Emily Tjhung

Last month, Gabriella Francis, known as Gabby by her friends and family, went on a trip to Adelaide to compete in the 2024 National Schools Debating Championships, Australia's most prestigious high school debating competition.

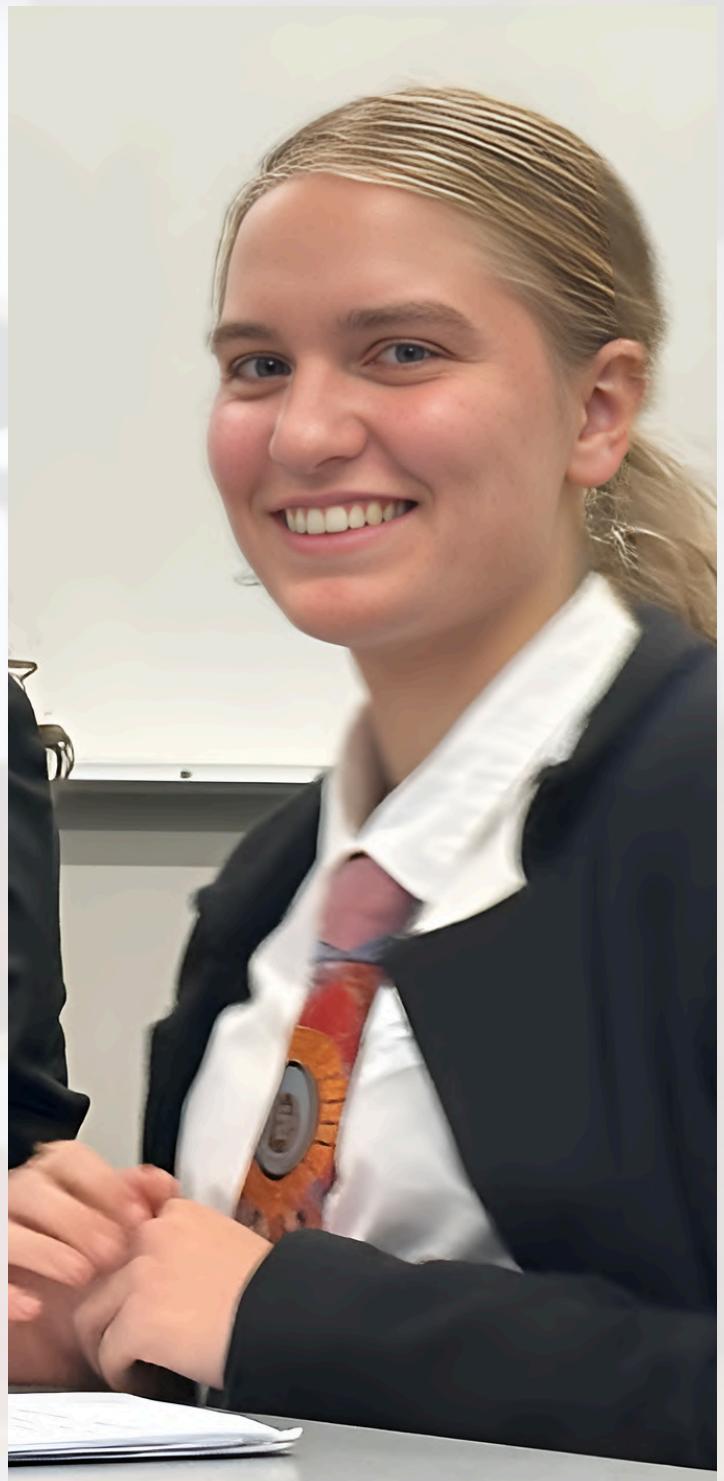
Gabby, along with her teammates, represented the Northern Territory, and victoriously placed 3rd place in the competition, as well as placing first in the NT. The competition involves a team from each state and territory competing in ten rounds, the last three of which are the final rounds that determine the national champions.

Gabby was born in Brisbane and has lived in Darwin for 10 years. Her family and friends not only encourage her, but also inspire her to work hard and believe in good things. She enjoys debating, and during the competition, felt nervous and had low expectations, but with her confidence in public speaking, she was able to overcome her nerves.

Besides participating in many competitions, Gabby also loves to run and has run half a marathon before. This year, she hopes to get back into running after an injury last year. She loves hanging out with her family and tries to enjoy social activities to help her mental health and reduce stress.

Doctor Paul Farmer, an abapical anthropologist who is well known for his efforts providing medical care to impoverished countries, is Gabby's inspiration. During her early teens, Gabby was especially interested in Mountains Beyond Mountains, written by Tracy Kidder, a non-fiction, biographical book about Paul Farmer's life of curing infectious diseases and bringing modern medicine to those who need it.

Gabby also shared some study tips that she uses as a year 12 student. Her techniques include rewriting notes, setting aside specific tasks to be done, and listening to music. Moreover, Gabby sometimes creates a positive environment in her room by turning on a lamp, or going outside to study, which helps her stay focused. She also advises to enjoy and manage time, to have a healthy balance between study, work and social life.



Gabriella at the 2024 High School Debating Championships  
(Image provided by interviewee)

Gabby has also shared with us a quote by John Lennon: "Everything will be okay in the end. If it's not okay, it's not the end" which often helps her feel "inspired to work hard at things, but this really encourages me to maintain perspective on different school/debating things I may tend to become anxious about".

# Shoots of Green (Part II)

By Lucy Tinapple

I seem to grow wearier by the second. The seed of grey sprouts shoots that grow more mature, and vicious, as the days wear on. The weather is turning – darkening clouds cluster overhead to form a sea of grey. The cold wind whips through the open window, yet I cannot move myself to close it. I grow accustomed to the icy shards that seem to pierce deeper into my skin. It doesn't even cross my mind to acquire warmer clothes.

What can I say? Like a fruit that has been drained of juice and now slowly rots at the bottom of the tree, I am nothing but a soulless husk. I am already living the life of a dead man.

She was my everything.

A snippet of a memory flashes across my brain.

A merry fire crackles, the room growing warmer by the second. Scarlet lips, the only spot of colour in a world of grey, open and close to reveal a toothy grin.

Suddenly the scene changes. We are older. Autumn. Red mingles with orange. Small hands around my waist, holding me close.

And then it shifts a third time.

A dank room with water-streaked walls. A pale, pallid face that almost looks grey. A hacking cough. Droplets of crimson on the threadbare bedsheets.

I start back to consciousness to find the tears frozen on my cheeks. Tottering over to the window, I inhale the deafening silence of the night.

"Bring her back I tell you! I would trade a fractured eternity for a desperate moment. A moment with her is all I need." The plea vibrates on my lips and dances into the night, and I watch as its curling coils snake between the soundless silver snowflakes and then rise to mingle with the watery stars.

But she does not come.

Fueled by that insatiable internal desire, a fire of despair ignites under my skin, hot as burning fever dreams and chilling as a frozen, white nightmare.

I turn and grab the kitchen knife, knowing what I must do.

I will end it now. I will bask in the radiance of the pain, hope that I might scream in agony and break the eternal agonizing silence.

I will saw off the silver stems of the grey plant within me.

I will beat it. I will beat death Death and, having severed the string that attached me to its hand, I will fall quietly into the arms of Nothing.

Trembling with the firmness of my resolve, I raise the knife with my right hand. The blade pierces the icy skin on my chest until a tiny bead of crimson wells up on my bare flesh.

It is the only spot of colour in a life of grey.

Scarlet lips.

Red leaves.

Droplets of crimson.

(To be Continued)

# A Walk Through Memory Lane

By Sarina Quadri

**A**s she gained consciousness, a terrible headache dominated her thoughts. The female looked around to find herself in a white room with the strong smell of chemicals. Neither her surroundings nor her senses offered any information. She couldn't remember a thing. Not about her, her family nor friends.

Doctor Sofia chuckled. "You must still be tired after your experience, Isabelle. Get some rest and let me know when you can."

Isabelle frantically shook her head, struggling to speak. "N-no..! I- this is my first time here! I don't know you; I don't knThe pain struck again, causing her to wince and grasp her head. She felt dizzy, and the smell only made it worse.

After a few minutes, a tall woman with ginger hair walked in with a notepad. She wore a white coat and a stern look. She looked at the girl with a smile. "You're awake! You were unconscious for 3 days straight!"

The girl looked at the doctor with a dazed expression. "Who are you...?"

Sofia shook her head, sighed, and scribbled something down on her notepad. "I figured this might happen, considering your fall."

"Fall? What fall?" Isabelle panted. Another panic attack. But this one was worse somehow. The doctor immediately summoned a nurse to help Isabelle calm down before explaining to her. "You've had Alzheimer's for the past four years, and a few days ago, we found you unconscious beside the toilets. You were bleeding..."

All the information hit the girl like a truck. "But I remember nothing, nothing at all. How can it all just happen with a slight fall...?"

"We'll see into that. But for now, we'll be calling in a psychologist so talk to you." Sofia smiled, standing up.

"Why?"

"Honestly, there is no one better than them to talk to."

Within a few hours of the next morning, Isabelle found herself seated in front of a small, brunette woman who smiled warmly at her. "No pressure."

Isabelle sighed. "I don't have anything to say. I can maybe answer things for you?"

Dr. Jane smiled again. "For sure! So, anything you remember before you fainted?"

"Nothing. Not one thing."

As Jane asked her questions, Isabelle's way of answering them turned odd with every passing second. She would zone out, mention a huge *fire* sometimes, and her *parents*.

There hadn't been a huge fire in Ajaccio in years, and her parents? She was an orphan. So, what were these "memories" she was seeing? Dr. Jane questioned her about it. "But your parents died 8 years ago. So why do you remember seeing them 4 days ago?"

Her face twisted. "No, I'm serious, they're the last things I sort of remember before fainting. Th-they can't be dead..."

(To Be Continued)

# Celebrating Excellence: NT's Simpson Prize Winners of 2024

By Amy Zhao

Winning the Simpson Prize is no small feat. Nabeeha and Patrick's essays were selected from hundreds of submissions nationwide, judged on their originality, depth of analysis, and engagement with primary and secondary sources. The competition not only tests students' historical knowledge but also their ability to think critically and express their findings coherently.

As winners, Nabeeha and Patrick were awarded a study tour earlier in the year, as the two were flown out to Canberra and visited significant historical sites. Not only did they get to visit historically important sites, but they were also even shown parts of locations that are not open to the public. These experiences offer invaluable opportunities to deepen their understanding of the ANZAC legacy and to see firsthand the places that have shaped Australia's history.

In a remarkable achievement, Patrick Chen and Nabeeha Qasim, both Grade 10 students from Darwin High School, have been honored as the Simpson Prize winner and runner-up of 2024. The Simpson Prize is a prestigious national history competition, named after John Simpson Kirkpatrick. The prompt focused on the service of Australians in both World War 1 and World War 2. These two students demonstrated outstanding knowledge and understanding of the ANZAC experience and its significance in Australian history.

Patrick and Nabeeha receiving their certificates (NT news)



A message from Nabeeha is to partake in everything you can as this action could open new interests, experiences and opportunities. Reaching outside comfort zones will expand your horizons and can push you as a person to grow and learn in abstract ways.

*"Even if that particular subject is not your strong suit it can still be beneficial and have a positive outcome so why not just give it a try and have some fun."*

*Nabeeha*

Their success also underscores the importance of competitions like the Simpson Prize in promoting historical literacy and critical thinking among young Australians. As they continue their academic journeys, Nabeeha and Patrick exemplify the values of inquiry, perseverance, and dedication that the Simpson Prize seeks to instill in all participants. They walk away from this achievement having grown in many different important aspects for students.

Runner-up Nabeeha Qasim at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra (Image Provided by Interviewee)



*'I enjoyed meeting new people and making new friends. Everybody was so kind, and we all got comfortable with each other quickly despite not having met before. I also enjoyed going to the governor general's house, the Australian War Memorial and Mount Ainslie. We got to have a tour of Canberra while doing lots of other fun stuff.'*

Later in April, Patrick was flown out to Singapore to commemorate Anzac Day. Similar to what they did in Canberra, all the Simpson Prize winners and runner ups of 2024 will be exploring historically significant locations and undoubtedly meeting more important alumni of the Simpson Prize Competition.



The Kranji War Memorial at Singapore, where Simpson Prize Winners of 2024 attended the Anzac Day Dawn Service (Online Image)

The success of Nabeeha and Patrick is a testament to the supportive learning environment provided by their teachers and the school community. Their achievements not only bring pride to themselves but also inspire their peers to pursue their academic passions with diligence and creativity.

# Guess Who's Back?

Artwork by a DHS student

Music and Arts



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# Northern Territory Students' Society.

email:  
[ntstudentsociety.inquiries@gmail.com](mailto:ntstudentsociety.inquiries@gmail.com)

## About Us.

We are a student-led group focusing on recognising achievement and promoting a positive youth culture within the NT. Established by dedicated students in 2023, we have a mission on focusing on student well-being and achievements.

## Our reason.

Due to information bombardment regarding problematic youths in the NT, public perception has always been negatively viewed. With this, young people that strive for excellence are overlooked and have fewer resources and opportunities. We hope to obtain a greater positive media attention for the young students in the NT, and to change the negative perception whilst creating more opportunities for students.

## Why join NTSS?

Students will be able to play a role in making positive community change and to take in leadership roles. We also provide an outlet for young people to voice out on issues. To join, simply fill out the online registration form and become a member!

## The Student Spotlight project.

In 2024, the NTSS is currently working on publishing a free online magazine known as "Student Spotlight", a magazine that covers young talents in the NT, showcasing students' original works. "Student Spotlight" is currently looking for freelance writers and voluntary journalists. If interested, please fill out the online volunteering form.

## Schools in the Northern Territory.

The NTSS is looking for support from all schools in the NT. By spreading positive influence across schools, we aim to create more united and positive school cultures. To learn more about getting your school involved in our initiative, please contact us via email.

# **TELL YOUR STORY.**

Become a writer for the  
Student Spotlight  
magazine

Sign up at: <https://forms.gle/V53nDU58DMWRrGpW9>



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# **Acknowledgements**

We would like to acknowledge the following people as the key contributors to this issue of our magazine

## **Student Writers/Journalists/Editors**

Erin Dejager	Maya Purdon
Hanna Eastick	Sarina Quadri
Ash Huynh	Emily Tijhung
Zafeera Jahana	Lucy Tinapple
Freddie Mannion	Matilda Wilton
Kim Nguyen	Claudia Wyles
Elora Pizanias	Amy Zhao

## **Student Photographers/Graphic and Web Design**

Maili Ansell	Surekha Ruwanpura
Zafeera Jahana	K-la Sky
Elora Pizanias	Emily Tijhung
	Arkana Triwidodo

## **Supporting Staff**

Mr. Trilo Chanmugam
Ms. Erin Shannon
Ms. Jill Hazeldine
Mr. Liam Phillips
Ms. Sally Walker



**We would love to hear  
from you.**

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