



# Academic Highlights 2024



Class of 2024

## HSC Highlights for Meriden Students

**7 top-10 placings** in a course, including **1st in state**

**65% of students** received an ATAR of 90 or more

**27 students** (18%) named **All-Round Achievers** (highest band possible for at least 10 course units)

**80% of students** recognised as **Distinguished Achievers** (highest band possible for one or more courses)

**Meriden ranked 11th** in the 2024 HSC Schools Ranking (*Sydney Morning Herald* 18.12.2024)

22 nominations and 7 selections for **ENCORE, OnSTAGE, ARTEXPRESS and Shape**

Multiple offers for places at **leading Australian, UK, USA and South-East Asian universities**

## 2024

Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank

ATAR	% OF MERIDEN STUDENTS
99+	10%
95+	42%
90+	65%
85+	80%

Median ATAR 93.70  
(State median 71.55)

# HSC highlights cont...

Meriden's HSC Results Celebration



## All-Round Achievers

All-Round Achievers are those students who have achieved results in the highest band possible in at least ten units of HSC courses. Twenty-seven students (18% of the cohort) were named on the 2024 All-Round Achievers List.

- |                      |                         |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Maisie Buckle        | Lucy Levenberg-Penkliis |
| Ella Coady           | Sophia Mak              |
| Erin Du              | Seeya Naik Panvelkar    |
| Roopsha Dutta        | Nidhi Nellore           |
| Annabelle Frederick  | Erica Ng                |
| Crystal Fu Chen      | Merryn Quang            |
| Shravya Garg         | Grace Shen              |
| Zoe Horvat           | Mia St George           |
| Elaine Huang         | Abisha Thevarajah       |
| Talia Jee            | Jacinda Tjiantoro       |
| Anjali Kailasanathan | Alicia Wang             |
| Eleanor Kenyon       | Rachel Xie              |
| Madison Kovac        | Chloe Xiong             |
| Seeun Lee            |                         |

## Top Achievers in a Course

NAME	COURSE	POSITION IN THE STATE
Abisha Thevarajah	Spanish Beginners	1st
Michelle Cho	Japanese Beginners	2nd
Isabella Rajah Tapia	Spanish Continuers	2nd
Grace Shen	Chinese Extension	4th
Claire Chan	Music 1	5th
Teresa Yang	French Continuers	5th
Roopsha Dutta	Community and Family Studies	10th

## Celebrating Excellence

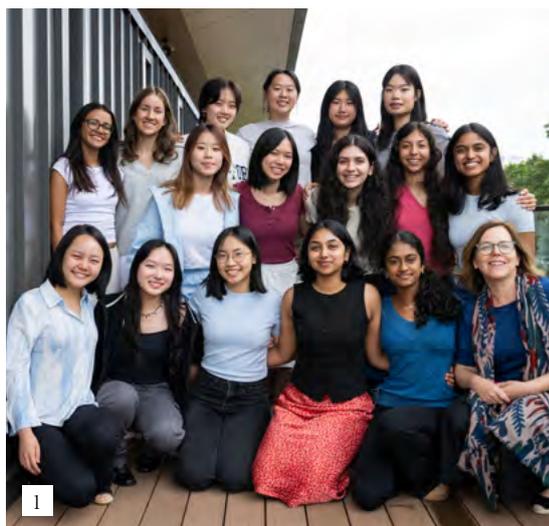


Principal Mrs Lisa Brown with Elaine Huang who achieved Meriden's top ATAR of 99.80

### Excellence in Languages

Meriden students excelled in HSC Languages with five students achieving top-five placings in the state. Abisha Thevarajah placed 1st in Spanish Beginners; Michelle Cho placed 2nd in Japanese Beginners; Isabella Rajah Tapia placed 2nd in Spanish Continuers; Grace Shen placed 4th in Chinese Extension; and Teresa Yang placed 5th in French Continuers.

The top band was attained by 100% of students in French Continuers and Spanish Beginners. Excellent results were also achieved in Chinese in Context, Chinese and Literature and Chinese Extension with all students achieving in the top two bands.



**1** Head of Languages, Ms Teresa Alonso-Lasheras with (back row) Isabella Rajah Tapia, Emma Lubke, Rachel Xie, Kylie Lin, Grace Shen, Jasmine Luo; (middle row) Jessie Lin, Zoe Chan, Nidhi Nellore, Zara Gupta, Roopsha Dutta; (front row) Teresa Yang, Cassandra Seeto, Elaine Huang, Abisha Thevarajah and Jodhi Kanthan



**2** Mrs Lisa Brown congratulates Abisha Thevarajah who placed first in the state in Spanish Beginners

## Excellence in Performing Arts

Meriden's results in HSC Music were exceptional. All students achieved the top band in Music 1 and Music Extension, with five students achieving a perfect score of 100% in Music Extension. Claire Chan placed 5th in the state in Music 1. Eleven students in Music 2 achieved Band 6.

Our musicians also excelled in their HSC performances, compositions and musicology works. A total of 16 students were nominated for ENCORE, the annual showcase of exemplary HSC performances and compositions held at the Sydney Opera House. The nominees included: Claire Chan, Erin Du, Talia Jee, Evangeline Lee, Jessie Lin, Jasmine Luo, Nidhi Nellore, Teresa Yang and Rita Yeung for Performance; Chloe Arnold, Danielle Berkmann, Zoe Chan, Talia Jee, Eleanor Kenyon and Nidhi Nellore for Music 2 Composition; Erika Lee for Music 2 and Music Extension Composition; and Priya Bains, Talia Jee, Nidhi Nellore and Elisabeth Starling for Musicology.

Violinist Teresa Yang was selected to perform at the ENCORE concert at the Sydney Opera House in March 2025.

In Drama, Zara Gupta's moving performance of the monologue, *A Chess Affair*, was nominated for OnSTAGE, the showcase of exemplary major works by HSC Drama students across NSW.



- 1** Music 1 students Lucinda Russell, Elisabeth Starling, Evangeline Lee and Claire Chan
- 2** Ms Bridget Hann with her Music 2 students (from top left) Jasmine Luo, Erin Du, Eleanor Kenyon, Nidhi Nellore, Zoe Chan, Jessie Lin, Teresa Yang, Talia Jee and Erika Lee
- 3** Zara Gupta in her HSC Drama performance



## Excellence in Community and Family Studies

Strong results in Community and Family Studies saw Roopsha Dutta place 10th in the state and 95% of students achieve in the top two bands.

Roopsha Dutta with her Community and Family Studies teacher Mrs Vanessa Kirolos, Dean of Community Learning

## Excellence in English

English results at Meriden are consistently strong. In the English Advanced Course, 93% of students achieved in the top two bands and students of English EAL/D achieved an average that was 18 marks above the state average.

English Extension 1 students (back row) Talia Jee, Rachel Xie, Elsie Starling, Anjali Kailasanathan and Lucinda Russell; (front row) Nynia Nguyen, Cassandra Seeto, Suhani Patel and Alicia Wang with Mr Tim Archer, Head of English



## Excellence in Mathematics

In Mathematics Extension 2, a remarkable 100% of students attained a notional Band 6. Mathematics Standard students also achieved excellent results with the cohort 15 marks above the state average.

Overall, Meriden ranked 4th in the state in Mathematics Standard 2 and 17th in the state in Mathematics Advanced, Extension 1 and Extension 2.

Mathematics students (back row) Erin Du, Kylie Lin, Evangeline Lee, Shravya Garg, Eleanor Kenyon; (middle row) Teresa Yang, Crystal Fu Chen, Victoria Li, Erica Ng; (front row) Elaine Huang, Reiaura Ling, Seeya Naik Panvelkar and Abisha Thevarajah with Mr Tobias Cooper, Head of Mathematics



## Excellence in Design and Creative Arts

Our Design and Technology students continue to create exciting work. The major works by Zara Chan, Maya Rachel David and Tina Tian were all nominated for inclusion in the annual SHAPE exhibition.

In Visual Arts, the outstanding works by Natalia Vavoulas and Rachel Xie were selected for the prestigious ARTEXPRESS exhibition and will be exhibited at art galleries across NSW.

Final results in Design and Technology were strong, with 100% of students achieving the top two bands.

Visual Arts results were also impressive with 94% of students achieving in the top two bands. In Food Technology, the Meriden average was 17 marks above the state average. It was an excellent performance by all students, with 91% of students in the top two bands.



**1** Rachel Xie whose major work was selected for ARTEXPRESS and Zara Chan who was nominated for SHAPE with Head of Design and Creative Arts, Ms Gillian Legge  
**2** Food Technology students Jacinda Tjiantoro, Claire Chan, Suhavi Bhatia, Scarlett Brown, Mia St George and Rachael Quek with their teacher Mrs Vicki Sheehan, Dean of Staff

## Excellence in Academic and Sports Performance

Several graduates from the Class of 2024 are considering offers from leading universities in the USA, UK and South-East Asia.

Three rising stars in sport, Lucy Levenberg-Penkliis, Miranda Xu and Aaniyah Bhola have received confirmation of places at USA universities and will commence their studies in 2025. Lucy has been accepted into Harvard University where she plans to study neuroscience and will represent the university in water polo.

Tennis ace Miranda Xu has been accepted into the University of Southern Mississippi, while up-and-coming golfer, Aaniyah Bhola, will attend Oral Roberts University.



1



2

- 1 Lucy Levenberg-Penkliis
- 2 Miranda Xu

# Some of Meriden's high flyers...



## Elaine Huang

ATAR 99.80

*HSC All-Round Achiever*  
Dux of the School  
At Meriden since  
Pre-Kindergarten  
*Prefect 2024*

### SUBJECTS STUDIED

Chinese Continuers  
Economics  
English Advanced  
Mathematics Extension 1  
Mathematics Extension 2  
Physics



## Talia Jee

ATAR 99.75

*HSC All-Round Achiever*  
Nominated for ENCORE  
At Meriden since Year 2  
*Prefect 2024*

### SUBJECTS STUDIED

English Advanced  
English Extension 1  
Legal Studies  
Mathematics Extension 1  
Mathematics Advanced  
Music 2  
Music Extension



## Abisha Thevarajah

ATAR 99.75

*HSC All-Round Achiever*  
1st in the State in  
Spanish Beginners  
At Meriden since Year 7

### SUBJECTS STUDIED

Chemistry  
English Advanced  
Mathematics Extension 1  
Mathematics Extension 2  
Physics  
Spanish Beginners



## Erin Du

ATAR 99.65

*HSC All-Round Achiever*  
Nominated for ENCORE  
At Meriden since Year 6

### SUBJECTS STUDIED

English Advanced  
Mathematics Extension 1  
Mathematics Extension 2  
Music 2  
Music Extension  
Physics



## Teresa Yang

ATAR 99.60

Head Prefect  
5th in the State in French  
Continuers  
Selected for ENCORE  
At Meriden since Year 7

### SUBJECTS STUDIED

English Advanced  
French Continuers  
Mathematics Extension 1  
Mathematics Extension 2  
Music 2  
Music Extension



## Seeya Naik Panvelkar

ATAR 99.55

*HSC All-Round Achiever*  
At Meriden since Year 7

### SUBJECTS STUDIED

Biology  
Economics  
English Advanced  
Mathematics Extension 1  
Mathematics Extension 2  
Physics



## Seeun Lee

ATAR 99.45

*HSC All-Round Achiever*  
At Meriden since Year 9

### SUBJECTS STUDIED

Economics  
English Advanced  
Geography  
Mathematics Extension 1  
Mathematics Extension 2  
Physics



## Alicia Wang

ATAR 99.40

*HSC All-Round Achiever*  
At Meriden since Year 7

### SUBJECTS STUDIED

English Advanced  
English Extension 1  
English Extension 2  
Mathematics Extension 1  
Mathematics Advanced  
Modern History  
Physics



## Shrayva Garg

ATAR 99.30

*HSC All-Round Achiever*  
At Meriden since Year 5

### SUBJECTS STUDIED

Biology  
Chemistry  
Economics  
English Advanced  
Mathematics Extension 1  
Mathematics Extension 2



## Nidhi Nellore

ATAR 99.20

*HSC All-Round Achiever*  
Nominated for ENCORE  
At Meriden since Year 5  
*Prefect 2024*

### SUBJECTS STUDIED

Chemistry  
English Advanced  
English Extension 1  
French Continuers  
Mathematics Advanced  
Music 2  
Music Extension



### Crystal Fu Chen

ATAR 99.15  
*HSC All-Round Achiever*  
At Meriden since Year 7

**SUBJECTS STUDIED**  
Chemistry  
Economics  
English Advanced  
Mathematics Extension 1  
Mathematics Extension 2  
Physics



### Erica Ng

ATAR 99.10  
*HSC All-Round Achiever*  
At Meriden since Kindergarten

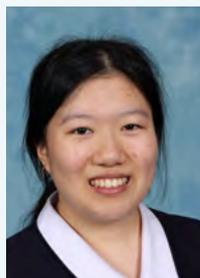
**SUBJECTS STUDIED**  
Biology  
Chemistry  
English Advanced  
Mathematics Extension 1  
Mathematics Extension 2



### Grace Shen

ATAR 99.10  
*HSC All-Round Achiever*  
4th in the State in Chinese Extension  
At Meriden since Year 7

**SUBJECTS STUDIED**  
Chinese Continuers  
Chinese Extension  
Economics  
English Advanced  
English Extension 1  
Mathematics Extension 1  
Mathematics Advanced



### Reiaura Ling

ATAR 99.05  
At Meriden since Year 7

**SUBJECTS STUDIED**  
Chemistry  
Chinese Continuers  
English Advanced  
Mathematics Extension 1  
Mathematics Extension 2



### Chloe Xiong

ATAR 99.00  
*HSC All-Round Achiever*  
At Meriden since Year 10

**SUBJECTS STUDIED**  
English Advanced  
Legal Studies  
Mathematics Extension 1  
Mathematics Extension 2  
Physics



### Sophia Mak

ATAR 98.95  
*HSC All-Round Achiever*  
At Meriden since Year 8

**SUBJECTS STUDIED**  
Biology  
Chemistry  
Chinese in Context  
English Advanced  
Mathematics Advanced  
Mathematics Extension 1



### Anjali Kailasanathan

ATAR 98.95  
*HSC All-Round Achiever*  
At Meriden since Year 3  
*Prefect 2024*

**SUBJECTS STUDIED**  
Chemistry  
Economics  
English Advanced  
English Extension 1  
English Extension 2  
Mathematics Advanced  
Mathematics Extension 1



### Lucy Luo

ATAR 98.80  
At Meriden since Year 7

**SUBJECTS STUDIED**  
Economics  
English Advanced  
English Extension 1  
English Extension 2  
Legal Studies  
Modern History  
History Extension



### Michelle Cho

ATAR 98.70  
At Meriden since Year 7  
2nd in the State in Japanese Beginners

**SUBJECTS STUDIED**  
Business Studies  
Economics  
English Advanced  
Japanese Beginners  
Mathematics Advanced  
Mathematics Extension 1



### Zoe Chan

ATAR 98.65  
Nominated for ENCORE  
At Meriden since Year 9  
*Prefect 2024*

**SUBJECTS STUDIED**  
Biology  
English EAL/D  
Mathematics Advanced  
Mathematics Extension 1  
Music 2  
Music Extension  
Spanish Beginners



### Rachel Xie

ATAR 98.65  
*HSC All Round Achiever*  
Selected for ARTEXPRESS  
At Meriden since Year 7  
*Prefect 2024*

**SUBJECTS STUDIED**  
Chinese Continuers  
English Advanced  
English Extension 1  
English Extension 2  
Mathematics Extension 1  
Mathematics Advanced  
Visual Arts



### Rita Yeung

ATAR 98.65  
Nominated for ENCORE  
At Meriden since Year 7  
*Prefect 2024*

**SUBJECTS STUDIED**  
English Advanced  
Latin Continuers  
Latin Extension  
Mathematics Advanced  
Mathematics Extension 1  
Music 2  
Physics

# Performance in HSC subjects

The performance of each girl in each of her HSC subjects is indicated in levels, called Bands, from 1 to 6. Bands 5 and 6 are the highest levels. The table below shows the HSC subjects studied at Meriden in 2024, and achievement levels of the girls in these subjects.

COURSE	% IN BANDS 5 & 6 AT MERIDEN	% IN BANDS 5 & 6 IN STATE	MERIDEN'S TOP MARKS IN EACH COURSE	COURSE	% IN BANDS 5 & 6 AT MERIDEN	% IN BANDS 5 & 6 IN STATE	MERIDEN'S TOP MARKS IN EACH COURSE
Ancient History	85.72	37.29	95	History Extension	100	86.43	48*
Biology	77.36	35.59	95	Hospitality	100	51.03	93
Business Studies	90.32	37.45	95	Japanese Beginners	100	39.77	98
Chemistry	66.67	38.82	95	Latin Continuers	75.00	91.15	93
Chinese Continuers	90.91	78.80	97	Latin Extension	100	100	48*
Chinese in Context	100	93.81	97	Legal Studies	100	43.58	95
Chinese and Literature	100	75.79	90	Mathematics Advanced	78.95	50.03	98
Chinese Extension	100	95.89	48	Mathematics Extension 1	96.49	80.33	97
Community and Family Studies	94.73	35.84	97	Mathematics Extension 2	100	83.40	96
Design and Technology	100	48.04	95	Mathematics Standard 2	80.00	28.75	97
Drama	94.12	61.91	92	Modern History	89.47	39.23	95
Economics	77.42	51.57	95	Music 1	100	67.58	99
Engineering Studies	100	32.12	93	Music 2	100	84.22	98
English Advanced	92.81	66.57	96	Music Extension	100	97.18	50*
English EAL/D	100	24.88	92	Personal Development, Health, Physical Education	91.66	34.97	93
English Extension 1	100	95.50	49*	Physics	80.95	38.32	93
English Extension 2	90.00	87.35	48*	Science Extension	100	81.57	43
English Standard	0	13.41	78	Society and Culture	100	45.35	95
Food Technology	90.91	35.42	98	Spanish Beginners	100	57.90	98
French Continuers	100	63.05	98	Spanish Continuers	100	65.51	96
French Extension	100	89.26	43*	Studies of Religion 1	93.34	43.80	50*
Geography	88.00	37.97	95	Visual Arts	93.75	66.94	96

\* MARK OUT OF 50

# HSC highlights from previous years

ATAR	2023 % OF MERIDEN STUDENTS	2022 % OF MERIDEN STUDENTS	2021 % OF MERIDEN STUDENTS	2020 % OF MERIDEN STUDENTS	2019 % OF MERIDEN STUDENTS
95+	38%	31%	36%	38%	35%
90+	63%	52%	56%	58%	53%

## Over recent years, Meriden students have received top placings in the state in the following subjects:

### 1st Place

- Biology
- Chinese and Literature
- Chinese in Context
- English EAL/D
- Food Technology
- Hospitality
- Japanese Beginners
- Music 2
- Music Extension
- Senior Science
- Science Extension
- Spanish Beginners

### 2nd Place

- Chinese and Literature
- Chinese in Context
- Community and Family Studies
- English Extension 1
- Japanese Beginners
- Latin Continuers
- Physics
- Science Extension
- Spanish Beginners

### 3rd Place

- Biology
- Chemistry
- Chinese Continuers
- English Extension 1
- History Extension
- Japanese Beginners
- Mathematics
- Spanish Beginners

### 4th Place

- Business Studies
- Chinese and Literature
- Chinese in Context
- Community and Family Studies
- English EAL/D
- English Extension 1
- Latin Extension
- Mathematics Standard 2

### 5th Place

- Chemistry
- Hospitality
- Modern History
- Music 2
- Physics
- Science Extension

### 6th Place

- Biology
- English as a Second Language
- Food Technology
- Senior Science

### 7th Place

- Food Technology
- History Extension

### 8th Place

- English Advanced
- English EAL/D
- Mathematics Extension 1

### 9th Place

- Community and Family Studies
- Economics
- Engineering Studies
- History Extension
- Latin Continuers
- Mathematics Advanced
- Studies of Religion II

### 10th Place

- English EAL/D
- Food Technology
- Mathematics Extension 2

## Tertiary study

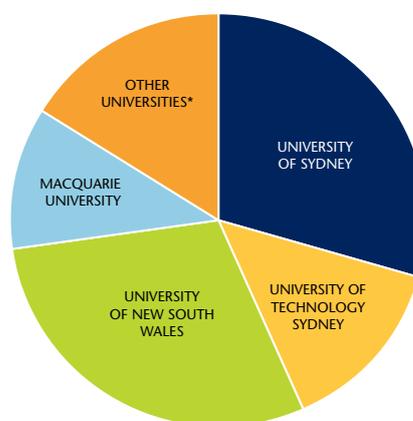
### Tertiary Courses

The most popular tertiary courses chosen by Meriden students over recent years (in alphabetical order)

- |   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| – Architecture  | – Law, International Studies |
| – Arts, Communications, Media                               | – Liberal Studies            |
| – Commerce, Business, Finance                               | – Medicine                   |
| – Design, Architecture                                      | – Midwifery, Nursing         |
| – Economics, Accounting                                     | – Music, Performing Arts     |
| – Education   | – Science, Psychology        |
| – Engineering – biomedical, civil and mechanical            | – Speech Pathology           |
| – Human Movement, Exercise Science, Nutrition and Dietetics | – Sport Science              |
|   | – Visual Arts and Fine Arts  |

### University Offers

Preferred university destinations for Meriden's HSC students over recent years



\* Includes local, interstate and international universities

# Excellence abounds...

## Debating

### Archdale Debating

Two Year 8 Meriden teams won their respective divisions in the Archdale Debating Competition, and the Juniors team was runner-up in its division.

The victorious teams include 8A: Alice Feng, Serena Li, Danielle Kim and Yumi Takusagawa; 8B: Misha Jha, Noemi Snelling, Mandy Shi, Rochelle Tao, Mia Wu and Ariana Zhang.

This year, five out of Meriden's eight teams qualified for the quarter-finals. Overall, Meriden finished third in the Archdale Shield.



**1** Danielle Kim, Yumi Takusagawa, Serena Li and Alice Feng  
**2** Ariana Zhang, Misha Jha, Rochelle Tao, Noemi Snelling, Mia Wu and Mandy Shi



## Drama

### Sport for Jove Shakespeare Carnival

The Sport for Jove Shakespeare Carnival is a competition that tests Drama students on their knowledge of Shakespearean literature and performance. Students also employ creative techniques to develop original performances based on Elizabethan language conventions.

Sienna Howard and Elissa Freney (Year 10) received a joint first place prize for their duologue from *Macbeth*: Act 1, Scene 7. On stage, they captured the manipulation of Lady Macbeth and the corrupting nature of power.

Sienna and Elissa's performance also earned them a place on stage at the Shakespeare Carnival state finals.



Sienna Howard and Elissa Freney

## English

### ICAS English Awards

Kitty Gai (Year 9) and Mila Ke (Year 7) were presented with University of NSW Medals for their achievement in the ICAS English examinations. These prestigious medals are awarded to students who receive the top score in their age group globally.

This year, 13 Meriden students received High Distinctions in ICAS English: Claire De Lany, Tracy Hu, Lillian Mai, Lila Powell, Vicky Qian, Jessie Xu, Lily Yang and Ella Zhang (Year 7); Alice Feng and Yumi Takusagawa (Year 8); Miriam Shin and Anusha Viswanathan (Year 9); and Jean Xu (Year 10).

### John Locke Essay Competition

Kitty Gai (Year 9) was shortlisted for the prestigious John Locke Essay Writing Competition this year.

This was the second year in a row that a Meriden student has been shortlisted for this highly competitive international competition, which challenges students to critically analyse and explore questions on economics, history, law, philosophy, psychology, politics and theology.

In her essay, Kitty grappled with sociological issues around autonomy and intelligence to answer why increases in IQ decrease the likelihood of women getting married but increase the likelihood for men.



Kitty Gai and Mila Ke

## Social Science

### Australian Geography Competition

The Australian Geography Competition assesses students' geographical knowledge and skills.

Meriden students participated in the Australian Geography Competition this year with some outstanding results, including Kitty Gai and Ashley Shu (Year 9), finishing in the top 1% in Australia.

### Tax, Super + You Competition

Angelin Chen, Chloe He and Diya Maninathan (Year 10) together entered the Tax, Super + You Competition, run by the Australian Taxation Office. The competition encourages students to put together a creative project highlighting the role of superannuation and the impact it has on our community.

Angelin, Chloe and Diya's video entry placed in the top three entries in the Senior category, earning \$1,000 in prize money for themselves and another \$1,000 for Meriden.



Kitty Gai and Ashley Shu

## High Potential Learning

### da Vinci Decathlon

The da Vinci Decathlon is a rigorous academic competition designed to challenge and stimulate the minds of high potential students in Years 7 to 11 in ten different subjects.

This year, the Meriden Year 9 team comprising Lisa Chen, Eva Gao, Olivia Kim, Yiru Li, Vivian Liao, Amelia Von, Jasmine Yang and Chloe Zhou, performed outstandingly, and were named State Champions in their division against 57 other teams, earning them progression to the National Championship.

At the National Championship, the team came first in English and second in Cartography, Ideation and Codebreaking, placing second overall.



### Tournament of Minds

Meriden's Tournament of Minds teams performed exceptionally at the NSW state finals. Our Languages and Literature team achieved honours in their division: Abigail Sidhom (Year 10, captain), Annie Li (Year 9), Thea Luttrell, Darcey Turvey (Year 8), Frances Errington and Hannah Mathew (Year 7).

Meanwhile, the STEM team achieved first place at the NSW state finals, earning a spot at the international finals held in November. The girls competed against the best teams from around Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Indonesia and the United Arab Emirates, displaying resilience and resourcefulness.

Congratulations to the team for their incredible achievement and representation of Meriden: Ila Bains, Sheiszen Ling, Hannah Xiao (Year 10), Cindy Shen, Isabella Zhu (Year 9), Annie Fang and Clare Yang (Year 7).



**1** Lisa Chen, Olivia Kim, Jasmine Yang, Vivian Liao, Amelia Von, Eva Gao, Yiru Li and Chloe Zhou  
**2** Annie Fang, Clare Yang, Hannah Xiao, Sheiszen Ling, Isabella Zhu and Ila Bains

## History

### Australian History Competition

Serena Li (Year 8) was named as a National and NSW State Champion of the Australian History Competition after achieving the highest score in the Grade 8 division.

This year, all Meriden students in Years 8 and 10 entered the competition. The cohort achieved some impressive results, with 23% of Year 8 and 31% of Year 10 students receiving High Distinctions or Distinctions.



Serena Li

### National History Challenge

Alice Feng (Year 8) was awarded best entry in New South Wales in the Year 8 category of the National History Challenge.

Students researched and wrote an essay on an area of interest related to the theme of 'Crisis and Response'.

Alice's essay explored the following question:

How were the responses of Byzantine authorities to the Plague of Justinian effective in lessening the severity of and ultimately ending the crisis?



Alice Feng

## Languages

### National Latin Examination

The National Latin Examination is an online examination conducted annually to over 100,000 Latin students in 27 different countries. Meriden's Year 9 Latin class sat this examination, obtaining some outstanding results; every student received a summa cum laude certificate as well as a gold medal, the highest possible award.

The Year 9 students who achieved this honour were: Nicole Cen, Lisa Chen, Luna Duan, Iris Gai, Kitty Gai, Zoe Ibrahim, Isabella Jiang, Olivia Kim, Annie Li, Yiru Li, Vivian Liao and Sylvia Zhao.

### ACER Assessment of Language Competence

The ACER Assessment of Language Competence (ALC) draws on students' sociocultural knowledge, cognitive skills and knowledge of the structure and purpose of language. It comprises two sections: Reading and Listening. To achieve a High Distinction in both sections of the ALC is a hallmark of an outstanding Languages student.

In Chinese, 19 students achieved High Distinctions in both Reading and Listening: Elvina Chen, Joanne Chen, Sarah Lin, Kelly Ouyang, Ashley Poon, Symphony Shi, Avery Sun, Luyin Wang and Bella Yao (Year 8); Vanessa Cheng, Chloe Du, Laraine Li, Amanda Lau, Annika Lou, Emily Seto, Amelia Von and Jenny Zhang (Year 9); Angela Feng and Hilary Lieu (Year 10).

In French, 12 students achieved High Distinctions in both Reading and Listening: Elizabeth Deller, Alice Feng, Emilia Ghaly, Karen Ghaly, Saisha Kaushik, Annabelle Kenyon, Andria Poon, Bethany Sidhom, Charlotte So and Mia Wu (Year 8); Eva Gao and Anusha Viswanathan (Year 9).

In Japanese, four students achieved High Distinctions in both Reading and Listening: Serena Li, Lucy Wang and Gabriella Wu (Year 8); and Sophia Noiret (Year 10).

### Australian Computational and Linguistics Olympiad

The Australian Computational and Linguistics Olympiad is the Australian round of an international competition which challenges students to solve a series of linguistics and coding problems under timed conditions.

A junior team of four Year 8 students obtained a gold certificate: Alice Feng, Adeline Hu, Serena Li and Mia Wu.

## Mathematics

### 62nd Annual UNSW School Mathematics Competition

The UNSW School Mathematics Competition has run each year since 1962, and assesses students' mathematical insight and ingenuity in a three-hour open book examination. A Distinction or Credit in this competition is an outstanding achievement.

Lillian Shen and Amelia Von (Year 9) achieved Credits, while Yiru Li (Year 9), who earned Distinction, also achieved a Prize Certificate awarded to the top 0.3% of students, her third successive award.

### Australian Mathematics Competition

The Australian Mathematics Competition is an engaging thirty-problem competition that demonstrates the importance and relevance of mathematics in students' everyday lives. Meriden students undertook the exams successfully, with 23 students receiving High Distinctions across Years 7 to 11.

The students who earned High Distinctions were: Mila Ke, Tiffany Kouhis, Alice Mi, Adelle Naidoo, Vicky Qian, Angel Yang and Ella Zhang (Year 7); Alice Feng, Adeline Hu, Yumi Takusagawa, Mia Wu and Amelia Von (Year 8); Yiru Li, Lillian Shen, Cindy Shen and Ashley Shu (Year 9); Angelin Chen, Diya Maninathan and Nishkala Shivashankaran (Year 10); Melody Chia, Calleigh Chow, Victoria Wu and Emily Yang (Year 11).

### AMT Maths Challenge

The AMT Maths Challenge aims to foster a greater awareness and interest in the power of Mathematics, as well as a joy in solving unusual problems. The Challenge runs over several weeks, with girls solving six individual problems. This year, Meriden received outstanding results with 35 students receiving High Distinctions.

The students who earned High Distinctions were: Angel Chen, Alice Du, Jialu Gao, Mila Ke, Mia Liu, Angel Yang, Clare Yang, Cynthia Yu and Ella Zhang (Year 7); Simrita Baddam, Alice Feng, Sophia Kanbour, Serena Li, Mandy Shi, Bethany Sidhom, Rochelle Tao and Mia Wu (Year 8); Cynthia Bui, Lisa Chen, Ashly Chu, Eva Hu, Olivia Kim, Suan Lee, Yiru Li, Vivian Liao, Emily Ng, Cindy Shen, Lillian Shen, Ashley Shu, Chanelle Tiranatvitayakul, Amelia Von, Chloe Zhou and Isabella Zhu (Year 9); Diya Maninathan and Naomi Riaz (Year 10).

### Australian Intermediate Mathematics Olympiad

The Australian Intermediate Mathematics Olympiad is a challenging four-hour test, designed to stretch talented students, giving an opportunity for them to be recognised and enhance their enjoyment and knowledge of mathematics.

Congratulations to the following students for achieving High Distinctions in this prestigious competition: Cindy Shen, Lillian Shen and Amelia Von (Year 9).

## Performing Arts

### AMEB Examinations

Many Meriden musicians completed examinations across all instruments, voice and musicianship this year.

Six students received their Licentiate Diplomas this year: Symphony Shi on Piano (Year 8); Eva Gao on Cello, Tina Dong on Viola and Chanelle Tiranatvitayakul on Piano (Year 9); Nerissa Du on Violin (Year 10); and Ellie Dong on Piano (Year 11).

Three students received Associate Diplomas: Shirley Feng on Violin and Sarah Lin on Piano (Year 8); and Chanelle Tiranatvitayakul on Violin (Year 9).

Additionally, Jenny Li (Year 6) earned her Certificate of Performance on Cello.

- 1 Eva Gao and Chanelle Tiranatvitayakul
- 2 Teresa Yang
- 3 Music Captain Erika Lee and the Senior School Ensemble Captains with their Eisteddfod trophies



## Sydney Eisteddfod

Meriden ensembles claimed seven first places at the 2024 Sydney Eisteddfod across both Senior School and Junior School, with Symphony Orchestra, Sinfonia, Madrigals, Senior Singers, Years 5 and 6 Choir, Year 2 Choirs and Junior School Chamber Strings all winning their divisions. Meanwhile, Big Band and Jazz Combo earned second place for their performances.

Following these performances, the Years 5 and 6 Choir and Senior Singers were invited to perform at the 2024 Sydney Eisteddfod Choral Championships. The Years 5 and 6 Choir achieved second place in the John Lamble Foundation Australasian Championship for Youth Choirs, competing against groups across Kindergarten to Year 12. Meriden Senior Singers placed first in the Australasian Open Choral Championship, up against professional adult choirs.

## Music competitions and programs

Symphony Shi (Year 8) was named as a finalist in the Sydney Concert Orchestra Concerto Competition. She was awarded a Platinum Prize and Outstanding Technique Special Award in the PicaSchubert International Music and Art Competition, and first place in the Junior Category of the American Protégé International Piano and Strings Competition.

Gabriella Wu (Year 8), Sharon Zhao (Year 10) and Teresa Yang (Year 12) participated in the semi-finals of the Ku-Ring-Gai Philharmonic Orchestra (KPO) Concerto Competition.

Teresa advanced to compete in the finals, performing the first movement of Bartok's *Violin Concerto No. 2*. Teresa's performance was outstanding, and she was the clear overall winner of the competition, receiving \$5,000 in prize money and an engagement to perform with the KPO. She was also awarded the Emily Sun Violin Prize, which consists of a violin from Emily Sun's private collection for loan of up to three years to support her emerging career as a professional violinist.

Isadora Tang (Year 10) was selected from a large group of emerging musicians to participate in the Australian Romantic and Classical Orchestra's Young Mannheim Symphonists National Academy.

Pianist Emma Rose Koeswandy (Year 8) competed in many festivals and competitions around the world in 2024. She competed in the International Music Festival in Romania, performing four recitals and was awarded first place in the Open Age category. She was also awarded the 2024 Steinway and Sons Management Choice Award. Emma Rose participated in four categories of the Wollongong Eisteddfod and placed first in three different categories. She was chosen from over 500 pianists to travel to Singapore for the Piano Island International Competition. Finally, she participated in the PicaSchubert Piano and Strings Competition and achieved a Gold Prize and two Platinum Prizes.



## Research and Critical Thinking

### Sydney Philosothon

The Sydney Philosothon is an interschool event hosted by the NSW Philosophy in Schools association.

Students engaged in three Community of Inquiry discussions, exploring whether it is ethical to breach someone's privacy for the sake of safety and security, whether you have the right to believe whatever you want, and the nature of reality in the online world versus the real world.

The Meriden team consisted of Sydney Nguyen, Sophie Yi and Maggie Zhang (Year 11), Juliette Owen, Anjali Popuri and Keira Taganesia (Year 10), and Ashley Shu (Year 9). At the end of the evening, Anjali was awarded second place in the Individual Philosopher category, competing in a field of around 60 students.

### Philosophy in Schools Essay Competition

Ila Bains (Year 10) placed third in the NSW Philosophy in Schools Essay Competition. Her achievement marks the sixth year in a row that Meriden students have placed in the top three of this rigorous competition.

Organised in collaboration with the Royal Society of NSW Southern Highlands, the state-wide competition challenges students in Years 10 to 12 to tackle complex philosophical questions.

- 1 Ashley Shu, Juliette Owen, Sophie Yi, Anjali Popuri, Ila Bains, Sydney Nguyen and Keira Taganesia
- 2 Ila Bains
- 3 Natalie Kim, Natasha Laggas, Youya Wei, Sophie Yi, Sophie Tan, Elena Whitfield and Olivia Kim



### Gold Parnassus Awards

Meriden students who have demonstrated deep learning through an original and evaluative critical analysis, report, creative work or invention that is based on extensive research are eligible for a Parnassus Award.

A Gold Parnassus Award is given to a student whose work displays outstanding rigour and merit, in both the finished product and the research process behind it. The quality of the work exceeds normal expectations for outstanding work at the student's present level of enrolment. The recipients of Gold Parnassus Awards in 2024 were: Olivia Kim (Year 9); Natasha Laggas, Natalie Kim, Sophie Tan, Elena Whitfield, Sophie Yi and Youya Wei (Year 11).



## Science

### Big Science Competition

The Big Science Competition is a fifty-minute exam for students in Years 7 to 10, testing students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Questions are set in real-life, contemporary contexts, making the exam relatable and interesting.

This year, 35 students achieved High Distinction, placing them in the top 5% of the State: Victoria Bi, Lucinda Buckley, Ella Hou, Mila Ke, Kate Le, Zoe Liddell, Elvia Lin, Lillian Mai, Alice Mi, Vicky Qian, Grace Song, Lydia Starling, Mo Su, Michelle Wu, Jessie Xu, Clare Yang, Lily Yang, Cynthia Yu, Ella Zhang, (Year 7); Alice Feng, Sophie Green, Serena Li, PeiQing Ling, Rochelle Tao, Luyin Wang, Emma Zhang, (Year 8); Yiru Li, Vivian Liao, Jasmine Yang, Jenny Zhang (Year 9); Mia Gu, Nicole Li, Sunae Park, Keira Taganesia, Jean Xu (Year 10).

Special mention goes to Luyin Wang, Jasmine Yang and Jenny Zhang for achieving a second High Distinction, and Jean Xu and Sunae Park for achieving a third High Distinction in the competition.

### Junior Science Olympiad

The challenging Junior Science Olympiad is an opportunity for top-performing students in Years 7 to 10 to test their skills against other elite scientists in Australia.

This year, six students achieved an impressive High Distinction for placing in the top 10% of entrants: Mila Ke and Alice Mi, Year 7; Serena Li, Alice Feng and PeiQing Lin, Year 8; and Lillian Shen, Year 9.

### ICAS Science

The ICAS Science competition tests students' scientific and analytic skills, requiring them to identify patterns and relationships in data, interpret the data and draw conclusions, as well as analysing data from secondary sources. The achievement of High Distinction in this competition places students in the top 1% of the state. The following girls received High Distinctions: Mila Ke, Mia Liu and Alice Mi (Year 7); Luna Duan, Kitty Gai, Ashley Shu and Amelia Von (Year 9).

### STA Young Scientist Awards

The Science Teachers' Association of NSW Young Scientist Awards celebrates the scientific and technical innovations of Kindergarten to Year 12 school students. Budding scientists receive awards for specific scientific projects across a number of different categories.

The following girls were presented with their awards at a ceremony held at the University of Technology Sydney: Kayla Chiu (Year 8), third in STANSW Young Scientist Investigation – Biology Years 7 to 8; Emilia Ghaly (Year 8), third in STANSW Young Scientist Investigation – Chemistry Years 7 to 8; Olivia Kim (Year 9), third in Innovations and Engineering Design Years 9 to 10; and Miriam Shin (Year 9), second in Innovations and Engineering Design Years 9 to 10.



1 Sunae Park and Jean Xu  
2 Jasmine Yang, Luyin Wang and Jenny Zhang  
3 Emilia Ghaly, Miriam Shin, Kayla Chiu and Olivia Kim  
4 Back row: PeiQing Lin and Lillian Shen  
Middle row: Alice Mi, Mila Ke and Serena Li  
Front: Alice Feng

## Speech

### Rostrum Voice of Youth Public Speaking Competition

Jasmine Yang (Year 9) and Elena Whitfield (Year 11) earned second places representing Meriden at the Rostrum Voice of Youth Speaking Competition, which requires students to deliver speeches on a topic of their choosing, reflecting critical engagement, research and public speaking skills.

Jasmine used the analogy of the Xupu bridge in Shanghai, which connects the historic banks of Xuhui, with the metropolitan Pudong district, to explain the importance of maintaining language connections between children of migrants and their families.

Elena suggested that our society's obsession with the future, and declining enrolments in History education, are impacting our ability to navigate the complexity of our present time.

### Junior Secondary Speaking Award

Mia Wu (Year 8) and Chloe Zhou (Year 9) were named winners of the Junior Secondary Speaking Award local finals against a challenging field of 16 competitors from schools across Sydney.

For the prepared section, Mia discussed the problem of gender bias in advertising, and Chloe tackled the problem of the underrepresentation of Asian cultures in the media. Both girls progressed to the regional final of this year's competition.

### Festival of Speech

The Festival of Speech is a debating and public speaking event that gives students the opportunity to speak up on issues they are passionate about.

The Junior Debating team reached the finals in their category, comprising Annie Li, Olivia Kim, Ashley Shu and Jasmine Yang (Year 9). The Current Affairs team placed fourth, the first time a Meriden team has placed in this category: Julia Chen and Kitty Gai (Year 9), Mia Pertsinidis (Year 10) and Angela Li (Year 11). Chloe Rae (Year 9) was fourth in the Individual Public Speaking section, the most competitive individual field.



1 Elena Whitfield and Jasmine Yang  
2 Mia Wu and Chloe Zhou

## STEM

### International Astronomy and Astrophysics Competition

For the first time this year, Meriden students competed in the International Astronomy and Astrophysics Competition (IAAC). The IAAC is an international competition that enables high-school and university students to prove their skills and unleash their creativity in the fields of astronomy and astrophysics.

Kate Nguyen (Year 8), Michelle Lu (Year 10), Mia Pertsinidis (Year 10), Anjali Popuri (Year 10), Reshmi Ramana (Year 10), Leah Har (Year 11), and Aiyang Wu (Year 11) achieved Bronze Honours.

Ella Zhang (Year 7) achieved Silver Honours, being placed in the top 15% of high-school and university students worldwide.

### Victor Chang

The Victor Chang School Science Award, by the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute, encourages secondary students' interest in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). The award honours Year 11 students excelling in their achievement and creativity.

This year, STEM Captains Annabelle Desmond and Anjana Kailasanathan both received this prestigious award for commitment towards independent student research projects and involvement in STEM.

### CREST Awards

In 2024, four Meriden scientists in Year 10 were awarded CSIRO Silver CREST Awards, while Anjali Popuri (also Year 10) achieved a Gold CREST Award for creativity and application towards her project. The Silver CREST Awards were given to Amy Chen, Jazara Navaratnam, Ananya Philip and Kiana Taylor.

To achieve a Silver CREST Award, students first write a proposal which is reviewed and approved by CSIRO scientists. They then complete a minimum of 30 hours on their project. On completion of the project, students receive a medal and certificate from CSIRO for their achievements. A Gold CREST requires students to work with a mentor, and that they spend 100 hours working on a scientific investigation or technological invention that is both original and has a specific, relevant and plausible real-world application.



1 Ella Zhang  
2 Annabelle Desmond and Anjana Kailasanathan



2

Meriden girls  
make their *marks.*



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