

'Rare opportunity': high school students graduate with a degree of experience at UON



By Alanna Tomazin

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High Performing Students program graduation, pictures supplied

HIGH school students have been given a taste of what it's like to study at the University of Newcastle.

160 students from 28 high schools graduated from the 2025 High Performing Students Program on Wednesday, July 23.

The program gives students the opportunity to engage in university-level education and complete a first-year university course while still in school.

St Clemente Catholic College year 9 student Maya Lewis said she was hesitant at the start of the program, not knowing what to expect.

"I thought it was going to be really hard, but I really liked getting to know lots of people that were interested in academics like me and connect," she said.

Maya said she has always wanted to go to university, and the High Performing Students Program had solidified that feeling.

"I hadn't really had much of an idea of what I want to do, but now I've done a course, I feel a bit more certain. I think I want to do business studies and maybe a law degree," she said.

She said she enjoyed the university experience, exploring the campus and hearing from academics and professors.

"I liked getting to have an actual professor and having that experience from someone who is really knowledgeable on a particular topic," she said.

Year 9 Merewether High School student Leonardo Legovich said he has always been interested in maths and was excited to pursue it through university.

"I've always wanted to further my understanding of mathematics, and uni seems like a great way to do that," he said.

Year 10 St Bede's Catholic College Chisholm student Henry Carpenter said he was impressed with the program.

"It's very rare to have this kind of opportunity. I was very excited. It really showed me a different form of maths than what I am used to. Fascinating," he said.

Henry plans to pursue a double degree in aerospace at the university and gain employment in the local industry.

The courses can be used as credit if students study a relevant degree at the university. It also gives them an introduction to what life is like on the Callaghan campus.

This year, enrolment numbers tripled with students from regional areas participating online.



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