

# STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE SPEECH: SOCIETY AND CULTURE AWARDS NIGHT



## Speech by Phoebe Britten, Central Coast Grammar School Society and Culture Awards Evening 3rd March, 2023

Mr Richard Neville, the Mitchell Librarian, invited guests from NESAs, the State Library, the Department of Education, the Association of Independent Schools, Catholic Schools NSW, the Professional Teachers Council NSW, friends of the late Dr. David Dufty, Society & Culture teachers, parents and friends, and most significantly the recipients of the Society & Culture Awards for the 2022 Higher School Certificate - it is my pleasure to have the opportunity to speak to you all this evening on behalf of this cohort.

I would firstly like to congratulate my fellow Society & Culture Award recipients for both the Top 10 in the state and High Distinction Personal Interest Projects, and recognise the dedication and effort that has led to their formidable academic achievement in this subject. I would also like to extend my gratitude to both the NSW State Library and Society & Culture Association for facilitating these awards, and thank them for their role in acknowledging student excellence today. As many of us here today know, achieving an exceptionally high result in a HSC course is no easy feat. Finally, it is imperative to recognise the wonderful people who have supported us in our achievements. To all families and the incredible HSC Society & Culture teachers here this evening, your kindness and your commitment in fostering a passion for the social sciences within us has not gone unnoticed, and many of us would not be here today without your guidance. These achievements are certainly yours too!

Like many of us, Society & Culture class was a time that I would always look forward to. It fostered an enriching degree of intellectual curiosity within me, where I was given the opportunity to form judgements on and dissect prevailing social phenomena, and develop my own cultural competence and active citizenship. Particularly, what I came to love about this course in my pattern of study, was the idea that there was never just one right answer. In examining anything, from the relationship between mass media and popular culture, or intersectionality and third wave feminism, you begin to appreciate the fact that there are always countless different ways of seeing and countless different ways of thinking. It is for this reason that I believe that HSC Society & Culture is a course like no other - where the content is transformed from an insulated syllabus outline on a page, to the poignant observation and analysis of our social and cultural world. To this day, I believe that this course reinforced my passion for social justice and humanities subjects, and like many of us, inspired an eager desire to learn that will be carried throughout our career journeys.

I hope in the future that the course does the same for its students, and empowers them with the knowledge to deeply understand the world. In our globalised environment, there are truly no greater skills than the ones that this course encourages us to develop - the ability to be a critical-thinker, to demonstrate socio-cultural literacy, to challenge the status-quo, to have empathy, and to embrace lifelong learning.

Congratulations again to all award recipients this evening.

Thank you.