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YOUNG PROBLEM-SOLVERS RISE TO THE CHALLENGE

Awards, STEM activities and plenty of fun were the common denominators as the brightest young mathematicians came together for the Newcastle Permanent Primary School Mathematics Challenge at Hunter Medical Research Institute (HMRI) on Friday.

The event brought together the top performing Year 5 and 6 students from six regions across NSW to recognise their achievements in the 2026 Newcastle Permanent Primary School Mathematics Competition, while students were also given the chance to put their problem-solving skills into practice through a series of hands-on STEM activities.

Students were given a behind the scenes tour of the HMRI research labs as well as taking part in activities including interactive maths games and joining HMRI researchers to extract DNA from a strawberry.

Newcastle Permanent Spokesperson Paul Juergens said the event was an opportunity to celebrate outstanding achievements while encouraging students to continue exploring where a passion for mathematics could take them.

"Congratulations to all of the students and teachers on their incredible achievements in this year's competition," Mr Juergens said.

"The Newcastle Permanent Primary School Maths Competition has had such a proud history of challenging young minds."

"We are excited to continue supporting an initiative that helps our communities thrive by encouraging curiosity, building confidence and allowing students to explore their passion for problem-solving."

Newcastle Permanent's Maths Competition Director Dr. Peter Howley was pleased to give the top achievers the chance to build on their skills through practical and engaging activities.

“Engaging young mathematicians with practitioners in the medical and statistical fields positively shapes the future”, Dr Howley said.

“This event was not only a celebration of high achievers but allowed students to participate in activities and learn how forensic anthropologists, medical scientists and those from other fields utilise statistical thinking, methods and expertise in practice.”

“The smiles, laughter, excitement and student questions on the day highlight the importance of these initiatives. Congratulations to the award winners and the many thousands of other primary school students who annually participate and test themselves in the competition.”

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