Dear Parents, Staff, Old Sydneians and other members of the SGS community,

I write with much regret to inform you that Dr John Vallance has decided that it is time for his tenure as Headmaster of Sydney Grammar School to come to an end.

With his customary thoughtfulness for the School and the Trustees, John has given us a long notice period. His Headmastership will end at the end of the first term in 2017.

John joined the Classics department in 1993 from Caius College, Cambridge University, where he had received his doctorate and taught for eight years. In 1999 he was appointed Headmaster.

It is rare in this time of constant change for a leader in any field to establish what we can rightly name an era. For the entire 21st century to date John has articulated and led a distinctive educational ethos at Sydney Grammar School that is easier to see and grasp in its practise than it is to name and describe.

John’s leadership has been characterised by clarity of vision, application of formidable intellect and constancy of purpose. He has built and led a common room that is unrivalled in (at least) Australian schooling and he has widened the range of learning experiences boys have at Sydney Grammar School. He has created a school that remains thoroughly grounded in the long Western tradition of scholarship and learning but which is nevertheless modern, adaptable and inclusive.

The Trustees are of course disappointed in John’s decision to leave but we respect and understand his desire to undertake new challenges and to do so when he is unquestionably at the top of his game.

The Trustees have begun the process to find John’s successor and we will communicate with the School community at appropriate times as that process proceeds.

We will have plenty of time to farewell John appropriately before early 2017. For now, and certainly as far as John is concerned, it is business as usual in a busy new school year.

Kind regards,

David Kirk
Chairman of Trustees