

Highlands School

Annual Report



2016



5576

Introduction

The Annual Report for 2016 is provided to the community of Highlands School as an account of the school's operations and achievements throughout the year.

It provides a detailed account of the progress the school has made to provide high quality educational opportunities for all students, as set out in the school plan. It outlines the findings from self-assessment that reflect the impact of key school strategies for improved learning and the benefit to all students from the expenditure of resources, including equity funding.

Ross Bowey

Principal

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Message from the Principal

This report is written with mixed emotion. As you all know I will be handing the leadership reigns to Mr James Opie at the beginning of 2017. Mr Opie and I have had long talks over the term four and I am confident in the extreme that he is committed to carrying on the culture of Highlands School. It would be remiss of me in the extreme not to give thanks to all the wonderful people who make Highlands School the remarkable place that it is. In particular I would like to thank the teaching staff of Ross Bull, Leah Bow, Ellen McKewon, Mark Garard, Steve Dunn, Sue Johnston, Janet John, Kevin Williams, Greg Lintern, Keith Pauley, Kelli Campbell, George Ballas, Brendan Barr, Renae Hooke, Katie Ellis and many more. Thank you for the best fourteen years teaching I have ever experienced. To the many parents and caregivers I would also like to say thank you for the support. The challenges were many and they were all made better by the support you offered relentlessly. The department staff were always ready to provide whatever was needed. You are a much under appreciated group who do such good work. And lastly to the people who made it all so worthwhile, "the kids". The stories will keep me entertained in my dotage in the nursing home (some decades away I hope!!). So as 2017 begins and a new chapter at Highlands opens "Onward and Upward".

Warm Regards

Ross Bowey

Principal Highlands School (ret)

School background

School vision statement

The fundamental purpose of flexible learning programs is to provide relevant and productive learning and teaching in order to enable viable futures for their students. Positive outcomes from education open doors – and for most young people in flexible learning programs, education and/or training qualifications provide one of the few avenues available to break the cycle of disadvantage impacting on

their life and career choices

The vision of Highlands in the next three years includes:

- continuing the success Highlands School already experiences while extending the capacity of the school to provide behaviour intervention and support planning to schools within the local systems,
- creating a new class for children with complex behaviour and mental health needs, and
- providing a Sanctuary Class for senior students with mental health disorders that inhibit attendance at regular schools.

School context

Highlands School is a School for Specific Purposes; predominantly for the re-engagement and intervention of students with significant behavioural disorders. The school has currently 5 classes with a new class soon to be established. There are 3 classes for students with significantly challenging behaviours, with the rest for students with a diagnosed suite of disabilities including Autistic Spectrum Disorder, mental health disorders and occasionally mild intellectual disability. These classes; considered Multi-categorical classes, represent new challenges to the school which has always been solely for behaviour disturbance. The staff and students are working collaboratively with our school community to ensure the safety and well-being of all of our students in a context of awareness around individual needs, interests and ability levels.

Arial">Davies, Lamb and Doecke (2011, pp.33–38) identify five core pedagogical strategies, each of which Highlands School utilises in engaging youth:

Arial">• Making learning less formal.

Arial">• Providing flexible learning options.

Arial">• Addressing literacy and numeracy skill development needs.

Arial;color:#67B52C">• Making learning applied and hands on.Arial">

Arial">• Offering programs that integrate technologies.

Self-assessment and school achievement

Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

For all schools (except those participating in external validation processes):

This section of the Annual Report outlines the findings from self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework, school achievements and the next steps to be pursued.

This year, our school undertook self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework. The framework supports public schools throughout NSW in the pursuit of excellence by providing a clear description of high quality practice across the three domains of Learning, Teaching and Leading.

Highlands School has been acknowledged by its peers as a school that demonstrates excellence in working successfully with the most difficult students across the state. The internal validation data supports this view.

Our self-assessment process will assist the school to refine the strategic priorities in our School Plan, leading to further improvements in the delivery of education to our students.

For more information about the School Excellence Framework:

<http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/about-the-department/our-reforms/school-excellence-framework>

For schools participating in external validation processes:

This section of the Annual Report outlines the findings from self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework, school achievements and the next steps to be pursued.

This year, our school undertook self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework and participated in an external validation. The framework supports public schools throughout NSW in the pursuit of excellence by providing a clear description of high quality practice across the three domains of Learning, Teaching and Leading. During the external validation process, an independent panel of peer principals considered our evidence and assessment of the school's progress, aligned with the standards articulated in the School Excellence Framework.

The results of this process indicated [insert a narrative of the progress achieved by the school across the domains of Learning, Teaching, and Leading. Schools may choose to use the information from their executive summary and the panel report to inform their narrative.]

Our self-assessment and the external validation process will assist the school to refine the strategic priorities in our School Plan, leading to further improvements in the delivery of education to our students.

For more information about the School Excellence Framework:

<http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/about-the-department/our-reforms/school-excellence-framework>

Strategic Direction 1

Alternate curricula opportunities for students; particularly disengaged and 'at risk' youth.

Purpose

Highlands School presents a flexible learning program for disengaged and predominantly 'at risk' youth. The school's primary aim is to be committed to stay flexible and responsive to change and open to creative solutions that best meet the learning needs of our students, staff and community.

The fundamental purpose of flexible learning programs is to provide relevant and productive learning and teaching in order to enable viable futures for their students.

- To extend pathways towards further education and work.
- Empower flexibility in staff to create a curriculum that is responsive to student's needs and goals.
- To extend the personal knowledge, commitment and perspectives of staff.

Overall summary of progress

2017 has been a very pleasing year with the website. At one point 4000 hits per month were recorded. Many resources were also added.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
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Next Steps

Essentially the best way forward in this endeavour is more of the same.

Strategic Direction 2

Alternate curricula opportunities for students; particularly disengaged and 'at risk' youth.

Purpose

Highlands School presents a flexible learning program for disengaged and predominantly 'at risk' youth. The school's primary aim is to be committed to stay flexible and responsive to change and open to creative solutions that best meet the learning needs of our students, staff and community.

The fundamental purpose of flexible learning programs is to provide relevant and productive learning and teaching in order to enable viable futures for their students.

- To extend pathways towards further education and work.
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- To extend the personal knowledge, commitment and perspectives of staff.

Overall summary of progress

2017 has been a very pleasing year for the website. This resource has been presented at conferences, schools and individually. Of particular note has been the addition to the resource by people external to the school.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
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Next Steps

As with the site itself the next steps seem to be more of the same.

Key Initiatives	Impact achieved this year	Resources (annual)
Low level adjustment for disability	Highlands School has successfully engaged students in a wide spectrum of disability.	Resources are acquired on a needs basis per student.
Socio-economic background	Many students with challenging socio-economic background are enrolled at Highlands School.	There has always been a willingness on the part of the staff to utilise resources effectively. The impact of this is simply student needs are met.

Student information

Student enrolment profile

Students	Enrolments			
	2013	2014	2015	2016
Boys	17	18	29	36
Girls	5	5	4	4

Highlands runs two discrete programs of three classes each. One program concentrates on secondary students who have behavioural issues which prevent them from accessing mainstream school. The other program concentrates on students from years five to twelve whose mental health issues prevent them from accessing mainstream school.

Workforce information

Workforce composition

Position	FTE*
Principal	1
Assistant Principal(s)	1
Classroom Teacher(s)	5.5
Teacher Librarian	0.2
School Administration & Support Staff	7.82
Other Positions	1.2

*Full Time Equivalent

While knowledgeable about indigenous culture there are no staff who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Teacher qualifications

All teaching staff meet the professional requirements for teaching in NSW public schools.

Teacher qualifications

Qualifications	% of staff
Undergraduate degree or diploma	100
Postgraduate degree	50

Professional learning and teacher accreditation

Highlands School's teachers have had many years of

experience. Consequently they are considered to be proficient teachers.

Financial information (for schools using OASIS for the whole year)

Financial information

This summary financial information covers funds for operating costs to <insert date> and does not involve expenditure areas such as permanent salaries, building and major maintenance.

Income	\$
Balance brought forward	205 030.33
Global funds	110 530.64
Tied funds	92 025.63
School & community sources	3 514.16
Interest	3 954.12
Trust receipts	557.20
Canteen	0.00
Total income	415 612.08
Expenditure	
Teaching & learning	
Key learning areas	7 453.45
Excursions	383.58
Extracurricular dissections	429.72
Library	0.00
Training & development	7 547.34
Tied funds	108 885.32
Short term relief	37 156.37
Administration & office	16 948.48
School-operated canteen	0.00
Utilities	22 013.69
Maintenance	4 324.32
Trust accounts	120.00
Capital programs	0.00
Total expenditure	205 262.27
Balance carried forward	210 349.81

A full copy of the school's financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the parent and/or community groups. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

Highlands School is a school small in number.

Parents/Caregivers, other agencies, departmental officials and educators from other schools are enthusiastically welcomed to the the school. As a result of this there is much interaction with those around us. Overwhelmingly there is a sense of positiveness surrounding Highlands School.

Policy requirements

Aboriginal education

Aboriginal education is integrated into the programs of Highlands School. One example is an Aboriginal Group that meets in the school every two weeks included all our students in a number of projects (one of which was the construction and installation of artefacts in the community.

Multicultural and anti-racism education

Multiculturalism, Anti-bullying and Anti-racism programs are integrated into the schools day. For example these aspects are triggered by day to day events and are then explored through a variety of forums. Other triggers for this is the use of pre-recorded material which have some or all of these themes central to the presentation.