

Highlands School

Annual Report



2017



5576

Introduction

The Annual Report for **2017** 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.

James Opie

Principal

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Message from the Principal

During 2017 Highlands School continued the flexible delivery of quality curricula and extra curricular educational programs for all students. Our committed passionate staff delivered a broad range of learning opportunities designed to empower our students and equip them for the challenges of the 21st century. Our school endeavours to establish a safe, supportive learning environment where all students have the opportunity to achieve their personal best and positive relationships exist across the school community. Highlands school is committed to working in collaboration with key stakeholders to optimise the delivery of quality educational programs.

2017 Highlights include:

- School camps to
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- Creation of flexible learning spaces to address the needs of our

MC student cohort

- Music Therapy Program
- Construction of a Playground/Reflection space
- MULTILIT Intensive Reading Program
- Establishment of a Student Representative Council
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- I would like to extend my sincere thanks for your support and continued assistance throughout the year.

I look forward to working with students, the Highlands staff team, parents and the broader school community in 2018.

School background

School vision statement

Highlands School is committed to working in collaboration with key stakeholders to optimise the delivery of quality educational programs. Our school provides a rigorous curriculum through the provision of challenging, relevant learning experiences, adjusted to address our student's diverse learning needs.

School context

Highlands School is a School for Specific Purposes (SSP) located in Mittagong on the Southern Highlands. The school has an enrolment of 42 students from Years 5–12 that exhibit challenging behaviours, emotional disturbance and/or Autism Spectrum Disorders(ASD).

The school consists of two campuses consisting of 3 classes. The Northern Campus caters for Behaviour Disordered (BD) students and the Southern Campus consisting of 3 Multi–categorical classes for students diagnosed with disabilities and mental health disorders.

Highlands School's alternative educational approach has a sustained focus on wellbeing, a balanced academic and functional curriculum and Individual Learning Plans for all students.

Although many students attend Highlands on a long term basis some students attend for a short term prior to transitioning to mainstream schools or education and training facilities.

Self-assessment and school achievement

Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

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 that in the School Excellence Framework(SEF) domains of **Learning, Teaching and Leading** Highlands School is operating at the **Delivering stage**.

On 12/09/2017 our school participated in external validation. In preparation for this meeting, the required body of evidence was prepared, reviewed and annotated.

The staff participated in a whole school staff meeting on 7/8/17 to undertake the SELF–ASSESSMENT mapping exercise against the elements of the School Excellence Framework.. Decisions were made by the staff regarding the priority area to include as evidence to validate the work and processes of Highlands School, particularly during 2017. During 2017 the school continued to implement the Strategic Direction described in the School Plan; Alternate curricula opportunities for students, particularly disengaged and 'at risk' youth.

The body of evidence indicates progress in this Strategic Direction. The body of evidence comprised ,The 2016 Highlands School Annual Report The 2015–2017 School Plan The 2017 School Plan Milestones The School Excellence Self–Assessment Survey The evidence organised is divided into 4 sets of artefacts in the following areas;1. Highlands Behaviour Focus Website 2. Differentiation 3. Real World Learning 4. Project Based Learning These sets described the work relating to the schools program that were agreed , by staff to be important in the context of the Schools Excellence Framework and the Validation Process.

In the domain of Learning:

The school developed a Wellbeing Policy to reflect our context and support wellbeing of our students socially, emotionally,academically and physically.

The timetable was reorganised to increase curriculum options available to our students.

Semester reports were reformatted to better inform parents/carers of students' progress.

Flexible and innovative learning spaces were created across the school.

In the domain of Teaching:

Teaching and learning within the classroom and outside environment features innovative, flexible delivery reflecting the Highlands unique and specific nature of student's learning needs.

The school's Professional Learning focussed on: Non-Violent Crisis Intervention, Strategies for Managing Abuse Related trauma, Mindfulness and Teaching students with Autism.

In the domain of Leading:

A range of purpose-built learning spaces have been developed utilising existing buildings and previously unused outdoor spaces to engage our students in lifelong learning experiences.

The Highlands Behaviour Focus Website has maintained its currency and behaviour workshops have been delivered to local schools by our Behaviour Website Manager. All feedback has been extremely positive.

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

For more information about the School Excellence Framework:

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/school-excellence-and-accountability/sef-evidence-guide>

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 create a curriculum that is responsive to student's needs and goals.
- To extend the personal knowledge and perspectives of staff.

Overall summary of progress

Our continued school-wide focus on Alternate Curricula Opportunities for Students has enabled us to move forward in the areas of student wellbeing and learning culture. The physical environment has been enhanced and school routines and timetables have been modified to better cater for the specific needs of students in a combined BD/MC setting.

Learning and support team processes have been enhanced through professional development and access to and contributing to the Behaviour Focus Website.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
The number of articles/resources added to the behavioural Focus Website, will increase by at least 10 percent.	Continuing employment of Brendan, Website Manager to maintain Behaviour Website Currency.	Number of articles/resources added to the Behaviour Focus Website has increased. Behaviour Focus Website teacher professional learning was presented to a range of mainstream schools.
100% of teaching staff will identify and engage with relevant research that can be effectively applied to the craft of teaching. 100% of teaching staff will be using BOTSES framework to direct the identification of relevant research.	Purchase interactive software programs to support student literacy and numeracy.	All teaching staff participated in Teaching and Learning Meetings, Staff Meetings and Faculty Meetings to discuss relevant research to improve their teaching practice.
Development of videos and Adobe connect courses that facilitate the effective management of behaviour at school, class and individual level.	External providers to create short film and music video. to support student wellbeing and promote positive pro-social student behaviour.	Improvement in Inter school connections to link teachers to resources that promote positive strategies and demonstrate numerous methodologies to assist with and supporting student behaviour.

Next Steps

- Staff training in Quality Teaching and Learning, differentiation, curriculum planning and dealing with students with complex behaviour needs.

- Develop a range of Professional Learning opportunities for Teachers to collaborate, have professional conversations and learn from each other's teaching practice using teacher observation
- Mindfulness training to be introduced across the school for both staff and students
- Conduct student and teacher Tell Them From Me surveys to determine student satisfaction and inform teaching practice.
- Continue to establish flexible, innovative learning spaces across the school.

Strategic Direction 2

Purpose

Overall summary of progress

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

**Improvement measures
(to be achieved over 3 years)**

**Funds Expended
(Resources)**

Progress achieved this year

Next Steps

Key Initiatives	Resources (annual)	Impact achieved this year
Low level adjustment for disability	Purchase craft materials Purchase STEM resources	Establishment of a sewing program for MC students STEM teaching and learning activities for MC students
Socio-economic background	Employment of additional SLSO to deliver music program Construction of flexible learning spaces Camps, excursions, cooking program Work preparedness program Construction of a playground/student reflection area	Number of articles/resources added to the Behaviour Focus Website has increased. Behaviour Focus Website teacher professional learning was presented to a range of mainstream schools. Implementation of a music therapy program for all students having a positive impact on student self regulation and wellbeing. Development of flexible learning spaces to address the learning needs of MC students

Student information

Student enrolment profile

Students	Enrolments			
	2014	2015	2016	2017
Boys	18	29	36	29
Girls	5	4	4	2

Workforce information

Workforce composition

Position	FTE*
Principal	1
Deputy Principal(s)	0
Assistant Principal(s)	1
Head Teacher(s)	0
Classroom Teacher(s)	5.52
Teacher of Reading Recovery	0
Learning & Support Teacher(s)	0
Teacher Librarian	0.2
Teacher of ESL	0
School Counsellor	1
School Administration & Support Staff	7.82
Other Positions	0.2

*Full Time Equivalent

No Highlands School staff identify as Indigenous.

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	0

Professional learning and teacher accreditation

All staff completed professional learning in MAPA, NCI, Project Air and Trauma Informed Practice. Executive and administrative staff completed additional training in

SCOUT and Financial Management Systems.

Financial information (for schools fully deployed to SAP/SALM)

Financial summary

The information provided in the financial summary includes reporting from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2017.

	2017 Actual (\$)
Opening Balance	200,766
Revenue	1,733,224
Appropriation	1,722,976
Sale of Goods and Services	250
Grants and Contributions	7,151
Gain and Loss	0
Other Revenue	0
Investment Income	2,846
Expenses	-1,748,854
Recurrent Expenses	-1,748,854
Employee Related	-1,599,766
Operating Expenses	-149,087
Capital Expenses	0
Employee Related	0
Operating Expenses	0
SURPLUS / DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR	-15,630
Balance Carried Forward	185,136

Financial summary equity funding

The equity funding data is the main component of the 'Appropriation' section of the financial summary above.

	2017 Actual (\$)
Base Total	397,977
Base Per Capita	12,269
Base Location	1,834
Other Base	383,874
Equity Total	76,310
Equity Aboriginal	6,549
Equity Socio economic	69,761
Equity Language	0
Equity Disability	0
Targeted Total	1,090,598
Other Total	135,056
Grand Total	1,699,941

Figures presented in this report may be subject to rounding so may not reconcile exactly with the bottom line totals, which are calculated without any rounding.

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.

School performance

HSC

The performance of students in the HSC is reported in bands ranging from Band 1 (lowest) to Band 6 (highest).

One student completed the HSC in 2017.

Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

Highlands School focuses on building positive relationship with our parents/carers and the community. Regular phone calls, ILP meetings, case conferences and multi-agency support meetings all enhance positive relationships. Parents/carers often express their thankfulness that a school like the Highlands is available.

This year we introduced a Student Council with our senior students. Through regular meetings we were able to introduce new activities, including remote controlled cars, to the school program and make changes to the timetable that students had suggested.

Teachers at Highlands School have a challenging yet rewarding profession. Staff meet morning and afternoon to discuss their students, their goals and

whole school objectives.

Policy requirements

Aboriginal education

In 2017 students were engaged in an Indigenous cooking program conducted by a local indigenous group. Activities included cooking with bush tucker foods and incorporating bush tucker into non-indigenous recipes. Students also participated in an environmental day conducted by the local council, where dreamtime legends and respect for the natural environment were promoted.

Multicultural and anti-racism education

Highlands School promotes multiculturalism inclusive events and the food technology program. Anti-racism is taught through class based activities and whole school projects. Policies and procedures are updated to reflect current requirements and training is provided to staff to meet our statutory requirements.