

Hunter River Community School

Annual Report



2017



5687

Introduction

The Annual Report for **2017** is provided to the community of **Hunter River Community 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.

Tracey Rapson

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Message from the Principal

I am proud of the achievements of all of our students and the ongoing success of the strategies being implemented by the school to create high quality learning experiences and to maximise student engagement.

Our continued success can be underpinned by key factors that promote quality teaching and learning programs that all members of the school learning community value and appreciate.

Firstly, the staff at Hunter River Community School are dedicated professionals who work collaboratively to provide an inclusive environment that facilitates individual learning and celebrates student achievement.

Our students are remarkable young people who demonstrate on a daily basis that having challenging and often complex disabilities, is no barrier when it comes to achievement and success.

Finally, Hunter River Community School enjoys tremendous support from our parent and local communities. This invaluable support enables our school to provide quality learning opportunities for every student.

I certify that the information provided in this report is the result of a rigorous school self-assessment and review process undertaken by all members of the school learning community and provides a genuine account of the school's achievements and areas for development

Tracey Rapson

School background

School vision statement

Hunter River Community School is committed to providing quality and adaptive education within an engaging and nurturing environment which values the cultural diversity of our community. Our core business is to provide all students with access to high quality education that is free from all forms of discrimination and disadvantage. We hold high expectations for all our students and aim to promote a culture of positivity through the provision of meaningful, relevant, caring and supportive learning experiences. We actively encourage and promote school culture underpinned by the beliefs of being safe, caring and being a learner.

WE ARE SAFE

WE CARE

WE LEARN

School context

Hunter River Community School is an established K–12 School for Specific Purpose (SSP), catering for the complex needs of 67 students with a moderate to severe intellectual disability and associated conditions. The school was relocated to a state of the art facility in Metford at the beginning of 2014.

The school serves a diverse population of students from six local government areas. There are currently 67 students attending the school, all of whom have high level support needs and complex communication disorders. The school has ten classes with each class staffed with a full-time Specialist Teacher and a School Learning Support Officer. The school population includes 20% of Aboriginal students and 15% of students in an Out of Home Care arrangement.

All students have a Personalised Learning Plan developed in conjunction with a Multi-Disciplinary Team, including parents, health care professionals, community agency professionals and special education consultants.

With a Family Occupation and Education Index (FOEI) of 148, the school receives equity funding to improve the learning outcomes of students from low socio-economic backgrounds.

As a result of ongoing school evaluation and reference to educational research our school priority areas focus on improved learning outcomes for students through, innovative student learning programs, quality teaching and leadership initiatives and enhancing supportive community engagement and participation opportunities.

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. 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.

In the Domain of Learning, an emphasis was placed on ensuring that students are engaged in quality, functional and future focussed learning experiences that promote engagement and assist students to reach their full potential and independence as successful individuals. Students who attend Hunter River Community School all require extensive curriculum differentiation to access educational opportunities and every student has a Personalised Learning Plan. Parents and carers are integral members of a multi-disciplinary Learning Support Team that meet regularly to discuss and review student priorities and future goals. All Personalised Learning Plans are involved in a mid-year review.

All members of the School Learning Community strongly believe, it was paramount to achieving success for students to

be given a voice and that they are treated as learners and respected members of the wider community. They are given a sense of belonging and purpose, they have their achievements celebrated and promoted in the wider community and they are acknowledged for their individual potential and strengths.

In the Domain of Teaching, an emphasis during 2017 has been on providing staff with a tool box of explicit skills to facilitate the development of high quality teaching and learning practises. These skills will promote students ability to achieve learning outcomes. Through explicit review of the wellbeing and curriculum documents, staff have been successful in designing engaging students programs that promote inclusion and success. One of the reasons that Hunter River Community School is so successful in meeting the needs of students with a disability is the school's commitment to best practise and to ensure that individual student needs are paramount in every decision. We believe that an increased focus on student centred learning will ensure that every student will achieve the skills that they need to live a full and valued life. Staff at Hunter River Community School will continue to be Instructional Leaders in the field of student centred learning and will demonstrate commitment in ensuring that Hunter River Community School remains a hub of Special Education expertise.

In the Domain of Leading, Hunter River Community School has focused on fostering our leaders of the future. Through a committed approach to building core skills, staff have been encouraged to plan their career pathways using the Performance Development Plan Tool. All staff and members of the school learning community were actively involved and contributed to the school planning process and have been encouraged to take on leadership roles in coordinating priority area committees. This inclusive process recognises that building leadership capabilities is critical when striving for successful school excellence.

Our self-assessment 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

STUDENT LEARNING –

Purpose

To ensure learning for all students is continuous K–12 and is based on challenging, high quality learning experiences supported by innovative technology access. To work together across all stages of learning to ensure consistent, high standard, shared professional practices.

Overall summary of progress

The staff at Hunter River Community School have continued to work collaboratively to ensure that every student is engaged in quality learning experiences.

Providing students with a voice is an essential goal for all staff. A personalised communication matrix has provided staff and families with a comprehensive tool to ensure that any communication system is tailored to individual needs. The focus on the communication for young people with complex needs has ensured that the learning community has developed a respect for student's innate communication styles.

Staff have continued to embed the principles of the Wellbeing Framework into school culture and this has had a positive impact on staff, student and learning community members wellbeing across a variety of environments

Students have participated in 'streamed' numeracy classes during the year and the 'Maths For Me' document has been implemented across all stages. the establishment of these classes have provided staff with an opportunity to teach explicit numeracy skills to students.

The Secondary school has engaged in 'streamed' science sessions which have focused on key elements of the curriculum, whilst embracing students individual learning requirements.

The School Excellence Framework has continued to be a value tool for all members of the learning community to monitor, assess and facilitate future direction. This tool has also provided staff with an opportunity to engage in professional dialogue and to reflect on school programs

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
All students will have a comprehensive communication matrix that reflects individual needs and communication strategies	Programs and initiatives have been funded under the Low Socio–Economic umbrella	During 2017, every students's communication system was reviewed under the lens of the Learning & Support Team. With most students having a speech therapist involved, each communication matrix was a collaborative tool. During 2017, emphasis was placed on students with complex needs, and these students innate communication was formalised and implemented across learning environments
Embedded knowledge of individual augmentative communication systems will facilitate increased levels of engagement and improved student outcomes.	This area was funded using the low socio economic funding band	Ensuring that all student stakeholders has explicit knowledge of student's individual communication systems has facilitated an improvement in student engagement across all learning environments.
Communication tools will be placed in Assisted Travel vehicles, facilitating greater communication and improved student behaviour.	Low socio economic funding has been used to facilitate this program	This program has ensured that students are able to effectively communicate with their Assisted Travel staff. This has not only provided Assisted Travel Staff with a deeper understanding of student's individual needs, but has enabled staff to effectively communicate with students during times of stress.
The student wellbeing framework	low socio economic funding	The embedding of student wellbeing framework and

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
and Principles will be embedded into school culture.		principles has ensured that a holistic approach to school planning has occurred.
Assessment tools for mapping student progress will be reviewed.	Low socio economic funding	The Student Assessment Tool has had a complete cycle of implementation. Teachers have used the tool to effectively map individual student indicator progress in all curriculum areas. This has facilitated a scaffold approach to future learning and planning

Next Steps

Student communication will always be an element of Hunter River Community School's core business. Individual communication matrix's will be reviewed in the Personalised Learning & Support Team Meetings twice yearly.

The Communication supports in Assisted Travel vehicles will be maintained and any new vehicles will be issued with a communication support document.

The Wellbeing Framework will continue to provide a lens under which current processes and practises are examined

Strategic Direction 2

QUALITY TEACHING AND LEADERSHIP

Purpose

To develop approaches which build on the capabilities of all teacher and leaders so they are involved in planning, and monitoring their own learning to increase their capacity to deliver high quality outcomes for all students.

Overall summary of progress

PBL strategies and programs have become an integral component of school culture. Students have responded positively to the "Leuca" awards and to the lessons that are being explicitly taught.

The implementation of the new Performance and Development Framework has facilitated teaching staff engaging in an explicit reflective process that is supporting the continuous development of all staff, with an individual focus and through a collaborative approach.

The Performance and Development Framework for non-teaching staff has also been implemented this year. Non-teaching staff have developed their first plans and aligned Professional Development to their goals

Staff have continued to develop their core understanding of Department of Education initiatives and the impact of those programs at Hunter River Community School. During 2017, Hunter River Community School administration staff engaged in explicit training in the new LMBR Finance Model and the school went 'Live' in Semester 2.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
All staff are engaged with the new Performance and Development Framework	This program was funded under the low socio economic umbrella	All staff engaged in planning for PDP during the year. For non-teaching staff, this was their first introduction to the framework. All Professional Learning is aligned with staff's PDP goals
All staff will implement identified features of PBL into daily teaching practice. The principles of PBL will be firmly embedded into school culture.	Low Socio Economic Rural/Remote	PBL principles have become embedded in school culture. All teachers are including the targeted lessons in their weekly timetables. Students and families have responded positively to the Leuca tokens and reward systems
All staff will demonstrate their knowledge of key DEC initiatives by aligning their professional goals and practices to key reforms	Professional Development funds Technology	During 2017, identified staff engaged in specific LMBR training in preparation for going "Live" in Semester 2. There were several upgrades to IT equipment in preparation of the new system
Teaching and Learning Programs will illustrate teaching staff's knowledge, understanding and commitment to National Curriculum guidelines and content	Professional development funds	Staff engaged in Professional Learning focusing on the implementation of National Curriculum guidelines and content

Next Steps

The PBL program will continue to be embedded into school core business. Weekly lessons and focuses will be explicitly taught in all rooms and student achievement recognised.

All staff will continue to engage in the Professional Development Program and will align professional learning to their specific goals

There will be ongoing training for staff on LMBR features and new budgeting tools in 2018. This will continue to be a priority for Hunter River Community School.

Strategic Direction 3

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

Purpose

To increase community support of our students through a school-wide focus on access, wellbeing and wellbeing programs. To work together as a learning community to provide our student with the knowledge, skills and opportunities to achieve their personal goals and live successfully in the community.

Overall summary of progress

The introduction of several alternative means of communicating with school has proven to be very successful. Parents and carers are using the Skoolbag App to register student absences and to review upcoming events.

The School Facebook page has continued to be a very useful tool and has facilitated a greater awareness of school programs and initiatives.

Our relationships with local Aboriginal Groups has strengthened and it has been pleasing to have representatives at several school functions. Our NAIDOC day celebration was a day of festivities and wonderful learning opportunities. This year Uncle Perry became an integral member of our school team and has delivered Programs focusing on Cultural Identity to all students. Students have responded exceptionally well to this program.

Supporting our families through the NDIS journey has been complex. Many have felt ill equipped to formulate a successful plan. The school is working closely with therapists to ensure that the service delivery of therapy during school hours is manageable.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
Parents will develop an understanding and build knowledge around curriculum development for students with significant disabilities	Funded from the low socio economic band of funding.	This program has provided families with an understanding of how the curriculum is differentiated for young people with complex disabilities. The parents who engaged in this opportunity provided extremely valuable feedback regarding the high value they placed on the activity.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skoolbag will be implemented	The P&C have agreed to fund this program after positive feedback from the previous year's trial.	The implementation of the Skoolbag App has facilitated greater communication with our learning community. Families are using the App, not only to view upcoming events, but to register student absences.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Connections will be strengthened with service providers	This initiative has been funded by a combination of school to work funding and per capita funding.	To successfully support our students in their transition to post school, it is essential that we develop and maintain excellent network relationships with external service providers. During the year, the Support Teacher Transition teacher, based at Hunter River Community School, has worked closely with the providers and school staff to strengthen relationships. One of the most valuable experiences was inviting service providers to visit the school to meet with our secondary students to develop an understanding of their needs and how they may be able to support them in the future.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased engagement of parents and school community members	Funded from low socio economic dissection	Students enrolled from our school access 6 local government areas. This can, at times, limit the interactions that families have with the school. The

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
in core school business		programs implemented this year have seen a slight increase in the number of families regularly interacting with the school. This will be an ongoing program.

Next Steps

Increased Engagement: Initiatives will be implemented to further increase parent engagement in school events. The school leadership team is investigating the possibility of using digital technologies to connect with families in the collaborative process.

Key Initiatives	Resources (annual)	Impact achieved this year
Aboriginal background loading	\$7197.16	This year the school invited Uncle Perry, a local elder, to join our learning community. Uncle Perry provides culturally based lessons each week to all students. This has been a wonderful program and student engagement during these sessions have been maximised.
Quality Teaching, Successful Students (QTSS)		This funding band has facilitated the release of experienced teachers to work in the Instructional Leadership model to support teacher development and student engagement.
Socio-economic background	\$37 861.36	This funding has facilitated a a number of high quality programs to support student learning, parent and community engagement and quality teaching.
Support for beginning teachers	\$10 788	Supporting beginning teachers is a key element of core business at Hunter River Community School. This year a support program was implemented which facilitated an experienced teacher being released each week to work along side the beginning teachers on a number of areas including programming and writing of SMART goals. The feedback from both groups was extremely positive

Student information

Student enrolment profile

	Enrolments			
Students	2014	2015	2016	2017
Boys	41	46	48	48
Girls	15	16	17	17

This year our school has continued to have enrolments at our capacity levels. There are 67 young people enrolled across the K–12 spectrum.

Structure of classes

Classes are structured to meet student needs and where possible are staged based. Individual behavioural and medical needs are also a major consideration when structuring classes.

Retention Year 10 to Year 12

Hunter River Community School has an excellent retention rate of our Year 10 students. Over 99% of students complete Year 12 and receive their Higher School Certificate Life Skills.

Post-school destinations

Proportion of students moving into post-school education, training or employment	Year 10%	Year 11%	Year 12%
Seeking Employment	0	0	0
Employment	0	0	0
TAFE entry	0	0	0
University Entry	0	0	0
Other	0	1	7
Unknown	0	0	0

Students exiting Hunter River Community School access a range of post school services. Students access Community Participation Day Programs or engage in a self managed program.

Year 12 attaining HSC or equivalent

At the conclusion of 2017, 8 students were successful in receiving their Higher School Certificate Life Skills.

Workforce information

Workforce composition

Position	FTE*
Principal	1
Deputy Principal(s)	0
Assistant Principal(s)	3
Head Teacher(s)	0
Classroom Teacher(s)	8.01
Teacher of Reading Recovery	0
Learning & Support Teacher(s)	0
Teacher Librarian	0.4
Teacher of ESL	0
School Counsellor	0
School Administration & Support Staff	11.82
Other Positions	0.74

*Full Time Equivalent

One teaching staff member identifies as being of Aboriginal descent.

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

Professional Learning for all staff is extremely important. During 2017, both teaching and non-teaching staff were encouraged to participate in Professional Learning which aligned with their Professional Development Plan Goals. This was the first cycle of non-teaching staff participating in the Professional Development Plan Process, and additional resources were allocated to assist the staff navigate the new process.

At the conclusion of 2017, there are 5 teachers who are at Provisional Teaching Level, 3 Provisional Teaching Level and 1 conditional teacher.

Financial information (for schools using both OASIS and SAP/SALM)

Financial information

The three financial summary tables cover 13 months (from 1 December 2016 to 31 December 2017).

The financial summary consists of school income broken down by funding source and is derived from the school Annual Financial Statement.

Voluntary School Contributions: Families are provided with an voluntary option of paying \$25 per semester school contribution. Only a small percentage of our families engaged in this option.

Short Term Relief: Once again the short term relief expenditure was significant. the majority of the staff suffered from the Influenza A virus that was prevalent across NSW.

LMBR: Our school went live to the new financial management system mid year.

External Donations:

Once again Hunter River Community School enjoyed tremendous support from local businesses and community groups. Our largest donation was \$ 25000 from East Maitland Bowling Club. This money is tagged to keep our 2 buses operational.

Receipts	\$
Balance brought forward	186,306
Global funds	179,827
Tied funds	83,785
School & community sources	39,569
Interest	2,135
Trust receipts	1,621
Canteen	0
Total Receipts	306,937
Payments	
Teaching & learning	
Key Learning Areas	5,063
Excursions	196
Extracurricular dissections	26,973
Library	1,203
Training & Development	0
Tied Funds Payments	71,965
Short Term Relief	59,878
Administration & Office	36,299
Canteen Payments	0
Utilities	29,193
Maintenance	5,309
Trust Payments	3,192
Capital Programs	0
Total Payments	239,271
Balance carried forward	253,972

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.

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

	2017 Actual (\$)
Opening Balance	0
Revenue	417,990
Appropriation	401,300
Sale of Goods and Services	146
Grants and Contributions	16,077
Gain and Loss	0
Other Revenue	0
Investment Income	466
Expenses	-181,098
Recurrent Expenses	-181,098
Employee Related	-101,806
Operating Expenses	-79,292
Capital Expenses	0
Employee Related	0
Operating Expenses	0
SURPLUS / DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR	236,891
Balance Carried Forward	236,891

The Opening balance for the 2017 school financial year is displayed in the OASIS table as Balance brought forward. The financial summary table for the year ended 31 December 2017 shows the Opening balance as \$0.00 because the Opening balance for the 2017 school financial year is reported in the OASIS table (as Balance brought forward).

The amount displayed in the Appropriation category of the financial summary table is drawn from the Balance carried forward shown in the OASIS table and includes any financial transactions in SAP the school has undertaken since migration from OASIS to SAP/SALM. For this reason the amount shown for Appropriation will not equal the OASIS Balance carried forward amount.

<Use this text box to enter a general statement describing:

- your school's financial management processes and governance structures to meet financial policy requirements
- any unusual spending patterns or substantial underspending/overspending (e.g. accommodating leave, illness, savings for planned capital expenditure)
- intended use of funds available>

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	2017 Actual (\$)
Base Total	482,717
Base Per Capita	20,448
Base Location	1,975
Other Base	460,294
Equity Total	100,753
Equity Aboriginal	14,394
Equity Socio economic	85,880
Equity Language	478
Equity Disability	0
Targeted Total	1,908,172
Other Total	16,531
Grand Total	2,508,173

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

School-based assessment

At the conclusion of 2017 the school undertook an internal review that focused on areas highlighted in the School Excellence Framework. This review engaged both teaching and non-teaching staff and provided an opportunity for the school team to analyse and unpack the things the school did well and emphasis the areas that required improvement.

NAPLAN

In the National Assessment Program, the results across the Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 Literacy and Numeracy Assessments are reported on a scale from Band 1 to Band 10. The achievement scale represents increasing levels of skills and understandings demonstrated in these assessments.

100% of students in the targeted groups were exempt from sitting the NAPLAN exams. These exemptions were given on the grounds of the significant disability after consultation with families and carers.

HSC

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

elected Student Leadership Team that represent the school at school and community functions. This team consists of 2 school captains, 2 vice captains, 2 junior school prefects, 2 secondary prefects and 2 sporting house captains.

All students at Hunter River Community School received their Higher School Certificate –Life Skills.

Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

Families, carers and staff participated in the 'Tell them From Me' Survey. The feedback from these surveys indicated that all members of the Learning Community were overall satisfied with the performance of the school.

Students participated in a pictorial survey which provided them with an opportunity to indicate what they liked and disliked about school. Overall students were happy with their experiences and indicated that they particularly enjoyed the additional programs that were offered.

Policy requirements

Aboriginal education

Aboriginal Education is integrated and embedded into every aspect of core school business at Hunter River Community School.

- Aspects of Aboriginal culture were experienced across the school through a variety of interactive classroom activities this year. Students completed artworks, listened to music, read stories and used the internet to develop and share their knowledge.
- Significant culturally important days were recognised and celebrated by the whole school community during the year

Multicultural and anti-racism education

Hunter River Community School promotes the values of acceptance and tolerance for a Multicultural Australia. All teaching and learning programs were reviewed to ensure that all environments were culturally inclusive and respectful.

Our school values individual difference and work together with all members of the Learning Environment to ensure students receive an education catering to their individual learning style and cultural identity.

Other school programs

Hunter River Community School has a peer and staff