

Highlands School

2019 Annual Report



5576

Introduction

The Annual Report for 2019 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.

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Message from the principal

In 2019 Highlands School Entered into the penultimate year of the current School Plan. The Staff and the School Community engaged in an extensive cycle of evaluative processes to examine the School's practices current practices and direction.

A curriculum review was entered into in order to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in Highlands School to best address the needs of the students with challenging behaviours, mental health concerns, autism and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE). Placing their unique needs at the centre of the planning and decision-making.

The school staff undertook a situation analysis, which incorporated the evaluation of school performance through the School Excellence Framework's Self-Assessment tool (SEF S-aS), to look at student achievement, behaviour and engagement. With a commitment, from every member of staff, to building a more inclusive education for all of our students to learn to their fullest capability. The existing six classes which had students grouped by behaviour or diagnosis were re-arranged based on a structure of development, achievement and transition.

Using a model of a 'School in a School', a senior school and a middle school were established, uniting the students and staff under one school banner. The middle school now consists of two early learning classes that have been established for primary age and stage 4 students in need of additional supports in literacy and numeracy inclusive of their mental health and other individual needs. Predominately Stage 3, these classes have an emphasis on sensory learning, adopting the Berry Street Education Model (BSEM) using a Trauma-Informed Positive Education (TIPE) lens that links healing in a Trauma-Informed Classroom (TIC) with Positive Psychology Interventions (PPI) that encourages student growth.

Two General Education classes have been formed for Stage 4 students incorporating the factors of BSEM that deals with student growth (PPI). These classes focus on Stage 4 outcomes in the core subjects to enable students to look to transition successfully to mainstream schooling by/in Year 9. Teachers have been supported in the development of scope and sequences, adapted from the three local High Schools, by Department of Education (DOE) Curriculum Support Advisors to ensure all elements of the Quality Teaching Framework are explicit in all programming.

Finally, two Stage 5 transition classes were established with a focus on transition to Year 11 at the students home school or successful completion of, Vocational Education (VET) courses in, Primary Industries, Aquaculture and Construction. Certificate I and II Skills for Work and Vocational Studies. Students with disabilities have also been supported with access to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) providers and successful supported transitions to further education or the work force.

Every student at Highlands School now has the assistance to thrive academically, is supported in their mental and emotional health and has the skills to finish school prepared for further education, at either their home school, TAFE, workplace training or successful employment.

Every student at Highlands School now receives an inclusive education regardless of disability or challenging behaviours. Students can access and fully participate in learning alongside their similar aged peers, supported by

reasonable adjustments and teaching strategies tailored to meet their individual needs.

Since the restructure four students have successfully transitioned to employment, two have followed their career aspirations by enrolling in courses at TAFE, three students are attending TAFE as part of the 'yes' taster program one day-a-week and four students have or are in the process of transitioning to mainstream schools. Two senior students have also received successful support from the NDIS in order to enter the workforce.

In 2020 the school will continue to evaluate its progress while beginning to work on the development and planning for a new School Plan cycle in 2021.

Nic MorrisPrincipal

Message from the school community

2019 has seen the formation of a Highlands Parents and Citizens Association.

School background

School vision statement

Our vision is to prepare every student to become a valued and productive citizen in the community.

Our purpose is to engage every student in their

Education, transitioning them to a mainstream school, training facility, workforce or alternative setting.

- We engage strategies to assist students with challenging behaviours so they are supported to reach their educational goals.
- Every student is given the opportunity to build the social and emotional skills required to successfully exist within their local community.
- We have a sustained approach to wellbeing that supports every student and every family to engage with local community resources and services when needed.
- We actively connect our students to their learning and empower them to succeed. Every student is known, valued and cared for so they can do well and prosper.

School context

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

Our goal is to

- Support students to transition back to their home school or support their transition to employment, alternative educational or supportive settings.
- Build capacity in students on how to re-engage with education, experience success, and feel a sense of belonging through providing a safe, supported learning environment
- Deliver appropriate curricula, using flexible learning environments, that are identified from each student's Individual Learning Plan.
- Provide opportunities for students & parents/carers to develop connections with other agencies to support young people's education and well-being
- Assist and develop students' ability to understand their behaviours and the associated consequences whilst developing the appropriate attitudes and behaviours through Positive Behaviour for Learning
- Provide a teaching and learning environment that enables the development of healthy, happy, successful and productive individuals that contribute to their own wellbeing, the wellbeing of their peers and the collective wellbeing of their communities.
- Build skills such as team work, resilience and resourcefulness, to enhance students' ability to actively contribute to the school and wider community.
- Every student is known, valued and cared for
- Every student is encouraged to connect, succeed and thrive at Highlands School.

Self-assessment and school achievement

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 is a statement of what is valued as excellence for NSW public schools, both now and into the future. 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.

Each year, we assess our practice against the Framework to inform our school plan and annual report.

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/school-excellence>

Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

Elements	2019 School Assessment
LEARNING: Learning Culture	Delivering
LEARNING: Wellbeing	Working towards Delivering
LEARNING: Curriculum	Working towards Delivering
LEARNING: Assessment	Working towards Delivering
LEARNING: Reporting	Delivering
LEARNING: Student performance measures	Working towards Delivering
TEACHING: Effective classroom practice	Delivering
TEACHING: Data skills and use	Working towards Delivering
TEACHING: Professional standards	Working towards Delivering
TEACHING: Learning and development	Delivering
LEADING: Educational leadership	Delivering
LEADING: School planning, implementation and reporting	Working towards Delivering
LEADING: School resources	Delivering
LEADING: Management practices and processes	Delivering

Strategic Direction 1

Quality teaching, excellence in learning

Purpose

To build staff capacity to deliver quality teaching and learning adjusted to address every student's needs within a framework of evidence based practice, creating high expectations of student learning and a culture of shared professional practice.

Improvement Measures

Every Student will be engaged in a wide range of learning experiences. Student will gather portfolio's of certificates and transcripts of learning to demonstrate what they have learnt and the competencies they have achieved.

Plan and implement quality teaching and learning practices.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Process 1: Staff share best practice models in programming, assessment and Quality Teaching Practices.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Staff have been supported strongly in their professional development.	Various external agencies and WHS Support Team Funding Sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Socio-economic background (\$14000.00)

Process 2: Establish a network of local SSP schools to support future and current school leaders to support professional development and encourage future leadership within the DoE

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Distance is an issue when attempting to arrange meetings as well as the different nature of each school. Ties with the local Community of Schools has been strengthened as well as the Wollondilly Principals Network	

Process 3: Developing a **range of professional learning opportunities** for teachers to collaborate, have professional conversations and learn from each other's teaching practice.

Developing Individualised Learning Plans for all students in consultation with staff, students and parent/care givers to meet student specific learning needs.

Using **teacher observation** as a source of evidence to demonstrate teacher progress towards professional goals.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
The program of staff development has been very successful with good numbers participating after the school day. All ILPs have been uploaded to Sentral for quick reference and review.	WHS Support Team Senior Psychologist.

Strategic Direction 2

Leading for learning

Purpose

To establish and maintain quality systems which will promote the creation of a culture of engagement and collaboration to enhance student learning and wellbeing, effective leadership capacity, quality teaching practices and positive staff wellbeing.

Improvement Measures

An increase in teachers participating in school leadership opportunities

All staff participate in professional learning activities and achieve their yearly aspirational professional learning goals.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Process 1: Support staff in the setting and implementation of **meaningful and appropriate professional goals** using the Performance and Development Framework and the Australian Professional Standard for Teachers.

Utilising PDPs to meet staff professional learning needs.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Staff encouraged to get on board with school Plan. Staff development day 4 dedicated to SEF and SEF S-aS	School Plan PDP goal setting Growth coaching conversations.

Process 2: Create structures and mechanisms to support the facilitation of staff leadership opportunities.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
All opportunities for Leadership have been offered through an EOI process.	

Process 3: Build links with Community organisations

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Links have been established and are ongoing. The PCYC drop in regularly and the Family Referral Service has been involved with a number of our families. The school is strongly linked with a Representative Football Club, A Touch Football Team, Pipes and Drums Band who all hire the schools facilities.	

Process 4: Undertake Choice Theory Training

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
All Staff undertook training in 2018.	

Strategic Direction 3

Supporting Student Wellbeing

Purpose

To create and sustain a safe learning environment ensuring connectedness via a whole school approach to support the cognitive, social, physical and spiritual wellbeing of all students. This will provide students, teachers, staff and the wider school community a shared understanding of the behaviours, attitudes and expectations that enhance wellbeing and lead to improved student outcomes.

Improvement Measures

Using Tell Them From Me Data students will demonstrate improved self regulation

Growth Coaching embedded at a whole school level

Suspension rates and behaviour incidents data

All staff participate in professional learning activities to increase awareness and skills in managing and supporting complex behaviour and student learning needs

Establishment of flexible innovative learning spaces that support student wellbeing.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Process 1: Staff Professional Learning in: Berry St, Growth Coaching, Trauma Based Practices, Mental Health.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Staff are booked in for Berry Street Training this year.	

Process 2: Build on significant partnerships and collaboration with parent representatives, the broader community, business, schools and other education and training providers to maximise student wellbeing and achievement.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
A Parents and Citizens Committee has been established.	
Regular contact with local Community Schools.	

Process 3: Students participation in student voice and feedback.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Students have regular access to voice concerns through a daily assembly and contact with the school executive.	
Parents are greeted when they drop students off and raise issues at this time. Tell them from Me Surveys completed.	

Key Initiatives	Resources (annual)	Impact achieved this year
Socio-economic background	<p>School Community Funds.</p> <p>Funding Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio-economic background (\$80 000.00) 	<p>School environment has been made safer for students and staff.</p> <p>School has clear signage and clearly designated entrance.</p>
Improvement of School Environment		<p>School environment is much more appealing as well as being safe for students and staff. Number of events including student damage to property has been reduced.</p>

Student information

Student enrolment profile

Students	Enrolments			
	2016	2017	2018	2019
Boys	36	29	33	26
Girls	4	2	4	3

Management of non-attendance

Attendance at school has a big impact on longer term outcomes for children and young people. When a child is not at school they miss important opportunities to learn, build friendships and develop their skills through play. Regular attendance at school is a shared responsibility between schools and parents. By working together we can have a positive effect on supporting our children and young people to regularly attend school.

Our teachers promote and monitor regular attendance at school and all our schools have effective measures in place to record attendance and follow up student absences promptly. They are guided by the School Attendance policy which details the management of non-attendance.

Workforce information

Workforce composition

Position	FTE*
Principal(s)	1
Assistant Principal(s)	1
Classroom Teacher(s)	5.5
Teacher Librarian	0.2
School Counsellor	1
School Administration and Support Staff	8.02
Other Positions	0.2

*Full Time Equivalent

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce composition

The Department actively supports the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees through the use of identified positions, scholarship opportunities to become a teacher and by providing a culturally safe workplace. As of 2019, 3.9% of the Department's workforce identify as Aboriginal people.

Workforce ATSI

Staff type	Benchmark ¹	2019 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representation ²
School Support	3.30%	7.20%
Teachers	3.30%	2.90%

Note 1 – The NSW Public Sector Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2014–17 introduced an aspirational target of 1.8% by 2021 for each of the sector's salary bands. If the aspirational target of 1.8% is achieved in salary bands not currently at or above 1.8%, the cumulative representation of Aboriginal employees in the sector is expected to reach 3.3%.

Note 2 – Representation of diversity groups are calculated as the estimated number of staff in each group divided by the total number of staff. These statistics have been weighted to estimate the representation of diversity groups in the workforce, where diversity survey response rates were less than 100 per cent. The total number of staff is based on a headcount of permanent and temporary employees.

Teacher qualifications

All casual, temporary and permanent teachers in NSW public schools must hold a NSW Department of Education approval to teach. Teachers with approval to teach must be accredited with the NSW Education Standards Authority, and hold a recognised teaching degree. All NSW teachers must hold a valid NSW Working With Children Check clearance.

Professional learning and teacher accreditation

Professional learning is core to enabling staff to improve their practice.

Professional learning includes five student-free School Development Days and induction programs for staff new to our school and/or system. These days are used to improve the capacity of teaching and non-teaching staff in line with school and departmental priorities.

Financial information

Financial summary

The information provided in the financial summary includes reporting from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019. The Principal is responsible for the financial management of the school and ensuring all school funds are managed in line with Department policy requirements.

	2019 Actual (\$)
Opening Balance	567,741
Revenue	2,080,974
Appropriation	2,063,392
Grants and contributions	15,449
Investment income	2,133
Expenses	-1,840,775
Employee related	-1,507,166
Operating expenses	-333,609
Surplus / deficit for the year	240,199

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.

Financial summary - Equity loadings

The equity loading data is the main component of the 'Appropriation' line item of the financial summary above.

	2019 Approved SBA (\$)
Targeted Total	1,139,188
Equity Total	83,941
Equity - Aboriginal	8,927
Equity - Socio-economic	75,014
Equity - Language	0
Equity - Disability	0
Base Total	491,183
Base - Per Capita	18,837
Base - Location	1,834
Base - Other	470,512
Other Total	191,209
Grand Total	1,905,521

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.

Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

Parents report satisfaction with the school and are happier to send their students everyday. Staff reported that 92% were happy in the workplace and felt valued by the Senior Manager in Tell Them from Me surveys. Student negative behaviour as demonstrated by school suspensions and serious incidents fell by 60% through the year while student attendance increased.

Policy requirements

Aboriginal Education Policy

The responsibility for enacting the Aboriginal Education Policy rests with all Departmental staff. The policy should underpin and inform planning, teaching practice and approaches to educational leadership in all educational settings.

Evidence of effective implementation of the policy included:

- Establishing, building and strengthening relationships with the Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, Aboriginal people and communities.
- Providing, in partnership with Aboriginal people and communities, education which promotes quality teaching, is engaging, and is culturally appropriate and relevant.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students will match or better the outcomes of the broader student population.
- Implementation of Personalised Learning Pathways for all Aboriginal students in a school culture of high expectations.

Anti-Racism Policy

All teachers are responsible for supporting students to develop an understanding of racism and discrimination and the impact these may have on individuals and the broader community. Principals are responsible for examining school practices and procedures to ensure they are consistent with the policy. All schools have an Anti-Racism Contact Officer who is trained to respond to concerns in relation to racism.

Multicultural Education Policy

Teachers address the specific learning and wellbeing needs of students from culturally diverse backgrounds through their teaching and learning programs. Principals are responsible for ensuring that school policies, programs and practices respond to the cultural, linguistic and religious diversity of the school community, and provide opportunities that enable all students to achieve equitable education and social outcomes.