

2020 Annual Report

Towamba Public School

TOWAMBA PUBLIC SCHOOL



3252

Introduction

The Annual Report for 2020 is provided to the community of Towamba Public 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.

School contact details

Towamba Public School
Towamba St
Towamba, 2550
www.towamba-p.schools.nsw.edu.au
towamba-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au
6496 7159

Message from the principal

What a year it was for Towamba Public School. The community endured mother nature at her worst and at her best and during all of this, the community connection was strong and supportive. The school, whilst being a place of security and support has been closed at times and has seen the presence of three different principals. Again, the community tenacity and support in welcoming each new principal and being prepared to start over again was remarkable. To add to this, the support and dedication of the small team that make up the Towamba Public School staff has been second to none. With each new principal comes a new set of expectations and ideas and the staff have supported each new person with unfaltering encouragement and patience.

Towamba Public School is a remarkable little school and I am confident in stating that any person who becomes a member of this school and community, is touched by it forever. 2020 saw the Towamba community create a legacy in the form of the "Fireflies" project which was a project inspired by love and emotion, which has been viewed across the state and country. The resilience shown by the students, staff and community during such a challenging year is something that everyone should aim to be able to achieve.

As the third of the relieving principals for 2020 I could not be happier that I have had the opportunity to get to know the students, staff, families and community members in this village. I am thankful for the support, guidance and encouragement that has been shown to me, along with the level of tolerance and patience that has been shown during a time of continuous change and challenge.

Towamba Public School and community have so much to feel proud of for 2020 and I am hopeful of continuing my position here to start fresh in 2021.

School vision

Towamba Public School supports the academic, emotional and creative development of students to become respectful and responsible citizens.

School context

Towamba Public School is situated in the Towamba Valley, 30km west of Eden, in an environment of mixed farmland, forest and rural lifestyle. Projected enrolment for 2018 is 20, including a small proportion of Aboriginal students. The school is rural, remote and predominantly low socio-economic in make-up, with a Family, Occupation and Education Index (FOEI) of 128 averaged between 2016 and 2017.

Many of the students have particular and specific individual learning needs. Targeted intervention programs which are based on sound and proven research have been implemented. The teachers are highly qualified to deliver these which are developed with Quality Teaching Principles and the School Excellence Framework underpinning establishment. All students are tracked in Literacy and Numeracy using the progressionss and PLAN2 (Planning for Literacy and Numeracy), and individualised programs are developed for each student. Towamba is well resourced with access to the latest in Information Computer Technology (ICT) and best practice assistive technology.

To specifically support the rural and remote community, Towamba Public School initiated a "KindyStart" program in Term 2, 2014. Children who have turned four and are enrolling at the school the following year are able to join the K12 class for one full day per week. A playgroup is also now in operation for two hours every week.

Many programs supporting gifted and talented students are offered. Drama, Music, Dance, Sport, Public Speaking, Science and Environmental Ed are particularly targeted.

The Bundian Way is the first Aboriginal pathway to be listed on the NSW State Heritage Register. As Towamba is a point of reference on this ancient walking trail, which connects the highest part of the Australian continent and the coast, Towamba Public School will actively engage in the development of the project.

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>

Strategic Direction 1

Equity, Inclusion, Exposure, Welfare, Wellbeing and Strong Partnerships

Purpose

To engage and connect our communities to build a dynamic learning culture where outstanding expectations achieve desired student outcomes by sharing knowledge, experience and skills and shared responsibility for student engagement, learning, development and success across school communities and networks.

Improvement Measures

- Increased Community Involvement in participation at school.
- All teachers participate in targeted professional learning and educational networks.
- Increased partnerships with small schools cluster schools.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Process 1: STEAM Project: Works towards building a Platform to engage both students and community in common purposeful and meaningful projects developing both partnerships and life development skills.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
The community based STEAM project was not completed during the year due to restrictions imposed by COVID19. Parents have been unable to attend the school since Term 1 and this has prevented a community based project going ahead. It is hoped that this may be undertaken in another form/similar form during 2021, however continuing COVID limitations mean that we are unsure as to future parent/community involvement at this time. Whilst the students had some involvement with Photography and Robotics, this was undertaken collaboratively with peers only. Students were very engaged with these programs whilst they were running and demonstrated a strong understanding of the concepts covered in each of these programs. The students all had a keen interest in both these areas of study and performed well in all outcomes.	STEM kits Robotics NSW Syllabus documents

Process 2: Workshops / Professional Learning: Build awareness and understanding of innovative pedagogy and new curriculum through workshops and increased school participation.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Staff training in the new PDHPE syllabus document was postponed due to interruptions by COVID 19. Finalisation of the new Scope and Sequence document is yet to occur, however it is anticipated that this will occur in early 2021. Collaboration with local small schools will further assist in the development of a multi grade scope and sequence document. Staff have commenced professional learning in Visible Learning and it is anticipated that this program will be incorporated into programming for 2021. This training is not yet complete and to ensure the program is introduced in a sustainable manner, it will be a gradual introduction. Staff are enthusiastic about the perceived benefits of the Visible Learning program and are looking forward to its successful implementation.	MyPL Programming PLPs Classroom resources

Process 3: Networking: Further develop our education partnerships within our small schools cluster to support curriculum implementation and innovative pedagogy.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Term 4 saw the completion of the Fair Education project, a small schools	

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

initiative to support innovative and engaging curriculum based programs within our small schools groups. The Fair Education project has served to bring local schools together to share resources and skills to enhance learning programs for students. This program has been running for three years and this years culmination resulted in very positive feedback from all schools involved.

COVID19 meant that many small school collaborations were postponed or cancelled, with some being conducted by Zoom. This created some difficulties in the continuity of small school support, however success was still experienced in a limited way. This collaboration, although somewhat reduced has served to strengthen the community of small schools in our area.

Strategic Direction 2

Quality Teaching and Learning

Purpose

Provide exceptional classroom practice through differentiated learning in a multi-stage setting using 21st Century learning strategies and evidence-based quality teaching to improve student learning outcomes and meet the needs of diverse learners.

Improvement Measures

Students show a positive growth in spelling and reading levels across all stages.

Strengthening quality learning environments for students to become Assessment Capable Learners and moving students from a Fixed to a growth mindset (Measured through Visible Learning evidence on students understanding and use of the four strands of a Visible Learner: Assessment Capable, Learning Dispositions, Feedback and Learning Processes)

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Process 1: Research Based Professional Learning: Staff will participate in relevant research based professional learning that promotes regular monitoring and evaluation of assessment practices to ensure student growth (eg. Visible learning strategies and action plans, Words their Way Spelling).

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Professional learning has been undertaken by staff in the areas of Visible Learning, Trauma Informed Teaching, Student Support Services (Stormbirds Training) and Hearing Assessments. Aside from the Visible Learning professional development, these subsequent courses have supported the effective delivery of curriculum to the students at Towamba Public School. Visible Learning professional development continues into 2021 and it is anticipated that this integration of this system of developing learners, in combination of the Case Management Model (Lyn Sharratt) will ensure that all students are effectively monitored and reviewed and all learning programs are specific to the needs of every learner. The implementation of these programs will assist in the establishment of clear learning journeys for each students, ensuring a years growth for a years learning, in every student.	Staff Casual Release to attend training Professional Learning funding to support Visible Learning training

Process 2: Research Based Student Learning: Establishment of a quality learning Environment which supports risk taking in learning, promotes students engagement and acknowledges students efforts and achievement.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Despite interruptions encountered due to COVID19, students created over 50 remarkable artworks as a component of the Fireflies Project. This collaboration between community, students and staff has resulted in a legacy for students and others involved in this process. Student artworks have been recognised by the Governor General, exhibited in the local museum and local towns and continued to have a strong online presence via the virtual gallery with Bega Valley Regional Art Gallery and use by many government and non-government agencies. This project took all students out of their comfort zone and challenged them to take risks both in their learning, personally and emotionally. The Fireflies project has been a resounding success and one that continued to happen despite the enormous challenges of fires, floods, school closures and COVID19 during 2020. Ongoing support from the school P&C has ensured the students artworks will continue to bring joy to communities far and wide.	

Key Initiatives	Resources (annual)	Impact achieved this year
Aboriginal background loading	Funding Sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal background loading (\$5 246.00) 	This funding was initially set aside to support the Aboriginal Language and Culture program which was to run during 2020. However due to ongoing difficulties getting this program up and running, the funds were redirected to support the employment of an SLSO (School Learning and Support Officer) to offer support and guidance to our Aboriginal students. The employment of this extra SLSO has been beneficial for all students in our school.
Low level adjustment for disability	Funding Sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low level adjustment for disability (\$6 447.00) 	Low Level Adjustment for Disability funding was used to support the delivery of two classes in our school. It is deemed imperative for the social and emotional wellbeing of our students, that we maintain two classes (K-2 and 3-6). This funding helps to ensure that teachers are able to focus on a reduced range of student learning needs whilst still being able to address a wide range of social and emotional needs in a two class setting.
Quality Teaching, Successful Students (QTSS)	Funding Sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Teaching, Successful Students (QTSS) (\$4 157.00) 	Quality Teaching Successful Students (QTSS) funding was used to support the delivery of two classes in our school. It is deemed imperative for the wellbeing and academic achievement of our students, that we maintain two classes (K-2 and 3-6). QTSS funding helps to ensure that teachers are able to focus on a reduced range of student learning needs whilst still being able to address a wide range of social and emotional needs.
Socio-economic background	Funding Sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio-economic background (\$21 587.00) 	Socio-economic funding was used to support the delivery of two classes in our school. It is deemed imperative for the wellbeing and academic achievement of our students, that we maintain two classes (K-2 and 3-6). Socio-economic funding helps to ensure that that we are able to continue to provide two full time classes five days per week.
Support for beginning teachers	Funding Sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for beginning teachers (\$5 701.00) 	Funding was sourced and granted to support our beginning teacher in Term 3. This has allowed us to offer time for development of NESA Accreditation documentation for application for proficiency. It is anticipated that this application for proficiency will be submitted for approval in Term 2, 2021. This funding has been invaluable in allowing time off class to support our beginning teacher.

Student information

Student enrolment profile

Students	Enrolments			
	2017	2018	2019	2020
Boys	12	15	14	13
Girls	6	6	7	8

Student attendance profile

School				
Year	2017	2018	2019	2020
K	88.7	93.9	95.7	89.9
1	93.5	90.3	95.5	100
2	85.2	89.9	88.6	100
3	84.9	91.4	94.6	88
4	89.7	83.8	95.1	95.5
5	80.6	94.4	84.7	99.4
6	95.3	89.7	91.5	91.4
All Years	89.1	90.5	91.4	92.4
State DoE				
Year	2017	2018	2019	2020
K	94.4	93.8	93.1	92.4
1	93.8	93.4	92.7	91.7
2	94	93.5	93	92
3	94.1	93.6	93	92.1
4	93.9	93.4	92.9	92
5	93.8	93.2	92.8	92
6	93.3	92.5	92.1	91.8
All Years	93.9	93.4	92.8	92

NSW student attendance data in 2020 is not comparable to previous years due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The NSW Government encouraged students to learn from home, where possible, for a seven week period from 24 March to 22 May. During this period, schools monitored engagement with learning to determine whether students were marked present. This changed the attendance measure. There was also some evidence of varied marking practices as schools adjusted to the learning from home period, with some schools recording higher attendance rates while others recording markedly lower rates.

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
Classroom Teacher(s)	0.5
Learning and Support Teacher(s)	0.1
Teacher Librarian	0.08
School Administration and Support Staff	1.07

*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, and scholarship opportunities to become a teacher and by providing a culturally safe workplace. As of 2020, 3.7% of the Department's overall workforce identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander People.

Workforce ATSI

Staff type	Benchmark ¹	2020 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representation ²
School Support	3.30%	6.30%
Teachers	3.30%	2.80%

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.

In 2020, an additional School Development Day was included at the start of Term 2 to assist school leaders, teachers and support staff to focus on the wellbeing of students and continuity of education, such as online and remote learning.

Financial information

Financial summary

The information provided in the financial summary includes reporting from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020. The Principal is responsible for the financial management of the school and ensuring all school funds are managed in line with Department policy requirements.

	2020 Actual (\$)
Opening Balance	70,558
Revenue	531,121
Appropriation	563,970
Grants and contributions	-32,927
Investment income	78
Expenses	-494,390
Employee related	-428,636
Operating expenses	-65,753
Surplus / deficit for the year	36,731
Closing Balance	107,290

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.

	2020 Approved SBA (\$)
Targeted Total	13,081
Equity Total	44,229
Equity - Aboriginal	5,246
Equity - Socio-economic	21,597
Equity - Language	0
Equity - Disability	17,386
Base Total	355,645
Base - Per Capita	5,051
Base - Location	9,784
Base - Other	340,810
Other Total	41,237
Grand Total	454,191

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.

School performance - 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.

The My School website provides detailed information and data for national literacy and numeracy testing. Go to myschool.edu.au to access the school data.

2020 NAPLAN

As agreed by the Education Council, the National Assessment Program (or NAPLAN) did not proceed in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This was to assist school leaders, teachers and support staff to focus on the wellbeing of students and continuity of education, such as online and remote learning.

The Education Council also agreed to defer the full transition to NAPLAN Online from 2021 to 2022 and the continuation of current NAPLAN governance arrangements through 2021.

Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

The Tell Them From Me Survey was not conducted during 2020 however students, teachers, parents, caregivers and the community were provided with one-on-one opportunities to provide reflection and feedback on our school.

Towamba Public School is a positive learning environment and students report feeling happy coming to school each day. Whilst limited parent and community involvement was possible during 2020, strong, positive relationships were still able to be maintained between school and home.

Parents indicated overwhelming support for the newly developed student welfare policy which supported student learning and wellbeing. A targeted focus on surveying parents in a method they are comfortable with and able to access, will be a focus for upcoming years.

Teacher satisfaction is high despite a high turn over of principals in 2020 and staff report feeling supported and valued in the workplace.

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.