

# 2020 Annual Report

## Royal Far West School

Royal Far West School

*partners in learning*



5504

## Introduction

The Annual Report for 2020 is provided to the community of Royal Far West 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

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### Message from the principal

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As the Relieving Principal of Royal Far West School (RFWS) I would like to acknowledge the hardworking and dedicated team of staff who continued to support country students from rural and remote areas across NSW during an especially difficult and unusual year. 2020 was a year of significant change for our country, communities and school, with life changing events such as bushfires, floods and COVID-19. School life at Royal Far West School in this context changed in March with children and families unable to attend RFWS for the remainder of 2020.

I began my role as Relieving Principal in June 2020, and unfortunately I was unable to meet any students face-to-face, because of COVID-19. Despite the challenges of 2020, we managed to stay connected and supported students and families through virtual meetings, case conferences and video conferences, phone calls and emails. Whilst the year was disrupted by a number of challenges, we all moved forward and became creative, innovative and engaged in different teaching styles to continue to provide support for our students.

The connection with rural and remote staff was valuable in ensuring the safety and well-being of our students. RFWS staff were deployed on a rotational basis to local schools where they shared their expertise and experience of students with complex needs with colleagues in nearby schools. Remaining, on site staff supported the online RFWS clients and their rural and remote schools.

We look forward as a school to 2021 and the opportunity to have students and families back on site.

Sharon Smithies

### Message from the school community

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Due to Covid we were unable to collect data.

### Message from the students

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Students enjoyed online interaction and support from the Royal Far West School teachers

## School vision

Royal Far West School aims to improve the quality of, and the access to, educational services that rural students need in order to lead healthy, fulfilling, productive and responsible lives.

## School context

RFWS provides educational services to the clients of the Royal Far West's integrated health, education and disability service. The NSW Centre for Effective Reading has a hub within the school. The Centre provides services to students with complex and severe reading difficulties in rural and remote NSW. Although located on the beachfront at Manly, all students are from country NSW, often from remote areas of the state. Students present with a range of medical conditions, including developmental, learning, behavioural, emotional and communication difficulties and disorders. The school works with students aged 3 years 6 months to 18 years, with 20% identifying as Aboriginal. All children are accompanied to RFW by a parent or carer. The school works in partnership with families, RFW, country schools and local services to provide information, consultancy, resource advice, professional development and program assistance. RFWS has a strong focus on building capacity in schools across the state using video conferencing and internet-based video communication for individual, ongoing student support. For further information see [www.royalfarwest.schools.nsw.edu.au](http://www.royalfarwest.schools.nsw.edu.au)

## 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 and participated in an external validation. 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. Every five years, our school undergoes an external validation process.

During the external validation process, an independent panel consisting of a Principal School Leadership and a peer principal considered our evidence and assessment of our school's progress against the School Excellence Framework.

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/school-excellence>

### Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

Elements	2020 School Assessment
LEARNING: Learning Culture	Sustaining and Growing
LEARNING: Wellbeing	Sustaining and Growing
LEARNING: Curriculum	Sustaining and Growing
LEARNING: Assessment	Sustaining and Growing
LEARNING: Reporting	Sustaining and Growing
LEARNING: Student performance measures	Working towards Delivering
TEACHING: Effective classroom practice	Sustaining and Growing
TEACHING: Data skills and use	Sustaining and Growing
TEACHING: Professional standards	Sustaining and Growing
TEACHING: Learning and development	Sustaining and Growing
LEADING: Educational leadership	Delivering
LEADING: School planning, implementation and reporting	Working towards Delivering
LEADING: School resources	Sustaining and Growing
LEADING: Management practices and processes	Sustaining and Growing

## Strategic Direction 1

Integrated health and education service.

### Purpose

To enable a holistic, collaborative and multidisciplinary service that supports rural students. This holistic approach aims to realise the individual potential of students who come from geographically disadvantaged areas of NSW

### Improvement Measures

Multidisciplinary Teams consisting of health professionals and educators working in close collaboration across all aspects of the service.

Integrated health and education assessments, reports and recommendations for intervention and support.

A range of evidence-based integrated health and education group programs.

### Progress towards achieving improvement measures

**Process 1:** Create flexible, innovative internal staffing model to more capably meet the needs of students.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Staff report through discussion at staff meetings, team meetings and staff debriefing sessions. High value is given to the daily opportunity to collaborate with colleagues to enhance the development of learning and teaching programs that cater for effective and differentiated learning at RFWS. Staff, including SLSOs and administration, reported feeling supported within a collegial environment where open and honest discussion and reflection ensures they feel valued and supported as part of the RFWS team maintaining staff wellbeing and collegiality.	Additional time allocated at all staff meetings for discussion of best practice. On site staff allocated a regular time on Fridays to meet and discuss a variety of strategies, programs and processes to more effectively meet the needs of RFWS diverse student population.

**Process 2:** Monitor the proportion of students participating in innovative, evidence-based multidisciplinary programs that clearly address specific cohorts and have clear, shared goals

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Staff reported that while they were supporting a range of students through remote learning, this was not as effective as face to face teaching and learning that had been conducted prior to COVID-19. The connection with rural and remote staff was valuable in ensuring the safety and well being of our students. Although it was difficult to be disconnected as a staff, deployment allowed staff to share their expertise and experience of students with complex needs with local schools.	Staff moved from direct face to face instruction of students to supporting remote learning from March due to COVID 19. A number of staff were deployed to support local schools. Those remaining onsite were able to support RFW clients and their rural and remote schools in an online capacity.

### Next Steps

Multidisciplinary programs such as SWAY, Centre for Effective Reading and Learning and Support will continue.

## Strategic Direction 2

Equitable access to specialist support.

### Purpose

To enable students and their families equitable access to expert, evidence-based, specialist teaching and learning in their local area, reducing the effect of disadvantage and isolation. To increase the capacity of partner schools and parents/carers to provide best practice support to children with complex health and learning needs.

### Improvement Measures

Schools in rural and remote NSW providing evidence based personalised support for students with complex health and education needs.

Parents and carers being informed, confident and realistic advocates for their children in their local school.

### Overall summary of progress

COVID -19 limited progress via face to face support. All communication was conducted through the telecare format but was in a reduced capacity given that many staff members were deployed to other schools

### Progress towards achieving improvement measures

**Process 1:** Integrated health and education teams given time to develop and implement staff training modules to better equip rural and remote school staff to provide support to students with complex health and education needs

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Due to COVID 19 and staff deployment, the Modules were not created for supporting the rural and remote home schools to assist in their professional learning. Staff were able to support rural and remote schools by providing suggestions of strategies and management ideas for RFWS students.	Nil resources used.  <b>Funding Sources:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quality Teaching, Successful Students (QTSS) (\$1000.00)</li></ul>

**Process 2:** Health and education staff trained in effective video conferencing techniques

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
COVID 19 provided an opportunity for additional staff members, other than members of the Executive team, to be involved with the Video Conferencing process in 2020. Staff appreciated the mentoring provided by the Executive team and will continue to be involved with the process where possible.	Nil resources used.

**Process 3:** RFWS website to be used to host parent and teacher training modules and practical resources for parents, teachers and students

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
RFWS website continued to be updated with regular NSW DoE updates and information.	\$2240

**Process 4:** Monitor numbers of schools taking part in multidisciplinary videoconferences

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
The RFWS database indicates that the multidisciplinary Video Conferencing process reached around 200 schools from rural and remote settings.	Nil resources used.

## Progress towards achieving improvement measures

**Process 5:** Monitor numbers of schools taking part in staff training modules offered by RFW/S

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Due to the COVID pandemic, no activity.	Nil resources used.

**Process 6:** Monitor number of parents attending individual and group sessions

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all meetings were held via the Zoom format.  Parent orientation meetings continued during COVID. They involved an executive and the client's parent/ carer and were also conducted via Zoom.	Nil resources used.



### Strategic Direction 3

Personalised learning and support for students.

#### Purpose

To improve educational outcomes for students with complex learning and health needs in rural and remote NSW by enhancing engagement and wellbeing and by promoting a culture of high expectations, flexibility and innovation.

#### Improvement Measures

Rural and remote school staff to be provided with a personalised suite of strategies and resources to be embedded in individual learning plans for all new clients of RFW/S.

A range of staff training options to build the capacity of rural and remote staff to provide personalised support to students with complex health and education needs.

#### Progress towards achieving improvement measures

**Process 1:** Multidisciplinary staff to develop a range of evidence-based programs and resources that can be personalised to meet the needs of individual students

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Due to Covid-19 and staff deployment, the Modules were not created for supporting the rural and remote home schools to assist in their professional learning. Staff were able to support rural and remote schools by providing suggestions of strategies and management ideas for RFWS students.	Nil resources used

**Process 2:** Rural and remote schools to provide RFW/S with existing individual learning and support plans prior to enrolment

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Due to Covid-19 and staff deployment, the Modules were not created for supporting the rural and remote home schools to assist in their professional learning. Staff were able to support rural and remote schools by providing suggestions of strategies and management ideas for RFWS students.	Allocated resources not used

**Process 3:** Video conference minutes following initial visit to RFW to include individual learning plan recommendations

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Due to the COVID pandemic, school closures and staff deployment, this was not feasible.	Allocated resources not used

**Process 4:** Embed options for training staff in rural and remote schools in personalising support for students

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Due to the COVID pandemic, school closures and staff deployment, this was not feasible.	Allocated resources not used

**Process 5:** Follow up videoconferences for all new clients 6-8 weeks after initial VC. Rural schools to provide feedback prior to follow up VC, including copies of current individual learning plan

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Due to the COVID pandemic, school closures and staff deployment, this was not feasible.	Allocated resources not used

## Progress towards achieving improvement measures

**Process 6:** Monitor numbers of rural schools embedding RFW/S recommendations for personalising learning support into existing and/or new plans.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Due to the COVID pandemic, school closures and staff deployment, this was not feasible.	Nil resources used

Key Initiatives	Resources (annual)	Impact achieved this year
<b>Aboriginal background loading</b>	\$76 277  <b>Funding Sources:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aboriginal background loading (\$76 277.00)</li> </ul>	The funding supported the RFWS AEO to work with the rural and remote communities and schools to develop and write authentic personalised learning plans.
<b>Quality Teaching, Successful Students (QTSS)</b>	Conducted workshops on the collection of data.  <b>Funding Sources:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality Teaching, Successful Students (QTSS) (\$46 612.00)</li> </ul>	Workshops focused on the collection of data to support students. These sessions were highly valued by the staff.
<b>Socio-economic background</b>	\$70 215  <b>Funding Sources:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Socio-economic background (\$70 215.00)</li> </ul>	This funding has supported capacity building of teachers in rural and remote communities to use assisted technology to further understand the specific needs of children referred to the RFWS and Royal Far West clinicians.

## Student information

Royal Far West School accepts students from Kindergarten to Year 12.

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.

Student attendance data is kept as per policy whilst students are at Royal Far West School. The home school is responsible for attendance data at other times.

### Management of non-attendance

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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.

### Post school destinations

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Not Applicable

### Year 12 students undertaking vocational or trade training

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Not Applicable

### Year 12 students attaining HSC or equivalent vocational education qualification

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Not Applicable

## Workforce information

### Workforce composition

Position	FTE*
Principal(s)	1
Assistant Principal(s)	2
Classroom Teacher(s)	5.84
Teacher Librarian	0.2
School Counsellor	1
School Administration and Support Staff	7.61

\*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 <sup>1</sup>	2020 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representation <sup>2</sup>
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 <b>Actual</b> (\$)
<b>Opening Balance</b>	327,596
<b>Revenue</b>	2,484,138
Appropriation	2,474,600
Sale of Goods and Services	9,676
Grants and contributions	-440
Investment income	302
<b>Expenses</b>	-2,322,531
Employee related	-2,253,830
Operating expenses	-68,700
<b>Surplus / deficit for the year</b>	161,607
<b>Closing Balance</b>	489,203

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

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

	2020 <b>Approved SBA</b> (\$)
<b>Targeted Total</b>	0
<b>Equity Total</b>	146,492
Equity - Aboriginal	76,277
Equity - Socio-economic	70,215
Equity - Language	0
Equity - Disability	0
<b>Base Total</b>	1,714,926
Base - Per Capita	22,526
Base - Location	0
Base - Other	1,692,401
<b>Other Total</b>	532,336
<b>Grand Total</b>	2,393,755

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

The COVID-19 pandemic meant that the RFW building, in which the school is housed, was completely closed down for much of the year. This meant that the school was not in full operational mode and many of the staff became deployed to other schools in the local area. Consequently, we were unable to comment on parent/ carer and student satisfaction. The staff was supported during this time via a telecare/Zoom format and regular Staff and Executive Meetings were conducted in this format. The staff adapted well to their workplace(s) and reported satisfaction in the manner in which they were supported.



# Policy requirements

## Aboriginal Education Policy

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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.

Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, our AEO was working from home but continued to provide support and guidance to schools and staff in relation to programmes and initiatives that supported Indigenous students. The SWAY programme was instrumental in providing a continuity of support and was delivered remotely from home.

## Anti-Racism Policy

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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

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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.