

# 2020 Annual Report

## Highlands School



5576

## Introduction

The Annual Report for 2020 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.

### School contact details

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Highlands School

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## School vision

**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 Purpose (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>

### Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

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

## 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 are better equipped and supported in program delivery. All classes are now meeting indicative hours in mandatory subjects and students are successfully completing the RoSA. Students are also now receiving N Award warnings.  The PDP process is now a genuine and robust process that centres on the compliance with NESA requirements and Quality Teaching outcomes.  Unfortunately COVID has hampered progress in this area.	SSP funding for an additional teacher to lead programming. \$50,000 Access to University of Newcastle training for leading Quality Teaching Rounds. BESM online training \$6000 for six Staff  <b>Funding Sources:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Professional learning (\$6000.00)</li></ul>

**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)
Interest for regular meetings was not overly enthusiastic. due to the differences between the schools.  COVID Shut this down.due to the inability to have meetings.  Strong links to Special Education Principal's and Leaders Association (SEPLA) were built instead.	

**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)
A final report from the Curriculum Support team has the school at sustaining and growing in terms of the degree staff are now able to plan and write	WHS Curriculum Support Team

## Progress towards achieving improvement measures

programs that incorporate the syllabus outcomes.

Due to COVID the desired links to Scope and Sequences from the feeder High Schools and Highlands has been hard to develop further as the ability to collaborate has not existed to the degree desired.

## 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 are engaged in targeted professional learning based on their agreed and perceived needs.	<b>Funding Sources:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Professional learning (\$14000.00)</li></ul>

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

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Staff are now beginning to identify roles for themselves and are comfortable in taking leadership roles within the school. It has led to staff identifying themselves as Sports Coordinators, A Sensory Room being established, Sensory Garden created, a role of Kitchen and Science Lab technician filled and VET and Work Experience coordinator established.	

**Process 3: Build links with Community organisations**

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
A Parent and Citizens Association has been established and immediately secure Community Funding from the Education Minister to supply every student with uniform.  An Aboriginal Men's Shed has been relocated to the Highlands from Bowral Hospital.  Regular Highlands representation on the Wingecarribee Shire Council meetings for Youth service providers and the local AECG..	

**Process 4: Undertake Choice Theory Training**

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)

## Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Use of Choice theory is not evident in current practices. New staff are not trained.	
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## 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)
All staff trained in the following:  <b>The Traumatized Brain: Understanding Trauma-Informed Practice</b> <b>Understanding Behaviour series</b> <b>Part 1 - The Science of Behaviour</b> <b>Part 2 - Preventative Behaviour Support</b> <b>Part 3 - Case Study</b> <b>Part 4 - Reactive Strategies</b> <b>Understanding Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)</b> <b>Conditions for Growth: Self-Determination Theory</b>	Senior Psychologist WHS Support Team

**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)
P and C established along with regular meetings with parents to monitor and agree on pathways for students twice a year. Regular reviews on student progress and planning.  Strong links with High Schools leading to students beginning strongly supported transition programs to two of the three local High Schools.	

**Process 3: Students participation** in student voice and feedback.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
More students and families have engaged in the surveys supplying feedback to the school.  Students are informed and given opportunities to engage in decision making	

## Progress towards achieving improvement measures

through regular morning meetings.

Regular assemblies and morning meetings have been affected by COVID.

Key Initiatives	Resources (annual)	Impact achieved this year
<b>Aboriginal background loading</b>	<p>Use of the Cubby House and erection of Shed.</p> <p><b>Funding Sources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aboriginal background loading (\$8 927.00)</li> </ul>	<p>COVID has slowed the process of establishing the Men's Shed at Highlands. The club will operate out of the Cubby after school hours and hopefully be a resource for male students to get some cultural guidance.</p>
<b>Socio-economic background</b>	<p>Science equipment and resources</p> <p>Specialist Science Teacher</p> <p><b>Funding Sources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Socio-economic background (\$75 014.00)</li> </ul>	<p>Students are able to engage in Science experiments and experiences in a safe environment.</p>
<b>Improvement of School Environment</b>	<p>Movement of shipping containers to Agriculture area. New teaching tractor</p> <p><b>Funding Sources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Socio-economic background (\$30 000.00)</li> </ul>	<p>Agriculture area less accessible to students increasing safety. Tractor safe for supervised student use.</p>

## Student information

### Student enrolment profile

Students	Enrolments			
	2017	2018	2019	2020
Boys	29	33	26	30
Girls	2	4	3	3

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

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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.

## Workforce information

### Workforce composition

Position	FTE*
Principal(s)	1
Assistant Principal(s)	1
Classroom Teacher(s)	6.61
Teacher Librarian	0.2
School Counsellor	1
School Administration and Support Staff	9.42
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, 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 Actual (\$)
<b>Opening Balance</b>	807,940
<b>Revenue</b>	2,653,150
Appropriation	2,629,785
Grants and contributions	22,834
Investment income	531
<b>Expenses</b>	-2,622,864
Employee related	-1,976,248
Operating expenses	-646,615
<b>Surplus / deficit for the year</b>	30,286
<b>Closing Balance</b>	838,226

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.

Closing Balance includes Money set aside for a new GA Shed \$80,000 Complete refurbishment of all classrooms \$6x\$40000 = \$240000 Removal of dead Pine trees \$150000 Re-design of Office Space contribution \$150000 Establishment of Creative Arts Room contribution \$40000

## 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>	76,193
Equity - Aboriginal	8,200
Equity - Socio-economic	67,993
Equity - Language	0
Equity - Disability	0
<b>Base Total</b>	1,920,729
Base - Per Capita	19,308
Base - Location	1,834
Base - Other	1,899,588
<b>Other Total</b>	586,391
<b>Grand Total</b>	2,583,313

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

Tell Them from Me (2019) (11 Students)

55% High Advocacy, High Expectations (57% - 2018) 18% Low Advocacy, Low Expectations (26% - 2018) 64% Positive Advocacy (56% - 2018) 73% Positive Expectations for success (70% - 2018) 27% Sense of Belonging (64% - 2018)

Establishment of Parents and Citizen's Association. Fund raising achieved over \$1000

Parents report strong support for the school demonstrated by high level of involvement in Learning Goal meetings and correspondence. Strong support for Uniform Policy.



# 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.

## 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.