

# Strategic Improvement Plan 2021-2024

## Hornsby Girls High School 8120



# School vision and context

## School vision statement

The school's vision is 'excellence in girls education'. The school demonstrates this excellence with our teaching and learning, student wellbeing programs, professional learning for staff, and our parents as partners in education. The school has seven shared values developed with the students, parents and teachers in 2019; Kindness, Resilience, Inclusivity, Social Responsibility, Personal Bests, Intellectual Curiosity and Respect. These values are reinforced through our 'Owl Awards' system where teachers inform parents of their child's commitment to the school values via a HGHS values based postcard. The school has also developed individual personal bests goals which students create and are then published with their student semester one and semester two reports so that students have autonomy with their learning goals which are shared with their parents and are reviewed by the school in consultation with the students. The school is committed to being the best school for girls in NSW so that we empower young women as responsible leaders and civic members. The school constantly focusses on improving literacy, numeracy, STEM, the creative and performing arts and HSC results through ongoing monitoring of student learning and wellbeing, parent satisfaction and teacher professional learning as evidence of our ongoing commitment to teaching and learning.

## School context

- There are 722 academically selective students in 2021 88% are NESB and all members of the school community have high aspirations for success. The school is located in Hornsby a northern suburb in Sydney on the traditional custodians the Guringai people of the Eora nation. We acknowledge this each morning with the raising of the Aboriginal, Torres Strait Island, and Australian Flags by the prefects.
- In 2021 we began using a school-wide learning taxonomy 'SOLO' to help students "learn to learn". Details of this taxonomy are provided in Strategic Direction 1.
- Extracurricular activities are offered in the following areas: Aerobics, Art and Design, Business Studies, Charity Fund-Raising, Chess Club, Choir, Commerce, Dance, Drama, Diversity Group, Driver Education Program, Duke of Edinburgh Award, English, Environment, Geography, Grit Factor, Harmony Day, High Resolves, Highlight, History, Leadership, Library, Mathematics, Music, Public Speaking, Running Club, Science, Social Justice Group, Technology and Applied Studies.
- Distinctive attributes of the school include our Positive Education focus which informs our student wellbeing programs. These include the Year 7 Transition Program. This new program addresses the "Transition and Student Success" recommendations by Dr Tracy Worthington (June 2018) that HGHS should "spend more time building a community of practice at the beginning of the year so that more students feel welcome and supported... help students feel recognised... minimise anxiety about high school." The program helps reduce the "culture shock" of the move to high school, nurturing self-esteem, social connectedness and academic self-concept from the very beginning of high school. Year 8 students also further explore the issue of internet safety and cyberbullying through designated workshops and a parent information evening. The Year 9 Camp held in Term 3 enables students to develop skills in leadership and team building. Activities such as rope courses, canoeing and abseiling help students to confront physical challenges and move outside their comfort zones. All Year 9 participate in leadership training courses during Term 4 to prepare them for the leadership roles of Peer Support Leader or a Facilitator in the High Resolves program. Year 10 Student Wellbeing Leaders (SWL) students are a fundamental part of our school's positive education program working with other students and teachers to develop and lead positive education initiatives through our SWL extended roll calls held each fortnight. Year 11 students participate in Camp Jindabyne, a week-long experience early in Term 1 which gives the students the opportunity to bond as a senior year group. The camp also constitutes part of the Department of Education's compulsory 25 hour Crossroads Course. Other programs for Year 11 are the Driver Education Program and the Healthy Lifestyle Program, in which the students have an opportunity to discuss relevant lifestyle and health issues with registered GPs in a structured, small group program. The Building Strength program is offered to all Year 11 students and gives them the chance to understand themselves as learners and to develop effective study skills. Year 12 students are nurtured in their HSC year both individually and as the senior year group. The role of the Year Adviser is crucial in monitoring students' social and emotional well-being and regular feedback is given to the Deputy Principal responsible for Year 12 by all teaching staff. While the Year 12 students do have the HSC as a strong academic focus, welfare programs are such

# School vision and context

## School vision statement

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## School context

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that students can see themselves as unique individuals who are much more than a mark in the HSC or an ATAR score.

- Significant school improvement focus based on the findings of the situational analysis: According to the External Validation conducted in 2016 our school is Sustaining and Growing in all fourteen areas. According to the staff survey our school is Sustaining and Growing in all fourteen areas. According to the NAPLAN and HSC data we are Excelling. According to our broad curriculum, community involvement and other highlights we are Excelling. Our first strategic direction will focus on Student growth and attainment which will encourage further use of data (NAPLAN, HSC, TTFM) to make learning improvements. Our second strategic direction will focus on student and staff wellbeing which will encourage further individualisation of student wellbeing, differentiation of wellbeing programs and curriculum to encourage greater student belonging and advocacy. This reflects comments from staff from our recent survey that this area could be improved. Our third strategic direction Learning Environments and Systems will encourage a focus on improving attendance, our online administration and parent communication platforms, online learning platforms and continual upgrades of classrooms and buildings both physical and technological.
- Our level of resourcing from the Department of Education for 2021 is \$8,085,194. Of this amount \$7,342,175 is allocated to staffing costs for 63 members of staff. Included in this amount the school also receives \$30,630 for integration funding and \$104,393 for equity funding. This level of resourcing allows the school to develop targeted school programs that ensure our students excel in all activities.

# Strategic Direction 1: Student growth and attainment

## Purpose

To improve student academic performance through a focus on literacy and numeracy

- Numeracy growth percentage of students achieving growth in numeracy in zones of aspirations (aka stretch targets) lower target 65% upper target 70%, percentage of students in top 2 bands lower target 99% upper target 100%
- Percentage of students achieving growth in reading lower target 66% upper target 74%, percentage of students in top 2 bands lower target 90.7% upper target 93.7%
- Attendance lower target 95.6% upper target 95.7%
- Numeracy and Reading are bedrock of student learning and equipping students for life-long learning opportunities including formal and informal learning and extra-curricular activities.
- Greater attainment of reading and numeracy skills will ensure all of our school students perform at the highest possible level.

## Improvement measures

### Target year: 2023

#### Expected Growth

Improvement in the percentage of students achieving expected growth in NAPLAN **Reading** to be above the school's lower bound system-negotiated target of 65.9%

Improvement in the percentage of students achieving expected growth in NAPLAN **Numeracy** to be above the school's lower bound system-negotiated target of 64.5%

### Target year: 2022

#### NAPLAN Top 2 Bands

Improvement in the percentage of students achieving in the top two bands to be above the school's lower bound system-negotiated target in **Reading** of 90.7%

## Initiatives

### SOLO in Numeracy

SOLO in Numeracy is an initiative driven by the Head Teacher Mathematics. SOLO is a taxonomy of learning (structure of observed learning outcomes) developed by Dr Pam Hook.

At the **prestructural** level of understanding, the task is inappropriately attacked, and the student has missed the point or needs help to start. The next two levels, **unistructural** and **multistructural** are associated with bringing in information (surface understanding). At the **unistructural** level, one aspect of the task is picked up, and student understanding is disconnected and limited. The jump to the multistructural level is quantitative. At the **multistructural** level, several aspects of the task are known but their relationships to each other and the whole are missed. The progression to relational and extended abstract outcomes is qualitative. At the **relational** level, the aspects are linked and integrated, and contribute to a deeper and more coherent understanding of the whole. At the **extended abstract** level, the new understanding at the relational level is re-thought at another conceptual level, looked at in a new way, and used as the basis for prediction, generalisation, reflection, or creation of new understanding.

"Learning to learn" requires the learner to think about the strengths and weaknesses of their own thinking when they are learning and to make thoughtful decisions on what to do next. Students of all ages can use SOLO levels, rubrics and frameworks to answer the following questions:

- What am I learning?
- How is it going?
- What do I do next?

HGHS uses SOLO to help students think about the strengths and weaknesses of their own thinking, to "learn to learn" and to help the school develop a common, school wide approach to making learning and learning outcomes visible to students. SOLO helps our school develop a school-wide understanding of:

## Success criteria for this strategic direction

A whole school approach ensures the most effective evidence-based teaching methods optimise learning progress for all students, across the full range of abilities.

Teachers employ evidence-based effective teaching strategies. Effective methods are identified, promoted and modelled, and students' learning improvement is monitored, demonstrating growth.

Students are fully engaged in all lesson and assessment activities. This will be evidenced from test results, teacher observation, student feedback and parent input.

Students demonstrate an understanding of the SOLO taxonomy and therefore increased autonomy over their learning.

## Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

Guiding Question for Evaluation: What has been the impact of SOLO in Numeracy and SOLO in Literacy on student performance?

Data: SOLO in Numeracy and SOLO in Literacy will be evaluated each month at the Strategic Improvement Plan meeting which has members from each faculty. At these meetings student focused data will be monitored to determine the impact of teaching and learning on improvements in numeracy and literacy. The reports from these meetings will be highlighted at our Executive Meetings. The data will highlight where improvements can be made with teaching and learning adjustments to improve student performance. The data will also come from our TTFM surveys.

Analysis: Data is analysed and triangulated regularly to determine the extent to which the purpose and improvement measures have been achieved. The analysis will be foundational, informing pedagogical decision making by every teacher in an ongoing whole school focus.

Implications: Rigorous analysis of the data to determine

# Strategic Direction 1: Student growth and attainment

## Improvement measures

Improvement in the percentage of students achieving in the top two bands to be above the school's lower bound system-negotiated target in **Numeracy** of 100%

**Target year: 2022**

### HSC Top 2 Bands

Increase the percentage of HSC course results in the top two bands to be above the school's lower bound system-negotiated target of 95.6%

## Initiatives

1. The learning process 2. The language of learning 3. Learning intentions and learning outcomes 4. Self Assessment of the learning process 5. Interventions that enhance the conditions of value when learning.

### SOLO in Literacy

SOLO in Literacy is an initiative driven by Dr Richard Strauss (Head Teacher English and Drama). SOLO is a taxonomy of learning (structure of observed learning outcomes) developed by Dr Pam Hook.

In this approach SOLO becomes a powerful mental model for students - and is capable of changing the way they think about their own learning outcomes. With SOLO, students understand that declarative and functioning learning outcomes are the result of effort and the use of effective strategies rather than luck or fixed abilities. They are able and motivated to monitor their own progress in a learning task and to make smart decisions on their next steps. Schools using SOLO, report improvements in student learning outcomes; a raise in student confidence and increases in student engagement in learning.

SOLO is used to:

- Plan for differentiation;
- Give and receive feedback;
- Develop self-assessment resources;
- Design innovative curriculum;
- Reflect on learning processes and products;
- Undertake research and student led inquiry;
- Integrate e-learning and thinking strategies;
- Establish a school wide common language for learning.

## Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

impact will guide both ongoing implementation as well as future school planning to provide continuous improvement, ensuring students grow in their learning

## Strategic Direction 2: Student and Staff Wellbeing

### Purpose

To improve student and staff wellbeing so that students are fully engaged in all activities. Students have a stronger sense of self and of their place in the world and how they can improve the lives of others in the school and in the wider community.

- Wellbeing to improve students sense of belonging and advocacy (students know who to talk to if they have a problem) lower target 83% upper target 83.5%
- Staff will complete the People Matters Survey so that the data can be analysed and discussed by the staff to acknowledge our successes and areas for improvement.

### Improvement measures

#### Target year: 2022

##### Wellbeing

TTFM Wellbeing data (advocacy, belonging, expectations) improves to be at or above the school's lower bound system-negotiated target of 79.7%

#### Target year: 2024

By then end of 2021 an increasing number of staff will complete the NSW Public Sector Employee Matters Survey which measures staff engagement in the workplace. This will provide the school with itemised data on areas for improvement within the school work culture.

By the end of 2022 40% staff will complete the People Matters Survey.

By the end of 2023 50% staff will complete the People Matters Survey.

by the end of 2024 60% of staff will complete the People Matters Survey.

### Initiatives

#### Belonging

The SRC will increase its communication towards the wider student body and a goal will be to increase awareness of diversity and social events in both the school and wider community.

A small group of students from SRC (and in collaboration with the prefects) will write regularly in the Torch (our school newsletter) and Daily Notices to develop this program.

Students will use their understanding of SOLO and relate what is happening in the wider world to some student life at school (for example, one aspect may be cultural events such as Chinese New Year or Hanukkah based on the DoE's Calendar of Diversity 2021).

They will also supplement this with information on the SRC social media.

#### Advocacy

##### Student Wellbeing Advocacy Group (SWAG)

The Student Wellbeing Advocacy Group was created in response to student requests for a greater voice in the school and to complement the Student Representative Council to promote improved student wellbeing. It consists of six Year 9 students and seven Year 10 students. The group will follow a program designed by Batyr - a preventative mental health organisation, created and driven by young people, for young people. The program is designed to empower students to develop and deliver thoughtful mental health initiatives which engage and educate the wider school community. It is a year-long, student led, online program broken up into four modules - one for each term. Each module has activities and tasks scheduled for completion on a weekly basis. The goal is to meet as a group every week.

The aim of the first module is to equip students with the tools required to engage in positive conversations about mental health. Future modules will build on these skills,

### Success criteria for this strategic direction

The school has implemented evidence-based change to whole school practices, resulting in measurable improvements in wellbeing and engagement to support learning.

Positive, respectful relationships are evident and widespread among students and staff and promote student wellbeing to ensure optimum conditions for student learning across the whole school.

Students and staff take leadership roles in promoting Aboriginal reconciliation.

### Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

The guiding question for evaluation: What has been the impact of improving Student and Staff Wellbeing on Belonging and Advocacy and Aboriginal Cultural Awareness in the context of a high potential and gifted setting?

Data: The SIP team will monitor the progress of this Strategic Direction at the monthly meetings and report to the Executive at the Executive Meetings twice per term. Adjustments will be made based on the progress of the initiatives.

Analysis: Data is analysed and triangulated regularly to determine the extent to which the purpose and improvement measures have been achieved.

Implications: Deep analysis of the data will guide future school planning to provide ongoing improvement to maximise student learning outcomes.

## Strategic Direction 2: Student and Staff Wellbeing

### Initiatives

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culminate in students planning an event in term 3, based on mental health advocacy such as 'R U OK' day.

Throughout the year students will build their mental health literacy, learning what it takes to positively impact mental health conversations.

### People Matters Survey

The NSW Public Sector People Matters Survey provides workplaces including schools with data related to the engagement of workers within their workplace. The school would like to increase the participation rate of staff so that the results from the survey are statistically valid. Completion of the survey by DoE teachers across the state is lower than other public sector workplaces. The data has the potential to improve the working conditions of staff. The school will highlight and encourage staff to complete the annual survey. Survey results will be sent to staff and the principal will present the findings to the staff on an annual basis.

### Aboriginal Cultural Awareness

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Ensuring that Aboriginal culture, heritage and perspectives are authentically integrated into the learning of all students. This will be done through the development of a Reconciliation Action Plan (Reflect) and through the attendance of all staff at Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training every three years. This will result in students and staff taking leadership roles in promoting Aboriginal Reconciliation.

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## Strategic Direction 3: Learning Environments and Systems

### Purpose

Learning Environments and Systems to improve learning will ensure that all students' learning needs are catered to so as to improve learning outcomes.

- This should be reflected in Attendance growth from 92.5% to a lower target of 95.6% and an upper target of 97.8%
- Increased attendance will mean that students have more opportunities to learn

### Improvement measures

#### Target year: 2024

##### Homework Club

Percentage of students accessing the homework club for additional support to be at the school's upper bound target of 25%.

#### Target year: 2022

##### Attendance

Improvement in the percentage of students attending school more than 90% of the time to be above the school's lower bound system-negotiated target of 95.6%

### Initiatives

#### Hornsby Homework Hub

Hornsby Homework Hub is an after school program that is monitored by the Librarian and a Support Teacher. Students attend the Library after school with extended hours until 4:45pm to improve student learning environments. Trained and selected peer tutors assist students who require help with their homework or classwork. This program runs on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Students receive either one on one assistance or in small groups. Information from these sessions is fed back to teachers to assist in adjustments to teaching and learning programs.

#### Attendance Team

Attendance Team checks daily attendance and puts in place systems to assist students to improve attendance including counselling, communication with parents, HSLO, HSC Pathways and Shared Enrolments. The committee also checks PXP rolls (class rolls). These are tabled at weekly Executive Team Meetings. Students swipe-on to register their attendance at school and are ready and settled for class at 8:48am each day.

### Success criteria for this strategic direction

The school evaluates its administrative systems and processes, ensuring that they are delivering anticipated benefits to the school community, and makes changes when required.

The leadership team collects information about the school's administrative practices in order to ensure their effectiveness.

### Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

Guiding Question for Evaluation: What has been the impact of Learning Environments and Systems on student performance?

Data: Learning Environments and Systems will be evaluated each month at the Strategic Improvement Plan meeting which has members from each faculty. At these meetings student focused data will be monitored to determine the impact of teaching and learning on improvements in Learning Environments and Systems. This collegial approach to the development, implementation and management of both material and virtual learning spaces will highlight diverse approaches across the school. This diversity will inform the team's decisions about optimising learning. The reports from these meetings will be highlighted at our Executive Meetings. The data will highlight where improvements can be made with teaching and learning adjustments to improve student performance.

Analysis: Data is analysed and triangulated regularly to determine the extent to which the purpose and improvement measures have been achieved. The analysis will be foundational, informing pedagogical decision making by every teacher in an ongoing whole school focus.

Implications: Rigorous analysis of the data to determine impact will guide both ongoing implementation as well as future school planning to provide continuous improvement, ensuring students grow in their learning