Our school at a glance

Warrawong is a comprehensive, multicultural high school with 530 students, 53% from a non-English speaking background and 38 nationalities. We house the region's Intensive English Centre for new arrivals to Australia and a Special Education unit for students with higher needs. Our school delivers the highest quality education and gives students many opportunities to excel.

Again this year, our annual survey data shows that significant strides have been made. Students feel more engaged and they are enjoying school much more. Students have a much stronger voice with the result that school tone is very positive. Key indicators include student attendance which has risen to state average, more students are getting better academic monitoring grades, more students are getting the overall rating required to attend incentive excursions and discipline issues are down very significantly.

Our school strengths include:

Academic focus

We use a range of strategies to ensure students achieve excellent academic results. One outcome is that around one in three students achieve a first round university entry offer.

Technology

We provide a state of the art digital learning environment by continuing to invest heavily in staff training and hardware. This allows us to prepare students for a 21st century world of employment, communication and entertainment.

Curriculum

We continually innovate to ensure our curriculum remains best practice. Senior students choose between two distinct pathways - an academic, university strand or a vocationally employment focused strand.

Individual learning needs

High achievers access a selective class program which provides a range of extension options. Less able students get additional support with a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy as the essential foundations for all learning.

Expectations and engagement

We create a positive school tone by encouraging students to be self-disciplined and focused to achieve their personal potential. We promote cooperation and use a wide range of incentives to make school more interesting and enjoyable.

Facilities and environment

Quality facilities are essential for better student outcomes. Our facilities are outstanding and we continue to seek a range of funding sources to maintain a program of continual upgrades.

Principal's message

Our school has a strong history of achievement with our students, staff and the school winning numerous state and national awards.

Teachers promote high expectations. The goal is for students to have a positive attitude and a strong work ethic so they succeed as learners and achieve their academic potential. Across all years,
students make significant performance gains because of how teachers integrate literacy and technology into classroom learning. Besides an academic focus, we help students to develop social, interpersonal and employment skills and build self-esteem.

We build school community cohesion through strong links with parents, a quality approach to student welfare and an extensive range of engagement programs. This includes a strong focus on sport and the creative arts - band, choir, dance and drama. Two of the most innovative programs are our annual student film festival and our permaculture gardens where students learn about how to achieve a healthy, environmentally sustainable lifestyle.

I certify that the information in this report is the result of a rigorous school self-evaluation process and is a balanced and genuine account of the school’s achievements and areas for development.

Again this year the focus on uniform, punctuality and coming to school work ready are all helping with school tone. We are also aware that there is a continuing focus on getting students to perform better academically and as a parent group, we strongly support this approach. Yet again more work has been done to improve school facilities. The hall refurbishment and staffroom classroom complex has been finished plus the toilet upgrade has now also been complete. The result in each case is outstanding and all up it now represents a $4.1 million upgrade of school facilities over the last 6 years.

Again this year the annual parent survey showed high level satisfaction with the school. The vast majority of parents are extremely happy with the quality of education that the school is delivering. We would like to acknowledge and thank all staff for their work to make this a great school for our children.

Sharon Hurst

Student representative’s message

Each year, 24 students are elected by their peers to the Student Representative Council (SRC). The SRC meets once a fortnight and increasingly, it is playing a vital role as the student voice in school directions.

The SRC maintains a high profile at school. SRC members chair all major formal assemblies, hold year meetings, meet with the senior executive on what students want at school, run fundraising events and represent the school in a range of ceremonies and activities. Major achievements in 2013 include:

Leadership development: started the year with a training day to decide directions for the year and select the charities to be supported. The day was very successful and increased our sense of purpose and ideas.
Charity fundraising: organised fundraising to support charities such as the Leukaemia Foundation (World’s Greatest Shave), Jeans for Genes day and Harmony Day as well as for our own School Representative Council.

We developed a WACKI film to incorporate the school’s core value of ‘Respect’ between all members of the school community.

School community participation: our captains represented the school at a state wide SRC conference, four students attended the annual Elevate SRC Leadership Skills Program at the University of Wollongong, SRC members also attended community forums with the local Federal member and presented student views on youth facilities with Wollongong Council.

In terms of mobility, our school has a relatively high annual turnover. About 7% of our students left during the year to either take up employment or because their family was shifting to another area. This was balanced by a 5% influx of new students enrolling during the year. Many new students from overseas come to us through our IEC English program.

For the second year in a row, our school is close to regional and state attendance averages. This is due to the success of a range of programs (see next section), curriculum adjustments to engage senior students and a greater impact on all students around a culture of attending school. Our big issues are still with the small number of students who have entrenched attendance issues.

School Context

Student enrolment profile

Enrolments have grown steady and consistently for the last 5 years. In the mainstream, student numbers are up by around 130 over this period. This is a strong indicator of growing community support for what we are trying to achieve. Enrolments in our partner primary schools are slightly lower for the near future and so without new injections we anticipate no major changes in student numbers in the near future.

Student attendance profile

For the second year in a row, our school is close to regional and state attendance averages. This is due to the success of a range of programs (see next section), curriculum adjustments to engage senior students and a greater impact on all students around a culture of attending school. Our big issues are still with the small number of students who have entrenched attendance issues.
Management of non-attendance

Initiatives to address attendance issues have achieved positive results in terms of attendance, truancy and lateness to school. These include:

Head Teacher Administration who oversees daily attendance monitoring and works to resolve non-attendance both to school and each lesson.

Introduced on-line period by period roll marking to provide immediate identification and targeting of non-attenders and truants.

A school appointed Community Liaison Officer makes regular phone contact with the parents of students with a poor attendance record.

Mentoring and targeted programs for Aboriginal students and those with welfare and behaviour issues have improved chronic attendance problems.

Interviews with identified students and their parents. Targeted students are then placed on attendance monitoring.

A close working relationship with the Home School Liaison Officer which has helped to modify poor attendance patterns.

Structure of classes

We have a 6 period day with 55 minute periods. The day begins with roll marking or our twice weekly assemblies. Across Year 7-10 we operate graded classes in the core subjects - English, Mathematics, Science, History and Geography and mixed ability groups in all other subjects.

In Year 7-8 we have an academically selective class. To access the class in Year 7, students must complete our selective class test. For Year 8, the class is reselected based on student performance across Year 7. This structure has had a very positive impact on student attitudes and performance.

To achieve greater curriculum choice in Year 9-12, students can choose to study subjects outside our school. Students can enrol in courses at other institutions including Saturday Languages School and through distance education.

To assist Year 10 students to make wise subject choices, we hold individual interviews with every student. We also organise an information evening on the ATAR, HSC rules, work options and pre-requisites for tertiary study.

Post-school destinations

Almost 30% of our Year 12 students received a university offer at the University of Wollongong. The degrees they are undertaking include Medical & Health Science, Law, Creative Arts, Science Education, Business, Graphic Design and Nanotechnology. Many took advantage of early admission and special access programs. Several Year 12 students participated in the IN2UNI program making them eligible for support in their application for university admission.

Around 30% of students received an offer for TAFE or private colleges studying at certificate or diploma level. Most of the rest entered directly into the workforce including students who had completed TVET Nursing gaining employment at Shellharbour Hospital. Other students gained traineeships and apprenticeships, for example in hairdressing.

We offer a distinct vocational HSC pathway to supplement the academic curriculum. We promote the vocational strand as an integrated two year package which includes Work Studies,
vocational (VET) subjects and access to TAFE and part time traineeships.

The greater focus on a vocational HSC is making the curriculum more relevant and having a range of positive impacts. Our recently completed Trade Training Centres Construction & Hospitality have provided our school, and region, with state of the art access to industry standard work class facilities.

More students are staying on for the HSC, more are involved in part time traineeships and TAFE and more are work ready. This year three VET courses operated - Hospitality, Construction and Retail.

A range of careers initiatives have built student employability skills and improved the school to work transition for students. These include Speed Careering, Discovery Day, IN2UNI, the Careers Expo, TAFE Brick & Block, industry visits and through the development of close relationships with organisations such as Workplace Learning Illawarra and Warrigal Employment.

**Retention to Year 12**

![Retention to Year 12 graph](image)

Our retention rate is mainly a result of curriculum adjustments plus the range of quality school to work and engagement programs we offer. These are targeted at year 10 and post year 10 (under 17) and also involve a very significant amount of individual student case management.

**Workforce information**

We have a highly experienced and professional staff. Over recent years, five staff have received Departmental awards acknowledging the quality of their work. We use much of our equity funds to employ additional staff to implement school initiatives. Currently we have one Aboriginal teacher permanently employed plus one who is a long term temporary teachers’ aide.

**Workforce composition - SG**

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<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deputy Principal(s)</td>
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<tr>
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**Teacher qualifications**

All staff meet the professional requirements for teaching in NSW public schools.

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<td>Postgraduate</td>
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<td>NSW Institute of Teachers Accreditation</td>
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Financial summary

This summary covers funds for operating costs and does not involve expenditure areas such as permanent salaries, building and major maintenance.

Date of financial summary 30/11/2013

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Expenditure

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<td>Extracurricular dissections</td>
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<td><strong>Balance carried forward</strong></td>
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A full copy of the 2013 financial statement is tabled at the P&C annual general meeting. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

School performance 2013

Expectations, engagement and academic performance

We expect students to maintain high standards in attendance, punctuality, uniform and classroom performance. In return the school provides a quality learning environment for students to express themselves and their learning skills. Students must be focused and self-disciplined to create a positive school tone and ensure they achieve their academic and personal potential. Expectations are reinforced through quality classrooms and a wide range of incentives and options to make school more interesting and enjoyable and help students learn new skills.

We have a strong emphasis on acknowledging academic achievement. At the most recent merit assemblies we handed out 508 merit certificates and at the annual Presentation Day assembly students received 106 major prizes and 24 sports awards.

We use five weekly progress checks for all students to measure their academic progress and application. In 2012, 45 students from Year 9 to 12 achieved all A’s at each check all year. Students with a poor rating face differing consequences depending on their previous performance. Issues such as commitment to school and study, part time work, relationships and stress are all dealt with as part of the process.

We provide free after school tutoring for senior students. All teachers are available as tutors and this year many Year 12 students took advantage of the opportunity. As in past years, students who took part in regular coaching sessions improved their grades and achieved superior HSC results.

To help students perform to their academic potential we also run a free homework centre in the library two afternoons. Our staff are available to help students from all years with all aspects of their school work.

Research skills are paramount for all students so to start high school, all Year 7 students now undergo an information literacy and computer skills course. These skills are immediately tested with students completing projects in a number of subjects using our library learning centre.

The Learning Centre (TLC)

A new initiative in 2013 is our learning centre. Learning and support staff use the room to withdraw students from class to assist them in a small group or individual program setting. Teachers can also send students who will benefit from individual support to complete tasks including both remedial and extension activities.

Literacy

Improving student literacy skills continues to be a major focus area. Extra staff resources are used across a range of coordinated literacy initiatives which include:
Reading Rescue: targeted students in Years 7 and 8 are involved in an intensive reading program designed to meet their individual needs. Students work in small groups or individual withdrawal programs to help develop their reading, comprehension and spelling skills. All students achieve substantial improvement in reading and showed a more positive attitude towards their learning in the classroom.

Targeted whole school literacy strategies: Following a detailed analysis of NAPLAN results, specific strategies are designed and implemented to address targeted areas. Currently we have a whole school approach targeting writing, with a scaffold for writing paragraphs (TXXXC) and a framework for constructing extended responses being taught across all KLA’s. Mentoring and TPL time with faculties ensures all staff have the skills to analyse SMART data and prepare relevant learning activities to meet specific literacy needs of their students.

ALARM: we are now into our 4th year of this major strategy to improve HSC student writing and thinking skills.

Extending talented students

We operate a selective class for Year 7 and 8 to extend the more academic students. These classes provide a range of enrichment activities and special projects which are designed to extend students and introduce them to new skills by going beyond the regular curriculum. In class, teachers focus on higher order thinking and multiple intelligences.

Major special events were the Habitat Day for Year 8 and the Year 7 Gifted and Talented Expo. Year 8 studied the local Berkley Brush habitats around the school and then made habitat boxes to encourage native wild life back into the school environs. Year 8 then used this knowledge to teach Cringila primary school students about the different habitats located in the school grounds. Year 7 completed projects across ten subjects (English, History, Science, Mathematics, Personal and Physical Development, Language, Visual Arts, Technology, Geography and Music. These were then presented to parents at the Expo night. Students hosted each event and used a range of presentation modes such as models, speeches, Photoshop, film and music. Students received certificates and prizes for their participation in these events.

Parents and teachers were very impressed with the quality of work and enthusiasm of the students. A very positive spin off has been the increased motivation and commitment from the 2nd class in each year with these students striving to gain a place in the selective class.

Vocational Education

Yet again there have been improvements to our facilities. We renovated our second construction workshop and created a café and outdoor bistro.

This has provided another high quality function area which also operates once per week as a café for staff and students. The development of this area was done with the involvement of our year
Vocational education provides our students with real life opportunities linked to the workplace and assists students preparing for life after school. Our strong vocational education and training program contributes significantly to student retention and engagement in education.

Creative & Performing Arts

Our school offers outstanding programs across the creative and performing arts. Our students were again involved in Southern Stars where they showcased their talents in drama, dance and music. Southern Stars is a regional performing arts event held annually at the WIN Entertainment Centre which includes over 1000 students from various public schools in the Illawarra. Our students were excellent and endured hours of rehearsals and individual practice. It was an honour to see them shine during the four sold out performances.

For the first time we hosted the annual community of schools talent expo during education week. This event gives students from our local schools an opportunity to sing and perform to showcase their classwork in the performing arts. Once again our annual creative and performing arts evening gave students the chance to perform in a 2 hour spectacular. This was the first creative and performing arts evening since upgrading the hall audio and visual system making it a more user friendly and suitable space for performances.

In visual arts, the focus was on developing a range of technical skills which enable students to accomplish high standards in their art making. Students explored themes relating to their immediate world, environments and a range of cultures and artistic styles such as Tibetan Mandalas and the world of Surrealism. Students used a great variety of materials and practices including ceramics, papier mache, sculpture, lino printing and collage techniques. This allowed students to develop their knowledge of the elements and principles of design and to communicate their ideas using expressive forms. 7S students were also involved with painting a mural panel as part of the local billy cart derby festival. The mural panel was displayed among others on Wentworth St and the students were featured in local newspapers.

Film & Visual Literacy

The Warrawong Schools Film Festival (WACKI) was once again an outstanding success. Now in its twelfth year, this is an annual joint COS project with our local primary schools, which encourages close contact and liaising between students and staff from all schools. It involves the production of films which are written, acted, directed and edited by students. This year over 200 students were involved in the production of 15 short films. A variety of genres, pre and post-production techniques reflect a growing engagement with and knowledge of movie making and visual literacy, linking it closely to school curricula and learning outcomes.

Our annual awards night held at the local Gala Theatre, Warrawong attracted over 300 students, parents, guests and teachers who joined in the
celebration. Later in the week over 400 primary and high school students enjoyed the films during a school excursion.

Student films and the film festival itself have won some outstanding awards - The NAB ‘Schools First’ Regional Impact Award for Community Partnerships, the NSW Director General Award for Excellence, Panasonic Kids Witness News and the NSW Equity Schools Short Film Competition.

Our festival has a strong community emphasis and receives generous sponsorship including free use of the local Gala Theatre. Continued financial support from WIN/BlueScope Foundation as well as The Illawarra Yacht Club and Oak Flats Bowling Club reflect the necessary community support to ensure the film festival continues.

Warrawong Intensive English Centre (WIEC)

The WIEC addresses the needs of newly arrived non-English speaking students arriving into our region. The IEC provides first phase new arrival students with a comprehensive English program by teaching English through Science, Maths and HSIE as well as Computers, PE/Health, Art, Sport and Library. The program equips students with the necessary skills and language so they can function well in a mainstream high school.

This year, we have seen a significant increase in newly arrival students mainly from countries including Afghanistan and Iraq. We finished the year with 90 students. Once students complete up to a year of intensive learning in English they mostly then transition into a mainstream high school. Our students mix with mainstream students to gain an idea of what school is like through activities such as grade sport, chess and integration week. The continued HSC success of our ex-students and their consequent admission into university is always a great source of satisfaction for IEC staff.

We use the NSW intensive English curriculum framework which has been specifically designed for newly arrived, secondary students whose first language is not English. The framework is outcomes based and has a literacy focus through a range of levels beginning at foundation and progressing to level 3.

The WIEC has been involved in a number of major projects and extension activities this year:

Gifted and talented students have been involved in writing, mathematics, art, film, chess and sport competitions. Students produced two films for the WACKI film festival. ‘New Found Hope’ was also entered in the ABC Heywire competition and was runner up.

All IEC students have been involved in the school permaculture program through science. Students made signs for the garden and participated in planting, maintenance and harvesting. Other highlights included combined high school, IEC activities such as national tree planting week and harmony day. The IEC music group performed during refugee week at Wollongong Art Gallery and the annual IEC open day and graduation ceremony during education week.

Students also participated in initiatives including water and beach safety at Port Kembla beach, the NSW swim program, Casual Edge and art mural projects with MCCI and Port Kembla Youth Project plus excursions to Taronga Zoo, ABC Studios, Australian Museum, Maritime Museum and BlueScope. Our overnight Canberra excursion was a highlight for the students and included visits to Parliament House, the War Memorial, Museum of Democracy and Questacon.

The annual 2 day multicultural youth conference provided a series of workshops for young people newly arrived in Australia around physical and mental well-being and a healthy lifestyle. Both
IEC and high school students participated in the conference.

IEC activities week to finish the year encourages our students through a mix of educational and social activities including Jamberoo Action Park, Minnamurra River where students did canoeing and fishing led by the Illawarra Environment Education Centre, tenpin bowling and our community and family day.

Library

All library programs have been enhanced by the redevelopment of the library and the extension of the library computer lab which now houses 20 multimedia computers and the purchase of 2 interactive whiteboards.

Besides information literacy, the goal of the library programs is to establish the library as a learning hub to support every classroom in the school. In an information-rich environment the critical skills is to know how and where to find information. While there is a strong focus on technology access and use it is about how to source and use the information that is potentially available.

Encouraging reading is vital to this goal and again this year, library loans increased steadily, a trend that has occurred each year for the past five years. In part this has been due to the library increasing its range of study guides and subject based resources for senior students. Another factor has been significant spending to upgrade fiction resources and student participation in recommending books to be acquired.

Sport

Sport is focused on engaging students in some form of physical activity to help maintain health, develop self-esteem, character and for the future use of leisure time. It involves grade and non-grade sport every Thursday and we enter the various state high school knockout competitions and gala days. The most significant achievements for 2013 included four of our grade sport teams making the Southern Illawarra zone grand finals:

- Senior Boys Soccer coached by Mr Nordstrom
- Senior Boys Basketball coached by Ms Dus
- Senior Girls touch coach by Ms Allnutt
- Open Girls Newcombe Ball coached by Mr Kane

Of these, two came away as champions:

Senior Girls Touch

and Senior Boys Soccer
Our swimming, cross country and athletics carnivals each involved significant community support which led to more students participating at school, zone and regional levels. We also entered knockout teams in the various CHS competitions - soccer, rugby league, rugby union, touch football and basketball.

Our individual sport champions were Samantha Hayes and Avari Aremaki. Congratulations to both on their fine sportsmanship throughout the year.

Chris Cugalji was our Ken McCarthy trophy winner for excellence in soccer. Tyler Paese was acknowledged for his outstanding commitment to sport and received the Premier’s sporting challenge medallion.

Ms Allnutt was named coach of the year for her efforts with the senior girls touch team and various other sporting teams throughout the year.

**Academic achievements**

The *My School* website provides detailed information and data for national literacy and numeracy testing (NAPLAN).

Click on the link [http://www.myschool.edu.au](http://www.myschool.edu.au) enter the school name in the *Find a school* and select GO to access the school data.

**Higher School Certificate (HSC)**

The last 5 years of trend data across all subjects indicate some improvements in HSC results. At the very top end, results are excellent and support the selective class strategy introduced 7 years ago. This year the bottom band value added was significant but again improved results were not consistent across the board.

We use a range of strategies impact positive in terms of student attitude and approach. These include academic monitoring, HSC tutoring, faculty monitoring, explicit teaching and targeted literacy and assessment help. As a school, our major goal is to continue to seek ways to achieve a consistent across the board lift in student academic performance.
Significant programs and initiatives

Respect and responsibility

An important part of our school culture is focused on building student self-esteem and encouraging students to show respect and act responsibly. We focus on respect as a core value. A range of initiatives are used with students to promote respect for yourself, others, the environment and the community. Respect is paramount in the culture and tone of our school and we continually seek ways to embed respect in our curriculum and welfare and discipline structures.

We have very effective systems to monitor and manage student attendance, behaviour, post suspension initiatives to help students returning to school, a progressive detention system and behaviour tracking to provide positive feedback and incentives for students experiencing difficulty at school. Largely, our systems are effective because of excellent communication via our weekly student welfare meetings, fortnightly learning support team meetings and through coordination of the work of our school learning support officers and school counsellors.

On the positive side, there is a major focus on merit to encourage all students to maximise their potential. The merit scheme is now better supported due to an overhaul of the system, a greater emphasis on merit at assemblies and more community promotion. Students are awarded merit certificates which lead to major merit levels and ultimately a school achievement medal. These awards are vital to reinforce the good work students are doing and to help build student self-esteem by telling them when they are doing well. Approximately 35% of students are currently on a merit level. This is an excellent reflection of the really positive contribution students are making at school.

All students are encouraged to achieve their best across all faculty areas and every term Incentive Excursions are run for each year group to reward students who are working to the best of their ability in all subject areas – these are highly regarded by all students with at least 50% of each year cohort receiving invitations to participate.

A range of initiatives are used to help students develop a more positive attitude to school and improve their self-esteem and self-confidence. This includes supporting students at risk through programs which supplement classroom learning and reduce the possibility that they will drop out of school. In the vast majority of cases students become more settled with behaviour, attendance and work ethic all improving dramatically.

We currently have around 12 engagement type programs operating - some are school initiated while some are shared with various community agencies and are being run either on or offsite.

Aboriginal education

A major goal has been to engage our Indigenous students in the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME) which offers connections with Aboriginal mentors from the University of Wollongong. The purpose is to build self-esteem, raise expectations and improve retention.
The school employs an assistant as an “in class mentor” and role model to support students experiencing literacy and learning difficulties. This role extends to a range of extra curricula activities. For 2013, major outcomes have been:

- Improved enrolment and retention for our ATSI students. There has been a significant increase in the number of ATSI students enrolled, up from 45 in 2012 to 50 in 2013.
- A very well attended parent luncheon in a bid to encourage parent engagement in their child’s learning.
- An Aboriginal student and SRC year leader played an active role in all SRC activities, major assemblies and was integral to the success of programs to support Aboriginal students.

- All Aboriginal students were involved in cultural experiences such as NAIDOC Week art program with Warrigal Employment, Sandon Point tent embassy excursion, end of year incentive excursion to Jamberoo Recreation Park and we completed our school digital acknowledgement to country.

**Multicultural education**

Our school is the most multicultural in the region and multiculturalism is embedded into every facet of school life. As a result we have a very harmonious school where individual differences are respected.

Again this year, student numbers have increased due to the school culture and the offer of HSC ESL English as the preferred option for completing the HSC. This is a very positive avenue for our students as it allows for their diverse language backgrounds. In 2012 one of our ESL students achieved a high Band 5 and an ATAR in the high nineties which reflects the success of the program. Also, one of the ESL students was elected onto the School Representative Council and represented our school at a number of events as well as helping to host all official school ceremonies.

A number of ESL students attended the Links to Learning program and (along with IEC students) participated in various multicultural events including Illawarra Multicultural Youth Forum and Harmony Day. Our ESL & refugee students also participated in the RAW (Ready Arrive Work) program. This program provides important employment related skills and a greater understanding of employer expectations and the Australian workplace culture.
Students with a Disability

Our special education unit has six classes divided into two MC Classes, one Autism class, one IO class and 2 IM classes ranging from year 7 to 12. All students complete social skills development and community access programs. Students also engage in many sporting activities and performing arts. Junior classes focus on developing basic literacy and numeracy skills that they will need later in life.

Senior students work on individual programs covering basic life skills, mainstream units and transition from school to work. Year 12 students complete an exit program which assists them to form links with the community before they leave school. Other senior students complete individual skills programs which prepare them for future participation in work experience. Students are encouraged to complete VET and vocational TAFE courses and also to participate in work experience.

We also run a very successful permaculture program and our Year 9 students participate in a world of work program. Together with our upgraded classroom technology, support unit students are experiencing and enjoying many new learning innovations at school.

We continue to explore new options to enhance the education for all special education students. These include the WOW program, TTW, ongoing TAFE and work experience.

Low SES National Partnership

Additional equity funding is the basis for a very successful formula ie. by linking student needs, a quality contribution from committed staff and adequate resources, the result is excellent (and improved) student outcomes. Ongoing analysis including trend data consistently indicates that the additional resources have led to significant, measurable improvements.

Most funds are used to give teachers time to develop and implement creative solutions to better meet student needs. The emphasis is on teachers working with students to implement programs. As a result teacher expertise has grown significantly. We combine our various equity resources and use these to drive our school plan across a range of focus areas:

- Achieving better student outcomes through a focus on quality teaching, especially using innovative ideas for the teaching of literacy and the use of technology.
- Improving student outcomes through a focus on increased expectations and increasing student engagement.
- Increasing student retention through quality curriculum.
- Ensuring school leadership is best practice.
- Creating positive community relationships.

Our annual evaluation has shown significantly improved outcomes across a range of targets. For 2014, we intend retaining all focus areas and maintaining our broad goals while looking to achieve even more by adjusting the specifics of many of the programs.

Connected learning

Computers are a key part of classroom learning with students able to access excellent technology systems and facilities. The school is fully networked with secure individual data storage, internet and intranet access via every computer and a range of the latest software packages. Facilities include five computer labs, one operating as a multi-media classroom, two mini-labs, the library as an electronic information centre and interactive whiteboards in over 75%
of all classrooms. Students can access the library all day for individual work and one computer lab is open to students during class breaks.

Optic fibre has been installed across the school and a parallel wireless system has been installed to support the national laptop program where all Year 9-12 students have their own laptop.

All staffrooms are linked to the school network and school administration is highly digitised. We use an outcomes based computer reporting system and the SENTRAL tracking system to help manage student welfare and discipline.

A major strength of our school is the classroom use of technology with each faculty using a range of digital resources to enhance student learning. Computers are an integral part of our focus on teaching literacy particularly tied to a hands-on learning approach. Our technology committee leads way in the continual evolution and upgrade of hardware and classroom teaching.

Learning community linkages

Our high school primary school linkages continue to strengthen. Our Year 6-7 curriculum transition initiative involving joint lesson design and delivery by primary school and high school staff is proving to be very effective. The permaculture living classroom project includes all local schools. This project involves developing permaculture gardens at each school to teach students about local food production, sustainability and healthy eating. We again held our annual combined Education Week concert and our annual WACKI film festival at the Gala Theatre. These celebrate the wonderful performing arts programs that all of our local schools provide for our students. WIN BlueScope Steel provides a major injection of funds each year which helps us maintain our learning community programs. In a new initiative the transition to high school program now involves a all Year 6 primary school students participating in digital citizenship training run by high school student leaders. Other ongoing community of schools links include an open night, NAPLAN sharing day where we also consult on Year 7 class placement, Year 6 class visits by our staff, the Year 6 orientation day and a once term meeting of all local Principals.

Warrawong High School Facebook

We have launched a school Facebook page to engage and interact with our parents, local community and partner primary schools. Our goal is to promote all the positive achievements which occur. The page now has 595 ‘likes’ and serves as a vital communication tool. While the page primarily serves as an image and event sharing tool, we have had more and more students and parents ‘message’ the page to find answers to questions about dates, events and other school business.

Environment Education (Permaculture)

It has been another productive and life changing year down in the garden and outdoor kitchen area. The permaculture engagement programs have been really effective in supporting students to transition into and engage with school. The girls completed their totem pole gateways, prepared locally grown produce and cooked it in our wood fired cob oven. The boys’ team were up to their elbows in compost growing a bounty of annual vegetables throughout the year.

One of the main contributing factors to our success is the number of community volunteers providing positive and inspiring role models. Volunteers came from Sydney University and the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney. We were also had a number of visiting national and international permaculture practitioners do hands on work with our students in the garden. Costa Georgiades and the ABC Gardening Australia crew filmed for five days during July for an October television screening of Ground Breakers.
Our students and staff were celebrated for their innovative approaches to environmental restoration and then growing food and building community engagement on remediated land. For example, a main objective of the IEC permaculture engagement programs is to foster a connected and caring community that is culturally and socially engaged.

Perhaps the most innovative new program is the science “Biodiversity of the Berkeley Brush” 8S research, design and install/construct project. Students develop a variety of habitats to attract biodiversity from around the local area into our school and local gardens. We employ the “kids teaching kids” pedagogy where the students from our local primary schools come to our garden for a full day of immersion workshops to learn about attracting and maintaining different wildlife habitats.

Special education have worked tirelessly to establish a Balinese style terraced garden. The students transformed a weedscape into a productive food forest that provided a variety of sub-tropical fruits. They also created a chicken house, straw yard and extensive chicken runs. While our chickens roam freely the vine weeds have been converted into tasty organic eggs for the wider school community.

F1 in Schools

Our school has been unveiled as the inaugural hub school for the Illawarra region’s F1 in Schools worldwide STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) challenge. The initiative is a multidisciplinary and team based activity where groups of students design a formula race team to compete at school, regional, state, national and international level. The program addresses skills shortages in engineering and provides participating students with the opportunity to gain ‘real life’ experience in the design and engineering industry.

Progress on 2013 targets

High performing schools deliver quality student outcomes across a broad range of indicators. While changes of a significant magnitude do not happen in even a few years we are now reaching towards the standards as set out in our school ethos statements (see school plan). There is no doubt that equity funding over a number of years is now having the expected impact. In terms of the key indicators and academic performance, two things are clear:

- In NAPLAN literacy, Yr7 achieved growth higher than SSG standard in all areas while Yr9 students achieved growth which was the same or better than growth achieved by SSG in reading, spelling and numeracy. In numeracy, an impressive 63.1% of Yr9 students achieved greater than expected growth. In the HSC an increasing number of subjects were about the SSG average
- Our students are achieving excellent results according to where our resources and teacher professional learning is focused from year to year. For example, 61% of students who were in our selective class program for Yr7 & 8 improved significantly in the Yr9 NAPLAN tests (+30 difference)
In terms of student engagement with school and in each classroom, the results are extremely deep, significant and broad ranging:

- Student attitudes to school work have lifted very significantly. The number of students getting excellent academic monitoring grades across all subjects has increased dramatically with the flow on impact that many more merits are going out (up by 25% over 2011) and more students are eligible for our term incentive excursions

- Students are more co-operative and positive about school. Negative student referrals for behaviour, attendance and academic performance have fallen by over 50% and also there has been a major reduction in the severity of behaviour notifications

- Attendance data is massively positive. Over the last 5 years student attendance rates have risen by around 4% (88.2% in 2013) which is close to the state average. In addition, truancy is consistently nil for over 98% of students.

- Over the last 3 years, Aboriginal student attendance and retention has improved significantly for all but a few students

- Many more students are seeking to be a school leader through nomination to the student representative council.

- School tone in terms of assemblies, the playground and uniform are all much better. Uniform compliance and associated support from parents is now reaching a very high level leading to significant positive community feedback. The number of discipline issues requiring intervention in the playground has decreased to extremely low levels

- We have much stronger positive relationships between students and students and staff. In terms of both attitude and approach both student and staff survey results indicate very high level satisfaction with school.

School evaluation processes

We conduct evaluations to support the effective implementation of the school plan. Processes used include:

- Focus interviews involving staff, students, and parents

- Analysis of policies and programs, plans, budgets, assessment information, program evaluations and other communications, documents

- School surveys (mostly online) for teachers and parents plus for all students using the “Tell Them From Me” software

- Analysis of student achievement data including assessment, NAPLAN analysis using SMART and HSC results using RAP

Program evaluations

NSW public schools conduct evaluation to support the effective implementation of the school plan. In 2013, two of our evaluations focused on academic performance and executive leadership.
Student Voice

Background
An effective school has excellent communication and a strong voice by all involved in the school community. One area of emphasis in the last 2 years has been student leadership and one outcome of this has been to seek a greater focus on student voice. We are seeking to build a culture where students respect and relate well to each other, there are strong positive relationships between students and staff and it is clear to students that their issues and expectations are being heard and understood. Four key initiatives have been used:

- A range of strategies where staff have collaborated to build stronger classroom relationships
- A range of high profile leadership responsibilities for the student representative council (SRC) including leading year meetings, regular follow up meetings with the senior executive to discuss the outcomes and leadership training and leadership opportunities within and out of school
- An increased profile for the SRC through their planning and organisation of school events
- Student development and presentation of lessons on harassment and cyber bullying

Findings and conclusions
In a short period of time our initial steps have delivered a much more positive school tone and culturally, there are a range of indicators which confirm students like school and feel happy and engaged. Student self-esteem and mutual respect exists across the school community though the development of a more collegial atmosphere where students feel respect runs two ways. In terms of our key initiatives, our evaluations show that there is more work that can be done to hone each of our four initiatives. In addition, as a major step at the end of last the SRC led all students through a consultation process. Students completed a survey on their attitudes towards the learning environment. The SRC senior leaders then ran a staff meeting workshop on the findings i.e. how students like to learn, what makes an effective lesson and what is a good learning space at school.

Future directions
In 2014, new leadership opportunities for the SRC will provide the greater recognition plus skills and experiences to aid a positive culture within the student body. Besides the current range of strategies all SRC members will be trained in peer mediation so they are available to help resolve minor issues between students. In addition, their role as peer leaders in addressing harassment and cyber bullying will now include the design and delivery of these lessons.

Targeted Student Engagement

Background
Our school puts a significant amount of resources into supporting Year 8-11 students who are disengaged, lack self-esteem or are unlikely to complete school. These programs are interwoven with and augmented by a range of external providers and community agencies which in turn means significant co-ordination to ensure maximum student outcomes and the most effective use of the resources for the most number of students. For Year 7-10 these include permaculture environmental education, garden art, girls positive life choices, student community volunteers and a two stranded, highly, targeted school to work transition project for Year 11.

There is no doubt that like student voice, these programs are having a significant positive impact
on school tone and culture. Our question is whether the high cost of these programs is sustainable in terms of student outcomes in a changing future funding environment. The outcomes of each program in themselves are extremely positive and have a range of additional spin off benefits in terms of school and community culture. In addition however, we are seeking longitudinal data to confirm that there are strong positive outcomes in terms of classroom engagement and attitude for the students involved.

Findings and conclusions

These targeted programs have achieved positive outcomes for the targeted students with engagement strategies providing a medium to deal with entrenched attitudinal and engagement issues. For the year 7-10 programs, student achievement levels have improved and for year 11, individual students have benefited from case management, a flexible curriculum and development of employability skills. Teachers have observed improved engagement and classroom performance for targeted students and teacher satisfaction and student performance ratings are increasingly positive. For some students, there has been no real reduction in the incident notifications but the incident seriousness is much improved. There has been a significant increase in student attendance and in the number of merit awards received by targeted students. There is also good evidence of a huge positive impact from 1-1 mentoring support but this does not always transfer into the whole school situation.

Future directions

Each of the listed programs is being maintained with adjusted targets to reflect suggestions through our annual school review process. An overall goal is to find strategies which promote the transfer of the positive engagement program behaviours into the classroom environment. Strategies here include connecting targeted students to our Learning Centre goals which will lead to students taking greater ownership for their own personal goals and steps to achieving these. As part of this develop a contract with students, and have regular reviews of attendance data and regular progress reports to track engagement in class.

Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction

In 2013 the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school. Students were generally very positive about teachers and the school. A survey was taken of all students- 84% believed they worked hard, 85% felt they worked hard, 82% thought the teachers showed them respect and 91% felt that teachers provided challenging lessons for them. Students believed strongly that they received plenty of attention from teachers and that they were focused in class.

Parents continue to rate the school very highly - 85% indicated their children enjoyed coming to school. Parents believe staff are doing an excellent job and that they are very professional and helpful. In areas such as opinions of teachers, promotion of multiculturalism, care of students and student incentives, parents were very happy. The area of communication was particularly highlighted by parents - all rated communication very positively in terms of both providing information and school responsiveness ie. information on events, school promotion, how well we address parent issues about student behaviour and performance. Numbers of parents attending the Parent Teacher Night and the Year 6-7 Open Night have remained high.

Staff continued to be very strongly supportive of the school ethos and culture. In our annual staff school performance survey, 83% were satisfied with school leadership and management. Staff believed that they were receiving more assistance in implementing literacy and numeracy strategies in the classroom. There was a much greater use of NAPLAN results by teachers in designing and implementing these strategies.
**Professional learning**

All staff participated in professional learning via school development days throughout the year, timetabled faculty teaching and learning meetings and through the use of TPL funds. All professional learning is based around school priorities as indicated in the school plan and there is significant co-ordination of all TPL to ensure it is used for the maximum benefit across the school. Each faculty must apply via the annual budget process for TPL funds to run faculty programs.

The main TPL spending areas were technology, literacy and numeracy, curriculum, quality teaching, leadership, student engagement, welfare and equity. Our school spent a total of $44,000 or an average of $800 per staff member. This was an increase on previous years due to National Partnership Funding priorities.

**School planning 2012-2014**

The school planning policy provides direction for the preparation and implementation of school plans including the identification of priority areas, intended outcomes and targets that are consistent with the NSW State Plan and the Department’s planning documents. Being a national partnerships school our goals, outcomes and targets are very broad, detailed and extensive. As such, please refer to our school plan accessible in our school website for details.

**About this report**

In preparing this report, the self-evaluation committee has gathered information from evaluations conducted during the year and analysed other information about the school's practices and student learning outcomes. The self-evaluation committee and school planning committee have determined targets for the school's future development.

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Parents can find more information about Annual School Reports, how to interpret information in the report and have the opportunity to provide feedback about the report at: