Hunter River Community School
Annual School Report 2014
School context statement

Hunter River Community School was relocated to Metford in 2014, sharing a site with Metford Public School. The state of the art facility is comprised of ten classrooms, all with kitchen, bathroom and breakout facilities. The school also has been provided with a hydrotherapy area, and multi-purpose hall, along with outstanding administration facilities.

Whilst the school may have relocated it continues to provide educational programs for students from Kindergarten to Year 12, through a personalised learning and support plan (PLP), responding to Board of Studies outcomes.(K-6 or Life Skills 7-12). Personalised programs are developed in collaboration with teachers, parents and principal, with support from therapists, medical specialists and external agencies where appropriate.

Student information

It is a requirement that the reporting of information for all students be consistent with privacy and personal information policies.

Students attending Hunter River Community School are drawn from six Local Government Areas across the Hunter Valley. All students attending the school have an intellectual disability with associated learning and support needs, including autism, cerebral palsy, and sensory impairment.

The school enrolment fluctuates throughout the year

Student enrolment profile

Enrolments commenced throughout the year bringing the total enrolment to 58 students.

Our enrolment profile results in a very complex and diverse student population, consequently a broad range of curriculum options, behavior management programs and instructional strategies are required to maximise the engagement and learning outcomes for all students.

Enrolments continue to be stable, with an expected 60 students to commence in 2015.

Student Attendance

Post-school destinations

Hunter River Community School only has one student leave after completion of their Higher School Certificate – Life Skills. That student will engage with the Post School Option Program through Disability Services Australia (DSA) in Raymond Terrace.

Year 12 students attaining HSC or equivalent Vocational educational qualification

One student was successful in achieving their Higher School Certificate – Life Skills in 2014.
Workforce information

It is a requirement that the reporting of information for all staff must be consistent with privacy and personal information policies.

All teaching staff at Hunter River Community School meet the professional requirements to teach in NSW public schools.

The school had a teaching allocation of 11.998 teachers in 2014, supported by nine full time School Learning Support Officers, one School Administration Manager, a part time School Administration Officer and a part time General Assistant. The school employed an additional part time School Learning Support Officer to cater for the complex needs of the student population.

Students and staff are also supported by specialist staff including a School Counsellor of 1.25 days per week, Itinerant Support Teachers Vision and Hearing for approximately 2 hours per week.

Workforce composition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Principal(s)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal(s)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Teachers</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teacher(s)</td>
<td>7.598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Reading Recovery</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning and Support Teacher(s)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Librarian</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of ESL</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Counsellor</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Administrative &amp; Support Staff</td>
<td>10.926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23.124</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Australian Education Regulation, 2014 requires schools to report on Aboriginal composition of their workforce.

On the basis of the information available to Hunter River Community School there were no Indigenous staff members employed on a full time basis in 2014.

Teacher qualifications

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>% of staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree or Diploma</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW Board of Studies Accreditation</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Professional learning and teacher accreditation

Over 400 hours of accredited professional learning occurred throughout the year. This averages out to be approximately 20 hours of professional learning per staff member. Considerable hours of learning were spent in the area of Student Wellbeing, which includes training in Anaphylaxis, Asthma, Health Care Procedures, CPR, Child Protection and Mental Health.

All teaching staff completed training around the Disability Standards for Education Act to clarify the obligations of the school and staff to ensure that student with a disability can access and participate in education on the same basis as other students.

School expenditure on all forms of professional learning activities, including associated costs, totaled over $14,500 in 2014, $10,000 from a tied teacher professional learning (TPL) grant, and $4,500 from school funds. This equates to approximately $750 per staff member.

Teachers entering the profession after 2004 must seek accreditation at the Proficient Teacher Level with the Board of Studies Teacher Education Standards (BOSTES) within 12 months of commencing full time work. The program aims to strengthen a beginning classroom teacher’s knowledge and skills. By working towards the Proficient Teacher level, teachers are provided with a clear framework to enhance their skills. The process involves collecting evidence about teaching practice and demonstrating that the
relevant Australian Teaching Standards are being met.

Hunter River Community School has almost 50% of teachers accredited at the Proficient Teacher level, with one staff member awaiting accreditation.

Currently there are no staff members seeking voluntary accreditation at the Highly Accomplished and Lead level of accreditation.

**Beginning Teachers**

A new initiative, Great Teaching, Inspired Learning sets a new direction for improving teacher quality and student learning outcomes in NSW schools. It will help students to achieve better results by researching and sharing what makes an excellent teacher, and supporting the career long professional development of all teachers.

The initiative provides schools with beginning teachers additional funding to ensure they receive high quality induction programs, with high level support to enhance their teaching skills.

Hunter River Community School had one teacher returning to special education after a retraining program. Whilst being an experienced teacher, the program focused on:

- quality induction programs;
- mentoring programs;
- collaborative supervision processes; and
- targeted professional learning programs.

Funding was used to facilitate the above processes by providing release from class duties on a fortnightly basis. Release from class duties was also provided to the mentor to facilitate some of these processes.

A corollary of this initiative has been the development of a comprehensive “induction and development” program for beginning teachers to Hunter River Community School.

**Financial summary**

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of financial summary</th>
<th>30/11/2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward</td>
<td>151184.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
<td>163460.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>99936.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
<td>63924.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>4486.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust receipts</td>
<td>7041.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canteen</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total income</strong></td>
<td>490034.31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Expenditure**           |            |
| Teaching & learning       |            |
| Key learning areas        | 16454.31   |
| Excursions                | 1974.80    |
| Extracurricular dissections| 22176.16  |
| Library                   | 520.41     |
| Training & development    | 4517.53    |
| Tied funds                | 76468.81   |
| Casual relief teachers    | 49686.03   |
| Administration & office   | 61967.93   |
| School-operated canteen   | 0.00       |
| Utilities                 | 41818.73   |
| Maintenance               | 38925.08   |
| Trust accounts            | 6106.80    |
| Capital programs          | 0.00       |
| **Total expenditure**     | 320616.59  |
| **Balance carried forward**| 169417.72 |

The school has been setting aside funding to purchase new equipment for the new school. We were very fortunate to have the majority of equipment and resources included in the building program, therefore more funds have been carried over than anticipated. These additional funds will be spent on upgrading some ageing equipment in 2015.

A full copy of the school’s 2014 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the parent body. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

**School performance 2014**

The learning needs of our students are diverse, as a result the performance measures used are not so much a measure of the overall school performance as they are an assessment of individual student performance.
Academic achievements

We celebrate student achievement at Hunter River Community School. All students have been engaged in a quality education program based on the mandatory curriculum requirements as prescribed by the Board of Studies, along with parent negotiated areas for improvement.

Our reporting provides a comprehensive assessment of all Key Learning Areas (KLAs) and is personalized to address the individual accommodations and adjustments afforded to each student.

NAPLAN

All students in Years 3.5.7 and 9 were exempt from NAPLAN testing due to their significant intellectual disability, at the request of parents and carers.

Best Start

All three Kindergarten students were exempt from the Best Start assessment process at parent request. All students have an Individual Learning Plan in place developed in conjunction with class teachers, parents and therapists.

Literacy and Communication

Each student’s capacity to communicate has improved as a result of ongoing assessment and refining of communication programs.

Each teacher works in conjunction with the student’s speech therapist in the development and implementation of teaching strategies and resources that are best suited to the receptive and expressive communication levels of each child.

In 2014, 73% of students achieved their specific communication goal identified in their Individual Learning Plan.

The school continued to implement the “Reading Eggs” program for identified students. Each student has built upon their previous success and continued to enjoy the challenge of the program.

One student, Kai Poon completed all the challenges of the Reading Eggs program and has progress to “Reading Eggspress”.

Numeracy

All students were benchmarked against the NSW Numeracy Continuum in the areas of number recognition and forward counting at the commencement of the 2014 school year. Results of the assessment appear below.

Despite targeted teaching benchmarking results did not show a great deal of improvement due to the large skill jump from one level to another. A more specific assessment related to students with intellectual disabilities needs to be investigated to gather reliable data.

Number Recognition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Descriptors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 0</td>
<td>Identifies some but not all numerals 1-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Identifies all numerals 1-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>Identifies numerals 1-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>Identifies numerals 1-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>Identifies numerals 1-1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 5</td>
<td>Identifies numerals up to 10 000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Significant programs and initiatives – policy

Aboriginal education

Aboriginal education is integrated into all Key Learning Areas (KLAs) and Connected Outcome Group (COGs) units of work at Hunter River Community School.

Aspects of Aboriginal culture were experienced across the school through a variety of interactive classroom activities this year. Students explored Aboriginal culture through their KLA units of work ‘Identity & Values’ and ‘Meeting Needs’ in which they looked at Aboriginal heritage and lifestyles in comparison to their own lives. Students completed artworks, listened to music, read stories and used the internet to develop and share their knowledge.

Students from the Junior School combined with Metford School to celebrate NAIDOC Week.

Multicultural education and anti-racism

Hunter River Community School promotes the values of acceptance and tolerance for a Multicultural Australia. Our Human, Society and its Environment (HSIE) curriculum and creative arts programs offer many opportunities to explore these values. Our school values individual difference where all staff endeavour to ensure students receive an education catering to their individual learning style and cultural identity.

Harmony day is an important day in the school calendar where we learn and understand how all Australians from diverse backgrounds equally belong to this nation and enrich it.

Significant programs and initiatives – equity funding

Hunter River Community School received targeted funding of 18,916, approximately $7,000 for aboriginal students and $11,000 for students from low socio-economic backgrounds.

Aboriginal background

Hunter River Community School is committed to the priority domains of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan. With an enrolment of eight Aboriginal students across the school, Hunter River Community School attracted additional funding of approximately $7,000 to implement initiatives and support.

Engagement and Connectedness – All Aboriginal students have an Individual Learning Plan developed at the commencement of each year. This plan is monitored on a regular basis and outcomes are reported on at the end of each
school year. A significant portion of the equity funding for Aboriginal students was used to employ additional School Learning Support Officer time to assist with the implementation of the individual plan and increase engagement levels of Aboriginal students.

Attendance – With the exception of one student with ongoing medical and health issues, Aboriginal students enjoy a higher attendance rate than the school average.

Literacy and Numeracy Achievement – all students, regardless of background have an individual literacy and numeracy program developed. Outcomes are very difficult to report upon in the special school environment. It is hoped that the school will have some meaningful, reliable data on which to report in future years.

Strong Understanding of Cultural Background- All staff have a sound understanding of the issues around Aboriginal education and their day to day work with Aboriginal students is around closing the learning and achievement gap. Hunter River Community School provides all students with opportunities to learn about Aboriginal culture, with junior students participating in NAIDOC Week celebrations with Metford Public School. It is anticipated that Aboriginal students from the school will have increased opportunities to participate in Local Management Group (LMG) Aboriginal cultural initiatives in 2015.

The school was especially proud to have Mr Tommy Miller, Wanaruah elder and Deputy Chairperson of the Mindaribba Local Aboriginal Land Council perform the Welcome to Country at our recent official school opening.

Socio-economic background

Students from low socio-economic backgrounds often face additional educational challenges. The equity loading for socio-economic background provides funding to schools to address the additional learning needs of these students.

Information on parental level of school education, highest non-school qualification and occupational category is drawn from data collected on enrolment forms and recorded through the Enrolment Registration Number (ERN) system.

An individual FOEI score is calculated for each student based on information about parental education and occupation levels captured on student enrolment forms. All students in NSW public schools are distributed across four socioeconomic quarters. The loading funds all students in quarter 1 and quarter 2 on the FOEI in every NSW public school.

A student in quarter 1 is funded at double the student funding rate of a student in quarter 2, as research shows that students in quarter 1 have the higher level of additional learning needs.
In 2014 the school’s FOEI was assessed at 136 and received approximately $12,000 in funding to support students from low socio-economic backgrounds. This funding was used to employ additional School Learning Officer Support time to assist with the implementation of Individual Learning Plans and increase student engagement.

Other significant programs and initiatives

**Sport**

Hunter River Community School continued for provide our students many opportunities to assist them lead a fit, active and healthy lifestyle. These include;

- Active After School Sports Program
- Swimming and Hydrotherapy
- Athletics
- Dance and Movement
- Cricket
- Horse Riding, and
- Sailing.

Integration Programs

Sharing the same grounds as Metford Public School has provided the school with a wonderful opportunity to enhance its integration programs. Strong links have been developed with the school and community. Regular formal and informal activities occur, with students from both schools enjoying the interaction.

Despite our relocation to Metford we have continued to strengthen our links with Maitland Grossmann High School, who welcome our students to attend their school for both informal and academic programs.

School planning and evaluation 2012—2014

School evaluation processes

NSW public schools conduct evaluations to support the effective implementation of the school plan. The processes used include:

- Conducting surveys of staff and families;
- Parent Focus Group sessions;
- Review of Educational Programs; and
- Review of school based data.

School planning 2012-2014:

**School priority 1 - Communication**

To improve communication outcomes for all students.

**Outcomes from 2012–2014**

To improve communication outcomes across the school and surrounding support classes through;
• the continued development of PODD Book communication programs;
• identified staff supporting neighbouring schools; and
• developing links with Newcastle University Speech Pathology programs.

Evidence of achievement of outcomes in 2014:
• 73% of students achieved their communication goal stated in their Individual Learning Program (ILP).
• Continuation of the provision of providing support to neighbouring schools on a request basis.
• 80% of students new to the school have an individual PODD Book available to them.
• 10% of students using iPad technology as a formal tool for communication.
• Presentation at Sydney University Speech Pathology Expo.

Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2014:
• Training of new staff in the use of PODD Book communication.
• Closer liaison with Sydney University, Speech Pathology students to engage as communication partners.
• Trail of “The Communication Matrix” as an assessment tool.

School priority 2 - Literacy
To improve school practices in the delivery of planned and explicit literacy programs to address the needs of all students.

Outcomes from 2012–2014
To increase the number of students achieving a one skill band increase in P-Scales –Literacy. ( Whilst Literacy acquisition remained a priority in 2014, the use of P-Scales as a measure of improvement was discontinued.)

Evidence of progress towards outcomes in 2014:
• 38% of students actively participating in the “Reading Eggs” program.
• One student successfully completing the “Reading Eggs” program and moving to the “Reading Eggsspress” program.

Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2014:
• Ensure all students have a literacy goal in their ILP.
• Literacy programs are a regular feature of classroom practice.

School priority 3 - Numeracy
To improve school practices in the delivery of planned and explicit numeracy programs to meet the needs of all students.

Outcomes from 2012–2014
To increase the number of students achieving a one skill band increase in P-Scales Numeracy. ( Whilst Numeracy acquisition remained a priority in 2014, the use of P-Scales as a measure of improvement was discontinued.)

Evidence of progress towards outcomes in 2014:
• All students benchmarked using the Numeracy Continuum.
• All classes using Numeracy programs developed by Holroyd and Mary Brooksbank schools
• Numeracy software rolled out across all classrooms to support programs.

Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2014:
• Tracking of student’s progress using a tracking tool based around aspects of the Numeracy Continuum. There is an inherent need to refine this tool for students with an intellectual disability to provide more reliable data.
• Provide professional development opportunities for teachers similar to that of the Count Me In Too program.
• Trial implementation of the new BOS Australian Curriculum in Mathematics ready for full implementation in 2015.

Parent/caregiver, student, and teacher satisfaction
In 2014, the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school using surveys from the “Tell Them from Me” surveys at the Learning Bar. Targeted focus group sessions were also held with selected parents to gather information for school improvement initiatives.
Their responses are presented below.

Not all parents felt welcomed at the school.

Parents felt written information from the school was clear and easily understood.

Parents felt that student reports were informative.

Parents expressed a wish for the school to hold more information sessions.

Staff were surveyed using the “Focus on Learning Survey. Feedback from staff indicated that Hunter River Community School excelled in the areas of Parent Involvement, Inclusive School, Technology and Collaboration, however needed a targeted focus around Leadership, Learning Culture, Teaching Strategies and The use of Data to Inform Practice.

Future Directions

2015-2017 School Plan

NSW DEC is implementing a new school planning process for 2015-17. The new plan will be published on the school’s website from the beginning of Term 2 2015.

The 2015 -2017 Strategic Plan will focus on the following three strategic directions;

- **Student Learning**
  
  To develop and implement challenging, innovative and inclusive curriculum that enables students to be effective community citizens.

- **Quality Teaching and Leadership**
  
  To develop a clear focus on teacher and leadership learning to increase the capacity to deliver excellent outcomes for all students.

- **Community Engagement and Participation**
  
  Develop community trust and strategic support to ensure students become successful and confident citizens.
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.

Ian Hughes - Principal
Tracey Rapson – Assistant Principal
Kiley McDonald – P&C President

School contact information

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School Code: 5687

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: