



**WESTERN RIVERINA
COMMUNITY SCHOOL**

2018

Annual Report

Western Riverina Community School

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12/31/2018

This report is written for fulfilling the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) requirement for registration and accreditation for Non-Government Schools in NSW.

This report provides a summary of;

- School performance in state wide tests and examinations
- Teacher attendance, retention and standards
- Enrolment profiles and policies
- Key policies including welfare, discipline and grievance policies
- School determined improvement targets
- Financial information.

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Western Riverina Community College Inc. would like to thanks the following:

The Commonwealth Department of Education

The NSW Department of Education and Committees

The NSW Association of Independent Schools

The Board of Directors

All staff and students

Report completed: __8th May 2019_____

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School Profile

Mission

Western Riverina Community School mission is to build, strengthen and reduce barriers in our community through the provision of education.

Aim

The School vision is encapsulated within the College's Strategic Plan combined with articulated performance indicators aligned to student enrolments. Strategically the vision is nourished by School Strategic Objectives.

- Respected education provider through a commitment to developing knowledge which addresses and provides for the learning and development needs of the community
- Consultative through a commitment to the development of the organisations' knowledge through community consultation.
- Equitable through continued development of an organisational culture which does not limit access to individuals based on gender, disability, race, social, cultural, religious or philosophical perspectives.
- Responsive, the college responds promptly to our community needs through the provision of appropriate educational opportunities.

Pursuing identified performance indicators in the first year of school operation 2018, the School offered co-educational opportunities to students in Years 9 & 10, stage five of the NSW School Syllabus.

Within this model, research determines students who are eligible to enrol in Year 9 and above are best suited to an Andragogic approach to education. To this end, small class sizes allow students to have access to individualised, tailored learning opportunities combined with the generation of structures providing a highly supportive learning environment. A supportive learning environment develops through the application of special assistance that enhances student engagement. Additionally, the goals of the School centre in recognising the individual. Such notions centre in the knowledge all students have their own lived experiences to share. most importantly the entire student population recognise the value of lived, shared experiences. Furthermore, the developed learning environment are provided in parallel and in compliance with the NSW School Syllabus.

Goals

Western Riverina Community School (WRCS) goals involve remaining dedicated to providing an alternative educational model for young people where the mainstream school environment has not catered to their individualistic educational learning needs. In this frame, WRCS blends key strategic objectives to create a school whereby students engage in NSW school syllabus. Representing an approach to educational delivery based on an andragogical approach to learning nested within an adult learning environment.

Through focusing on the creation of a learning environment aligned to adult learning theory, the School provides opportunities for “at risk” young people in our community. Such a focus allows young people the opportunity to achieve a Record of School Achievement (ROSA) and complete school education to a year ten level. Furthermore, through completion of school education students have foundations to build positive visions for their futures underpinned by post-school employment and or further education and or training opportunities creating foundations for successful futures.

Introduction

The inaugural year of operation for the Western Riverina Community School proved to be a very successful year albeit challenging. With the advent of 2018, the school enrolments grew to a total of twenty students. Providing students with the opportunity to engage in year nine and ten while undertaking the NSW Syllabus for Stage 5. However, the organisation found recruiting appropriately qualified teachers a challenge. Nevertheless, as each challenge arrived risk management allowed the developed mitigations to ensure the School provided its student's with quality educational activity.

The establishment of the School represented and required a significant shift in our advance. The founding of the school generated a rollercoaster of emotions centred on the nervous appreciation of anticipating, or agonising on the evolution of the school. Nonetheless, as day one arrived, the school had eight Students and a (one) Teacher. A new era at WRCC had begun. By the end of 2018, enrolments grew to twenty supported by a dedicated team consisting of four Teachers, a Student Welfare Officer, two Teaching Assistants and an Administrative Officer. Of greatest importance in this equation were the students and their successes in learning and re-engagement with education.

Context

The establishment of the School grew from the knowledge of a community-wide need and with in our community structures did not exist to address the missing piece of educational provision. In this frame, the Western Riverina Community College sought counsel from numerous special assistances schools across NSW to facilitate the establishment of policy and procedures to support approval by the NSW Educational Standards Authority (NESA) to recommend initial registration of the School. During October 2017, the NSW Minister for Education provided the initial approval to establish WRCS as a special assistance School. A school to provide students with the ability to enrol into Stage five of the NSW Syllabus.

WRCS students are young adults largely disengaged from mainstream schooling due to a variety of factors. In this sense, a student's attendance prior to enrolling at WRCS, ran to a minimal attendance if at all. Conversely, once an individual engaged at WRCS, their school attendance grew. Facilitating improved attendance, WRCS provided structures, whereby students wanted to come to school. Such structures allowed students to become embedded in the school and therefore drive student participation. Importantly through increased engagement, each student grew. Furthermore, student engagement in their learning journey a previously obscured picture became illuminated highlighting a personal positive vision for their futures.

While the school generated a certain amount of angst and uncertainty tuned to staffing and the Board, nonetheless our light on the hill, our purpose remains shining brightly. It is the College's reason for being; Supporting, building, strengthening and reduction of barriers within our community through the provision of education. In this frame, the School has provided a sturdy vehicle to ferry organisational purpose forward.

Compliance

Moving beyond NESA's initial approval to establish a Special Assistance School WRCS received a compliance visit in May 2018. NESA in this phase of School operation conducted an audit of the Schools Governance structures in association with an assessment of the School's educational program, and pedagogical processes. As a result of this visit, the NESA recommendation provided for five years of School's registration. However, in this process, NESA also recommended an advisory visit for 2019 to ascertain ongoing development of the School's curriculum and to confirm mandatory Child protection policies, procedures became condensed. Through condensed policies School employees would have one policy to direct actions where child protection issues may arise. The granting of NESA recommendation for five years registration came as comforting news the School operation evolved in line with regulatory requirements.

During 2018 the School also sought and was granted membership of the Association of Independent Schools (AIS) NSW. AIS is an independent school peak body supporting operations of independent schools. In this frame, AIS have provided significant advice and support allowing the school to evolve as a school which sets its sight on providing high quality educational, learning activities which remain compliant to NSW Syllabus and all associated legislation.

Legislation influencing school operation, the School, recognises, embeds key elements of the following Legislation and associated Regulations.

- The Australian Education Act,2013
- Education Act 1990 (NSW)
- Ombudsman Act
- Child protection (Working With Children) Act of 2012
- Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
- Institute of Teachers Act 2004
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW)
- Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979
- Food Act 1989
- Explosives Act 2003
- Building Code of Australia

Further to the above, WRCS auspicing body Western Riverina Community College Inc. Maintains and facilitates the following services and or operational necessities for School operations; these include insurances, management Goods and Services Tax (GST), Workers Compensation and Payroll.

Continous improvement and Professional Development.

During 2018 the Board of WRCS participated in Governance training through Actuate Leadership. The course attended was delivered by Dr Steve Bagi Consulting Psychologist and aligned to the NESA approved course in “Healthy Schools Board Course”. The course was attended by all school Board members and totalled four Hours of Professional Learning.

Continuous Improvement

- Ongoing Professional development activities of all school staffs

- Curriculum Development workshops through AIS
- Benchmarking with similar special assistance schools
- Programming in conjunction with local NESA Liason Officer
- Evaluation of pedagogical effectivity
- Regular staff meetings
- Student and parent evaluation
- Participation in Special Assistance Schools Communities of Practice.

Memberships and affiliations

The school maintain membership of AIS and through the Auspice body has a membership of Community College's Australia. Further, the Auspice body is a member of the regional Disability network. The School is a member of the Griffith Head Space Consortium, active participants in the Griffith Interagency and plays an active role in the Griffith Educational Business Advisory Council and Wagga Compact. Further during 2018, the school through the principal added a further affiation with the Western Riverina Country Universirty Centre.

WRCS Premises

School Premises are located in the Western Riverina region of NSW. The physical location of the school is within the Western Riverina Community College Building Located at 23 Hickey Crescent Griffith East NSW. The Building is a school by day and an Adult Learning centre after School hours. However, at times Adult learning activity may also occur during School hours. In unavoidable situations where such circumstances occur the College and School provide structures which ensure the health and wellbeing of School Students is maintained with particular reference to child protection requirements.

The Building is a well-maintained facility approximately nine years old. Further, the building was specifically designed and constructed to enable community learning activities. The repurposing of the building by the Auspice body for the use of the school saw an increase in office space and the dedication of specific classrooms for school use only. The dedication of classrooms allowed students to make space their own and to also protect the privacy of students.

Communications

The school places a focus on maintaining communications with Students, Parents and the wider community to ensure the activities, programs and success of the School are effectively communicated to key stakeholders. However, in preparation of any school news and or communications the school ensures all communications are prepared with in accordance with privacy legislation requirements. Furthermore, management of Teacher and Student

communications also occurs within the boundaries of the Schools' Code of Conduct for School employees.

Actions of communications occur via School Student Welfare Officer and Teachers who regularly communicate with Students Parents and or Guardians. Further, the School maintains a closed School Facebook page for students and their families. Additionally, the school also maintains an externally available Facebook page and Website. The content on these digital platforms is support by content such as general School information and allows for facilitation of complaints grievances processes. The latter two platforms are also available to the wider community. The school also prepares and distributes a quarterly School Newsletter. Further communication with parents and or Guardians occurs within 'parent-teacher meetings' scheduled quarterly.

Operational Dynamics

2018 Naplan Results

2018 Year 9	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar	Numeracy
	National average 7.5	National average 8.2	National average 7.5	National average 7.4	National average 7.6
	School Average 6.8	School Average 5.6	School Average 6.8	School Average 6.6	School Average 6.6

The School in 2018 had six-year nine students participate in NAPLAN testing. To this end, student results provided valuable benchmarking information to the school which enabled a tailored approach to teaching and learning goals to enhance the learning of each student. While students results in this round of national testing in some cases articulated a need for knowledge development in areas such as writing, numeracy, punctuation and grammar. However, analysing NAPLAN results as a school average against the national average are lower. Although it is important to recognise data analysis requires an appreciation of Student background particularly in the case of lower achieving students. With such a focus, NAPLAN outcomes have a direct correlation with historic low attendance rates in alternate and previous educational contexts. Furthermore, assessments conducted subsequent to each students enrolment at the School and participation in NAPLAN indicate substantial improvements in all learning areas assessed by NAPLAN. In this sense, data trends would see students continue to improve in conjunction with improved attendance at the School.

Record Of School Achievement

Stage 5 Year 10 Program

A Student who leaves school prior to the successful completion of year 12 receives the New South Wales Record of School Achievement. As the Western Riverina Community School offers year 9 & 10 only those, who have adequately addressed all elements associated with the completion of NSW Stage 5 Syllabus are awarded a (ROSA). WRCS At the completion of the 2018 educational year, had 3 Students achieve a ROSA. Wider school year 10 results are displayed in the table below.

Year 10 Stage 5 2018 Results (From School online).

Course Name	Students in School	Students in State	School Pattern (%)						State Pattern (%)					
			A	B	C	D	E	N	A	B	C	D	E	N
English 200 Hrs	6	85134			67	33			12	28	38	16	6	1
Mathematics 200 Hrs	6	85152			83	17			15	23	32	23	7	1
Science 200 Hrs	6	85201		17	67	17			13	25	36	18	6	1
Geography 100 Hrs	6	85098		17	33	33	17		14	27	35	16	6	1
History 100 Hrs	6	84875			50	50			14	27	35	17	6	1
PDHPE 100 Hours	6	21165			33	17	50		17	35	33	10	4	1

In consideration of the data from above and as previously stated the school's 2018 academic results require consideration of the school's context and individual student history. These notions illumine WRCS students histories involve minimal school attendance throughout their secondary Schooling. Furthermore, the student cohort has experienced varying levels of social isolation, combined with heightened anxieties. The existence of these dynamics act to influence academic achievement. Nonetheless, student achievement while not mirroring state averages, the School views Student performance as significant personal steps forward. Moreover, such achievements would not have occurred without the existence of WRCS to provide a tailored pathway to educational success.

Professional Learning and Teacher Standards

Teaching Staff

In the first year of the Schools operation Staffing, the school with appropriately qualified teaching staff grew as a challenge. While beginning the school year with a Head Teacher and a couple of reliable casual teachers teaching a small student cohort. To this end, the school capped enrolments until such time as an additional qualified teacher/s could be employed. Following this theme, by the end of 2018, the school had teaching Staff of four equating to 3.2 FTE's. Of the four teaching staff alignment with NES A accreditation

requirements three are determined as proficient. While one casual teacher was progressing through provisional accreditation.

Teacher Qualifications

All of the School teachers' qualifications addressed the requirement as having teacher education qualifications from a higher education institution and holding a Bachelor degree within Australia.

The School remains committed to investing in the development of the teachers at WRCS. Although, given the school was in its first year of operation and the school reached a full complement of teachers in the latter part of the year. Nevertheless, all teachers attended at least one Professional Development activity.

Teacher Professional Development	Teachers Attended
Firstaid Course	4
WarriKirri Special Assistance School Conference 2 Days	2
AISNSW PDHPE New Syllabus training 2 days	1
Course in the management of Anaphylaxis	4
Course in the management of Asthma	4
Course in the Management of CPR	4
Board attended and School principal Mandatory Governance training	1
Completion of Masters in Education	1
Better Board Conference 2018 inclusive of two Board members	1

Workforce composition, including indigenous

WRCS during 2018 has a Principal, Head Teacher, Student Welfare Officer, Three classroom Teachers, one Administrative staff member and Two Teaching assistants. All employees of the School were Australian Citizens; additionally, three employees of the school have indigenous heritage.

Student Attendance and Management of Non-attendance

Western Riverina Community School is a Special Assistance School providing educational activities in line with the NSW Stage 5 Syllabus. During 2018 Students maintained the following attendance rates.

- Year 9 Average attendance 57%
- Year 10 Average 63%
- Average School Daily attendance 60%

Retention of students in the School

Retention of Students and total enrolments for 2018

- Total Year 9 Students enrolled 12
- Total year 10 Students enrolled during 2018 8

Post School Destinations

The Graduating group of three students who completed year 10 and achieved their ROSA in 2018 have all moved successfully into the next stage of their lives. To this end, all three have pursued further educational opportunities at TAFE and or other Vocational learning activities. Additionally, one student left the school to return to a mainstream school to pursue an HSC.

Enrolment Policies; Policy 6.1

The School is a school specifically designed to re-engage disenfranchised and 'at risk' young people. Our school aims to provide opportunities to young people, primarily aged 15-17 years, who are unable to complete their education within the traditional school environment. The selection criteria for the School focuses on eight key areas:

- Learning difficulties/disabilities
- Behavioural difficulties/disabilities
- Social disadvantage
- Age
- Academic achievement
- Financial disadvantage
- ESL/ATSI
- Isolation

The School cannot cater to students who are functionally illiterate or who require intensive behaviour or health support; such students would be more fully catered for in a smaller environment, of which there are opportunities in the local environment, the School will offer suggestions for such facilities should the need arise. We provide case management to all students who are enrolled in the school but are not in a position to manage students who cannot operate within the adult learning environment.

School Policies

The School incorporates the following policies as the key to School's operation.

Summary of Policy	Changes in 2018	Access to the full text
<p>Student Welfare WRCS seeks to support children and young people and to identify where problems arise that may put their safety, welfare or wellbeing at risk. All staff have a responsibility to recognise and report the risk of harm or concerns about any of the School's students. Additionally, it is the school's role to provide Special Assistance to ensure support to our students ensuring their abilities to maintain attendance at school and to achieve identified learning goals. Moreover, students of the School can develop a positive vision of their futures beyond School.</p>	<p>2018 represented the first year of the school's operation. In this frame, all school policies were reviewed and altered to ensure both Governance and effective operational outcomes.</p>	<p>The full text of the Schools Welfare policies can be accessed through the School's Principal</p>
<p>Anti-Bullying WRCS recognises the predominant causal effect for students disengaging from school becomes founded on an instance of Bullying. In the appreciation of this knowledge, the school's aim is to ensure actions of Bullying and or harassment are not tolerated. Further, WRCS also recognises actions of bullying raise student stress levels which in turn impede a students ability to learn. Therefore WRCS Students should feel safe in the learning environment.</p>		
<p>Student Discipline WRCS does not support corporal punishment. The Schools discipline policy draws on the WRCS Behaviour matrix to manage the instance of poor student behaviour. The matrix is the foundation for the school's processes to provide, warnings, Time outs or where warranted expulsion.</p>		
<p>Reporting Complaints and Grievances School stakeholders and the wider community retain the right to complain, report on activities which an individual feels are outside of WRCS, philosophies and or policy or procedure. Additionally, the school actively seeks feedbacks from Students, Parents, Guardians and the wider community. Maintaining such a focus allows the school to utilise feedback to build a continuous environment. Further, WRCS recognises in many instances where complaints, grievances, feedback are provided it is necessary to maintain confidentiality, privacy and or anonymity. In this frame, such feedback can be provided in line with the published policy available on the school's website www.wracs.nsw.edu.au</p>		

Processes of Continual Improvement

During the first year of WRCS operation, the school set its focus on the construction of educational, learning activities aimed toward establishing processes through which WRCS students would develop solid foundations in Language Literacy & Numeracy. Moreover, such foundations would also provide the building to block their lives in a post School world. In this frame, the school implemented personalised learning pathways with a process of quarterly review further supported by input from Parents and or Caregivers. This process sought to identify with each student clear pathways to post School opportunities. Further activities within the school also focussed upon building student resilience. Further, a school aim to build a culture which evolves in a positive fashion developed school values in consultation with Students. These values grew as and centred on Respect, Responsibility and Positivity.

Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction

Given the small size of WRCS of the student cohort there is the opportunity for the School to maintain a strong connection to the Student Cohort along with their Parents, Guardians and or Caregivers it is During the course of 2018, WRCS conducted a range of activities which provided Parents, Guardians, Caregivers & Students the opportunity to provide the school with feedback on the the schools operations as well as opportunities for improvements and or general feedback. During this process, feedback gained assisted with change which enriched the school environment. Additionally, it is recognised that the school did not receive any formal complaints during the year. In this frame, the School considers the actions of interaction with stakeholders generated positive outcomes for all.

Continuing in the quest for feedback from teaching staffs also generated positive input to shape the Schools culture and positive improvements in practice. As a whole, the School Teachers remained wholly engaged with the school and provided a level of commitment to the role beyond organisational expectations. However, our teachers reflected the nature of the teaching role at a special assistance school while rewarding evolved as a role which requires additional emotional investment and such investment develops to be emotionally demanding. Similarly, School support staff also reflect the teacher's consideration of the Special Assistant School context.

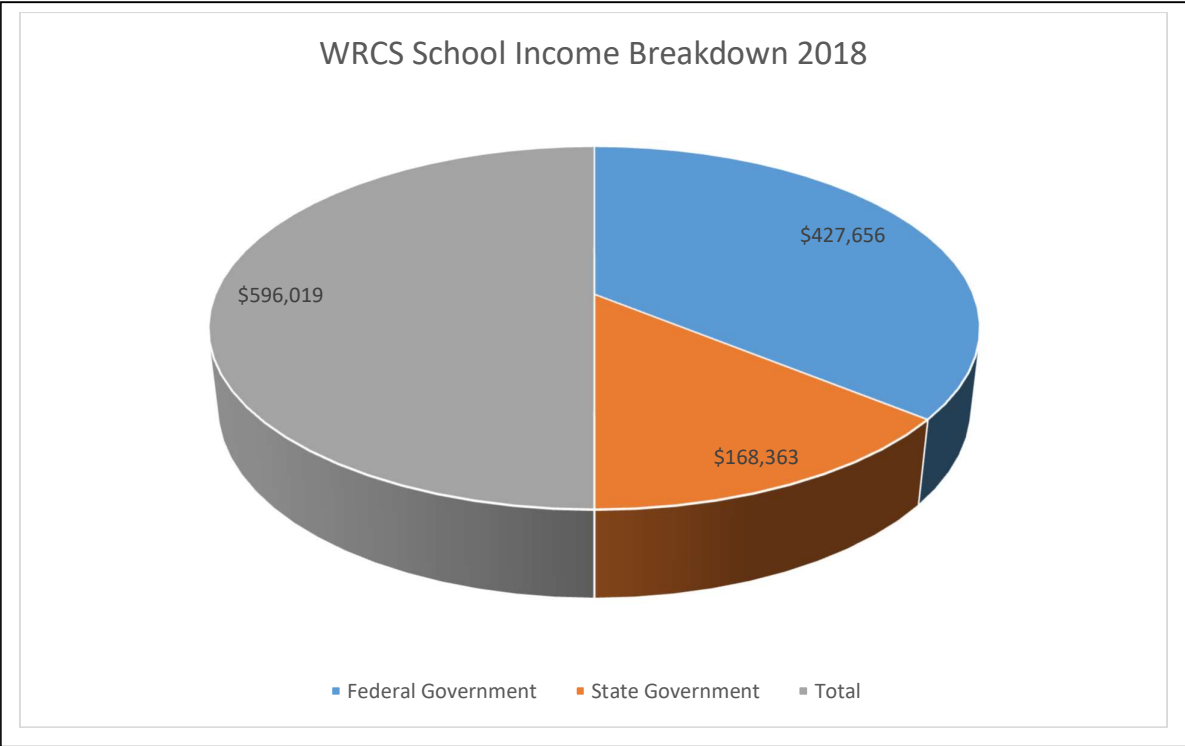
Highlights of the Year

There were numerous highlights throughout the Year. In the first instance, the greatest highlight surrounded providing an alternate educational context whereby 20 Students who otherwise would not have attended school had a vehicle in which they could learn. Secondly, a key celebration occurred during education week. The Education week celebrations provided a showcase whereby students demonstrated many of their achievements. Furthermore,

education week activities involved inviting to the whole community to celebrate Education and learning at WRCS. The celebrations were well attended by local dignities and included The Mayor of Griffith, Griffith City Councillors, WRCS Board, families and friends of the school. Most importantly, this was an opportunity for Students to shine and they did! Notwithstanding the students showed a level self-effacement, embarrassment when in the spotlight. Lastly, the inaugural end of year celebrations provided an opportunity for all of the school's family to come together and celebrate the year's achievements. Again, importantly the WRCS Students at the end of year celebration represented a cohort of students who previously had not attended school. Yet, at the years end there was a room full of WRCS students with a school they could call their own. On a whole the final event of a the school year provided a vision of achievement and success.

Summary of Financial Information

During the 2018 School financial year and at Audit the Auditor found that funding provided to the school were solely used by the organisation to operate WRCS. To this end, any purchases and payments incurred by the school remain in line with the maintenance of a Not for Profit School. Further, the use of funds/ funding to support the schools operation remain compliant to the Education act and funding Contracts and Guidelines.. Additionally, the school during did not incur nor make any third party payments.



Summary of Financial Information cont...

