



Education &
Communities

5654



Rivendell School

Annual School Report



2011



Our school at a glance

Students

Rivendell School is located within the historical Thomas Walker Estate at Concord West. It shares the site with the Department of Health's Rivendell Child, Adolescent and Family Unit and provides an education program for students from Year 7 to Year 12.

Staff

Rivendell School has four executive staff, seven classroom teachers, two outreach teachers, a school counsellor, ten school learning support officers (SLSOs) and two administration staff.

Rivendell is also the base school for the District Guidance Officer, the Assistant Principal of the Itinerant Behaviour Team and the five itinerant behaviour teachers. (Details on page 2)

Significant programs and initiatives

Rivendell School provides the educational component to six different programs which cater for up to 80 high school students.

Two of these programs, Lawson and Yaralla, are on-site and cater for students who have been admitted to the Rivendell Child, Adolescent and Family Unit (Department of Health). Two of the programs are off-site. They are the Walker Unit (located in the Concord Centre for Mental Health) and Gna Ka Lun (located at Campbelltown Hospital). These four programs are all multidisciplinary programs where health and education staff work closely together to provide programs for adolescents with mental health disorders.

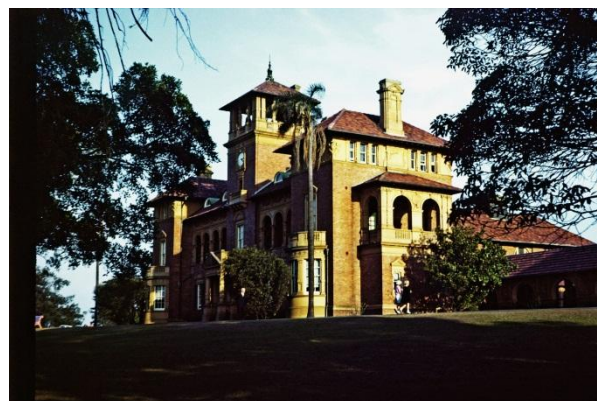
The other two programs are Paterson and Sulman which are on-site DEC programs. Students are referred by their school through the Department of Education and Communities Access Request procedure or by transfer from one of the health programs.

All programs have a major focus on successfully transitioning students back to a mainstream school, on to further study at a TAFE or university or into the workforce.

Student achievement in 2011

Sixteen Year 10 students sat for the School Certificate core subjects including the mandatory Computing Skills. Two of those students were completing a Pathways Year 10 Program.

Two students sat for the Higher School Certificate exams in General Mathematics, Music 1 (Aural Skills) and English Standard.



Messages

Principal's message

This Annual School Report for 2011 provides our community with information regarding our programs, achievements, initiatives and evaluations. The report details the ways in which we care for and embrace our diverse student population, providing every student with opportunities to achieve their individual goals.

This report presents a transparent and detailed analysis of our students' learning outcomes and the diverse and dynamic context within our school. We continue to have a strong emphasis on providing pathways to further education and training through academic and vocational education.

Our positive student outcomes are the result of our high expectations, commitment to quality teaching and the strong supportive and collaborative relationship we have with the NSW Health staff, mainstream schools, Sydney Distance Education High School (SDEHS), Meadowbank TAFE, Ostara, Rotary Club of Concord, community agencies and local business personnel. As always, the ongoing support of our parents and carers is greatly appreciated.

In 2011, the school benefited from improvements in our learning environment from the federal injection of funds known as 'Building the Education Revolution'. These funds have enabled the painting of parts of the main building, specifically designed furniture for classrooms and the installation of three electronic whiteboards.

The school targets have been in the areas of increasing the use of technology in classroom programs, promoting our Outreach program and further developing the learning centres at our two off-campus sites. Consequently, the implementation of strategies to this end has resulted in positive improvements in these areas. The school will continue to focus and build on these accomplishments.

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.

Anne Reddie

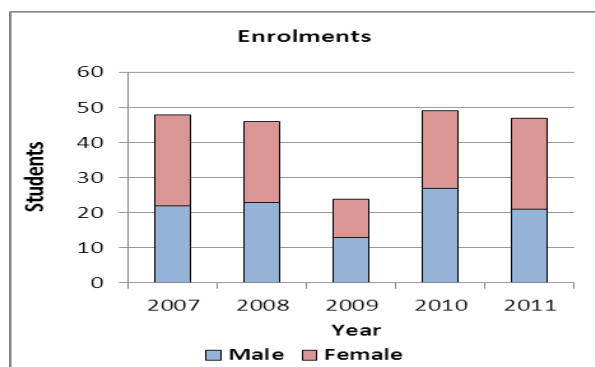


School context

Student information

The school can cater for up to 63 high school students on-site and up to 17 high school students in our off-site learning centres.

Student enrolment profile



This data is taken from the number of students enrolled on a set day.

Management of non-attendance

Each student who is enrolled at Rivendell has a personalised learning plan (PLP) that addresses a number of areas including school attendance if relevant. A significant number of students who attend Rivendell experience anxiety based school attendance difficulties. Their attendance is managed in a collaborative manner with clinical staff.

Structure of classes

Students are placed in classes according to the program in which they are enrolled.

There are three classes in the Lawson program, two classes in each of the Yaralla, Paterson, and Sulman programs. There is one class in the Walker Unit.

Each Rivendell class may take up to seven students at any one time.

The Gna Ka Lun learning centre can accommodate up to 10 students.

Staff information

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

Staff establishment

Position	Number
Principal	1
Assistant Principals	3
Classroom Teachers	7
Outreach Teachers	2
Teacher RFF	.84
Teacher Librarian	.40
District Guidance Officer	1
Assistant Principal (Behaviour)	1
Itinerant Teachers Behaviour	5
Counsellor	1
School Administrative & Support Staff	11.926
Total	34.166

The National Education Agreement requires schools to report on Indigenous composition of their workforce.

In 2011 Rivendell School staff did not include anyone who identified as being of indigenous background.

Staff retention

All staff were retained during the reporting period.

Teacher qualifications

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

Qualifications	% of staff
Degree or Diploma	54
Postgraduate	46

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	30/11/2011
Income	\$
Balance brought forward	566 280.51
Global funds	130 775.50
Tied funds	72 015.07
School & community sources	600.00
Interest	29 195.25
Trust receipts	109 958.74
Canteen	0.00
Total income	908 825.07
Expenditure	
Teaching & learning	
Key learning areas	19 969.91
Excursions	0.00
Extracurricular dissections	7 979.48
Library	0.00
Training & development	2 084.54
Tied funds	64 534.26
Casual relief teachers	0.00
Administration & office	42 652.04
School-operated canteen	0.00
Utilities	5 647.11
Maintenance	3 875.53
Trust accounts	149 699.40
Capital programs	14 176.49
Total expenditure	310 618.76
Balance carried forward	598 206.31

A full copy of the school's 2011 financial statement can be obtained by contacting the school.



School performance 2011

Achievements

Arts

Throughout the year, students enjoyed musical performances from *Sounds Baroque* and *Musica Viva*. The *Sounds Baroque* performance was drawn from Greek mythology and the stories of Hercules and Hermione. Students were delighted by this fun and engaging mini baroque opera performance. Using dramatic interplay, the voice, language and humour of today, and replicas of instruments common to the era of 300 years ago, the quartet made the Baroque period accessible to students from Years 7 to 12.

Based on Jean-Baptiste Lully's 1674 Baroque opera *Alceste*, Hercules used a combination of new and interesting musical styles including rap.

The *Musica Viva* performance, 'Chambermaids' involved an all-female wind quintet. The 'Chambermaids' brought to life the wind instrument family in a fun and informative performance that engaged and inspired the students. One of Australia's premiere chamber music groups, their repertoire ranged from the classics through to contemporary music. They played on instruments both familiar and foreign, ranging from flute, piccolo, oboe, clarinet, bassoon and French horn to a noisy hosepipe horn. Students came away from the performance with a genuine appreciation of the instruments and the musical styles.

Throughout 2011, art and craft workshops were offered to all students. These workshops

encompassed a variety of experiences using different mediums to explore procedures, materials and techniques in making artworks.

Examples of artworks included paintings, drawings, masks, papier mache sculptures, paper weaving, mosaics and clay work.

In Term 4, students from all programs contributed to a triptych entitled, 'Under the Sea'. This consisted of sea creatures made from collage and paper mosaic techniques on a painted background.

This collaborative artwork has been exhibited in the hallway of the main block. Additional artwork is also displayed here and in the pod room, as well as on the Rivendell website.

Activity days involving the whole school were held in Term 4, 2011. On the first day, in the art component, students created tea light holders by painting terracotta pots with lids in bright, contrasting or harmonious colours. Some surfaces were highlighted with transparent glitter paint and decorated with glass mosaic beads. The students were engaged in the activity and made positive comments about their completed projects.

On the second day, students learnt an easy but effective technique for creating a ceramic bowl from rolled balls of clay pressed into a mould. The outside texture was revealed when the bowl was removed from the mould and allowed to harden. Students have proudly displayed their works in the school's foyer.

Sport

In 2011, fishing was included as one of the afternoon activities, our first off campus sports workshop. The activity was well planned with appropriate resources being purchased, a risk management plan developed and signed permission obtained from parents. Students learned about types of rods, sinkers, casting, local fish types, suitable baits and tides.

Fitness Testing was run this year by the Paterson Program. Paterson students demonstrated and explained the test to their peers, took part in timing the tests, and assisted students to record their results. Data was recorded on an excel spreadsheet and given to students combined with

test results from their previous test so they could compare their progress.

Rivendell School again took part in the Coles vouchers for sports gear promotion. From the vouchers traded, we received some new equipment including two croquet sets, three hockey sticks, a magnetic dart board, soccer shin pads and a bungee soccer ball for soccer juggling skills training. This year students were encouraged to access the website and add items to the wish list.

Healthy living groups continued to run with the Rivendell sports psychologist in workshop time. The sports psychologist also organised mountain bikes and helmets for the students in the Walker unit, and students were able to access the Thomas Walker Estate.

Field sports, tennis and basketball were regular activities in the weekly workshop program.

The Lawson program joined Yaralla in the daily walk around the Thomas Walker Estate. This activity has been very effective in encouraging students to communicate and use their break time in a constructive and healthy manner.

For the sports component of the activity days, a tennis ball machine was accessed and students had the opportunity to be coached on a variety of tennis shots. The use of the ball machine allowed for a fast paced and varied activity which positively engaged the students.

Academic

In the National Assessment Program, the results across the Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 literacy and numeracy assessments are reported on a scale from Band 1 to Band 10.

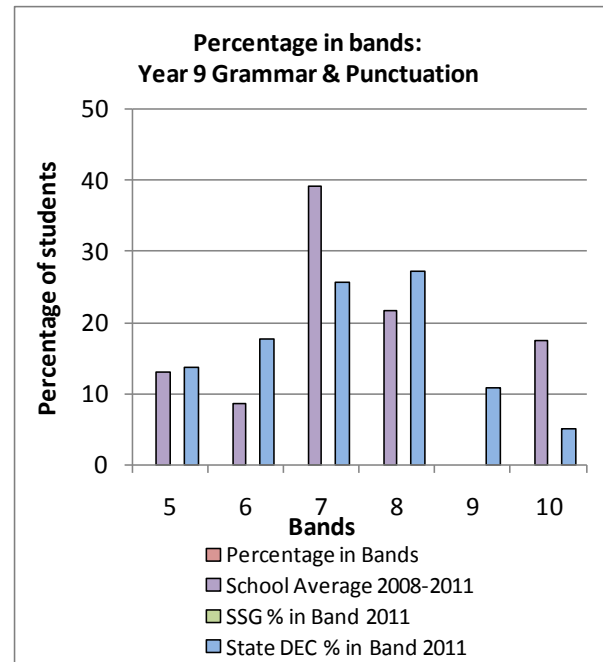
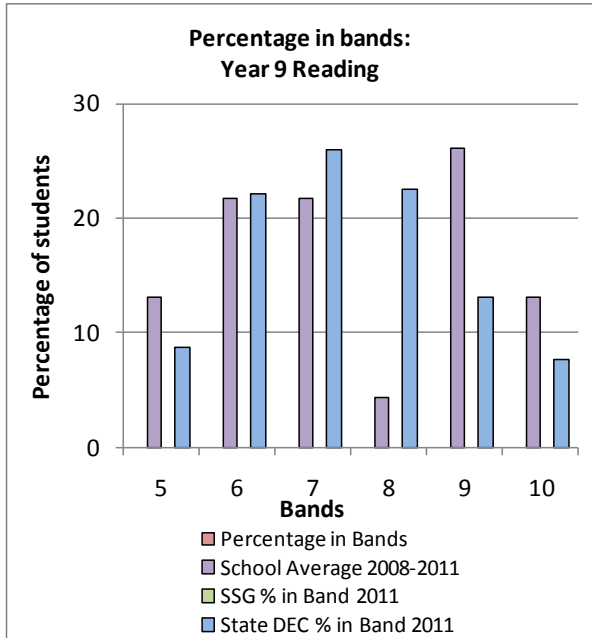
The achievement scale represents increasing levels of skills and understandings demonstrated in these assessments.

In the Year 9 Naplan results the performance of students is reported from Band 5 (lowest) to Band 10 (highest for Year 9)

In the School Certificate the performance of students is reported in performance bands ranging from Performance Band 1 (lowest) to Performance Band 6 (highest).

Literacy – NAPLAN Year 9

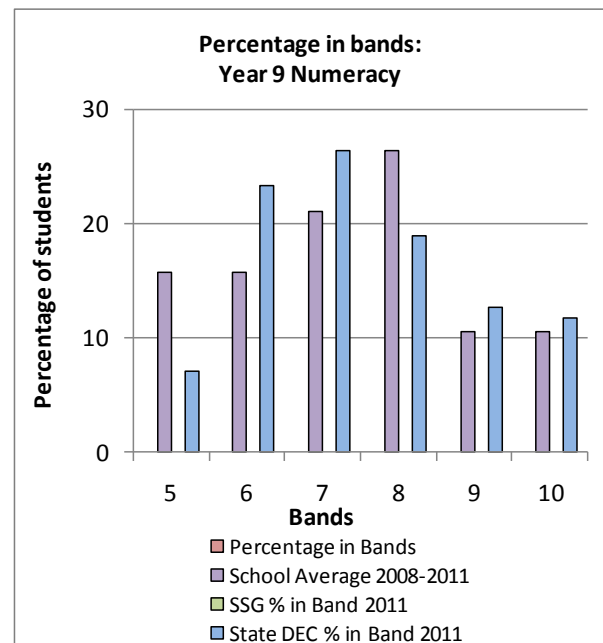
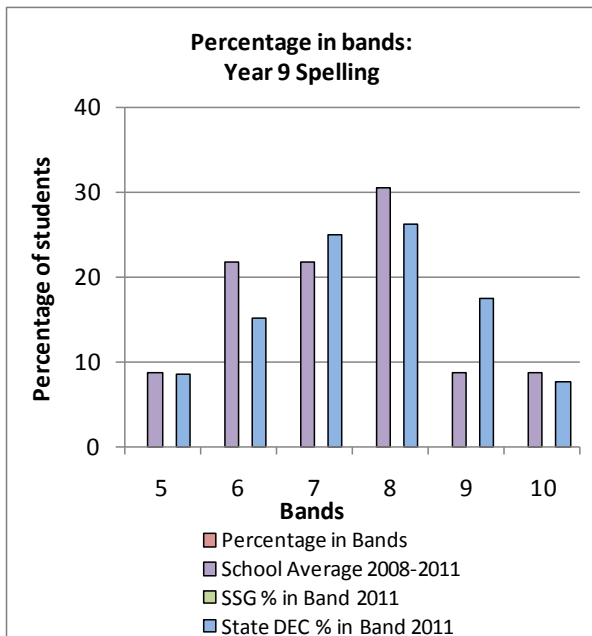
The 'Percentage in Bands' and 'School Average' columns are not shown if results are available for less than 10 students. State average band distributions do not include students who were exempted from the tests.



Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 9

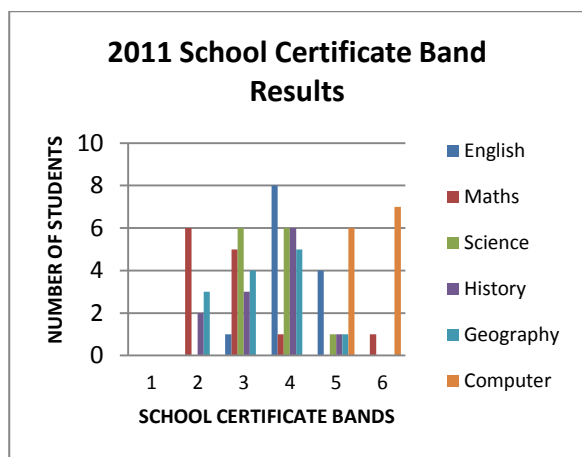
The 'Percentage in Bands' and 'School Average' columns are not shown if results are available for less than 10 students. State average band distributions do not include students who were exempted from the tests.

Due to the small number of students at Rivendell sitting for the Year 9 NAPLAN Numeracy tests, the graphs only show the school average against the State DEC percentage in the same band.

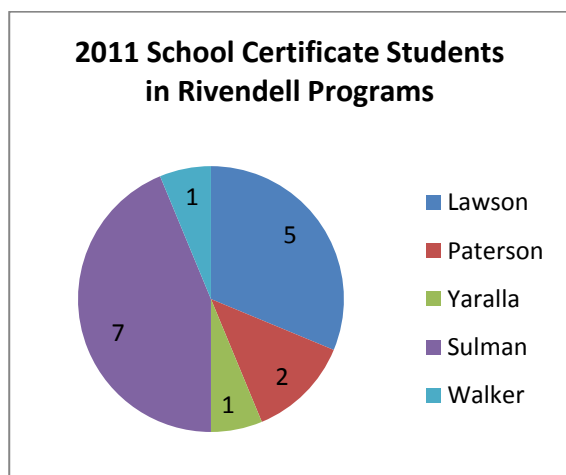


School Certificate

Sixteen Year 10 students sat for the School Certificate core subjects including the mandatory computing skills. Two of those students were completing a Pathways Year 10 program. Three students from other settings used Rivendell as their examination site.



The following graph gives a breakdown of School Certificates students across the five programs.



Higher School Certificate

Two students sat for the Higher School Certificate (HSC) exams across three subject areas. Their results are shown in the table below.

SUBJECT	RESULTS
General Mathematics	Band 3
Music 1 (Aural Skills)	Band 3
English Standard	Band 2



Significant programs and initiatives

Aboriginal education

As part of our Aboriginal education program, Rivendell hosted a performance by Ryka Ali, a proud ambassador for Australia's Indigenous youth. Ryka's indigenous heritage stems from the Wuthathi tribe of Shellburne Bay, Cape York and from the Torres Strait Islands. Ryka performed with his Aka (grandmother), Cindy, at Rivendell in Term 4, 2011.

He explored new sounds with the didgeridoo, which is one of the world's oldest woodwind instruments. Ryka's speciality consisted of performing Australian native animal sounds, together with modern sounds and the sound of D.J./beat-boxing.

Students were invited to join in the singing and dance routines as well as a 'hands on' experience of the traditional musical instruments and costumes.

Respect and Responsibility

Rivendell School's welfare practices, including the areas of student learning, student safety and wellbeing and recognition of achievements are ongoing priorities.

The school's anti-bullying policy continues to be upgraded and implemented. Staff have had

training on current best practice and have developed new reporting procedures for incidents of bullying. Two executive members are part of a network of executives from other schools who are developing a consistent anti-bullying approach across our schools. Students are made aware of these policies upon enrolment at the school and this is followed up through social skills lessons.

In 2011, a 'Safe Schools' audit was conducted with all staff. It surveyed staff on the effectiveness of nine elements of The National Safe Schools Framework including leadership in the school, policies and procedures, professional learning, behaviour management, and student engagement. The results of the survey showed overwhelmingly that the staff felt the school community was working very well in all of the elements.

A number of staff have been working on updating social skills lessons for use with interactive whiteboards. Staff have undertaken peer to peer professional learning to keep them up to date with the technology and content needed for these lessons.

During the school's weekly assembly, student achievement and effort was recognised through awards from Rivendell School and SDEHS.

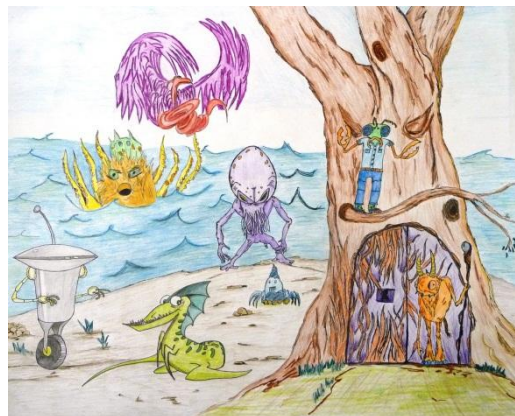
Students and staff have been involved in a number of fundraisers throughout the year. Bandana day culminated in not only raising money for young people living with cancer, but enough bandanas were given back to the school to make two quilts which were then donated to CanTeen.

Students and staff also participated in 'Loud Shirt Day' which was a lot of fun and raised money for the Shepherd Centre

Community partnerships

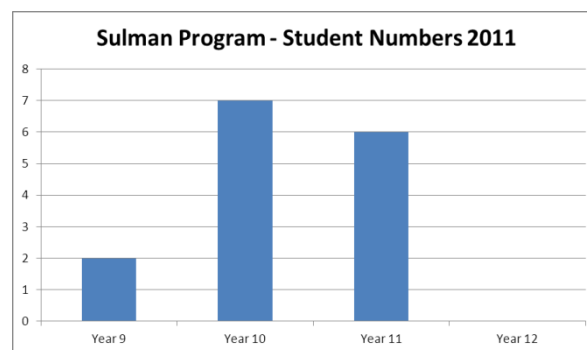
Rivendell School was nominated to be part of *Vodafone's Green Schools Connect Program*. Volunteers from the company spent time completing projects that helped to establish and implement an organic gardening program. Students have learnt about sustainability and have developed positive attitudes relating to a healthy diet and lifestyle. Bunnings at Lidcombe donated \$100 towards resources for this project. The Rotary Club of Concord supported the school

with citizenship awards, which were presented at the end of year presentation ceremony.



Sulman Program

The Sulman Program provides an academic program for students in Years 9-12.



The appointment of an additional teacher to the program has significantly expanded the flexibility that can be offered for a wide range of learning experiences, incorporating TVET, Outreach TAFE courses and curriculum based excursions. The excursions have complemented student's academic programs and helped build their social confidence. These learning experiences are planned in consultation with the school's transition coordinator. Students, parents and teachers meet and plan academic goals at the outset of the year. At the end of Term 3, all parties again met to review the current year and plan for the following academic year.

A presentation evening was held in December to acknowledge the students' achievement of their goals. All fourteen students were successful in achieving their goals in 2011 and have an individual plan to transition to the next stage, either through SDEHS or Open Training and Education Network (OTEN).

Two students successfully completed their Preliminary courses through SDEHS and began work in Term 4 for the 2012 HSC. Another two students are completing their Preliminary studies through OTEN and will continue into 2012. Eight Sulman students gained the School Certificate, and two students completed their Year 9 studies.

All students have a PLP to provide the optimum opportunity to meet their needs. Transition plans are developed throughout the year in consultation with students, parents, teachers and relevant agencies.

The significant academic achievements awarded by SDEHS include:

- Visual Arts (Preliminary) - 2nd Place
- Mathematics (Year 10) - 3rd Place
- Industrial Technology (Automotive) - 2nd Place



Paterson Program

The Paterson program caters for secondary school students experiencing difficulties managing their behaviour in a mainstream school setting. It has two classes with a maximum of seven students in each class and is a structured, intensive program designed to provide students with opportunities to learn, improve and self-manage their behaviour.

Through consistent management and explicit teaching, students practise new skills and strategies to enable them to manage their own behaviour. For most students in the Paterson program, the long term goal is integration back to

their mainstream school on a full-time basis or a vocational pathway.

Students in the Paterson program participate in regular social skills lessons with the aim of improving relationships, preparing the students for integration, and to celebrate student success. Opportunities to practise positive social skills were made available to students through morning breakfasts and weekly social lunches. Students were involved with the planning, preparation and delivery of these activities.

The 'Blue Card' reward system was a highly successful motivator in Paterson as students were focused and determined to maintain positive behaviour in order to either attend an outing with staff or choose a different reward. This reward system gave students the opportunity to plan their day and reflect on and improve behaviour throughout the day.

In 2011, Paterson staff reviewed the behaviour management system and introduced specific anti-bullying elements to the system. This proved to be highly effective in reducing the frequency and intensity of bullying incidents within the program.

In 2011, 13 students were supported in the Paterson program:

- Two students achieved their School Certificate which included the successful completion of a TVET course.
- Three students successfully completed work experience programs.
- Two students successfully completed TAFE Taster Courses.
- Five students were accepted for TVET courses commencing in 2012.
- Middle school curriculum was accessed from SDEHS for identified students to better accommodate their specific learning needs.

Future directions for 2012 include:

- the trial of a program specifically designed for Year 10 students that will include TVET courses and the delivery of some of the curriculum from Rivendell staff;
- increased collaboration with the school counsellor who will work with the

- students using Cognitive Behaviour Therapy; and
- increased use of technology including installation of electronic white boards.



Lawson Program

The Lawson program caters for secondary students with depressive and anxiety disorders. There are three classes accommodating up to 21 students from Years 7 to 12. Planning for the student's academic program occurs at the pre-admission meeting and develops in consultation with the student, their family and therapists. An academic program is developed individually for each student accessing resources from SDEHS, Karrabar Distance Education High School, OTEN, the student's home school, TAFE and work programmed by the class teacher.

In 2011, students in the Lawson program also had access to vocational programs, including the ten week *Ostara Towards Employment Program*, TAFE Taster courses and work experience.

Lawson students were involved in a variety of activities which complemented their academic program. These included:

- video conference lessons from SDEHS;
- individual and group lessons with teachers from SDEHS at Rivendell school;
- art and music therapy; and
- therapeutic discussion and group work in the areas of mindfulness, protective behaviours, psycho-education, health and fitness.

In 2011, 24 students were supported in the Lawson program:

- Three students achieved their School Certificate.
- Four students completed the *Ostara Towards Employment* 10 week program and are now eligible for six month follow-up support.
- Two students took part in work experience at a local café.
- Two students took part in the TAFE Taster courses 'Digital Photography' and 'Beauty and Makeup' and one student completed a one day Barista course.
- One student achieved Certificate II in Animal Studies.

Lawson SLSOs took part in a peer tutoring initiative to assist them in their use of technology and computers. Lawson teachers met once a week to synchronize and coordinate group activities including social skills lessons and the 'Coffee Card' reward program.

In 2011, counteracting bullying was a focus of individual and group social skills lessons. This focus led to many positive individual and group interactions between students across programs. Students were recognised at the weekly assembly for their positive initiatives and achievements in this area.

Each Lawson class facilitated the running of a school assembly once per term. All students were involved in developing a theme for the assembly. Students created a PowerPoint presentation around the theme, participated in its delivery and the dissemination of awards. This initiative has created opportunities for teamwork, confidence building, and the development of leadership and interpersonal skills.



Yaralla Program

The Yaralla program has two classes for secondary students with a mood disorder, a psychotic illness or who are on the autism spectrum scale. The program provided a supportive environment with up to seven students in each class.

The academic programs are provided by SDEHS, the student's home school and/or Rivendell staff. Nursing staff also conduct programs for the students such as Mindfulness, HYPE (a psychoeducational discussion group), relaxation strategies, protective behaviours and healthy living skills.

Students also participated in activities and attended information sessions with a sports psychologist. Art and music therapy were provided along with a wide range of workshops.

During 2011 the Yaralla program conducted weekly social skills lessons on topics such as emotional recognition and regulation, helpful thinking and communication skills. These lessons are now held in the Yaralla building thanks to a new interactive whiteboard which was installed in Term 4 courtesy of the Building the Education Revolution program. Students responded well to these lessons and they will be continued in 2012.

Another program initiative implemented in 2011 was a weekly art lesson. One of the rooms in Yaralla has been configured into an Art Room for this purpose. Each week students and staff worked on a series of collaborative and individual art projects which were then displayed around Rivendell School. Students found this session to be very rewarding and an enjoyable group activity to end each week.

This year, one of the Yaralla teachers successfully implemented a horticulture course within the grounds of Rivendell. Funding was received from Vodaphone and a group of Vodaphone volunteers attended the school and set up a number of garden beds that the students now use for weekly horticulture lessons.

In 2011 three students gained their School Certificate and one student completed two TAFE outreach courses. This student enjoyed the different environment that TAFE offers and will continue studying at TAFE in 2012.

This year there were fewer students supported through the Yaralla program than in previous years due to fewer referrals being made to the Rivendell Adolescent Unit. During 2011, 23 students were supported through the Yaralla program:

- Three students transitioned into other programs at Rivendell.
- Eight students have returned to their school to continue their education.
- Two students received placements at other Schools for Specific Purposes (SSP's).
- Two students transitioned to TAFE.
- Eight students remained in the Yaralla program and will continue their studies in 2012.

The Yaralla program has a number of initiatives it will pursue in 2012 including a new student reward program, based on the 'coffee card' system used by other programs within Rivendell School. Students will still receive merits and gold cards for achieving classroom and integration goals, but the additional 'coffee card' reward program will also operate. This program will focus on promoting consistent positive behaviour and result in student visits to the school principal to receive their rewards.



Walker Program

The Walker learning centre provides the educational component of the Walker Adolescent Mental Health Unit. This unit is for students with severe and ongoing mental health needs. It is

located within the Concord Centre for Mental Health campus.

Currently the learning centre has one class of up to seven students and is supported by a teacher and SLSO.

In 2011 the learning centre supported students who completed:

- the School Certificate;
- Preliminary pathways courses;
- a TAFE Outreach program; and
- Statement of Attainment courses with OTEN.

Also, 25% of the Walker students accessed the Rivendell afternoon workshops.

In 2011, there were 10 new enrolments. 60% of students were enrolled in distance education through SDEHS and OTEN. All students were supported by PLPs focusing on their individual strengths and needs. 70% of the students transitioned to other settings including mainstream and special schools and individually supported programs.

Gna Ka Lun Program

Gna Ka Lun is an acute Adolescent Mental Health Unit based at Campbelltown Hospital. Located within Gna Ka Lun is a learning centre staffed by two Rivendell School outreach teachers and the Rivendell specialist school counsellor.

In 2011, there were 100 students who accessed the learning centre whilst a patient at Gna Ka Lun.

- 16 were in Years 7 and 8
- 47 were in Years 9 and 10
- 24 were in Years 11 and 12
- 65 attended a DEC school
- 22 were enrolled in non-DET schools
- 13 were attending other facilities such as transition to work programs or were not connected with an educational setting.

The role of the Gna Ka Lun learning centre teacher is to liaise with each student's school in an effort to ensure the continuity of education and positive re-integration to school upon discharge from the hospital. The teachers

maintain individual transition plans for each student with a focus on sustaining and restoring student's engagement with education.

During their admission at Gna Ka Lun, students integrate back into their school settings whenever travel constraints permit. Gradually increased school integration has been viewed as being a valuable component of a student's discharge planning. This is not always possible however as some students have a very short stay in the unit.

When students present without a school or an education pathway, the Gna Ka Lun teachers and school counsellor are able to refer them to appropriate Department of Education and Communities personnel.



Professional Learning

Each year staff develop an individual professional learning plan based on targets from the school plan, Department of Education and Communities guidelines, and their own interests, roles and responsibilities in the school. In 2011, all staff completed a wide range of professional learning topics relating to teaching and learning and school management. Professional learning sessions were facilitated by Rivendell staff, consultants from within the Department of Education and Communities, colleagues from other schools and outside agencies.

Staff shared information from the professional learning they undertook with colleagues. This was done through mentoring opportunities, small group discussion sessions, whole staff sessions

and reporting of information during staff meetings.

A review of the school's professional learning program was conducted each term. Reviews also occurred through the school's staff supervision process.

The professional learning program for all staff has continued to result in staff being able to reflect on their practice and implement appropriate changes. It has also had a positive impact on learning outcomes for students.



Progress on 2011 targets

Target 1

To further develop the educational service delivery at the Walker Unit and Gna Ka Lun

Our achievements include:

- a second learning centre operating successfully in Gna Ka Lun;
- a 29% increase in the number of students from the Walker unit accessing Rivendell afternoon workshops; and
- Internet connections being made available to both units.

Target 2

To further develop the Rivendell Outreach Program

Our achievements include:

- promotion of the Rivendell programs by our specialist school counsellor to various groups including school counsellors in training;

- positive evaluations from both attendees and presenters at the Rivendell Outreach day; and
- responding to all requests to provide professional development to schools accessing the Paterson program.

Target 3

To embed information and communication technologies (ICT) in all classroom programs to improve student learning outcomes

Our achievements include:

- all staff reporting an increase in confidence and skills relating to ICT;
- video conferencing lessons provided in the areas of maths, science and history; and
- an increase in the number of lessons using the interactive whiteboards.

Key evaluations

It is a requirement for all NSW public schools to conduct at least two annual evaluations – one related to educational and management practice and the other related to curriculum. In 2011 our school carried out evaluations of the Gna Ka Lun learning centre and the Rivendell workshop program.

Educational and management practice

Gna Ka Lun learning centre

Background

Gna Ka Lun (GKL) is an adolescent mental health unit based at Campbelltown Hospital.

It has a multidisciplinary team consisting of adolescent specific nursing, allied health, medical professionals and teachers. Students participate in a variety of daily activities including attending the learning centre for school.

There have been a number of changes to the learning centre program since its commencement including an increase in the time the centre is open and the establishment of a second class. The multidisciplinary team agreed that it would be beneficial to review the operation of the learning centre to assess the outcomes of the changes.

Findings and conclusions

An electronic survey was sent to staff at Rivendell who had worked at GKL, the health staff at GKL and the mainstream schools of students who had been admitted during the year. The results showed that:

- 100% of education and health staff believed that the establishment of a second class, the inclusion of the school counsellor for a full day and the crossover of teaching staff all have had a positive impact on student outcomes;
- 100% of education and health staff reported that the communication between all stakeholders is good to excellent;
- communication overall between education and mainstream schools is reported as good with 42% reporting suggestions for improvement;
- 71% of the mainstream schools who responded reported that students' transition plans could improve; and
- 80% of the mainstream schools' responses indicated a lack of understanding of the role of a learning centre for students admitted as patients to an acute health unit.

Future directions

As a result of this review the school will:

- implement suggestions for improving communication;
- revise the format of transition plans to better inform mainstream schools of a student's progress; and
- develop an information package to better inform mainstream schools of the role of the learning centre in an acute unit.

Curriculum

Rivendell workshop program

Background

Rivendell School conducts afternoon workshops on four days of the week. The aim of these workshops is to provide activities to support the

curriculum and to give participants opportunities to interact with staff and students outside their classroom cohort. In 2011 the school's self-evaluation committee, supported by staff, targeted this program for review. All participants were sent an electronic survey regarding participation and their suggestions for improvement.

Findings and conclusions

Over half of the students who responded to the questionnaire reported they enjoyed the workshops, with one quarter reporting they were fantastic. Students made suggestions for future workshops, including music, media, textiles and a walking group. The purchase of additional resources to improve sports workshops was also suggested.

Over 90% of staff surveyed reported the delivery of workshops relating to curriculum, student participation and enjoyment was in the average to excellent range. Staff also reported that workshop participation enhanced students' cooperation and enabled the practice of social skills in varied settings. The study group was a very beneficial workshop for senior students. It was also reported that it was beneficial for teachers to deliver workshops in areas in which they are trained or have expertise.

Staff highlighted some difficulties related to the delivery of workshops including access to a whiteboard or other suitable venue for wet days, greater stability of student attendance in each workshop from week to week (this may be affected by integration timetables or other interruptions to daily routine), and where possible staff to be given prior knowledge if a workshop is to be cancelled to enable better communication for accommodating changes.

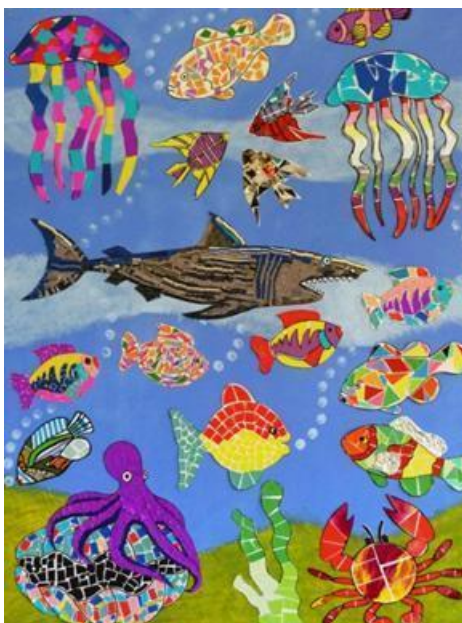


Future directions

During 2012 staff will meet to discuss findings from the questionnaire and continue to plan and develop the workshop format and delivery.

Focus areas will include:

- aligning workshops with a themed, planned unit of work targeting specific curriculum outcomes;
- increasing staff and student input during planning, implementation and evaluation stages;
- reviewing the structure of workshops with reference to attendance patterns, flexibility and environmental issues; and
- improving access to technology and resources.



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.

School priority 1

Outcome for 2012–2014

Improved student learning outcomes for all students in literacy and numeracy

2012 Targets to achieve this outcome include:

- increasing the number of students in Years 7 to 10 receiving the English and Mathematics curriculum delivered by Rivendell staff (versus distance education) from 0% to 10% by the end of Term 3, 2012.

Strategies to achieve these targets include:

- the English curriculum being taught to students in the new Paterson class in place of distance education and these lessons being open to students from other Rivendell programs;
- providing release for Maths trained teachers to work with students individually and in stage groups; and
- staff attending Strathfield SEG head teachers' network meetings for professional development and access to teaching resources.

School priority 2

Outcome for 2012–2014

Improved engagement in learning

2012 Targets to achieve this outcome include:

- increasing the percentage of eligible students completing a TVET or TAFE Taster course from 35% to 50% in 2012; and
- increasing student attendance from 76% to 80% or more by 30 November 2012.

Strategies to achieve these targets include:

- introducing flexible schooling structures that support attendance at TAFE;
- increasing the use of ICT as an effective learning tool; and
- developing individual attendance plans for identified students in consultation with all stakeholders.

School priority 3

Outcome for 2012–2014

Increased time in quality learning for students

2012 Targets to achieve this outcome include:

- increasing the percentage of classroom teachers who will achieve *Professional Competence* in Element 5 of the *Professional Teaching Standards* from 75% to 85% during 2012; and
- increasing the percentage of staff who will achieve competency in the ICT component of their professional learning plan from 70% to 80% during 2012.

Strategies to achieve these targets include:

- staff development days focusing on best practice for achieving the *Professional Competence* components;
- the inclusion of an ICT component in the individual professional learning plans of all staff;
- programing regular teacher meetings with distance education staff to reflect on student engagement and learning outcomes; and
- linking Rivendell teachers with colleagues in our local mainstream high schools to share their respective behaviour and curriculum development expertise.

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 out more information about Annual School Reports, how to interpret information in the reports and have the opportunity to provide feedback about these reports at:

<http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/asr>