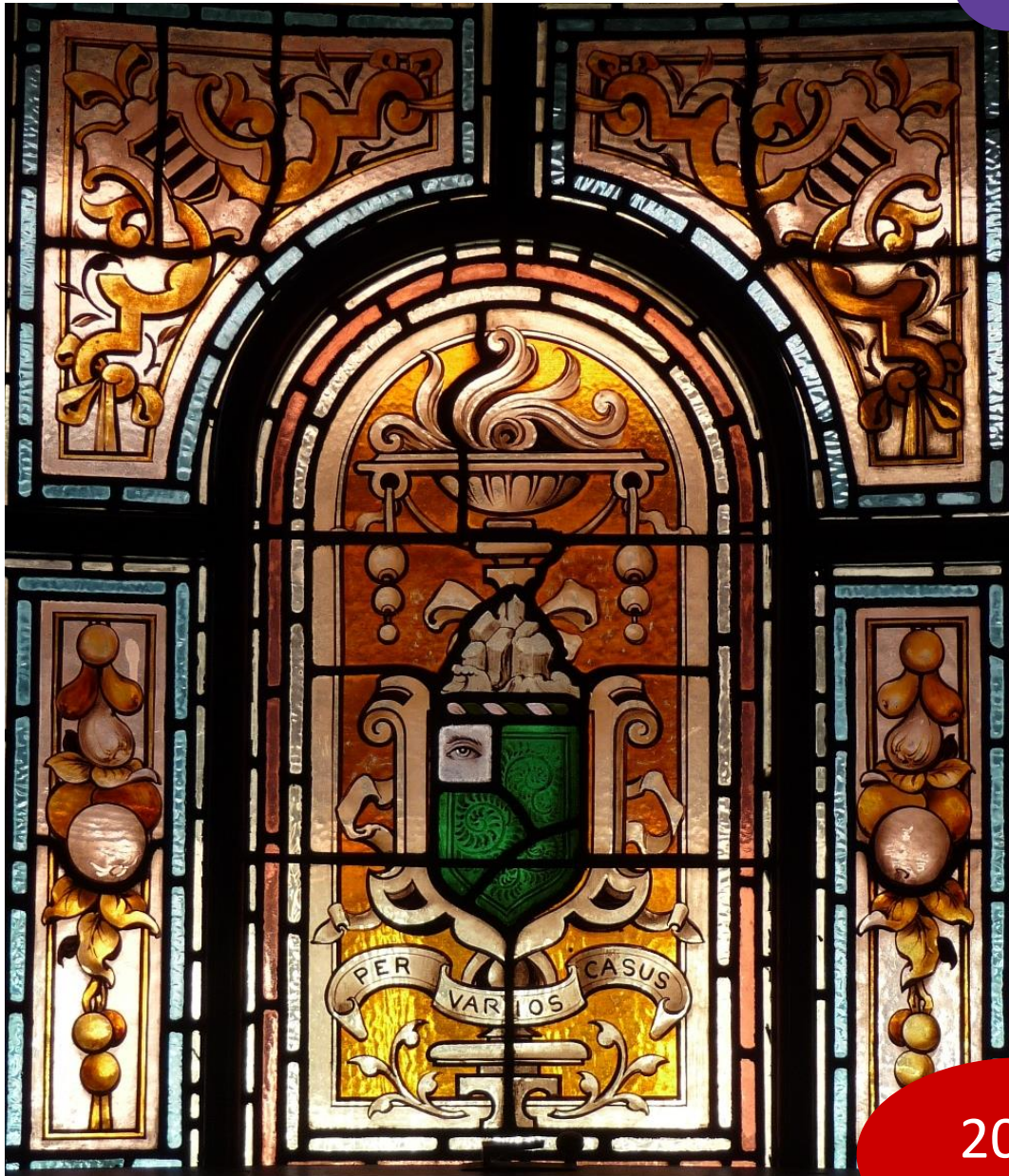


Rivendell School Annual Report



2015



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Introduction

The Annual Report for 2015 is provided to the community of Rivendell School as an account of the school's operations and achievements throughout the year.

It provides a detailed account of the progress the school has made to provide high quality educational opportunities for all students, as set out in the school plan. It outlines the findings from self-assessment that reflect the impact of key school strategies for improved learning and the benefit to all students from the expenditure of resources, including equity funding. The Annual Report describes the school's high quality practices across the three domains of the School Excellence Framework of learning, teaching and leading.



Jennifer Shumack
Principal (Rel)

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Message from the Principal

This Annual School Report for 2015 provides our community with information regarding our programs initiatives, achievements and evaluations.

For Rivendell School, 2015 was a year marked with change, observable growth and a strong commitment to the academic outcomes for our students who have often missed school and require extensive support, both academically and therapeutically. We are proud of the outcomes for our students in 2015 and look forward to seeing continued success in 2016.

2015 saw the implementation of various reforms within the Department of Education, including a new process to prepare and deliver a three year management plan. This plan was developed in 2014 through extensive consultation with our community, health and education staff, and students. This plan enabled the school to visualise schooling our students in a way which aligned them much more closely with their mainstream cohort.

Thanks must go to the Rivendell school staff who have committed to providing a quality educational experience for our students.

Our positive student outcomes are enabled by the strong supportive and collaborative relationship we have with the NSW Health staff, mainstream schools, Sydney Distance Education High School (SDEHS), Meadowbank TAFE, Rotary Club of Concord, community agencies and local business personnel, especially the Kokoda Cafe. As always, the ongoing support of our parents and care givers is greatly appreciated.

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.

Jennifer Shumack
Principal (Rel)

School background

School vision statement

The Rivendell School community prides itself on promoting shared and individual responsibility for positive and respectful relationships; safe behaviour; and cooperation and participation in quality learning.

We are committed to a shared vision that fosters an inclusive school culture and is evident in the ways in which we guide, inspire and challenge our diverse student population. Every student is given the opportunity to achieve their individual goals and develop personal resources for future success and wellbeing.

As a staff we are committed to critically reflecting on our practice, respecting student and community voice and exploring innovative teaching and learning.

School context

Rivendell School is part of a joint NSW Ministry of Health and Department of Education (DoE) facility. It is located within the historical Thomas Walker Estate at Concord West and shares the site with the Rivendell Child, Adolescent and Family Mental Health Service. Rivendell School provides the educational component for students admitted to the Yaralla and Lawson programs of the Rivendell Adolescent Mental Health Unit.

The school also has two DoE programs for students with an emotional disorder. The Paterson program is for students in Years 9 and 10. The Sulman program is for students in Years 11 and 12.

There are two learning centres staffed by Rivendell School on off-site campuses. One is within the Walker Adolescent High Severity Psychiatric Unit in the Concord Centre for Mental Health. The other learning centre is at Gna Ka Lun Acute Adolescent Mental Health Unit attached to Campbelltown Hospital.

The school provides a broad academic curriculum, targeted vocational programs, and the opportunity for students to participate in a range of extra curricula activities.

The school has a committed staff with a strong ethos of communication and collaboration with the wider school community.

Self-assessment and school achievements

Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

This section of the Annual Report outlines the findings from self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework, our school achievements and the next steps to be pursued. The Framework supports public schools throughout NSW in the pursuit of excellence by providing a clear description of high quality practice across the three domains of Learning, Teaching and Leading.

This year, our school undertook self-assessment using the elements of the School Excellence Framework.

Progressively during Professional Learning Sessions in 2015, and on Staff Development Day, staff were invited to examine the School Plan and the 2015 milestones in the light of the School Excellence Framework. We reflected on the progress made across the school against the expectation statements within the Framework. This enabled us to continue our forward planning to ensure our progress aligned with the expectations within the Framework.

Our ongoing self-assessment process will further assist the school to refine the strategic priorities in our School Plan leading to further improvements in the delivery of education to our students.

Through this process, significant progress was evidenced in the areas of **Learning, Teaching and Leading**.

In the domain of **Learning**, the school focussed on the elements of Curriculum and Learning, Assessment and Reporting and Wellbeing. There has been a collaborative approach in our planning to provide our students with an educational experience which is relevant, engaging and inclusionary. An examination of the culture of student learning led to the implementation of innovative practices, resulting in positive outcomes across the five programs at Rivendell. Assessment documentation and requirements were also reviewed, leading to a fresh approach aligned to the new curriculum mode of delivery at Rivendell. Teachers differentiate curriculum delivery and as a result, students are able to approach their learning and associated assessment tasks, feeling well supported and optimistic, and are able to use the assessment and reporting procedures to reflect on their own learning.

Wellbeing is embedded in daily life at Rivendell. It is fundamentally important to the successful outcome for each student, in relation to attendance, participation and engagement with all aspects of schooling: curriculum, extra curriculum, access to therapy, social engagement and ultimately transition to the next setting. The school has in place a comprehensive and inclusive framework to support the cognitive, emotional, social, physical and spiritual wellbeing of students, which measurably improves individual outcomes for all students.

In the area of **Teaching**, the school focussed on the elements of **Effective Classroom Practice, Collaborative Practice and Learning and Development**. All staff developed and worked from their Performance and Development Plans. Teachers self-identified professional learning needs related to their professional goals and the strategic directions in the school plan. A process of peer observation was implemented and teachers provided and received planned constructive feedback from their peers, from school leaders and from opportunities for self-reflection. A leadership strategy was developed within the executive and processes are in place to provide formal mentoring, supporting leadership practice. The ongoing development of the use of Sentral, an efficient system of gathering and collating all information and data related to students, remains an important step in the assessment and reporting process and the centralisation of each student's Personalised Learning Plan (PLP). Data for PLPs will be gathered from Sentral, as will data for semester reports.

In the area of **Leading**, the school focussed on the elements of **Leadership and School Planning, Implementation and Reporting**. Rivendell School has shown commitment to the development of leadership skills in staff and students, as shown by the growth and support for the SRC and the implementation of the executive mentoring strategy. The school recognises that leadership development is central to school capacity building and strives to present opportunities for all staff to take on leadership roles at every opportunity. The school acknowledges a wide diversity of student and staff achievements and takes every opportunity to celebrate successes, both academically and socially and in the sporting and creative arts areas. Our community's importance is recognised by the ongoing and increasing invitations for participation in many aspects of the school day. Programs have been innovative in their ways to include parents in the education process, and increased communication with families and mainstream schools has ensured positive relationships and authentic conversations. We look forward to expanded community participation in 2016.

Rivendell School has an inclusive and extremely supportive culture, with all staff committed to ensuring students are able to maximise the benefit and opportunity Rivendell School and related health support can offer. Our ongoing self-assessment will support the improvement of education delivery to our students.

Strategic Direction 1

Students will be successful learners and leaders who are confident and future focused

Purpose

To provide a learning environment that has high expectations, prepares students for life beyond Rivendell and affords students opportunities to develop academically, socially, in leadership capabilities and in their areas of talent.

Overall summary of progress

The Learning Centre was established in term 1 and was operational throughout 2015. This enabled the provision of Rivendell developed curriculum in the areas of Mathematics, HSIE, English and PDHPE to all stage 4 and 5 students by faculty teachers. Curriculum teams used release time to develop each semester's scope and sequence for each area in line with Board of Studies Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES) requirements. Assessment tasks were established for each area, and assessments completed and reported on to parents/carers each semester. The Learning Centre is an innovative step in supporting Rivendell students to experience a larger classroom environment in preparation for the return to their mainstream schools. Wellbeing is the core business of Rivendell School and integral to all our programs. The Student Representative Council (SRC) was established in order to provide extended opportunities for student leadership. The SRC was very active in 2015, particularly in semester 2, after the roles and responsibilities were established and the students saw value in being part of the school leadership team. SRC representatives showed learnt leadership during school events by co-hosting our community information evenings and the annual Presentation Day event, remarkable achievements for our students. They also reviewed the student support system and the school merit system, presenting it to the school executive for discussion and ratification.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures		Resources (annual)
Improvement measure (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	
100% of the Stage 4 and 70% of the Stage 5 curriculum is developed and delivered by Rivendell School	4 faculty teams have actively planned and developed programs and assessments for both semester 1 and semester 2. Programs have been delivered to stages 4 and 5 students in the Learning Centre. Rivendell draft Assessment Booklet and Guidelines have been established. Student work and Rivendell assessment tasks aligned with syllabus. All faculties have established a draft 2016 calendar and Learning Centre timetable for 2016. This defined timetable mirrors mainstream schools/TAFE. Moving towards required BOSTES hours for subject time in a special setting.	\$8,400
30% increase (16% in 2014) in students engaging in leaderships programs	There is active participation in the SRC. Weekly meetings are held with formal agendas and delineated roles. SRC has been active in reviewing the student support system and the merit system. These have been presented to executive and ratified for school use. SRC now has a strong profile at Rivendell.	\$0

Next steps

- To finalise the Rivendell Assessment Booklet and Guidelines
- Commence Project Based Learning Assessment tasks within the Learning Centre
- To increase the community connection of the Rivendell SRC
- Participate in a regional SRC

Strategic Direction 2

Staff will be high performing, reflective and innovative

Purpose

To support staff and their commitment to deliver quality learning experiences, engage in reflective ongoing professional development and be innovative in the ways in which they use evidence based teaching strategies to engage students. This will support a culture of continuous improvement focused on excellence in teaching and leadership.

Overall summary of progress

The Performance and Development Framework was implemented in semester 2 after delivery and training in the reform in semester 1. All staff worked towards achieving their professional goals as outlined in their Performance and Development Plans and participated in the peer observation process. It is clear that teachers are working together in their curriculum teams to improve teaching practice and learning outcomes both in the Learning Centre and in the classrooms. There has been an increase in attendance in the Learning Centre and a reduction in student non participation, as a result of increasingly relevant, engaging and current curriculum delivery.

In 2015, lessons incorporated numerous programs to engage students such as; the Adobe Creative Suite, Microsoft Office applications, Code Academy, Nearpod, mathletics, intoscience and spelladrome along with iPad applications such as movie maker, songify and garage band. Students have responded well to these programs and have demonstrated some significant gains in their engagement within the lessons. Students also participated in a range of activities such as the hour of code, an international coding event aimed at increasing students' 21st Century skills. Students continue to participate in online learning with staff from other settings using Adobe Connect and video conferencing equipment. This accessibility to specialist teachers is improving students' understandings and as a result, engagement, quality of work and results. Staff training has expanded the use of the Sentral server, specifically in roll marking and recording student's welfare. Surveys completed by the community at the end of 2015 showed a moderate level of satisfaction and have helped us to identify key areas within the school to focus on.

This year a new Personalised Learning Plan (PLP) template was developed and introduced in the Sulman and Paterson programs. This ensures that all students and parents are actively involved in the planning of educational goals, and regular reviewing of progress.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures		Resources (annual)
Improvement measure	Progress achieved this year	
100% of staff will apply their Performance and Development Plan (teachers) or their Professional Development Plan (SASS) to improve their practice	All staff (incl SASS) participated in the process for developing a Performance and Development Plan. Peer observations were completed. Written feedback was provided. Staff were given the opportunity to evaluate the school process and fine tune for 2016.	\$0
Increase from 42% to 100% of parents and students engaging with the new PLP processes that reflect literacy and numeracy needs, individual learning goals and required adjustments	Sulman and Paterson programs evaluated, developed and used new proformas for PLPs and review of student progress. Yaralla and Lawson continued using same proformas.	\$5040

Next steps for 2016

- Professional goals on PDPs will be clearly aligned with strategic directions
- Delivery of targeted Professional Learning on lesson observations, constructing and giving feedback and teaching practice
- Student reports and Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs) will be completed on Sentral
- Upgraded technology access in the Learning Centre will include a class set of iPads
- Technology audit to determine whole school requirements including exploring the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy

Strategic Direction 3

To have a collaborative and connected community of learners

Purpose

To foster a school community that operates in a united manner with the central goal being the achievement of positive student learning outcomes. To ensure that there are meaningful partnerships with all stakeholders and that all community members have the opportunity to share their expertise.

Overall summary of progress

In 2015, Rivendell School worked strategically towards strengthening community with parents, students, home schools, health staff and combined staff at offsite programs. A new process of weekly communication for families and home schools was implemented which captured individual student progress over the week. Parent Information nights were scheduled and held at school to engage families in the Rivendell community, and, incursions and excursions became a part of curriculum planning and implementation.

The new weekly communication process resulted in increased authentic dialogue with both families and home schools. Parents used information from the communication as a springboard for discussions at home whilst also being empowered to make decisions in collaboration with the class teacher in a timely fashion. Home schools were kept abreast of any developments around the student's progress and the continued communication ensured that a connection with the returning school was maintained.

Rivendell School hosted two Parent Information evenings during 2015. These evenings provided families with the opportunity to network with other parents, connect with education staff outside the busy classroom environment and develop an understanding of school processes, mental health initiatives and post school options.

Historically, students attending Rivendell School have not regularly engaged in excursions to sites outside the school. In 2015, six excursions were planned across the year, each linking to units of work taught in the Learning Centre. The excursions also provided an opportunity for students to generalise the skills they had learnt in their programs and to develop a richer understanding of the area of work they studied. Students were highly engaged on each excursion and were able to provide a richer response to curriculum based discussions as a result.

Program information was updated on the Rivendell Website in 2015, however the platform and content areas remained largely untouched with whole school protocols taking priority.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures		Resources (annual)
Improvement measure	Progress achieved this year	
Increase from 27% to 90% the parent response rate, affirming the school's strategic directions in relation to opportunities for collaboration and engagement	Increased attendance by parents at information nights 100% of parents identified that they receive weekly communication with the school from their child's class teacher 76% parents of parents identified that they communicate with teachers weekly 75% of parents found the communication invaluable 100% increase in excursions and incursions shows greater connection to community.	\$6197
30% increase in staff, parents and the community using the Rivendell website to access information and resources	Not achieved	

Next steps

- Development of school blog. To go live In Semester 1, 2016
- School website to be revamped to be more modern and user friendly
- Maintain parent participation in weekly communication
- Increase parent attendance at information sessions held each semester
- Increase number of community events

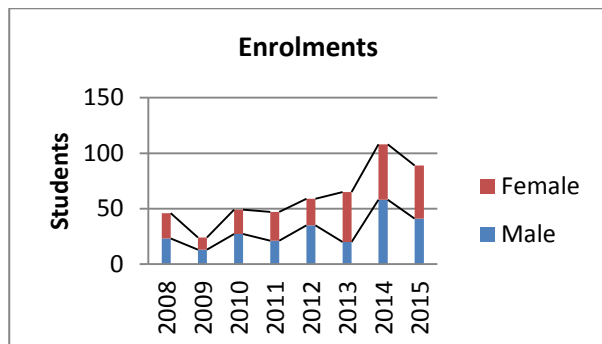
Key initiatives and other school focus areas

Key initiatives (annual)	Impact achieved this year	Resources (annual)
Aboriginal background funding Action research project on hold until 2016	Access for local Aboriginal community visits	\$240
English language proficiency funding Absorbed into SDEHS fees. Students in stage 5 and 6 need a specialist teacher in each KLA in order to fulfill BOSTES requirements for the RoSA and the HSC.	All subjects for students in stage 6 and some subjects for students in stages 4 and 5 accessed from SDEHS	\$200
Targeted students support for refugees and new arrivals	NA	\$0
Socio-economic funding Absorbed into SDEHS fees Students in stage 5 and 6 need a specialist teacher in each KLA in order to fulfill BOSTES requirements for the RoSA and the HSC.	All subjects for students in stage 6 and some subjects for students in stages 4 and 5 accessed from SDEHS	\$1824
Low level adjustment for disability funding	NA	\$0
Support for beginning teachers Support and mentoring Professional Learning	Mentoring for beginning teacher by supervisor Access to relevant Professional Learning. Beginning teacher achieved accreditation. Release time for Professional Learning.	\$13,127

Student information

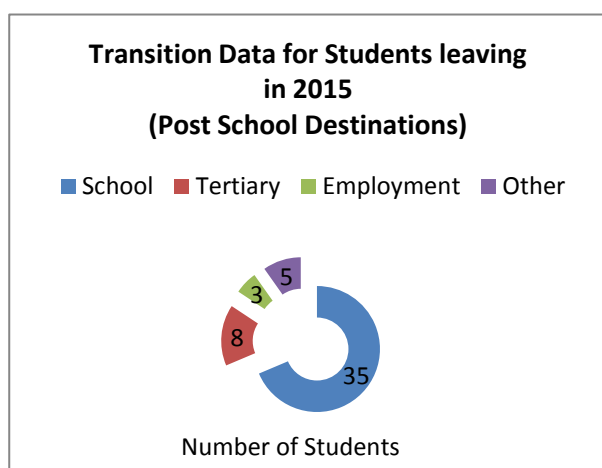
It is a requirement that the reporting of information for all students be consistent with privacy and personal information policies.

Student enrolment profile



Students accessing Gna Ka Lun 2015 (not enrolled)	Number
Male	34
Female	66
Stage 4	20
Stage 5	43
Stage 6	35
Other	2
DoE schools	74
Non DoE schools	20
TAFE	6
Total	100

Post-school destinations



Workforce composition

Position	Number
Principal	1
Assistant Principal(s)	3
Classroom Teacher(s)	8
Outreach Teacher (s)	2
Teacher Librarian/RFF	1.49
School Administrative & Support Staff	12.82
SSP District School Counsellor	1
District Guidance Officer	1

Position	Number
Assistant Principal(s) Learning and Support	2
Assistant Principal Student Wellbeing	1
Vocational Transition Teacher	1
Student Wellbeing Teacher	0.3
Total	36.62

Workforce information

Reporting of information for all staff must be consistent with privacy and personal information policies.

Rivendell's allocation of staffing includes a teacher and an SLSO for each class except for Gna Ka Lun which is staffed by two outreach teachers.

The Australian Education Regulation, 2014 requires schools to report on Aboriginal composition of their workforce. In 2015 Rivendell School staff did not include anyone who identified as being of indigenous background.

All staff indicated in the shaded area are those whose base school is Rivendell but whose direct service is across various schools in Ultimo operational area.

The District Guidance Officer, Assistant Principals Learning and Support and the Vocational Transition teacher join with Rivendell staff for professional development and attend the school development days.

Workforce retention

In term 2, 2015, the substantive principal was seconded to work as Director, Every Student Every School across the Ultimo operational area. A principal (rel) has been in the leadership role at Rivendell School since term 2, 2015.

Two assistant principals were appointed during 2015, following a retirement and a position which was relinquished.

One teaching position and one School Learning Support Officer were filled by transfer. One teaching position was filled by merit selection. There has been a relieving specialist school counsellor at Rivendell since term 2 2015, as the substantive counsellor remains in a District Guidance Officer (rel) role at another school.

Teacher qualifications

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

Qualifications	% of staff
Undergraduate degree or diploma	60
Postgraduate degree	40

Professional learning and teacher accreditation

In 2015 all staff participated in a wide range of weekly professional learning meetings which supported mandatory guidelines and addressed the three strategic directions from the 2015 – 2017 school plan.

Semester 1 Professional Learning included:

Code of Conduct, Child Protection Update 2015, emergency fire and evacuation training, Performance and Development Framework, a review of the student support system and professional Standards for Teachers. Professional Learning around curriculum planning with faculty teams.

Semester 2 Professional Learning included: School Excellence Framework, Non Violent Crisis Intervention, part two Disability Standards for Education, anaphylaxis, teaching students who have experienced trauma and the accidental counsellor training.

Individual staff and teams attended offsite Professional Learning including: Women in Leadership and Generation Next: the Mental Health and Wellbeing of Adolescents.

All staff completed their Performance and Development Plans in semester two.

One teacher achieved accreditation at proficient in 2015. There are 2 teachers seeking accreditation, with 4 teachers maintaining at Proficient.

Financial information

Financial summary

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

Rivendell School holds funds in trust for the Ultimo Network of Schools and State Office programs as well as the Families First organization.

Date of financial summary	30/11/2015
Income	\$
Balance brought forward	1055215.75
Global funds	162708.73
Tied funds	87534.72
School & community sources	0.00
Interest	26611.98
Trust receipts	535887.17
Canteen	0.00
Total income	1867958.35
Expenditure	
Teaching & learning	
Key learning areas	27485.71
Excursions	4272.81
Extracurricular dissections	6290.34

Library	1457.03
Training & development	1122.83
Tied funds	64301.88
Casual relief teachers	4916.14
Administration & office	54166.02
School-operated canteen	0.00
Utilities	5036.01
Maintenance	46336.89
Trust accounts	361947.62
Capital programs	0.00
Total expenditure	577333.28
Balance carried forward	1290625.07



School performance

In 2016, students in years 7 and 9 were able to complete their NAPLAN assessments on site at Rivendell School. The results of their assessments are included in the cohort of their mainstream schools.

Higher School Certificate (HSC)

There were 12 students who sat the HSC at Rivendell School in 2015. Of these 12 students two moved into the workforce, five students completed their HSC and moved onto tertiary education and five continued their education working towards their HSC.

Record of School Achievement-RoSA

There were 14 students who completed Year 10 studies through Rivendell School. Of these 14 students one student received their Record of School Achievement and went onto tertiary studies, five transitioned back into mainstream school and eight continued onto senior studies at Rivendell School.

Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

In 2015, students, teachers, parents and health staff were invited to complete a *SurveyMonkey* questionnaire to assist in gauging overall satisfaction and areas for development.

The *SurveyMonkey* questionnaire was completed by nine students (20% of all students) with all responses gained from the Sulman program. Over 30% of students identified that the School Representative Council (SRC) plays an active role in school decision making with more than 50% of the cohort identifying that they felt comfortable talking to their representative about school issues. 100% of students agreed that they have access to technology within the school with 66% finding its reliability average. 78% of students identified that they have an individual learning plan which they have developed with their teacher. 38% identified this as crucial to their recovery.

The *SurveyMonkey* questionnaire was completed by 13 education staff (60% of all staff) from across five programs (Sulman, Paterson, Lawson, Yaralla, and Walker). All staff identified student engagement in the Learning Centre to be average to highly engaging. The majority of staff identified technology to be average to very poor. 100% of staff were able to identify individual student goals, all indicating that these are discussed fortnightly through to daily.

The *SurveyMonkey* questionnaire was completed by six health staff (38% of health staff) who support both the Yaralla and Lawson program. 100% of respondents indicated that they communicate with Rivendell education staff several times a day to every second day through a variety of methods including email, phone, face to face and in meetings. 0% of respondents identified that they have attended the Learning Centre. 100% of respondents identified that they know individual students education goals with 67% discussing these with education staff at least weekly.



The *SurveyMonkey* questionnaire was completed by 12 respondents (approx. 27% of all parents), capturing parents across four programs: Sulman, Paterson, Yaralla and Lawson. All respondents indicated that they receive weekly communication from their child's teacher with 76% identifying this as invaluable. When it comes to developing education goals for individual students, 83% of respondents indicated that they knew their child's educational goals at Rivendell, with 100% indicating that working towards these goals was important to crucial. Of the respondents that indicated that their child attends the Learning Centre, over 67% indicated that student engagement was above average. Almost all respondents agreed that technology is accessible at school although reliability scored quite low with only 44% of parents indicating it was above average to high.

The importance of individual student goal setting was identified across the student, education staff, health staff and parent responses. The majority of all respondents found the weekly communication invaluable and working towards goals in a collaboratively way crucial to student recovery. School technology was identified as an area of concern across the student, education staff, health staff and parent responses with reliability scoring significantly lower than anticipated. Increased access to technological innovation and a robust network may address these issues.

Policy requirements

Aboriginal education

Throughout 2015, staff teaching in the Learning Centre have embedded cross-curriculum priorities encompassing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, into the teaching and learning program with particular emphasis in the Key Learning Area of HSIE.

In May, an executive member of staff completed an Aboriginal Pedagogy Course which provided a framework for embedding Aboriginal perspectives into planning and teaching in an authentic manner. This was followed up with attendance at the Leading Aboriginal Education workshop in September 2015. This has created a foundation for further development in 2016.

All Rivendell programs have utilised *Circle Time* at particular points in the year to explore reconciliation and the indigenous experience. These discussions have been further enhanced and explored during whole school assemblies and incursions.

In early 2015, Rivendell School received a small art grant through the *Reconciliation Arts Council Homegrown Heroes art competition*. Students used their creativity to develop a board artwork depicting the portrait of an indigenous homegrown hero of their choice. The completed art work was submitted for the competition before being displayed at back at the school.



In-school performances and excursions have provided further insight into the indigenous experience for Rivendell students. During our lead up to NAIDOC we invited Uncle Alan Madden via Metropolitan Lands Council to Rivendell School to talk at our assembly and provide a welcome to country. Further performances and activities have enriched student understanding of the diversity within the Australian culture.

Performances included:

Kadul - Performed by Ryka Ali

Ryka Ali's heritage stems from the Wuthathi tribe of Shellburne Bay, Cape York and the Torres Strait Islands. He is a very proud ambassador for Australia's Indigenous youth and Aboriginal culture.

Ryka's presentation revealed the richness of both the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islands culture. His performance reflected both sides of his heritage and greatly encouraged volunteer and wider audience participation throughout. Ryka spoke about the Torres Strait Islands flag and provided explanations of various instruments, artefacts, costumes and dances specific to the Islands. He explained the importance of traditional body paint with ochre and the significance of the designs in his culture.

Ryka discussed the instruments pertinent to Aboriginal culture and gave a demonstration of the versatility of the didgeridoo including the more modern sounds of the DJ and beat-boxing popular with young people.

The students were attentive and enjoyed the performance. It was a great insight into Aboriginal culture and traditions.



Mana - The Spirit of Polynesia Performed by Tony Mason

Tony Mason introduced his audience to the rich and diverse culture of Polynesia from where he grew up. The students accompanied Tony on a bright, energetic journey of his ancestry to his homeland New Zealand. They learnt a basic Maori action song and then participated in the Haka (Maori war dance). Tony also used the famous Maori poi balls to demonstrate rhythmical movements such as a helicopter and the flight of a bird. Through this creative environment of songs, chants and rhythms Tony demonstrated the deeper meaning of his culture, customs and spirit of the people of Polynesia.

Tony had a wonderful ability to communicate with the students to help foster an appreciation of his culture and to encourage them to embrace the multicultural society in which we live. His performance supported the development of learning in two key areas – creative arts and diversity.



Let's Bridge the Gap Performed by Fred Reid

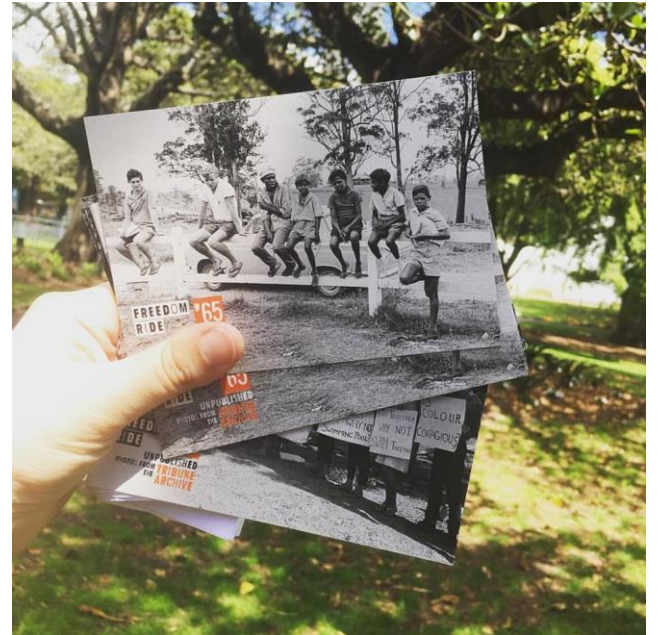
Fred Reid's mission was to bring about a better understanding of Aboriginal people and their culture. Fred comes from the Daingattie tribe of North Western NSW. Fred delivered his message in a fun, positive way. He talked of the history of his people and their traditional way of life. Fred also talked about the challenges facing Indigenous people today such as adapting to mainstream living.

The performance included dances of Australia's unique animals, the didgeridoo and its many sounds, stories from the Dreamtime, the symbolism of his body paint, traditional dress and artifacts. Aspects of traditional culture were woven throughout – clans, sacred rituals and laws governing male and female roles.

His deep respect and knowledge of Aboriginal culture, along with his gentle, humorous rapport with the students, made for a very enriching experience. The performance was tailored to the audience and participation was greatly encouraged. The performance began with an acknowledgement of country and welcome dance and concluded with question time.

School excursions have explored identity and human rights. In Semester 2, students visited the State Library of NSW for the Freedom Ride of '65 exhibit. Facilitated by the son of one of the original participants, students learnt about the civil rights movement in Australia and consolidated the

knowledge they had learned in HSIE about the event. This visit was followed by a trip to the Art Gallery of NSW where students were immersed in a study of Aboriginal art.



Students participated in hands on activities and were able to learn how Indigenous communities use art in their cultural expression.

As a school, Rivendell continues to use the *Acknowledgment to Country* at all assemblies and formal occasions.

Multicultural Education and Anti-racism

Rivendell School promotes a highly inclusive learning environment where students and their families from all cultural, religious, and language backgrounds are positively supported and encouraged to participate in all areas of the school.

Our school has an anti-racism policy supported by a trained anti-racism officer. Harmony Day was celebrated in Semester one and *Circle Time* heavily featured activities to develop student understanding of our community's diverse cultural, religious and language backgrounds.



Other school programs

Student leadership: Student Representative Council (SRC)

2015 saw the development of the Rivendell School SRC. A group of staff were allocated to support the students. Each Rivendell class elected a student to be their Student Representative, with a back-up member also elected to attend meetings if required. The newly formed SRC members explored the DoE SRC Charter and took on roles of Chairperson, Minuter, and School Executive liaison. Students kept the minutes on the school server, and also learned to use Edmodo in order to communicate with members in between meetings. Each SRC meeting commenced with a leadership game or activity to help break the ice. SRC members took on roles at parent evenings, greeting families and assisting them to their seats. They presented information at school assemblies about their roles and upcoming school events, including White Ribbon Day and Bandanna Day. Towards the end of 2015, the SRC conducted an evaluation of the Rivendell School merit/reward system and designed a new system which was more in line with other mainstream high school systems. This has a bigger emphasis on achievement rather than the reward. Future directions of the SRC: The SRC is very keen to investigate further money raising activities, gain a returned serviceman contact at a local RSL club, run an ANZAC Day service and run a Remembrance Day service. We are also hoping to support our students at SRC meetings in their mainstream schools.



Technology

Throughout this year technology has been utilised in the delivery of lessons within the learning centre and in homerooms. Students participated in activities such as the hour of code, which is an international

coding event aimed at increasing students' digital literacy and 21st Century skills.

Staff have undergone training in the use of various programs and applications. Some of this training has taken place through collegial support with more "tech savvy" working shoulder to shoulder to increase their skills. This has especially enabled greater use of the Sentral server within the school notably in roll marking and recording student's welfare. Next year reports and Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs) will be completed on Sentral.



Training has also increased staff's capacity to deliver highly engaging lessons utilising technology such as interactive whiteboards and videoing equipment. Lessons have incorporated numerous programs to engage students such as; the Adobe Creative Suite, Microsoft Office applications, Code Academy, Nearpod, mathletics, intoscience and spelladrome along with iPad applications such as movie maker, songify and garage band. Students have responded well to these programs and have demonstrated some significant gains in their engagement within the lessons. Students have also participated in online learning with staff from other settings using Adobe Connect and video conferencing equipment. This accessibility to staff has been beneficial to students as it has helped them to quickly understand concepts they may have been struggling with.

Surveys were issued to all key stakeholders within the school community using SurveyMonkey and this information has helped us to identify key areas within the school to focus on in the future. Using this feedback the school is purchasing a class set of iPads to use within the Learning Centre and during work shop times and also updating laptops and computers within the school. A BYOD policy will also be explored this year.



Personalised learning.

This year a new Personalised Learning Plan (PLP) template was developed and introduced into two of the programs within the school. The PLP review process was also reassessed and implemented. Initially when a student commences at Rivendell educational goals are established and this forms the basis of the student's PLP. Parents are informed weekly via email of their child's progress working towards these goals. Relevant staff, students and their families also meet regularly throughout their time at Rivendell School to discuss the progress towards the PLP goals. The time between these meetings varies between programs and individual students, the maximum time between meetings is six months. This information helps to provide short term goals with which students can improve their academic progress, social interaction and communication skills.

Transition /Vocational Education

Rivendell staff coordinating transition worked with students, their families and staff from all programs during 2015. They explored a variety of alternative pathways which support positive outcomes for the continuity of the student's education or future work directions.

The transition role is varied at Rivendell School and supports each individual student according to their needs. The focus is to look at a student's interests and goals and collaboratively plan transition around achieving these goals. Some students were looking to integrate into a mainstream high school while others were focused on a vocational or higher education pathway.



Ten students from programs throughout the school participated in a TAFE Horticulture course at Ryde TAFE designed for Rivendell School. During the course students learnt how to propagate plants, classify plants and how to care for gardens established at Rivendell School. All students who participated in this course were awarded a certificate of participation.

During 2015 a number of students from Rivendell School attended TAFE 'taster' courses, and TVET courses. The taster courses gave students experience in the TAFE environment and the TVET courses gave students another pathway of study in working towards a completing a certificate course and gaining their Higher School Certificate (HSC). These courses consolidated their educational pathway as well as provided them with vocational training. Two students participated in TAFE 'taster' courses.

Three students completed TVET courses in Plumbing, Human Services and Horticulture. Other students completed the 120 hour component of their TVET course and will continue during 2016 to complete the 240 hour component of their course.

In addition, five students completed preliminary and HSC studies through TAFE.

Students were provided with opportunities to engage in work experience programs. A number of students were involved in interest based work experience in retail and fitness.

Two teachers participated in the Northern Sydney Institute of TAFE Career Advisor and Transition Advisor networking days. These staff were trained in the changes that have taken place in TAFE such as Smart and Skilled and the newly reformed electronic application to TVET courses.

The Creative Arts

Excellence in a diverse range of opportunities for exploration through the Creative Arts is a feature of Rivendell School. With a range of hands-on experiences students have learnt practical skills and an alternative means of expression. Creative arts are implemented across programs, during class time and morning circle and weekly workshops. Completed artworks are taken home by the students and displayed around the school providing students with a sense of pride in their accomplishments and a dynamic school environment.



Some of our experiences and achievements in 2015 include:

Ceramic totem poles: Yaralla students created beautiful totem poles using coil and slab techniques. This group activity represents the collaboration of individual students who have worked together on the Yaralla garden.

Tie-dying and sewing: students in the Paterson program created beautiful tie-dyed and embroidered cushions for the Rivendell staffroom.

Painting and Posca Art: In addition to the Visual Art Syllabus, students in the Sulman and Paterson programs worked on individual art canvases reflecting their world and interests.

Photography: In the photography workshop students learnt about exposure in low-light conditions, made their own matchbox pinhole cameras and created cyanotype prints using traditional developing techniques.

Multimedia: Using iPads and editing software, students worked collaboratively to create a plasticine stop animation. They used humour and imagination when creating multi-layered photomontage.

Sport

In 2015, Rivendell School staff programmed and delivered Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) to years 7 – 10 students, contributing to a greater understanding of self and identity, relationships, healthy lifestyles and how to

make safe choices. This inspires students to make lifelong physical activity a habit, in connection with their local recreational clubs and facilities.



The physical education (PE) component consisted of students participating in, and developing skills in hockey, soccer, touch football, athletics and Australian Rules Football. In term four the first ever PE excursion was organised as part of the unit on volleyball. Students went to Coogee Beach where they participated in a beach volleyball skill development workshop and other beach games.

All students across the school, participated in the Premier's Sporting Challenge which enhanced their understanding of the benefits of exercise for the mind and body.

In 2015, the weekly sports award was introduced, recognising student sportsmanship, participation, effort, and enthusiasm. This has resulted in an increase of students authentically participating and feeling acknowledged during PE.

As part of Rivendell's commitment to connecting with community, an AFL workshop in collaboration with the Sydney Swans football team was hosted, linking students to a club and encouraging them to connect with their local AFL teams and clubs at a grassroots level.

Environmental and Sustainability

Rivendell School is situated on a large estate of parkland along the Parramatta River. This unique setting provides daily access to a plethora of ecosystems and natural habitats.



In 2015, Rivendell School students were immersed in a number of projects including the *ANSTO Plastics Project* and *Citizen Science: School of Ants*, which involved them in the critical appraisal and active participation of a number of environmental issues. Students made decisions for the environment that reflected their understanding of the principles of ecological sustainability. These initiatives provided students with an awareness of the issues facing the environment and helped them develop ways the school can put in place sustainable measures to protect our environment. This included participation in *Clean Up Australia Day* and research into the use of polystyrene/plastic vs paper cups.



A number of programs in the school have created sustainable gardens which provide food for the weekly food technology program. The development of each garden has required students to research the harvesting season of desired vegetables and herbs, insect control.