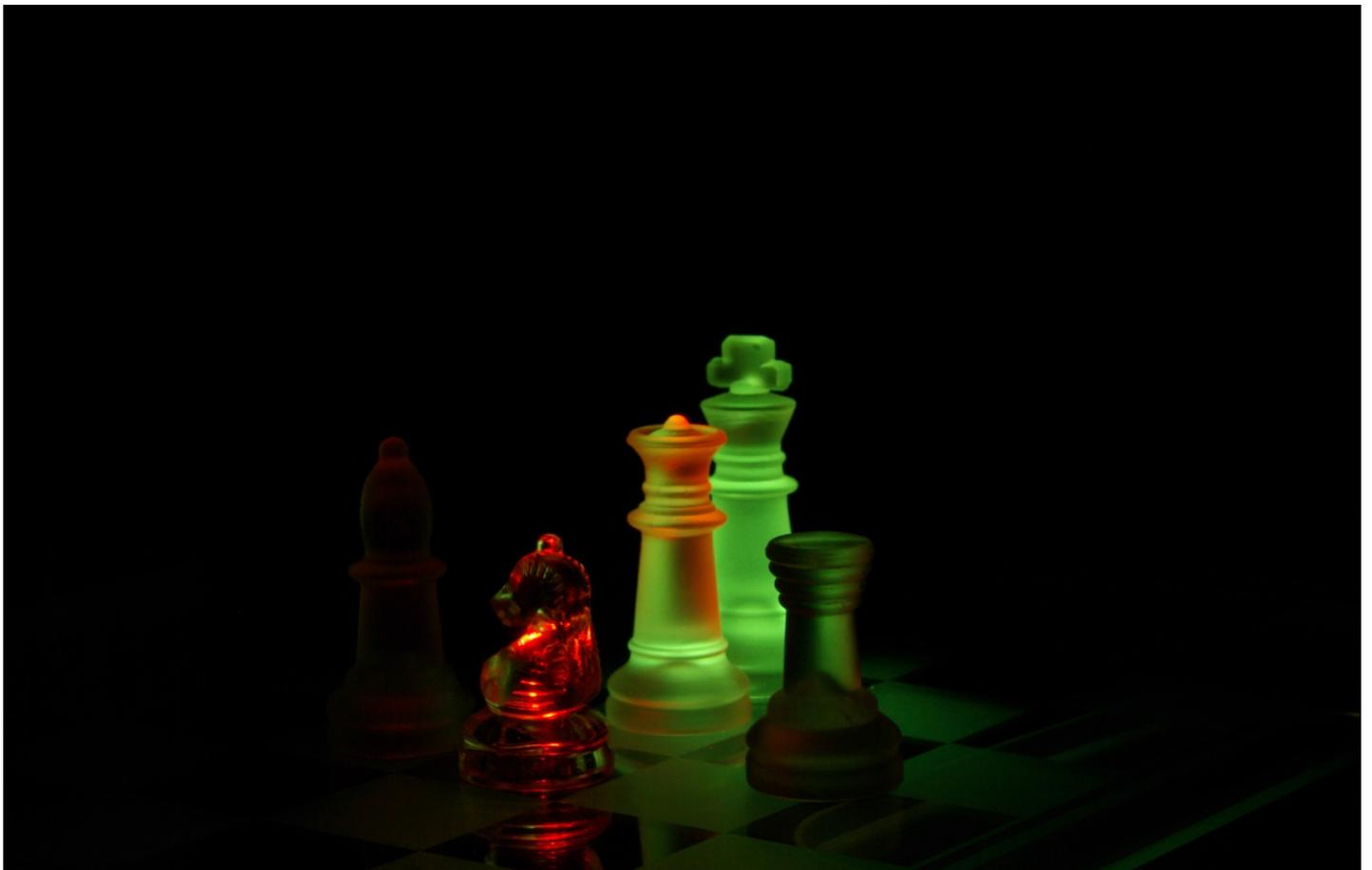


# 2014 Annual School Report Highlands School



## **The school at a glance**

### **School Context**

Established in 2002 Highlands School is intended to be an intervention program for students with extreme behavioural difficulties. It currently comprises two discreet programs. In the “behaviour” program it is not necessary for students to have a diagnosis of a disability rather, referring schools need to have exhausted all resources in dealing with the referred student. Some students in this program have been diagnosed with Oppositional Defiant Disorder or Conduct Disorder. This program has three classes and incorporates the founding structure of the school. In 2013 a multicategorical class was formed at Highlands School. This program was extended to two classes in 2014. In reality the students in these classes are generally drawn from the support classes in the local area.

Students, once at Highlands School, are supported through the development of individual behavioural and academic plans as a means of providing the required “time out” to allow the students to get themselves back on track.

On successful completion of their programs all students are preferably integrated into their school of origin or another school. Acceptable alternatives include full time employment or full time education such as TAFE.

## **Student attendance profile**

The minority of students that still find it difficult to break their pattern of non-attendance are case managed with the focus on engagement. In extreme cases the Home School Liaison Service is brought in. In reality this occurred in only a few cases in 2014. The students attendance records are significantly improved on previous enrolments. Attendance records are maintained in accordance with departmental policies and are included in departmental evaluations.



## **Principal's message**

2014 has been a pivotal year for Highlands School as the two programs seek to find the balance between the individual needs of the programs and the degree to which they can realistically combine. It has involved growth from all concerned and I am pleased to say that the school has accommodated these changes well. I believe one of the foundational school philosophies of “Programs fit students, not students fit programs” has been responsible for the successful growth. With 75% of the “Multicat” staff changing for 2015 I would like to take this opportunity of thanking the staff for their tireless work in establishing

the program. Clearly there will be more significant change in 2015.

Ross Bowey

### **Significant programs and initiatives**

On entering Highlands School the majority of students believe their future chances of gaining a job or a career are at best nebulous. A driving element of the philosophy of Highlands School is that all education is about employment.



Research has clearly identified a link between student perception and behaviour. Highlands School's response to this assertion has been to develop a holistic culture as an agent of change accessible to all students. An advantage of such a process is that it combines all educational elements (academic, social, emotional, behavioural, psychological, cognitive and developmental) into a coherent program for each student. Whilst the culture of Highlands School is "greater than the sum of its parts" individual initiatives are easily identified and evaluated.

### **VET**

The prognosis for finding meaningful employment is a vexed issue for many of our students. Only too aware of the

link between poor performance at school and lessened employment opportunities students have expressed, in a number of ways, their lowered expectations for finding a job let alone a career. Gaining industry recognised accreditation, especially if it involves external assessment, allows the students the opportunity to break the cycle of failure through the development of increased self esteem, self confidence and self worth. An example of this is when all students and staff combine to undertake the senior first aid course through All Aid. Staff also provide opportunity for students to gain work skills in the areas of metal work, aquaculture, agriculture, hydroponics and wood work.



### **Social Skills/Sport**

The development of competent social skills is fundamental to employment. Achievement of these skills by the students is a daily activity using sport as a relevant delivery system. Depowering the competitive nature of both games employed and the students themselves creates a pro social environment where decisions and consequences are demonstrably linked. A feature of these games is the staff

joining in and participating. This allows informal instruction regarding social skills and interaction and is able to give rise to formal lessons where required. Role modelling appropriate behaviour by staff also allows the students a social benchmark by which they may evaluate their skills.

### **Outdoor Recreation**

Students with behavioural difficulties respond positively to programs that best meet their needs. It seems that active programs where the students are challenged provide an environment in which the students can concentrate on themselves and their abilities. Involvement in outdoor pursuits takes advantage of this egocentricity to challenge each individual to revisit the notions of self responsibility, decisions and their consequences, goals (short, medium and long), problem solving and the importance of solid social skills. To this end many excursions, activity days and camps were conducted throughout the year.



### **Student Welfare**

To ensure efficient delivery of quality welfare programs briefing and debriefing meetings are held daily. Morning briefing meetings provide

sound communication practices between staff. At these meetings daily needs of all students are discussed with amendments being made to the program. Debriefing meetings, held at the conclusion of each day, evaluate the progress of each student and also the effectiveness of the daily school program. Recommendations from this meeting inform the structure of the following day and are ratified at the next morning's briefing meeting. A feature of the afternoon meeting is the focus on the negative and positive aspects of each of the students and the development of their program. All staff seek to model fairness, honesty, respect and support in all their daily interactions with students. It is clearly expected that the students will reciprocate these expectations.



### **Behaviour Focus Website**

Highlands School manages troubled and troubled students well. Resourcing staff with knowledge, tools, information, concepts, etc is paramount to success in the classroom. After years of collecting and collating the website moved from being a cumbersome webboard to an easy to navigate website. There has been an instant acceptance by other departmental staff of this ESES project with, at one stage, over 16 000 hits in a

month. This has been most satisfying as the only promotion of this facility has been “word of mouth”. With more ESES funding the promotion of the website should see a greater uptake by our DEC colleagues.



### **Curriculum**

Delivery of curriculum continues to evolve at Highlands School. More students than ever before, in the behaviour program, have elected to undertake work through Distance Education. As a consequence of the operating levels of the students in the “Multicat” program the students are focusing on literacy and numeracy.

### **Staff**

Carl D. Glickman in his paper entitled “Developmental Supervision” contends a professional teacher demonstrates a high level of commitment and a high level of abstraction which is the ability to clarify and discuss the issues as well as the ability to implement changes using well thought out strategies. All teachers at Highlands School are mature teachers with many years of experience across a broad range of settings. Enthusiasm for the school by its staff is a key ingredient in

Highlands School success. It is pleasing to be part of a school where all staff are categorised in the highest level of Glickman’s scale: professional.

### **Professional learning**

Professional learning will continue to play a major role in the continuing evolving culture of Highlands School. As courses become available staff are expected to engage in them.



### **Staff Retention**

There has been minimal staff turnover at Highlands School this year. Obtaining high quality casual staff for all positions continues to be no problem. In fact there are waiting lists for casual positions at Highlands School at all levels of employment.

### **Staff Information**

The staff of Highlands School are acknowledged as being of very high calibre. This is consistent with evaluations of previous patrons who also commented specifically on the qualities of the staff at all levels

### **Staff establishment**

Position	Number
Principal	1
Deputy Principal(s)	
Assistant Principal(s)	1
Head Teachers	
Classroom Teachers	4.8
Teacher of Emotional Disabilities	
Teacher of Mild Intellectual Disabilities	
Teacher of Reading Recovery	
Support Teacher Learning Assistance	
Teacher Librarian	
Teacher of ESL	
Counsellor	0.6
School Administrative & Support Staff (SASS)	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>13.4</b>

In 2014 there were no indigenous Staff members employed at the school.



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

Qualifications	% of staff
Degree or Diploma	100
Postgraduate	40



## 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:	30/11/2014
<b>Income</b>	<b>\$</b>
Balance brought forward	207 456.36
Global funds	100 108.09
Tied funds	69 940.49
School & community sources	6 352.36
Interest	5 783.26
Trust receipts	477.65
Canteen	0.00
<b>Total income</b>	<b>390 118.21</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Teaching & learning	
Key learning areas	10 394.71
Excursions	972.74
Extracurricular dissections	4 881.28
Library	0.00
Training & development	3 939.55
Tied funds	76 840.46
Casual relief teachers	37 231.62
Administration & office	25 496.42
School-operated canteen	0.00
Utilities	21 062.69
Maintenance	4 141.41
Trust accounts	127.00
Capital programs	0.00
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>185 087.88</b>
<b>Balance carried forward</b>	<b>205 030.33</b>



## School performance 2014

Determining success in behaviour schools has always been problematic. The staff of the school have formulated the view that success

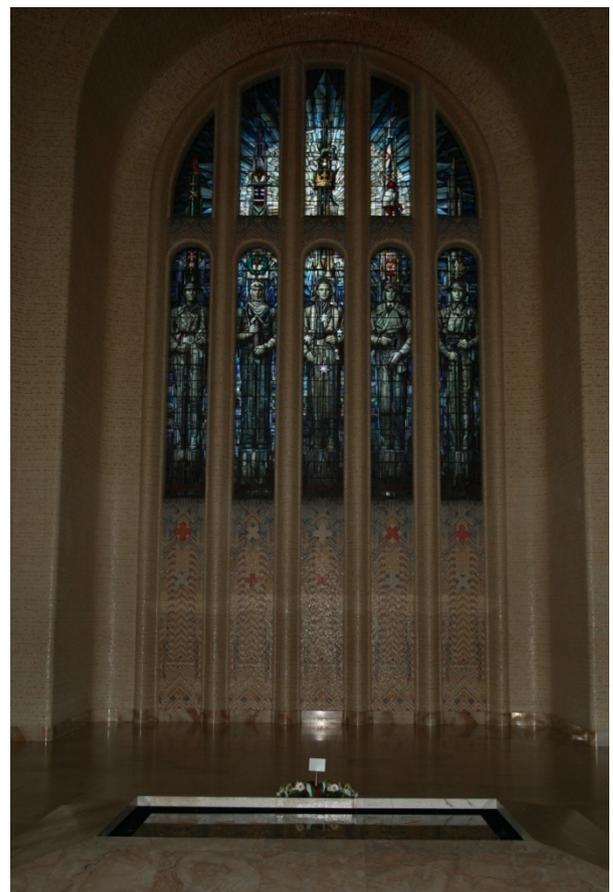
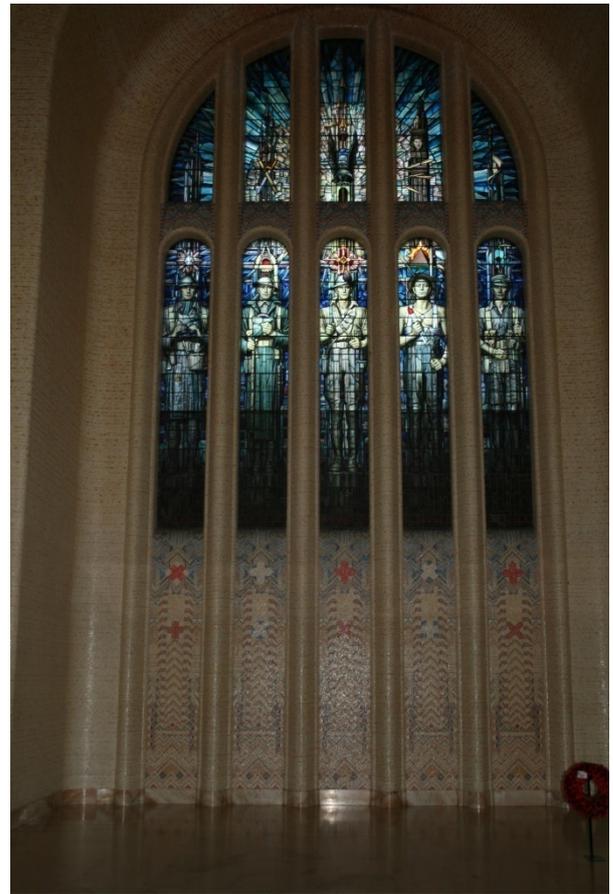
for our students is best measured as to whether our students are in full time employment, full time education or full time training two years after completing their time at Highlands School. The difficulty is that it is difficult to monitor our students after they have left school. Informal networks and anecdotal evidence continue to confirm the school operates successfully. A significant number of students who return to the school freely admit that Highlands School has a tremendous positive effect on their lives. This is the purpose of education is it not?

### **Target 2015**

The school has undergone some refurbishment in 2014. Highlands School now has the facilities to accommodate three “Multicat” classes. It is hoped that in 2015 the school will be allocated another class. In any event the development of the balance between individual, unit and school programs will be extended.

### **School contact information**

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School Code: 5576





## The Values of Highlands School

- Resourceful
- Candour
- Devotion
- Curiosity
- Independence
- Comradeship
- Ancestry
- Patriotism
- Chivalry
- Loyalty
- Coolness
- Control
- Audacity
- Endurance
- Decision