2008 Annual School Report
Richmond River High School

NSW Public Schools – Leading the way
Messages

Principal's message

It gives me great pleasure to provide each family with a copy of this 2008 Richmond River High School Annual Report. Its contents outline the outstanding achievements of so many of our students, all of whom are to be congratulated.

A review of the 2008 school year showed times of significant change to our physical resources as a result of continuing storm repairs which included new roofing, paintwork and carpet in many areas which has made for a more presentable, safer and structurally sound set of buildings. Work on our new agricultural storage shed continued while our science labs were demolished and a completely new design was started that incorporated new technology infrastructure.

To enhance student engagement in learning, our school committed funding to the installation of seven interactive whiteboard technologies which complemented the video conferencing facility which connects our students with students learning anywhere. Through these innovative programs, together with ongoing staff professional learning, we expect student outcomes to improve and classroom management issues to decrease following ongoing quality teaching practices.

The excellent opportunities for students to experience various academic, sporting, social and cultural events, competitions and programs would not have been possible without the commitment, passion and professionalism of our teaching and support staff. Their continual engagement in leadership learning and enhancing customer service has seen Richmond River High School become the school of choice in the Lismore community which we can all feel very proud of.

A caring school of excellence that is growing rapidly cannot afford to rest on our achievements. As such, we have exciting plans to embed the positive behaviours we expect to see displayed in being a Respectful, Responsible, Honest and Safe student in all school settings through explicit teaching in roll call and beyond. Also we are introducing cultural and literacy studies in Year 8 with the Rock and Water program to be delivered to Year 7.

Achieving above average results in statewide and national testing allows us to measure improvements in levels of student success compared to regional and state averages. Our school continues to nurture this through extension and enrichment programs for Reach High students, personal interest projects for Year 8 in 2009, mentoring and tutorial support for senior students along with personal best plans.

Finally, a special thank you to everyone in our learning community, including our volunteer readers, canteen workers and local business personnel who have supported our school in any way throughout 2008. In this regard the support of our P&C, parents and caregivers generally is always very much 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.

Neville Ryan

P&C message

The Richmond River High School Parents and Citizens’ Association has an enviable relationship with the school executive and its staff. Not only are the views of the parent body encouraged, they are valued and implemented. The P&C plays an active role in all policy development and review, interview panels for school appointments and allocation of funds. We work in conjunction with the school’s management team to resolve issues associated with maintenance, air conditioning, grant applications and school improvements.

The P&C supports a praise scheme to improve student progress and behaviour as well as a merit scheme for excellent student achievement via canteen vouchers. The P&C provides financial support for all Key Learning Areas (KLAs), hire of an air conditioned venue for the HSC and recognition of outstanding achievements of Year 12 students through scholarships which are presented at their formal graduation.

This year, after extensive consultation, our parents decided to move uniform sales out of the canteen and into a retail outlet run by our existing local manufacturer. The P&C is paid a commission on sales, hence retaining the financial benefits of uniform sales while avoiding the often unforeseen issues which uniform sales present.

Our parents and carers are clearly connected to our school in many ways. Parents participated in a number of school routines such as classroom and library assistance, excursions, socials, tutoring students experiencing difficulties in reading and mathematics, acting as scribes in exams, assisting at sports carnivals, open nights and student orientations, transporting students to out of school activities, as well as assisting with drama and musical performances. Meeting numbers have improved in 2008 with increasing numbers of new parents. This is a very positive sign for the future.

Cheryl Amor
Student representative's message

The Student Representative Council (SRC) is committed to the promotion and demonstration of visible student leadership. This, in turn, allows the SRC to provide practical support for our core values of student success, excellent opportunities, innovative programs and quality teaching. For example, the SRC provides student voice in the development of school policies (innovative programs), SRC sponsorship of student school representatives (student success), funding of improvements to the physical school environment (excellent opportunities) and the purchase of teaching resources (quality teaching).

Our co-presidents, Emily Connor and Ashley Naclerio, chaired formal assemblies while remaining SRC members are rotated to chair weekly whole school assemblies. In all of their efforts, SRC members act as positive role models for all students.

The SRC is an enthusiastic supporter of the excellent opportunities provided through interschool meetings. Alex Jones (Year 10) was elected to attend the 2008 State SRC Conference at Vision Valley in Sydney. Alex acquitted herself admirably and brought back fresh ideas from around the state. Further, six students attended the Regional SRC Camp at Mebbin Springs where they were entertained with diverse outdoor activities and motivated by visiting leadership specialists.

SRC students were involved in an innovative program regarding school uniform and provided models to demonstrate changes to uniform in 2009. The SRC are still in the process of drafting a staff dress code to ensure adult role modelling.

A school social each term provided the SRC with the means to sponsor a variety of avenues for student success in representative sport, debating, Tournament of the Minds, music camps, CAPA excursions and the Global Leadership Convention. These funds were also used to purchase teaching resources and beautify the school environment, underpinning our commitment to quality teaching.

The SRC continued to provide ushers for significant school events such as the Year 12 Formal, Open Night Expo and representatives to talk to Year 6 about secondary school life.

The student body, led by the SRC, maintained very strong community participation through the Anzac Day march, the Red Cross Doorknock, the Cancer Council, the Salvation Army Red Shield Appeal, the Rescue Helicopter appeal and Remembrance Day.

The SRC continued to enjoy a strong, positive relationship with the senior executive pertaining to the school environment, assemblies and school representation in the community.

2008 has been an enjoyable and busy year. We look forward to even greater success in 2009.

Sheryl Williamson

Student Representative Council Executive, 2008.

School context

Student information

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

Student enrolment profile

Our student enrolments have grown consistently since 2005. In particular, there was an increase between 2007 and 2008 of 59 students, contributed to again, in no small part, by a substantial Year 7 intake of 149. The larger numbers of students we now have in our Years 7, 8 (168) and 9 (129) cohorts continue to reflect a pleasing degree of community confidence in the core values of quality teaching, innovative programs, excellent opportunities and student success which are reflected across our school.

School Enrolments

![School Enrolments Graph]
As was the case in 2007, the number of girls in our school again exceeded boys, this year by 13. This has become one of the many contributing factors to the comprehensive and inclusive nature of our school.

Student attendance profile
Richmond River High School continues to ensure student success through attendance rates among its Years 7 to 10 cohorts which are on par with average attendance rates for schools across the North Coast Region. It should be noted that, overall, the improvement in our Years 7 to 10 attendance rates have been maintained through the ongoing effectiveness of our swipe card attendance system. This innovative program is an example of our effective partnership with our community, by which a head teacher closely monitors attendance rates and fractional truancy through timely contact with parents and carers where necessary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years 7 to 10 Attendance</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>84.5</td>
<td>87.4</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>87.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>87.8</td>
<td>88.3</td>
<td>88.6</td>
<td>88.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>90.1</td>
<td>89.9</td>
<td>90.1</td>
<td>90.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Attendance rates among our senior students, particularly among our Year 12 cohort, reflect our ongoing emphasis on innovative programs which contribute to student success. The hard work of their year adviser, our community liaison officer and our school executive has seen the implementation of personal learning plans focusing on increasing student and parent/carer awareness of the importance of regular attendance and responsible time management.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years 11 and 12 Attendance</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>85.1</td>
<td>88.0</td>
<td>87.7</td>
<td>86.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>88.0</td>
<td>88.1</td>
<td>87.6</td>
<td>88.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>89.5</td>
<td>89.7</td>
<td>89.6</td>
<td>89.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For a Year 12 cohort which has struggled to match the levels of academic achievement and improvement of preceding cohorts, attendance levels have, consequently, only marginally declined compared to the previous year, and to average attendance levels across the region.

Retention to Year 12
The retention rate of students completing their School Certificate in 2006 going on to complete their Higher School Certificate in 2008 experienced a decline (3.5%) relative to the corresponding 2007 figure, but remained close to the average of healthy figures from preceding years.

![Proportion Staying On (SC to HSC)](image)

This has occurred within the broader context of a similar decline in retention being experienced across our region (3.4%), and, to a lesser extent, across the state (0.5%).

Post-school destinations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University (attending/accepted)</td>
<td>19 (31%)</td>
<td>8 (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAFE (attending fulltime)</td>
<td>6 (9.8%)</td>
<td>3 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working fulltime (including apprenticeships, traineeships)</td>
<td>20 (32.8%)</td>
<td>9 (14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking work fulltime (including applications for apprenticeships)</td>
<td>6 (9.8%)</td>
<td>4 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown (including undecided)</td>
<td>8 (13%)</td>
<td>38 (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (including overseas, deferred university)</td>
<td>2 (3.2%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage currently engaged in fulltime study and or education</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures in the above table are based on the 25 responses received by the school, from a total of 72 Year 12 students. It should be noted therefore that the adjusted figure for survey respondents only - in terms of further full time study - is a high 80%.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Principal(s)</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Teachers</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>38.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Emotional Disabilities</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Teacher Learning Assistance</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Librarian</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Careers</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsellor</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>54.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the continued growth in student numbers, our school again experienced an overall growth in teaching staff numbers. This increase was comprised of an additional Head Teacher and an increase to classroom teacher positions by 2.085.

Further, as indicated below, our support staff entitlement also increased slightly with a 0.4 increase in Administration Officer numbers.

We are certainly confident that these ongoing increases to staffing entitlements will allow us to continue to offer programs which reflect our core values and benefit the learning of our students.

Position – Support Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support Staff Manager</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Administrative Manager</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Administrative Officers</td>
<td>7.682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Assistant</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal Education Officer</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Assistant</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Aide Special (ED)</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12.282</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Staff retention

The traditional stability of our staff continued and was consolidated in 2008. We welcomed a new Deputy Principal and an additional member of our school executive in the form of a Head Teacher PD/H/PE. In addition our school was appointed four new classroom teachers, one of whom was a specialist agricultural teacher.

Two of our teachers retired at the end of the year and the third was transferred to another school on compassionate grounds.

As always we remain confident that all of our staff appointments will substantially contribute to the school’s ongoing capacity to deliver our core values in all teaching and learning activities.

Staff attendance

Staff have access to leave entitlements such as sick leave. In 2008 the average daily attendance rate for staff, as determined by the Department, was a high 96.2%. This figure reflects the professionalism and commitment of our staff to our core educational values. It is also a reflection of a healthy level of morale given the ongoing high standard of working conditions and collegiality within the school.

Teacher qualifications

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>% of staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree or Diploma</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Financial summary

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of financial summary:</th>
<th>30/11/2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward</td>
<td>458 404.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
<td>539 567.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>362 553.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
<td>244 265.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>36 675.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust receipts</td>
<td>32 224.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canteen</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total income</td>
<td>1 673 691.84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Expenditure</strong></th>
<th>$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching &amp; learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key learning areas</td>
<td>128 347.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excursions</td>
<td>84 683.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extracurricular dissections</td>
<td>46 359.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>8 996.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training &amp; development</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>320 662.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual relief teachers</td>
<td>127 792.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration &amp; office</td>
<td>136 393.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-operated canteen</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>74 446.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td>131 982.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust accounts</td>
<td>30 197.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital programs</td>
<td>37 079.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total expenditure</td>
<td>1 126 939.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balance carried forward</strong></td>
<td>546 751.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Our canteen is operated by the P&C and this accounts for the zero income and expenditure on the school accounts.

Likewise training and expenditure is paid from Priority Schools and Professional Learning tied funding programs.
A full copy of the school's 2008 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the School Council and/or the parent body. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

**School performance 2008**

Our school takes great pride in its mission statement as a *caring school of excellence*. This is certainly reflected in the quality and diversity of our achievements.

**Achievements**

**Arts**

In 2008 the school continued its proud tradition of student success and a high degree of creativity in the arts. The school continued to provide excellent opportunities for students with a passion for the arts at community and at state level.

Photography remained a popular student elective. It is unfortunate, therefore, that opportunities to demonstrate outstanding student work in photography were restricted in 2008 because of fewer local, state and national exhibition opportunities. Nonetheless, Year 12 student Genevieve Humphries was awarded a major prize in the national “Thanks Dad” photographic competition. Meanwhile, Year 10 student Taylor Moses gained second prize in the Bentley Art Prize.

**Photography**

Award winning photo by Genevieve Humphries

2008 again saw the outstanding work of music students and their teachers recognised at a local and regional level. Luke Rosten (Year 9) won the North Coast Composition Competition for the second year running. Both Luke and Nathan Haycock were invited to perform at the Principals’ Conference and at Education Week at Salt, Kingscliff, where they received much acclaim. Music students and their teachers played a key role in formal assemblies and the school's open night.

Drama continued to grow in the school. Talented Year 11 student Emma Hofstetter was chosen from a strong field to attend the State Drama Camp. Students attended a variety of theatrical productions on the North Coast, in Brisbane and Sydney. The publicity design work of talented Year 11 student Carissa Halliday was selected for promotion of the North Coast DramaWorks performance. The highly successful Theatresports competition continued with resounding success. A Year 11 performance of the play “Mr Wookie”, written by Emma Hofstetter, was warmly received by its community audience. Throughout the year, students attended a variety of workshops including the Bell Shakespeare workshop.

The annual CAPA senior excursion to Sydney was again a tremendous success. Students enjoyed a variety of theatre productions, workshops and art galleries. The highlight of this year’s trip was attending Opera Australia’s production of “La Boheme”. Students also enjoyed meeting with a variety of actors, directors, designers and artists.

An impressive display of HSC visual art, photography and music was again showcased at the “Amplified” evening, attended by many parents and community members. Richmond River High School students also played a key role in the Lismore Lantern Parade.

Our performing arts students staged some excellent performances such as the Year 9 Musical Theatre Night, Senior Drama Night and the much acclaimed Year 9 Music Performance Night. Year 9 students also produced “Lockie Leonard, Human Torpedo” as the annual River Theatre Company production.

**Sport**

Our school takes pride in providing students with an enormous breadth of *excellent opportunities* in sport. This applies to both our regular school sport, conducted during 2008 on Wednesday afternoons, but also to sports carnivals and representative sport. Our staff recognise and support the importance of sport as a pathway to *student success*.

The Combined High Schools (CHS) knock-out competitions give students access to a wide range of sports and a chance for them to embrace the concept of teamwork and caring for each other. Our school community embraces a strong ethic that sport is to be enjoyed by all and that winning isn’t the most important thing. Staff encourage students to be humble in winning and gracious in defeat. Our teaching staff volunteer for roles as coaches, managers, trainers and provide classroom support when teams travel away to venues. In 2008 we provided zone and regional managers in volleyball, touch football, beach
volleyball, soccer, softball, baseball, hockey, basketball and cross country. With out this unique characteristic our school would not produce the many marvellous results on the field that it does, in turn providing excellent opportunities for so many of our students, who reflect the diversity of our school community, to experience sport at higher levels.

Our annual sport awards ceremony, which celebrates student success in sport, is a very popular part of the school calendar. The format of the awards includes musical performances by our talented students and, this year, a prominent guest speaker in the form of Mr Stan Gilchrist, father of former Australian test cricketer Adam Gilchrist and a slideshow of the year’s achievements. Over 160 students received recognition for their efforts in sport.

**Sport award recipients with Mr Stan Gilchrist**

Ashley Neclerio of Year 12 was awarded the Pierre De Courbetin Olympic Award for Sporting Excellence, and travelled to the Olympic Stadium in Homebush to receive his certificate. Ashley also won the Senior Male Sportsperson award with participation in zone and regional rugby league, zone touch football and zone athletics while also representing the school in open boys touch football, beach volleyball, basketball, rugby league, touch football and boys netball.

Senior Female Sportsperson of the Year went to Maxine Amor, also of Year 12, who participated in open girls volleyball, open and zone basketball, open touch football, open soccer and was athletics age champion.

Carlie Walker was awarded the Junior Female Sportsperson award performing in swimming, open basketball, open volleyball, zone, regional and state softball, being chosen in the CHS squad and open netball.

Jonty Miller of Year 10 received the Junior Male Sportsperson trophy for his prowess and commitment in zone and regional soccer, athletics, volleyball and beach volleyball.

Along with these major achievements, seventeen of our students were acknowledged in the form of Sporting Excellence Medallions. These students represented the school in up to ten sports throughout the year. Congratulations are extended to Elsa Mangan, Jay Mihaly, Nikkila Goulding, Max Beresford Goodluck, Jess Powers, Alannah Rosten, Elliott Black, Daniel Bow, Ruby Edwards, Nakita Anderson, Ruby Morris, Sarah Small, Genevieve Humphries, Brendan Gillespie, Kelly Bryant, Claire Stead and Zach Wilson.

Our school achieved notable success in team sports, particularly in beach volleyball where our team, consisting of Cameron Clark, Jonty Miller, Brendan Gillespie, Matt Wyatt and Jackson Maher, became the Senior Boys North Coast Champions for the first time.

We also had students who were placed in North Coast representative teams in athletics (Kelsey Duncan, Shaun Heath, Nikkila Goulding, Jess Powers, Alannah Rosten and Ruby Morris), cross country (Jay Mihaly and Jess Powers), Australian rules (Jay Mihaly), girls cricket (Tegan Clark), baseball (Brendan Gillespie), boys soccer (Jonty Miller), softball (Carlie Walker) and volleyball (Tegan Clark).

A number of regular sporting carnivals are a highly anticipated feature of our school calendar. As always, Year 7 took part in a range of sports at the annual Gala Day at Evans River K-12 School. Our three school carnivals of swimming, cross country and athletics were very well supported with over 75% of students attending and participating. The champion house for swimming was Hewitt with Gilchrist gaining second place. In athletics Gilchrist was the crowned champion with Thomas being runner up.

**Student Success at Regional, State and National Levels**

**Excellent Opportunities for Student Success**

Once again, there was much to celebrate in 2008 in terms of our students taking up an enormous
range of excellent opportunities in order to maintain our school’s fine tradition of student success in so many different fields. The scope and quality of these achievements is, in turn, a reflection of the innovative programs which our school offers, demonstrating the obvious link not only between curricular and extra curricular learning experiences, but also our core values and what we are able to achieve within and beyond our school.

**Major Awards and Achievements**

One of our students, Eleanor Fleetwood of Year 12, was awarded the Minister for Education Award for all round student achievement. This is the highest state award for student achievement, and marks our seventh award since 2002. In an outstanding year of achievement, Eleanor also won the regional Zonta Young Women in Public Affairs competition to continue a virtual stranglehold of Richmond River High School winners in this competition.

**Eleanor Fleetwood winner of Regional Zonta Young Women in Public Affairs competition**

In other awards, Darcy Garlick Kelly, Danielle Maher, Hayley Larsen, Johanna Qualmann, Juliette Maher and Ariel Cameron all received the North Coast Region Awards for all round academic, leadership and citizenship achievements. Ariel, Johanna and Juliette also won essay prizes from Southern Cross University. The University also awarded Gitiika Gunther, Josh Creighton, Bonnie Sevil and Lisa Cameron industry scholarships worth $15,000 for their studies in 2008 and beyond.

Of commendable note this year were Genevieve Humphries who won the People’s Choice Award in the national “Thanks Dad” photo competition, Jessica Gooley, who was a finalist in the North Coast TAFE Trainee of the Year Award, Tara Cartwright and Cielle Marchal who were finalists in the Australia Wool Awards and Emma Light who was awarded second place in the Sydney Writers’ Festival Year 7 category.

**Creating Opportunities**

Several students certainly took one of our school’s core values, excellent opportunities to heart, creating for themselves further pathways to success. Adam Keys won the right to attend the National Science forum in Canberra, along with a place in the Rotary Science Program at Bond University. Emma Hofstetter continued our fine tradition in the creative and performing arts through her selection to attend the State Drama Camp. Additionally, Jessica Mitchell was selected to attend the National UBS Finance Academy in Sydney.

**Adam Keys attended National Science Forum in Canberra**

In the performing arts, Haley Larsen earnt the opportunity to perform in the NSW Choir at the Sydney Opera House and the Schools Spectacular in Sydney. Meanwhile, Years 9 and 10 music students were selected to perform at the Education Week concert in Kingscliff and at the State High Schools Principals’ Conference.

**Local and Regional Success**

Within our school, a number of innovative programs provided further pathways to student success. Future Year 7 students from our feeder primary schools participated in a Numeracy Activity Day and an English Enrichment Day. Students in Years 10 and 11 participated in a Financial Literacy Assessment program and a “Hip Pocket” Financial Literacy Seminar. Meanwhile Years 11 and 12 Metal and Engineering students designed and created resources for the school including metal display units for the annual Open Night, metal lighting brackets for our heritage listed River Theatre and discus and shot put trolleys for our PDHPE department.

The annual Lismore Show provides a rich and traditional setting for student success. Under the leadership of our TAS teachers, Luke Woodward,
Jenny Zobel and Toni Ellis, senior students of Primary Industries, Textiles and Design and Food Technology achieved tremendous success. Our school again took out first prize in the Led Steer Competition, with Kelly Bryant awarded best steer leader in Rural Youth. Further, our school was honoured again as the overall champion school for the excellent standard of entries in the textiles, food technology and wood technology sections – many of which gained first place.

**Kelly Bryant best steer leader in Rural Youth**

**State and National Success**

Our Tournament of the Minds teams again performed with distinction. Both our ‘Social Science’ and ‘Language and Literature’ teams gained second place overall in the regional showcase event. Under the leadership of Colin Blake, our Year 11 legal studies students participated in the Mock Trial competition against other schools, presided over by representatives of the legal community.

Our school also fielded debating teams in all age sections, with both our Year 7 and Year 8 teams becoming zone champions, narrowly missing out on their respective regional titles. In addition, we were well represented in public speaking competitions by Johanna Qualmann, Twoey Jones and Emerald Moon. Further, our students were awarded for best story and best photograph in the Newspapers in Education competition.

Teachers from across our faculties encourage students to enter a range of state wide competitions, all with tremendous results. Students entered the University of NSW Competitions in English, Writing and Spelling, gaining a total of 7 high distinctions, 7 distinctions and 22 credits. In mathematics a Year 8 team won the Northern Zone Maths Olympiad against a strong field of public and private schools, while our Year 9 team finished third in the Gifted and Talented Maths Quest. At a national level, our students gained 4 distinctions and 14 credits in the Australian Mathematics Challenge, with a similar result in the Australian Mathematics Competition.

Our Human Society and Its Environment (HSIE) faculty organised student participation in the Australian and NSW Geography Competitions, gaining a total of 6 high distinctions, 8 distinctions and 20 credits. Year 10 students were also involved in the NSW History Teachers' Association History Competition, gaining 2 high distinctions, 4 distinctions and 9 credits. Students were also encouraged to participate in the Australian Stock Market Competition, in which they had to manage an initial portfolio of $50 000 over three months.

Not to be outdone, our Science faculty encouraged participation among junior students in the Rio Tinto Big Science Competition, resulting in 4 distinctions and 8 credits. The STAWA online science competition saw the involvement of ‘Reach High’ students from all year groups, competing against schools across the country. Further, the Rotary Club sponsored a whole day challenge for Year 10 ‘Reach High’ students, competing against eight other North Coast high schools in a range of activities designed by the Newcastle University Science Education Faculty. Students were involved in activities such as designing hover craft, moon buggies and so on.

**Leadership**

It has been a year of outstanding success in numerous leadership and personal development programs. Three students – Eleanor Fleetwood, Johanna Qualmann and Hayley Larsen won the Australian Defence Force Scholarships awarded for leadership. Many other students demonstrated their leadership by organising forums addressing climate change at Southern Cross University, or were part of the organising committee for the Regional ‘Steps to the Future’ forum which invites famous Australians to inspire and motivate our youth.

**Alex Jones**

at State SRC Conference
Leadership potential was acknowledged when Danielle Maher was chosen for the Rotary Regional Leadership Youth Transition Seminar, while Alex Jones represented the Lismore District at the State SRC Conference. Further, Johanna Qualmann was the North Coast Regional Representative on the NSW Student Equity Advisory Team. She also presented a paper at the Byron Bay Human Rights Conference. Meanwhile, six Year 10 students attended the World Vision Global Leadership Convention at the Gold Coast.

The depth of our innovative programs which enhance the personal development and growth of students was clearly evidenced through:

- The Year 8 ‘Rock and Water’ program
- The Year 8 motivational camp
- The Southern Cross University R-Risk program for Year 11 students
- The ‘Love Bites’ program for Year 10 students
- First Aid courses for Years 11 and 12
- Peer mentor training for Year 9 at SCU
- Deadly Days motivational workshops conducted at TAFE for Aboriginal students.

The Student Equity Group now includes students from each year and has input into school policy and decision making. The group has been trained in advocacy and has taken on the project of Rainbow Day in 2008 and 2009. Rainbow Day is about sexual diversity and acceptance of difference and is closely related to the ‘Safe Place’ project. This has provided leadership opportunities for students and an opportunity for students to participate in a valuable way in our school community. This year a new leadership and citizenship award system has been developed by a task force team and the student equity committee reviewed the award system and provided valuable feedback to the team from a student perspective.

Students involved have gained in confidence, have participated as members of the PSP committee, spoken on assembly and have coordinated whole school events. The students attended and presented at an International Human Rights Conference in Byron Bay. One of these, Johanna Qualmann, was a member of SEAT this year and has gained valuable insights and confidence in terms of being involved in equity issues and the local community.

The students in the Equity Group organised a day at school to raise awareness of the issues associated with differences in sexual orientation. The students used the advocacy training they have received from the Northern Rivers legal services and invited guest speakers and organised forums to educate students in an enjoyable way. This was well received by the school community and the students are hoping to follow this strategy with the ‘Safe Place’ promotion. Video conferencing facilities will be used in the future to link the RRHS Student Equity Group to students in other schools.

2008 saw the establishment of the Global Citizenship Leadership Group at RRHS. Not only was this group centred on raising awareness of global issues in relation to poverty, health, education and human trafficking, but also hoped to focus the students on positive action. The group has been developed by Justine Thomson and Bev Gray and has been a useful addition to our school leadership structure. Visual presentations on assembly have been important in the education of our students.

Our Leo Club has grown in strength in 2008 under the guidance of Olivier Maxted and Paula Moverley. Students involved have taken on leadership roles in raising funds and in speaking on assembly and running meetings. This club is a vital link to the community and is assisted by the mentor appointed by the sponsoring Lions Club. In 2008 the Leo Club has raised funds for the school’s Rainbow Fund to assist students who may need some financial assistance to achieve their goals.
Our school community is committed to a widely acknowledged set of expected positive behaviours (see ‘Respect and Responsibility’), these being Respectful, Responsible, Honest and Safe (RRHS). Our students certainly reflect this in their active participation in the following community events:

- Jump Rope for Heart
- 40 Hour Famine
- Salvation Army Red Shield Appeal
- Westpac Helicopter Door Knock
- Anzac Day march
- Remembrance Day observance
- Regular blood donations
- ‘Friends for the Ages’ Caroona aged care visits.

**Year 9:** 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 7**

The lowest measurement for levels of achievement in Year 7 is Band 4, while the highest level of achievement for Year 7 is Band 9. Of the four elements of literacy measured in NAPLAN testing, students in our Year 7 intake demonstrated higher levels of achievement in reading over writing. A pleasing 34.1% of students achieved in the top two bands, compared to the state average of 29.2%, and our Like Schools Group (LSG) average of 18.7%. This also reflected a significant improvement on the performance of preceding cohorts since 2005.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Band Distribution</th>
<th>Average mark, 2008</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>LSG</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Band</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number in band 2008</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage in band 2008</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School average 2005 - 2007</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSG average 2008</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State average 2008</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>23.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Alternatively, the corresponding figures for writing show 16.4% of our students in the top two bands, a figure reasonably consistent with the performance of preceding cohorts. While this placed us above the LSG average (15.5%), we fell below the state average (28.5%). In terms of spelling and grammar and punctuation, the remaining elements of literacy testing, the trend of performing below state average, but well above the average for our LSG, continued.

**Year 7 NAPLAN Writing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Band Distribution</th>
<th>Average mark, 2008</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>LSG</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Band</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number in band 2008</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage in band 2008</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School average 2005 - 2007</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSG average 2008</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State average 2008</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>23.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The average mark for our students in NAPLAN literacy testing overall was 532.5 of a possible 634. This compared with the average LSG result of 521.3 and state mark of 541.2. In terms of the value added to student achievement in literacy since Basic Skills testing in 2006, our students’ average growth was 41.9 marks, compared with 43.7 for the state and 42.8 for our LSG. It was pleasing to note, however, that our boys outperformed both their LSG and state counterparts by 2 – 3 points.

---

**Students attend Anzac Day March**

**Red Shield Appeal**

**Academic Performance**

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 the assessments.

**Year 7:** from Band 4 (lowest) to Band 9 (highest for Year 7)
Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 7

Our Year 7 students achieved very encouraging results, with 62.6% achieving in the top three bands, compared with an average of 42.2% in our LSG and 57.3% across the state. This reflected a consistent improvement in results over the past three years by an average of 10%.

It is also pleasing to note that our students improved their numeracy scores since Basic Skills Testing in 2006 by an average of 62.7 points (the maximum possible score again being 634), compared with 56.2 for our LSG and 61.8 across the state.

Literacy – NAPLAN Year 9

The lowest measurement for levels of achievement in Year 9 is Band 5, while the highest level of achievement for Year 9 is Band 10. The common pattern across the state is of a relative decline in the proportion of students achieving in the top bands for literacy, compared to Year 7 results.

Given this, our Year 9 students performed well, with 25.8% achieving in Bands 9 and 10 for reading, compared with the state figure of 23.1% and LSG figure of 14.8%. This, in turn, reflects an average growth in marks from 2006 ELLA testing of 36.1 for our students, well above the LSG figure (31), but slightly below the state (36.7).

Year 9 NAPLAN Reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Band</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>LSG</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Our students performed very well in grammar and punctuation, with 20% achieving results in the top two bands, compared with 18% for our LSG, and just below the state average of 21.2%. These comparisons were very similar for results in spelling. In terms of writing however, 7.7% of our students achieved in the top two bands, compared with 12.1% for our LSG and 21.2% for the state. It should, nonetheless, be noted that 30% of our students performed in Band 8, making for a very favourable comparison overall.

Year 9 NAPLAN Writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Band</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>LSG</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The school has selected ‘Literacy’ as a priority area for improvement in its ‘Plan for School Improvement (2009–2011)’. A fundamental strategy in this planning will be an innovative program in explicit cross curricular teaching of the range of text types required for student success in extended writing.

Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 9

The numeracy results achieved by our Year 9 students were similarly robust. 49.6% achieved in the top three bands comparing favourably with the LSG average (37.4%) and coming very close to the state average (52.4%). It is also pleasing to note that a very low 6% of our students achieved in Band 5, 1.3% below the average for our LSG and nearly on par with the state average.
The average growth in numeracy results among our Year 9 students since SNAP testing in 2006 again proved positive at 39.1, 2% above the average for our LSG while remaining 2% below the state average.

Our strong numeracy results are due in no small part not only to the efforts of our classroom teachers, but also to the success of innovative programs such as our 'Numeracy in the Middle School' (NIMS) program. 'Numeracy' has been identified as a priority area in the school’s ‘Plan for School Improvement (2009 – 2011)’ and a key strategy in this planning is the expansion of the NIMS program, expanding the excellent opportunities being offered to students.

Essential Secondary Science Assessment (ESSA)

ESSA testing was completed by Year 8 students during Term 4. The results achieved by our students were most encouraging, average results falling above both LSG and state levels in all four tested categories:

- Working scientifically
- Knowing and understanding
- Communicating scientifically
- Extended response questions

Additionally, our school was one of a small number of schools to participate in a pilot online practical ESSA examination. The state average in this trial exercise was 50.6%, with our students virtually on par at 50.3%.

School Certificate


English Literacy

We are very pleased with our results overall, being virtually on par with the state average and above our LSG average. While two students achieved in the top band (Band 6), the most significant contributor to our students’ success as a group was that 72.7% of our students achieved results in Bands 4 and 5, compared to the comparative state figure of 65.8% and the LSG figure of 66.1%.

Equally pleasing was that only one student from our school achieved in the bottom two bands, compared to the state and LSG averages, both at 3.7%. Further, our average mark (74.9%) exceeded the average for our LSG (74%) and remained virtually on par with the state average (75%).

Mathematics

It is pleasing to note that four students achieved a Band 6 in mathematics. However, our overall results were slightly below the state average. In the top bands particularly, our students who gained placement in the top bands achieved results typically 6% below the state average for these bands. It should be noted that these results are on par with our previous results and fit the expectations of the students sitting the test.

A more pleasing aspect of these results was the significant value adding to students who were in the lower bands. In Band 1 there was a 5% improvement and in Band 2 a 7% improvement. Students in other bands were on par with their previous BST result. Further, our average mark (68.1%) exceeded our LSG average (65.9%), and fell only marginally short of the state average (68.9%).

Science

Our science faculty enjoys a strong tradition of success with its students at School Certificate level. While it is certainly pleasing that we continue to match our LSG in terms of students placed in the top band, it is extremely gratifying that 68.9% of the entire cohort were placed in the top three bands, compared to 51.9% in our LSG and 58.8% across the state.

Equally pleasing is the average value added to levels of student achievement since Basic Skills Testing at 3.31. Further, our students' average
mark (72.5%), exceeded both our LSG average (70.1%) and the state average (71.7%)

**Australian History, Civics and Citizenship**

It was extremely pleasing to note that a greater percentage of our students achieved results in the top three bands than has been the case in previous years. Further, the percentage of our students performing in the top two bands (13.5%) significantly exceeded the figure for our LSG (10.3%), while still falling 5 points below the state average.

Similarly, the average mark achieved by our students (68.9%) exceeded both our LSG average (66.1%) and the state average (68.5%)

**Australian Geography, Civics and Citizenship**

The average mark for our students (71%), in again exceeding our LSG figure (69.6%) and falling only marginally below the state figure (71.4%), indicates our continued strength in the delivery of this subject.

In terms of individual student performances, it was similarly pleasing to note that 62.9% of our students achieved results in the top three bands, compared to 52.5% for our LSG and 58.5% across the state.

**Computer Skills**

In our commitment to innovative programs and student success, our school has devoted considerable resources to teacher professional learning and classroom infrastructure in the field of Information Communication Technology (ICT).

Consequently, it is extremely gratifying to note the positive results being achieved by our students, with an average mark of 79.4%, placing them above both our LSG (77.2%) and the state (79%). Further, 57.8% of our students achieved within the ‘Highly Competent’ Band, compared to 44.9% in our LSG and 51.1% across the state.

**Technical and Applied Studies**

Overall results for students undertaking Stage 5 elective courses proved very pleasing. A significant number of students achieved Grade B or above in a range of subjects including Textiles Technology, Food Technology, Information and Software Technology and Industrial Technology.

**School Certificate relative performance comparison to Year 5 (value-adding)**

It is very encouraging to note the value added to levels of achievement demonstrated by this cohort since their Basic Skills Testing in 2003. Our traditionally strong areas of English, Science, Australian Geography Civics and Citizenship and Computing continued to improve by an average of 0.5 to 1 point. However, far more dramatic improvements since 2007 are noted in Mathematics (up 1.6 points) and Australian History, Civics and Citizenship (up 3.4 points).

These results mark not only a dramatic lift in value added to student achievement levels compared to previous years, but also place our students’ achievements well above the average results from across our LSG. Our core values of quality teaching, innovative programs, excellent opportunities and student success have clearly translated into a very dynamic and successful learning experience for these students.

**Higher School Certificate**

In 2008, Richmond River High School continued its strong tradition of supporting and encouraging diverse patterns of study for a broad spectrum of ability levels. 72 students from our school sat for the HSC across 26 examinable subjects. 37 of our students studied subjects through TAFE, while 52 students were enrolled in Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses which were delivered at our school. Of the latter group, 14 opted to sit for examinations in these subjects, making them a ‘Category B’ subject contributing to a University Admission Index (UIA). This cohort also contained one Life Skills candidate.
English
Four English courses were offered in 2008. The majority of our students, 46, completed the Standard English course. While their average result was four points below the state average, it is encouraging that four of these students achieved Band 4 results, placing them on par with the highest achieving students in this course across the state.

14 students completed the Advanced English course, with their average result again falling below the state average. It is pleasing to note, however, that a significant proportion of these students – four – achieved results in Bands 5 or 6 in a very challenging course.

Mathematics
Four mathematics courses were offered in 2008. Of these, 30 students attempted the General Mathematics course, 6 attempted the higher Mathematics course while 2 students attempted the Extension 1 and 2 courses. While General Mathematics results were three points below the state average, it is pleasing to note that most of these students moved their result above the state reference line when compared to their effort in the School Certificate. Further, a significant number of these students were able to lift themselves from a Band 4 School Certificate result to a Band 5 HSC result.

Science
Four very challenging courses were offered in 2008. Of these, results in Biology were outstanding, with the average result for our students falling 15.78% above the state average. Students of Earth and Environmental Science performed very close to the state average, while results for Physics and Chemistry the two most challenging courses fell below the state average.

Creative and Performing Arts
Music has had a history of strong performance at the school. This year, with a small candidature, the majority of the candidates received a Band 5 result. This maintained our results near the state average.

Visual Art also has a strong history at the school. Our students performed close to the state average, falling just 0.5% below. Most of the candidates achieved a Band 5, with one Band 6 result. Visual Art performed 8 marks below the LSG average.

Drama underperformed this year, with results well below the state average.

Human Society and Its Environment
This faculty, in the five HSC courses offered in 2008, is typical of the diversity of subjects studied by our students. The most pleasing results from among these subjects were those achieved by our Ancient History class, with an average mark of 84.63% which exceeded the state average by 12.14%.

Students attempting the remaining subjects of Society and Culture, Legal Studies, and French Beginners achieved results below the state average, with Business Studies students achieving considerably below the state average.

Technical and Applied Studies
An even more diverse range of subjects was offered by our TAS faculty, with nonetheless a pleasing degree of consistency in results achieved. Students of Textiles and Design and of the Hospitality Examination course achieved, on average, results either above or marginally below their state averages.

Of the remaining subjects, Metal and Engineering Examination, Software Design and Development, Industrial Technology and Food Technology, our results were below the respective state averages. However, results in these subjects tended to be the best results overall for individual students, with a number of students across all courses achieving placement in Bands 5 and 6.

Further, students undertaking our Vocational Education and Training courses also gained success, with an overwhelming majority completing AQF Certification in a range of context areas including Construction, Metal and Engineering, Hospitality, Information Technology and Primary Industries.
Higher School Certificate relative performance comparison to School Certificate (value-adding)

As already noted (see ‘Student Attendance Profile’) our 2008 HSC cohort, as a group, demonstrated a range of needs through their progression into senior study, which were heavily supported by a range of innovative programs designed to foster student success, including personal learning plans, individual mentoring, subject specific tuition and structured study time at school. Consequently, the value added to levels of achievement demonstrated at School Certificate level in 2006 for students achieving in the lower bands (i.e. Bands 1, 2 and 3) remained in range with levels achieved in previous years, falling behind by only 1.5 points, however falling 2.4 points below the average for our LSG.

The extent to which students with results falling in the middle (Band 4) and higher bands (Bands 5 and 6) were able to add value to levels of achievement in the School Certificate, however, proved more disappointing. The value added to our Band 4 results declined 3 points on the average of previous years, leaving these students 5.3 points below their counterparts from our LSG. In relative terms then, it was more encouraging to note that our higher achievers (Bands 5 and 6) fell only 2.5 points below the school average for previous years, and 3.5 points below the respective LSG average.

The school has identified ‘Student Engagement and Retention’ as a priority area in its ‘Plan for School Improvement (2009–2011)’. This plan specifies the development of strategies outlined above, along with longer term innovative programs such as Personal Interest Projects in Year 8 and Oral Portfolios in Year 10 which provide excellent opportunities for students to develop their skills in, and valuing of, learning.

Similarly, another priority area of the school’s ‘Plan for School Improvement (2009–2011)’ is ‘Quality Teaching’. Our students will be provided with rich and authentic assessment tasks which, through backward mapping of teaching programs, will reflect a deeper engagement of student learning. Further, our development of scope and sequence charts across all stages of learning will ensure a conscious and explicit build up of knowledge and skills from Year 7 through to Year 12.

Minimum standards

The Commonwealth Government sets minimum standards for reading, writing, grammar and punctuation, spelling and numeracy for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9.

The performance of the students in our school in the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy is compared to these minimum standards. The percentages of our students achieving at or above these standards are reported below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Year 7 students achieving at or above the minimum standard in 2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage of Year 7 students achieving at and above minimum standard</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation and grammar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is obviously very pleasing to note that such high percentages of our Year 7 students are achieving above the national minimum standard in all tested categories. Improvements of 8.3% in reading and a remarkable 29.5% in numeracy can be noted relative to 2007 ELLA and SNAP results.
Percentage of Year 9 students achieving at and above minimum standard in 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>93.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>85.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>93.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation and grammar</td>
<td>88.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>94.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results for Year 9 students in terms of achieving the national minimum standard are similarly pleasing. Percentages of students are high in each category, with only writing and grammar and punctuation not having 90% or over of students achieving the minimum standard. As already noted (see ‘Literacy – Year 9 NAPLAN’) our ‘Plan for School Improvement (2009–2011)’ prioritises literacy and extended writing in particular. Consequently, it is anticipated that we will be able to establish a consistently high percentage of students meeting the national minimum benchmark across Years 7 and 9.

Significant programs and initiatives

Aboriginal education

Faculty Innovative Programs

Our school’s commitment to innovative programs targeting student success has seen the design and implementation of an in-service for staff aimed at engaging schools in Aboriginal education and positive partnerships. Workshops included information about the Aboriginal Education Review and the significance for faculties, Personalised Learning Plans and incorporating Aboriginal perspectives in teaching and learning programs. Staff had time to reflect and work in KLA groups on programming and implementation of Aboriginal perspectives. There were representatives from most KLAs and five local schools accepted the invitation to send staff to participate in the day.

Richmond River High School continues to be a member of the ‘Dare to Lead’ program and faculties are continuing the work commenced in 2006 aimed at promoting student success among Aboriginal students.

Our school was one of 35 schools who participated in the North Coast Aboriginal Education Review aimed at identifying future directions to improve educational outcomes for Aboriginal students in the North Coast Region. Richmond River High School was identified in the review as an exemplary school providing a supportive learning environment for our students.

In 2008, Richmond River High School was part of a pilot program that encouraged students to find out about their own local stories and history. The aim of the project, ‘Yarn-Up’, is to educate our young Australians for a united future where we have a shared understanding of our past and present to pave the way for the future. As part of the program, the school hosted a special screening for the community of the film ‘Kanyini’, based on the life of Bob Randall.

Whole School Innovative Programs

Funding for an innovative program, the In-School Tutor program, was approved allowing the continuation of this successful initiative implemented in 2007. A trained teacher was employed to work with students in Years 7 and 8 who were achieving below national benchmarks in literacy and numeracy. Each student received a combination of withdrawal and classroom assistance – our provision of such excellent opportunities promotes improved learning outcomes for Aboriginal students.

Five students from Year 10 successfully completed V-Tracks, a TAFE taster course designed especially for Aboriginal students. Students were enrolled in hairdressing and automotive and a number of students then completed a short barista course. One of the students, Sophie Monks, received recognition for excellence in hairdressing and was awarded a TAFE Medal for Achievement.

All Aboriginal students attended ‘Deadly Days’, an initiative by North Coast TAFE. Sponsored by the Australian Government, the purpose of the festival was to encourage increased participation by young Aboriginal people in education, training and employment through workshops, hands on activities and performances by guests such as Troy Cassar-Daly.
Multicultural education

Excellent Opportunities
The school's approach to discipline and student wellbeing ensures the values of tolerance and acceptance of diversity are reinforced which, in turn, underpins our capacity to provide all students with excellent opportunities for student success across all school settings.

This approach contains detailed measures to address bullying behaviour. The school formally presents this policy to each year group at the start of the year.

Obviously, as a public school, inclusivity for all members of our school community is vital. This is consistently and visibly reinforced by the ongoing efforts of our Student Equity Group who, under the guidance of our Community Liaison Officer Julian King Salter and interested staff, work to promote tolerance and acceptance in our school.

Our approach to the values embedded in the DET Multicultural Education Policy positively contributes to the implementation of our core values. Accordingly, the school has a trained Anti Racism Counselling Officer and has employed an Aboriginal Education Assistant who fulfil their mandatory requirements in line with our core values.

Quality Teaching
Our staff have continued their dynamic engagement with the Quality Teaching (QT) framework (see Target 3 in 2009 Planning). Our understanding of cultural knowledge as a key element in the QT framework has led to a range of innovative programs which promote the values of multiculturalism.

Specifically, junior history and geography courses develop our students’ knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Indigenous cultures as well as the multicultural nature of Australian society. Further, our planning for a specific cultural studies teaching program to be delivered to Year 8 students in 2009 further promotes multicultural awareness and values.

Extra Curricular Activities and Student Initiatives
Each year, students take part in the Model United Nations Assembly (MUNA).

Respect and responsibility
Positive Behaviour for Learning
For the past two years, our staff and students have worked positively with the Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) innovative program. This program comprises a broad range of systemic and individualised strategies for achieving important social and learning expectations for our students while preventing problem behaviours.

During 2008 our staff worked with students to establish a broad understanding of, and commitment to, expected positive behaviours implied in our school’s initials (RRHS), these being Respectful, Responsible, Honest and Safe behaviours in all areas of the school. All students were issued with a copy of the PBL expected positive behaviours for their diary and targeted lessons were explicitly taught, discussing what these behaviours looked like. Students and staff were expected to model, monitor and reinforce these expected positive behaviours in all areas of the school at all times.

The Positive Behaviour Support Team coordinated a review of our behaviour reporting system (RISC) so that we could access accurate data around the types of problem behaviours occurring, where they were occurring and what consequences had been issued. This behaviour data proved essential in identifying the main problem behaviours and students involved. A special roll call for students identified with problem behaviours through RISC data was established so that students could be continually reminded of the expected behaviours and taught strategies to avoid repeated misbehaviour. Students were also placed on Behaviour Monitoring where staff are asked to give a numerical value of 1-3 in relation to student’s respectful, responsible, honest and
safe behaviour in each class. This monitoring was coordinated by a team member who met with the students each morning and discussed the previous day’s performance. Regular contact with parents was maintained to support the process.

Students who continue to demonstrate this school’s expectation to behave respectfully, responsibly, honestly and safely are recognised and rewarded through our praise and merit scheme along with those students who showed improvement in their behaviour or achieved their personal best in learning outcomes.

2009 will continue to see the implementation of PBL with ‘Pre-Correct’ lessons taught explicitly in roll call and more opportunity for the Learning Support Team to analyse data from RISC, signage around the school will be posted showing the positive behaviours expected in each school setting and explicit work will be undertaken with students identified through RISC data.

Priority Schools Project

Our school’s inclusion in this project has contributed dramatically to the means with which we could act on our core values of innovative programs, excellent opportunities, student success and quality teaching. These values were embedded in the following priority areas to which our funding was directed - Quality Teaching and Professional Development, Literacy, Numeracy, School and Community Partnerships. The success of programs and strategies put in place within each of these priority areas was measured through both external and school based data.

PSP funding has enabled our staff to develop a more complex understanding of the Quality Teaching Framework and the concepts of quality assessment tasks and backward mapping. A considerable amount of the funds was devoted to the professional learning of staff and capacity building within faculties to this effect.

Specifically, the funding enabled us to develop an ongoing professional partnership with Judi-Anne Abdini, who leads the consultancy group Learning Linkages. Judi-Anne works with schools across Australia and regularly presents at national and international conferences on best practice pedagogy, specifically the Quality Teaching Framework in place in NSW public schools, also in the fields of educational leadership, school sustainability and capacity building. Judi-Anne continues to work with our senior executive in these areas.

Our staff also looked at the “Closing the Gap” data around the importance of high expectations and Quality Teaching strategies for Aboriginal students.

PSP funding has made possible the highly successful and beneficial Numeracy in the Middle School (NIMS) innovative program. Not only has it strengthened the middle school links with our feeder primary schools but has also up-skilled our teachers in Newman’s analysis and related pedagogical strategies to promote student success.

Another innovative program, the Numeracy project, was developed from the work done in NIMS and has proved to be an integral part in the continued development of student success. Teachers in our mathematics and science faculties made use of the SMART data analysis package and the suggested numeracy teaching strategies it presents to improve numeracy teaching strategies across the school. As a consequence, our teachers have become more proficient users of the data provided through online student result analysis packages in their broader planning to improve student learning outcomes.

Year 7 and 8 students who were chosen to participate in the Numeracy project were given either individual or group tuition on both past SNAP papers and NAPLAN like questions. It also included individualised work sheets on some of the different strands of mathematics. It included work from Stage 1 to Stage 4. Some of these Year 8 students also chose to participate in the Even Start Numeracy Program. Evidence drawn from classroom activities and assessment indicates a marked improvement in the numeracy performance of these students.

Year 9 students were provided with common numeracy work booklets which were used at the beginning of each mathematics lesson. Evidence drawn from student work indicates this was a less effective strategy than was the individual tuition provided for Years 7 and 8, which was based on the Newman’s analysis approach of targeting specific areas of need.

Peer literacy tutoring is a highly innovative program which provides pathways to student success for all concerned. Year 7 students were identified early in the year through testing and Year 10 peer tutors were trained appropriately. The program began in term 1 and included a daily tutorial opportunity between the older and younger students. Literacy testing through both ELLA and NAPLAN has consistently shown that the value added to student levels of literacy achievement is greater on average for those participating in Peer Tutoring.

The benefits to the tutees in the Peer Tutoring program have been numerous and have been found to include one-to-one tuition, prolonged time on-task, instant feedback, immediate correction of miscues, positive reinforcement and peer
relationship building. In regard to more personal benefits for the tutees, tutees participating in cross-age tutoring programs have shown improvement in communication skills, self-confidence, self-esteem, interpersonal skills and in the ability to set short and long-term goals.

Peer Support activities

Our Community Liaison Officer, (CLO) Julian King-Salter, continued to improve our home, school and community partnerships. Significantly, we have implemented an idea from the “Leading and Achieving Conference” in 2007 around the provision of excellent opportunities for our students through Personal Best Plans. This has been core business for our CLO this year and has proved to be very beneficial in opening lines of communication and improving goal setting, student outcomes and a more coordinated approach to student support. Further meetings were conducted for Year 10 by Mrs Jenny Zobel (Board of Studies Coordinator) and Mr Shane Gooley (Careers Advisor) exploring the subject choices for 2009 and their suitability for the individual student considering academic ability and future goals.

Our website framework has been established and will be operational as of 2009 to allow increased access for parents to information, newsletters and school policies and procedures. It will also provide a link to our careers website.

Parent representatives from our Parents and Citizens’ Association (P&C) have also been included in the structure of our Action Groups. These groups are aligned with priority areas addressed in our ‘School Improvement Plan 2009 –2011’. These parent representatives report back to the P&C meetings regarding the ways in which Action Groups are addressing targets for school improvement. This has not only assisted Action Group structure but has also created a beneficial "flow on" effect in terms of our developing partnership with parents and the community. For example, one parent now volunteers one day per week to work with students at school on relaxation and stress management.

A series of protocols have now been developed in relation to parent involvement in these groups and the necessary confidentiality around student information.

A staffing allocation of 1.7 was part of the PSP Program and was allocated as follows:

- 1.0 timetable allocation to allow for Head Teachers to have one period per week to drive Quality Teaching in their faculties, allow Reach High classes to operate and to support the small senior classes to improve opportunities for university entrance.
- 0.3 – This was used to remove our Support Teacher Learning Assistance (STLA) from her teaching load in order to concentrate on individual programs and Peer Tutoring.
- 0.4 - Two mathematics teachers were given an allowance of 4 lessons per week to analyse data and run withdrawal groups as part of the Numeracy project.
- One period per week for was shared by two teachers, one from Science and the other form HSIE to develop cross curriculum numeracy strategies.

Numeracy in the Middle School (NIMS)

Two mathematics staff members, Mr Jack Scarrabelotti and Mrs Yolonde Duncan, were given release time through the Priority Schools Program. These staff members worked on improving the numeracy skills of students in the junior school.

Training for the project was organised by Amanda Scofield, the District Numeracy Consultant. The staff members worked with students in small groups. They targeted willing students who had been shown to have numeracy problems. Students were pre-tested and post tested.

Results for the project were positive with all students showing an improvement in their marks. The effect of this program was also noted in the national numeracy test. The program has been extended into 2009 on a limited basis following the loss of the Priority Schools Funding.

Quality Teaching

Our whole staff engagement with the Quality Teaching Framework (QTF) was a prominent and dynamic feature of the school year. This was due in no small part to the efforts of our Quality Teaching Action Group under the leadership of our Head Teacher CAPA, Peter Howes.

In continuing to drive the implementation of the QTF across the whole school, a group of
executive staff attended the 2008 Quality Teaching Conference in Coffs Harbour. The conference provided the latest research findings from which the Quality Teaching Action Group set targets for the implementation of the QTF across all Key Learning Areas (KLAs). The immediate focus was on the element of 'Intellectual Quality'. Research has shown that this element of the framework has the most immediate positive impact on student outcomes in schools of similar socio economic environments.

In setting a professional learning agenda focussing on Quality Teaching, the Action Group surveyed all staff on their knowledge and value of the QTF before any planned professional learning took place. Results demonstrated that 74% of staff had limited knowledge of the Quality Teaching elements and approximately 80% of staff felt that the QTF was not relevant.

Based upon the findings from the conference and the staff survey the Action Group set the following targets:

- All teaching staff improve their knowledge of the QTF and its elements
- All teaching staff value the QTF as an important tool to improve student outcomes
- The school will focus on the element of ‘Intellectual Quality’.
- All Stage 6 assessments for the 2009 HSC be Quality Assessment Tasks based upon the element of ‘Intellectual Quality’.
- Each KLA will begin the process of backward mapping programs with a renewed focus on Intellectual Quality.
- Substantial professional learning funds be allocated to support staff in the implementation of Quality Teaching.

Professional learning funds were used to engage a private consultant, Judi-Ann Abdini, who led sessions for the executive prior to two consecutive staff development days held in Term 3. A DET assessment consultant, Ric Cilona, led workshops on quality assessments for all staff on the first of the development days. Judi-Ann then led sessions for the whole staff during the second day focusing on backward mapping. Head Teachers played an important role in leading faculty sessions.

A snapshot survey following the staff development days demonstrated that almost 100% of staff had a sound knowledge of the QTF. 98% saw QT as highly relevant.

Quality assessments have been developed for Stage 6 courses with some KLAs now focusing on other stages. Each faculty has also begun the backward mapping process for at least one curriculum stage and this will continue with our engagement in QTF in 2009.

Reach High

Our school has a strong tradition in providing excellent opportunities which lead to student success. This obviously applies to students who have been identified as being both talented and motivated in their approach to learning. In 2008 the school carried out a review of our Reach High class structure which caters to these students, its selection process and overarching philosophy.

The review was carried out by the Reach High Task Force consisting of Peter Howes, John Ryan, Kevin Mison and David Hanley. Similar models from other schools were observed and the following targets were set:

- Reach High classes remain at a maximum of 25 students in each class where possible
- Self nomination by students continues to be the first stage of the selection process
- Student performance would be the second selection criteria
- Teachers of the Reach High classes should ensure students enjoy a differentiated curriculum: “different, not more work”.
- Provision of professional learning and/or release time be explored for teachers of Reach High
- The end of semester review of Reach High students be revised
- A Reach High policy and procedure booklet be created.

These targets have shaped the planning for Reach High classes in 2009.

In line with our commitment to Quality Teaching, another successful rich task was in evidence during the Reach High Showcase Night, conducted in the River Theatre and led by the Gifted and Talented coordinator, John Ryan. This year's theme was ‘Umbrellas’. Over the two nights more than 250 parents and visitors attended with positive feedback about the impressive nature and quality of the students’ work. Academics from Southern Cross University judged the student work.

Reach High Presentation Night
The Reach High program integrates with the school’s focus on the ‘Intellectual Quality’ element of the Quality Teaching Framework.

**Progress on 2008 targets**

**Target 1: Improve Literacy and Numeracy outcomes**

*Our achievements include:*

- A program of comprehensive numeracy tutoring was conducted with pretesting and post testing of all targeted students. All students involved showed significant improvement in numeracy results. Students were actively involved in this optional activity and anecdotal evidence showed a great deal of student enjoyment from their participation.

- Our teachers worked with Amanda Scofield, Lismore District Literacy Consultant, on the NIMS program. Teaching strategies and other ideas were bought back and implemented at RRHS.

- A large number of parents and students attended numeracy training days that demonstrated the skills necessary for students to achieve in the National Numeracy Test (NAPLAN).

- Our Literacy Enhancement Program, conducted over eight months, improved the reading age of targeted students by up to 3.6 years.

- Over twenty students from all years were involved the Learning Assistance Program (LAPS), while 31 students were involved in the ‘An Even Start’ program. These innovative programs complemented the work already done by our STLA, Ms Jane Ryan, through her assistance and intervention with programs to remediate literacy skills.

- School and community partnerships were strengthened by an information evening held early in the year for Year 7 students. A large number of our parents came along and were informed of expectations in numeracy and literacy.

- NAPLAN results for numeracy showed a high level of achievement from our students (see ‘Numeracy – NAPLAN’ report). The implemented strategies have raised the results of all students.

- NAPLAN results for literacy demonstrated the ongoing need to target extended writing, grammar and punctuation (see ‘Literacy – NAPLAN’ report). These have become a focus for our Literacy Action Group in 2009 (see ‘Targets for 2009’ report).

**Target 2: Leadership, Support, School and Community Partnerships**

*Our achievements include:*

- Ongoing development of the RRHS website. A great deal of time has been given to developing the scaffold for the website to allow data and policies to be loaded onto this site in 2009.

- Personal Learning Plans for selected students in Years 8 and 10 and all students in Years 11 and 12 have been a beneficial addition to the program. Parents are invited into the school to participate in skill identification and goal setting for their students.

- An outstanding number of leadership programs have been implemented for the benefit of our students and parents. These included “Step to the Future”, the International Women’s Day Forum, Police Liaison workshops, the Southern Cross University Outreach Program, the Southern Cross University R-Risk program, “Speak Easy” programs, Financial Literacy “Hip Pocket” Seminars, SRC leadership programs, Oral Portfolio presentations and the World Vision Youth Leadership Program. Further, parents have received training in numeracy and literacy and in the “Families Matter” program.
• The Global Citizenship Group was established in the school and students were made aware of global issues through meetings and presentations at assemblies.
• Our Head Teacher of Teaching and Learning, Gae Masters, has made several visits to our primary schools to collect data and qualitative information on our incoming Year 7 students with learning needs, those requiring funding support and those with significant behaviour issues. The information was distributed through our welfare and executive meetings to staff. Additional visits were organised for students requiring extra assistance with the transition program. A Learning Support Team is operational at RRHS.
• All feeder primary schools are visited by the Student Advisor of the incoming Year 7 students and the Deputy Principal. Students also attend in a leadership role and answer questions from Year 6 students and ease the transition process.

Transition visit to Caniaba Public School

• Our SRC and Student Equity Group have continued to strongly represent the views of students at a school, regional and state level. Students have attended leadership forums and the Regional Leadership Camps.
• Eleanor Fleetwood won the Zonta Young Women in Public Affairs Competition, delivering a speech about environmental change and personal responsibility.
• Two students from the Student Equity Group presented at a Human Rights Conference at Byron Bay.

Target 3: Improved learning outcomes for Aboriginal students and low socio-economically disadvantaged students

Our achievements include:
• The provision of significant professional learning funds towards Quality Teaching strategies and opportunities for staff to work within faculties on teaching and learning programs.

• Ongoing implementation of Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) into our day to day activities within the school. This has been achieved by explicit teaching of expected behaviours, modelling, monitoring and reinforcing and rewarding the behaviours that will help us nurture excellent opportunities in learning which will lead to student success.
• Increased student participation in V-Tracks (TAFE) courses specially designed for Aboriginal students to encourage student engagement and retention in education.
• Increased staff participation in the Aboriginal Perspective and Engagement in-service, initiated and coordinated by Richmond River High School staff and supported by the ‘Dare to Lead’ program to ensure that curriculum content and delivery is relevant for all students including Aboriginal students.
• Staff capacity to differentiate curriculum and deliver Lifeskills courses has become more widespread, allowing the provision of excellent opportunities that in turn engage and challenge more students and cater for and support individual needs.

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 2008 our school carried out evaluations of distributed leadership as part of our educational and management practice, and of literacy and Aboriginal perspectives as part of our whole school curriculum.

Educational and management practice

Distributed leadership

Background

In 2007, through their work on Marzano’s model of “what works in schools”, our executive had begun to explore the concept of a school as a ‘learning community’ where all the work a teacher does was acknowledged as having a significant impact on overall student achievement levels.

In 2008 our executive noted with interest one of the priorities set out in the ‘North Coast Region Plan 2009–2011’, namely ‘Teacher and Leader Quality’. The following target was of particular interest: “Current and aspiring school leaders demonstrate a progression in identified leadership capabilities within the School Leadership Capability Framework.”

Our executive have increasingly come to understand that sustainable leadership which leads to a smoothly functioning school and
meaningful positive change cannot be left to individuals, but must be spread systemically, with leaders at all levels making sustainability a priority in their work.

Findings and conclusions

During Term 2, all staff were surveyed in order to determine an effective values platform around which teachers could form a holistic view of their work, and on which whole school planning and decisions could be based. It was found that the way staff viewed their work corresponded with our existing mission statement as a “caring school of excellence” which fosters and provides:

- Excellent opportunities
- Innovative programs
- Quality teaching
- Student success

During Terms 3 and 4, the school’s executive was able to take this values platform into consideration during the lengthy process of planning for programs which would ensure ongoing, long term school sustainability. During a series of extended executive planning meetings, programs for school sustainability were rationalised as follows:

- Staff and Student Success
- Student Wellbeing and Support
- Aboriginal and Low Socio Economic Status Students
- Home, School and Community Partnerships
- Leadership and Management.

Within this structure, the distribution of whole school roles was reviewed and rationalised. The next step was to produce comprehensive planning documents which used our agreed values platform as the means to link all whole school roles with these programs which had been identified as being vital for our school’s sustainability.

Future directions

In 2009, our ‘Plan for School Sustainability (2009)’ will be published alongside our ‘Plan for School Improvement (2009–2011)’. As part of this process, staff will be consulted on the whole plan, and in particular those sections of the plan referring to roles which they fill.

The objective will be to familiarise staff with the link between the role which they perform and the smooth functioning of the school. More broadly, through the organisational structure of the planning documents being based on our agreed values platform, consideration of the importance of whole school roles in enhancing student learning outcomes will also be encouraged.

These avenues for professional reflection and dialogue will be drawn upon and formalised through planning conferences in semester two, involving a review of our planning to date in preparation for 2010.

Curriculum

Literacy and Aboriginal perspective

Background

In our ongoing analysis of ELLA (English Language and Literacy Assessment) testing results prior to 2008, and of NAPLAN literacy results in 2008, a number of consistencies presented themselves in student results. Specifically, while our students tended to perform well in reading, their results in writing and grammar and punctuation were generally below the state average (see NAPLAN – Literacy).

Further, all KLAs recognise the vital role of extended writing in order for any student to achieve success in their learning. Literacy is a priority area recognised at state and regional levels, and in or own ‘Plan for School Improvement (2009–2011)’.

Similarly, the ‘North Coast Region Plan 2009–2011’ recognises the importance of Aboriginal perspective in teaching programs in order to close the achievement gap between Aboriginal and non–Aboriginal students. It particularly emphasises that “30% of schools participate annually in the Aboriginal Cultural Education Program or locally developed cultural knowledge program”.

Our staff share this commitment, underpinned also through our dynamic engagement with the Quality Teaching Framework and its emphasis on ‘Significance’ in learning.

Findings and conclusions

A process of whole staff consultation and school executive consideration led to the inclusion of ‘Literacy’ and ‘Cultural Studies’ in the Year 8 timetable for 2008.

The implementation of both teaching programs was led by members of the school executive and involved the input of both the Literacy and the Student Engagement and Retention Action Groups. It was agreed that the Literacy program should explicitly address the following:

- A specific text type, directly indicating its relevance to a nominated KLA.
- The necessary features of grammar and punctuation necessary to create an effective example of this text type.
- A clear scaffold for students to use in planning their writing.
- An assignment in the form of the nominated text type that would be marked and reported on.
The Cultural Studies program was instigated by the Aboriginal students in response to a workshop for students addressing racism in schools. The program has been designed to address the following:

- Fostering inclusivity for Aboriginal students.
- Promoting awareness and acceptance of Aboriginal cultural perspectives among all students.
- A pedagogical style which emphasises the elements of the ‘Significance’ dimension of the QTF.
- Focus on issues highlighted in the Aboriginal Education Review.

Future directions

Through the work of the Literacy Action Group in 2009 and beyond, it is hoped that all teachers will acknowledge and develop their skills as literacy teachers. This should certainly be reflected in explicit literacy lessons as part of KLA specific teaching programs.

Further, the timetabled explicit literacy lessons targeting the range of text types will be expanded to be taught by more teachers across Years 7 to 10. This will also involve teachers’ from all KLAs working together and with regional and other sources of external support to develop literacy teaching programs.

The Cultural Studies program will be retained for Year 8 students, ensuring that each successive cohort over coming years will benefit from this initiative. The school will continue to maintain links with Dare to Lead and implement Aboriginal perspectives across all KLAs which will be supported by the Cultural Studies program.

Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction

Throughout 2008 the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers in a variety of ways. These included a Year 12 exit survey about school life and a teachers “Get it off your chest” survey.

The Year 12 exit survey was completed on the students’ last day of school in Term 3. It provided information about the effectiveness of our school in preparing our students for life after the HSC.

- 100% of students agreed that Richmond River High School was a good school and that they would recommend our school to future students.
- 98% of students felt very happy at the school and believed other students were friendly.
- 98% of students believed that there were excellent opportunities to do things that they enjoyed.

- 99% of students had a strong sense of belonging to the school and were satisfied with the education that the school had provided.
- 98% of students felt safe at school.
- 99% believed that the school had done all it could to prepared them for the HSC.
- 100% of students felt that they had a positive relationship with their teachers while 97% of students believed that teachers were caring towards their students.

The extended survey responses reported a high percentage of students who felt that staff had treated them well and really cared about them. Students felt that they had been taught well and with patience in relation to their needs and were helped to reach their potential.

A few comments were also made in relation to the need to update resources and facilities in relation to toilets, air conditioning, the need for blinds for every window and faster internet connections. Many students were appreciative of the library and its resources, the senior study area and the organised excursions.

The following opinions represent the main concerns of staff when given the opportunity to complete a “Get it off your Chest” survey in Term 4:

- Some teachers were concerned about the use of the Student Attitude Modification (SAM) room in relation to consistency of application of warning letters, negotiations to return to class, information to the classroom teachers and consequences for misbehaviour in the SAM room. A SAM room task force was created to look at these issues and revise the procedures, booklets and staff training scheduled.
- Some teachers were still concerned with the length of the assemblies but this seems to have decreased with the introduction of TPL time for teachers during the assembly period and faculties rostered on for duty. Some staff indicated that this has reduced the quality of communication as staff missed out on information regarding behavioural targets and school issues. An effort is being made to make the assemblies more positive and to highlight to staff and students the opportunities available for leadership and citizenship development and for participation in events and activities.
- Some teachers have been concerned about the lack of information given to staff regarding decisions made in executive meetings. This is an issue as staff feel excluded from the decision making process and are unaware of decisions made and their future implications. This points to a need for a more public display
of agendas and minutes and also the need to monitor faculty meetings.

Individual concerns were raised by staff about:
• Communication
• Overcrowding of staffrooms
• Tightness of rooming and issues regarding home rooms
• Litter in the playground
• Staff meeting agendas
• Professional learning.

The above are being addressed by numerous strategies.

Professional learning

Our total expenditure of professional learning funds in 2008 was $29,736. Our training and development funds were supplemented in 2008 by PSP. As per our planning, 40% of professional learning funds was allocated to Quality Teaching with a further 30% to ICT. This allowed professional learning to support our identified school priority areas and targets for improvement.

Each faculty was allocated $300 per person in terms of professional learning funds to assist in achieving faculty goals and to support individual teacher professional learning goals. These funds were to be utilised in the same ratio as the allocation and were to support faculty initiatives.

At state level, our staff were represented at the Quality Teaching Conference in Coffs Harbour. Further, our school development days were utilised to improve the staff’s collective understanding of Quality Teaching dimensions and elements, and their implementation into classroom practice, programming and backward mapping. These initiatives were supported by PSP funding.

The specific areas of professional learning funding expenditure were:
• Beginning Teachers $361
• ICT for Teaching and Learning $1,630
• Literacy and Numeracy $842
• Quality Teaching $9,515
• Syllabus Implementation $5,585
• Career Development $8,221
• Welfare and Equity $2,560
• School Identified Priorities $1,168.

School development 2009 – 2011

Richmond River High School, as a caring school of excellence, shares in its core values the North Coast Regional commitment to capacity building within schools. This is achieved through great leaders – planning, developing and sustaining innovative programs and excellent opportunities for students and staff, great teachers – planning and delivering quality teaching, and great partnerships – delivering student success within and across the Lismore Community of Secondary Schools, its partner primary schools, and in consultation with our diverse community.

Targets for 2009

Our staff and executive have completed a lengthy process of consultation and collegial planning and target setting in order to link the following statewide priorities for school improvement with our own core values of Innovative Programs, Excellent Opportunities, Student Success and Quality Teaching.

Target 1: Movement of 9% of Year 9 students’ literacy achievement levels from Bands 7 & 8 (65% in 2008) to Bands 9 & 10 (12% in 2008).

Strategies to achieve this target include:

• Head Teachers and Literacy Action Group members will review NAPLAN and School Certificate results, using the SMART. All staff will become familiar with the SMART data analysis package in terms of identifying literacy problem areas. Progress will be reported back to the Literacy Action Group.

• Head Teachers and Literacy Action Group members will access relevant teaching resources linking explicit literacy teaching strategies to teaching programs within their KLA. Progress will be reported back to the Literacy Action Group.

• Year 8 students will participate in weekly literacy lessons, specifically addressing extended writing in specific text types. All Year 8 students will complete a literacy assessment task in extended written form.

• Literacy teaching resources used with Year 8 students will be expanded through contributions from all faculties. This will allow for an expansion of explicit literacy teaching to other year groups beyond 2009.

• NAPLAN parent information evenings will be held, informing parents and carers of the nature of NAPLAN testing, and what they can do to support their students.

Our success will be measured by:

• Teachers consciously and regularly incorporating literacy teaching strategies into teaching programs within their KLAs.

• Teachers regularly and confidently use the NAPLAN data analysis package to develop
understandings of the literacy learning needs of individual students or groups of students.

- Teachers sharing their experience with literacy teaching resources, whether these be drawn from the bank of resources linked to NAPLAN in the SMART data analysis package, or from other sources such as the regional literacy consultant.

- All Year 8 students in 2009 will produce an extended piece of writing as a formal assignment. They will be able to reflect on the skills and processes with which they needed to engage in order to complete this assignment.

- Parents and carers in our community will be aware of the nature of NAPLAN testing, ensuring a clear understanding of the meaning and implications of their student’s results when these are reported to them.

**Target 2: Improve numeracy results in Year 9 NAPLAN testing (2009) by increasing the Band 7 and 9 results by 10% whilst maintaining Band 8 results compared to Year 9 2008.**

**Strategies to achieve this target include:**

- Action Group meetings identify the numeracy components of the NAPLAN, ESSA and School Certificate tests that relate to their faculties. Teachers from all KLAs to develop knowledge of numeracy expectations. Each faculty to target specific numeracy skills in their teaching programs.

- Inservice teachers on the use of SMART data packages. All staff to develop proficiency in using data in discussions of student learning outcomes. Use resource links to QT strategies to develop learning activities to address targets.

- Strategies developed during 2008 NIMS to be shared and utilised by all KLAs. Retention of a support teacher for numeracy to maintain NIMS strategies (i.e. small groups of targeted and willing students).

- Introduce an online tutoring system to the school (HOTmaths). Look at how this matches the Quality Teaching framework in areas such as the engagement of students in numeracy and differentiating the curriculum.

- Continue to invite parents to attend training days in numeracy.

**Our success will be measured by:**

- Teachers see the significance of numeracy to their KLAs. More teachers are able to participate in discussions on numeracy demands in the secondary school.

- Teachers become familiar with and have access to NAPLAN numeracy data. Their knowledge of this data is enhanced and their ICT skills improved.

- NIMS project facilitated by more teachers across KLAs. All students access the extra numeracy learning activities.

- Numeracy activities are embedded in all KLA teaching programs for Stages 4 and 5. Lessons show numeracy connections to intended outcomes.

- Increased numbers of students taking up the option of joining HOTmaths in their efforts to improve numeracy results.

**Target 3: Ongoing professional learning in Quality Teaching.** All teachers implement quality assessments and backward mapped programs for Stage 6. Quality scope and sequence introduced across the school.

**Strategies to achieve this target include:**

- Professional learning for all staff on establishing effective scope and sequence at school development days

- Submission of assessments, programs and scope and sequence to QT Action Group for coding and feedback

- Continue the development of quality assessments and backward mapped programs for all years in every KLA

- Provide ongoing professional learning about Quality Teaching for all staff

- Provide ongoing feedback for each KLA on the development on their quality assessments and quality programs.

**Our success will be measured by:**

- Quality scope and sequence produced for one targeted stage by each KLA

- Quality assessments and programs for all stages by 2011
• Staff adopt the Quality Teaching Framework into their daily practice
• Staff continue to build upon, revise and evaluate their work
• Improved quality of assessment tasks.

Target 4: Student engagement and retention -
3% improvement in attendance, 10% increase in participation in HSC tutorials and increased retention by 3% above the state average from Year 10 to Year 12.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

• Improved communication with homes. Attendance monitoring strategies including specialised roll call, attendance monitoring, cross referencing attendance with NAPLAN data. Increased responsibility for classroom teachers to monitor attendance.
• Streamline presentation of information for subject selection, personal learning plans for senior Aboriginal students.
• Higher quality transition programs to support students and their families through school. This includes clearly expressed assessment policy booklets.
• Increased staff participation in Habits of the Mind and Personal Interest Project activities for stage 4 students. Year 9 students on Oral Portfolio panels.
• Implement leadership programs such as Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, Global Citizenship Group, peer mediation, various leadership and citizenship awards.

Our success will be measured by:

• Reduced whole day absences and fractional truancy, improved student engagement and parental involvement.
• Closing the gap in attendance and retention rates between Aboriginal and non Aboriginal students.
• Early support in place for Year 7 students with learning difficulties. Anecdotal evidence of improved learning skills in Stage 4.
• Increased programs catering to our diverse range of needs and interests among our students.
• Improved participation in HSC tutorial program, Year 10 Oral Portfolio program, Years 11 and 12 study skills program.
• Decreased proportion of students leaving in Years 10, 11 and 12.

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.

N Ryan Principal
D Williamson D Principal
M Hensley D Principal
D Hanley HT English
C Mills HT Maths
R Gill HT Science
S Dawson HT HSIE
S Clayton HT TAS
G Masters HT Teaching & Learning
P Howes HT CAPA
M Bugden Administrative Manager
C Amor P&C President
(Acting)

School contact information
Richmond River High School
Lake Street North Lismore 2480
Ph: 66 213456
Fax: 66 222928
Email: richmondri-h.school@det.nsw.edu.au
School Code: 8214

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: