Richmond River High School
Principal’s message

Richmond River High School is proud to be a comprehensive public school which caters to a rich and diverse community, drawing upon an ingrained passion for learning and resilience in the face of challenge. We remain strong in the mission we have set ourselves – to provide a rich and dynamic learning environment which is safe and caring, and to promote among our students the values of self reliance, acceptance, respect and social responsibility.

Our school continues to provide students with opportunities to succeed. The mean results for our students in nearly half of the HSC courses studied at our school in 2012 were above the state average, with significant improvement noted in a number of other courses. Further, our students maintained our school’s strong tradition in winning awards acknowledging academic and civic achievement at a local, state and national level. It is a privilege to work with teachers and students who continue to achieve such exemplary outcomes.

While we recognize our strong traditions, however, we cannot expect to maintain a successful learning environment without consistently reviewing how we do things in order to ensure that our systems and processes continue to serve the best interests of our students. Accordingly, 2012 saw considerable reflection on the improvement priorities identified in our school planning, our leadership and management structures and the means through which our human, financial and physical resources are allocated across the school. We are extremely excited by the results we have achieved, moving into 2013 confident that we have the resources, structures and teachers to realise our vision for our school and its students.

Whether it is through the work of our Learning and Support Team, the teachers of our High Achievers classes or through our strengthening partnership with our partner primary schools and neighbouring high schools which form the Lismore Community of Secondary Schools, we stand by our vision for Richmond River High School.

We seek to produce well rounded and successful citizens able to take up positive and productive roles in the 21st century. Because of this we provide quality teaching, innovative programs and excellent opportunities which lead to student success. Our staff take pride in their achievements in a collaborative and supportive learning environment.

Mr Michael Hensley
Deputy Principal

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.

Ms Mary-Jane Pell
Principal (Relieving)

P &d C and/or School Council message

The Parents and Citizens Association of Richmond River High School has a well established cooperative relationship with the school executive and its staff. We as the parent body are encouraged to have an active involvement in all aspects of school life. The P and C has an active role in policy development and reviews, interview panels for school appointments and committees to do with school management.

We recognise the outstanding achievement of our students through awards at formal assemblies.

Our parents and carers have connections with our school in many ways. They help in the canteen, on excursions, at socials, tutoring, acting as readers and scribes for exams, assist at carnivals, open nights and student orientations, transport students to out of school activities as well as assisting with drama and musical performances. Parents and carers have been panel members for the Year 10 Oral Presentations and the Year 8 Personal Interest Projects.

Parent support is important and we hope to build up our numbers and involve as many parents and carers in our activities as possible.

Mrs Tanya Harvey
Student representative’s message

The Student Representative Council (SRC) continually demonstrates a commitment to the promotion of visual student leadership. We provide practical and financial support for the core values of student success (SRC sponsorship of student school representatives), excellent opportunities (funding of improvements to the school physical environment), innovative programs (provides student voice in the development of school policies) and quality teaching (purchase of teaching resources).

The SRC organises a school social each term and this is the primary source of income. These funds enable the SRC to sponsor a diversity of opportunities for student success.

In 2012 the SRC assisted financially

- The RRHS softball team, for their travel as they made it to the finals
- Our senior and junior debating team as they were the regional champions, and required sponsorship to progress on
- students to attend the World Vision Leaders Convention on the Gold Coast
- the Global Citizenship group, and holding a stall at the local lantern parade.
- purchasing and gifting flowers to patients at Lismore Base Hospital in memory of Mrs Campton
- subsidised 20 students to attend the GRIP Leadership conference at Tweed Heads
- Purchased 25 school blazers for use at formal occasions.

The SRC embraces the excellent opportunities provided through interschool meetings. In 2012 we organised and hosted the Regional SRC meeting where students from a variety of schools came to RRHS and discussed the effectiveness of the SRC and planned for future initiatives to be implemented.

Josie Coles and Damon Lewis were nominated as our Regional Representatives and attend the SRC State Conference in June 2012

The SRC leads the student body in maintaining very strong community participation through the Anzac Day march, Daffodil Day and Shave for a Cure for the Cancer Council, the Salvation Army Red Shield Appeal, the Rescue Helicopter Appeal, R U OK Day and Remembrance Day.

The SRC enjoyed a productive relationship with the senior executive regarding the school environment, assemblies and school representation within the community.

In 2012 the SRC election process and school captain election process was amended. These two processes are now separate elections. This has led to the rewriting of the Constitution and has allowed each year group to have six elected members, making the student voice for each year stronger.

2013 promises to be an energetic year in which we will continue to promote positive student leadership.

Ms Kay Varley

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>478</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Enrolments Chart]
Management of non-attendance

2012 saw the continuation of procedures set in place over the past few years. The early intervention by Year Advisers has helped to address attendance issues with students in a supportive and welfare orientated form.

This has allowed the Deputy Principals to concentrate on the identified students with more serious attendance issues and develop plans to address and resolve. This is proving to be successful in most cases.

These processes have also highlighted a number of issues around fractional truancy which should be addressed by the implementation of a Daily Year Meeting structure in 2013 which will provide staff the opportunity to work together as a coordinated team to address the issue of fractional truancy.

Post-school destinations

Of the 111 students who completed their studies for Year 12 in 2012, 103 completed the exit survey on which our data is based. In a positive result, 42% of students indicated their intention to pursue tertiary studies, which is comparable to figures from previous years, and above the state average. Meanwhile, 17% of students indicated they would pursue further study at TAFE.

A significant proportion of students (32%) indicated they were entering employment, whether in the form of an apprenticeship or traineeship position. Overall, it is extremely pleasing that 91% of students were able to describe clear educational and career goals which they had set themselves over the next two years.

Year 12 students undertaking vocational or trade training

Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses continue to be a popular option for Stage 6 students at Richmond River High School. In 2012, 25% of our Year 12 students undertook VET training, participating in one or more of the following courses: Construction, Information Technology, Primary Industries and Hospitality.

Year 12 students attaining HSC or equivalent vocational educational qualification

Increasing numbers of our graduating students are achieving success through vocational education, with 39% of Year 12 students attaining an HSC or equivalent vocational educational qualification in 2012.

Students undertaking VET courses may choose to sit for the HSC examination. The 2012 cohort scored significantly above the state average in these exams.
**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</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Principal(s)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Teachers</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>53.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Emotional Disabilities</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Teacher Learning Assistance</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Librarian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsellor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Administrative and Support Staff</td>
<td>13.972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>73.872</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The National Education Agreement requires schools to report on Indigenous composition of their workforce. Three members of our staff identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

**Staff retention**

Richmond River High School has long benefitted from an experienced staff, many of whom are now moving towards retirement. In 2012 four teachers retired and one transferred to another school. This necessitated a total of five new permanently appointed teachers joining our staff.

Further to this, three teachers were appointed through expression of interest to cater to our growing numbers.

Finally, our executive team benefitted from the appointment of a new Head Teacher Science, Mr Brett Brice, along with the newly created Head Teacher Welfare, Mrs Louise Savins. One of our Deputy Principals, Mrs Dianne Williamson, was seconded to work on the consultation process for the proposed “Rivers College K-12” for most of 2012, and was relieved by our substantive Head Teacher CAPA, Mr Peter Howes.

**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>
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</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>30/11/2012</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward</td>
<td>$510522.66</td>
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<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
<td>685327.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>656856.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School and community sources</td>
<td>283788.96</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>27325.87</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trust receipts</td>
<td>46053.88</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canteen</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total income</strong></td>
<td>2209875.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Expenditure**           |          |
| Teaching and learning     |          |
| Key learning areas        | 221889.00|
| Excursions                | 118781.76|
| Extracurricular dissections | 85573.83 |
| Library                   | 16502.92 |
| Training and development  | 21496.53 |
| Tied funds                | 534699.57|
| Casual relief teachers    | 207215.49|
| Administration and office | 157680.49|
| School-operated canteen   | 0.00      |
| Utilities                 | 120325.01 |
| Maintenance               | 35440.92  |
| Trust accounts            | 48298.95  |
| Capital programs          | 76392.33  |
| **Total expenditure**     | 1644296.80|
| **Balance carried forward** | 565578.66 |

A full copy of the school’s 2012 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 2012**

**Achievements**

**Arts**
The Arts at Richmond River High School continued to shine within the school, region, state and nation. Students in Photography were recognised for their consistent entries into the Ilford National Competition School Section gaining second place in Australia for their consistency of entries with six students gaining certificates of merit. (Carly Parkinson, Issac Chambers, Deanna Batten, Yoshi Bockler Martin, Emma Light and Celsie Richardson). The outstanding work of Heidi Cierpiol in Visual Arts was evident with her topical series of pencil drawings being accepted into the Board of Studies Art Express exhibition. Students in music showed a depth of talent. The Year 12 Music class gained four Band 6’s in the HSC. Jordan Smith was nominated for the Board of Studies ENCORE Concert Program. Drama had three groups of students selected to perform at the Curtain Call, a regional showcasing of high quality drama pieces.

2012 saw innovation in The Arts and broadening of student talents and opportunities. Fifteen students participated on a weekly basis in a dynamic performance percussion group culminating in a stunning debut performance at the end of the year. The Year 12 Visual Art class were given first-hand experience of putting on a community art exhibition showcasing their HSC works at the Art’n’Stuff Gallery in Lismore over a three day period. Twenty students accepted an offer of a place in a gifted and talented songwriters group and enjoyed a workshop with professional singer/songwriter Mike McCarthy to extend their talents in Music performance and composition. Year 8 Elective Drama gave a performance of ‘Rob and the Hoods’ and playwright Aw Wei Wei worked on a production with Year 10 Drama. Music Concert Evenings for Year 8 Elective and Years 11 and 12 Music were held and enjoyed support from the students’ families and friends. Links with the Northern Rivers Conservatorium was established with a day of workshops for Year 9 Music students focusing on music technology and performance skills.

Our Arts students continued the school’s tradition of winning a plethora of awards and opportunities. Eden Monique Hull gained a place in the National Art School and studied one HSC unit of studio practice in Photography. Niall Robertson and Yoshi Bockler Martin gained prizes in the Bentley Art Show and the school’s Visual Arts and Photography students received numerous second prizes in the Coraki Art and Photography Show. Year 10 student Jaeden Ogsten gained many fans whilst performing at the DEC State Principals Conference, Deputy Principals Conference, WEIL Conference and at the LCOSS information evening. Deanna and Julia Batten from Year 9 were selected as the winners of the under 15’s Youth mentorship from the Mullumbimby Music Festival. We contributed to the Our Kids Christmas CD for sick children with 10 Music students recording a piece of music for this.

The Arts looks forward to continuing to expand its links with industry professionals and showcasing students’ works in the larger community in 2013.

Ms Sharon McKay

Sport

Richmond River High School takes pride in providing students with many opportunities in school sport. The New South Wales Combined High Schools Knock-out competition gives 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 promotes 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 2012 we provided Zone and Regional Managers in Volleyball, Touch Football, Beach Volleyball, Soccer, Softball, Baseball, Hockey, Basketball and Cross Country. Without this unique characteristic our school would not produce the many marvelous results and provide the opportunity for students of all socio-economic backgrounds to experience sport at a higher level.

Our Annual Sport Awards Ceremony is a very popular part of the school calendar. The format of the awards included performances by our talented students, our ex-student and past Sports Person of the Year in 2008, Maxine Amor, as guest speaker and a slideshow on the Year’s achievements. Over 160 students received recognition for their efforts in Sport.

In 2012 Laura Knight was awarded the Pierre De Courbetin Olympic Award for Sporting Excellence. Laura also won the Senior Female Sportsperson with participation in a wide range of sports including, Athletics, Softball to State level, Touch Football, Beach Volleyball, Basketball, Volleyball, Soccer and Netball.

Senior Male Sports Person of the Year went to Zach Wilson with excellent participation in Open Rugby League, Volleyball, Open and Zone Basketball, Open Touch Football, Open Soccer and Athletics Age Champion.

Anna-Leeza Hull was awarded the Junior Female Sportsperson performing with the following amazing list:

* Zone Swimming Age Champion
* North Coast Region Swimming
* Age Champion Athletics
* Zone Athletics
* Age Champion Zone Athletics
* North Coast Region Athletics

* State Athletics
* Age Champion Cross-country
* Zone Cross-Country
* Age Champion Zone Cross-country
* North Coast Region Cross-country
* State Cross-country
* Australasian Schools Cup Cycling Finals Champion

Charlie Morris received the Junior Male Sportsperson trophy for his prowess and commitment in Zone and Regional AFL, Athletics, Volleyball and Beach Volleyball, Basketball, Athletics and Cross Country. We also distributed 31 Sporting Excellence Medallions for students who represented in numerous sports throughout the year.

In 2012 we introduced a Rugby League perpetual shield, The French Shield, which was presented to most valuable player Nathan Perren. A further new award was the Premier’s Sporting Challenge Medal which went to Luke Tonks for outstanding effort from a junior student. Our Northern Rivers Cricketer of the Year was awarded to Damien Vidler.

In the sport of Boys Open Softball we became the North Coast Champions and travelled to the NSW State finals in Newcastle. We also had students represent in North Coast teams at State level in Athletics, Australian Rules, Girls Cricket, Baseball, Boys Soccer, Boys Hockey, Swimming, Cross Country, Softball and Volleyball. Dean Gillespie was chosen in the CHS State Softball Team and was awarded a RRHS and North Coast Sporting Blue.
Year 7 took part in a range of sports at the Gala Day at Evans River K-12 School. Year 8 went to Kadina High School for their Gala Sports Day. Our three school carnivals of Swimming, Cross Country and Athletics were very well supported with over 75% student attendance and participation.

**Competitions and Awards**

Richmond River High School maintained its successful record in a range of state and national competitions during 2012. Both of our junior debating teams, drawn from Years 7 and 8, and Years 9 and 10, became Zone Champions. Our senior debaters (Years 11 and 12) went one step further to become Regional Champions.

Comparable levels of success were achieved by our Model United Nations team, representing Norway to be placed second in the Northern Rivers / South East Queensland zone. Emerald Moon of Year 12 was selected to become part of the team that went on to win the National MUNA Final in Canberra.

Meanwhile, another Year 12 student, Alice Fleetwood, won the North Coast Regional Final in the Sydney Morning Herald Plain Speaking Competition.

Further success was achieved by our Tournament of the Minds team who were awarded Honours at a regional level in the language literature section. Also, our Mock Trial team became Regional finalists.

Our school’s annual participation in the Lismore Show saw our students achieve first place in the Lightweight Calves division, with honourable mention in other divisions. Calves prepared by our students achieved some of the highest sale prices in the show. Congratulations to Madi Riley, Grace Moreton, Ashleigh Smith and Jake Noble for their fine efforts.

Our students, similarly, continued to gain recognition at community, regional, state and national levels. Alice Fleetwood became the tenth recipient from Richmond River High School of the Minister’s Award for Excellence in Student Achievement, based on her high levels of academic achievement and her involvement in a range of community activities.

Alice, along with Zoe Galea, also went on to become a finalist in the Zonta Young Women in Public Affairs competition, an event in which our school has an ongoing tradition of success. Josie Coles also became a finalist in the Lions Youth of the Year competition.

Finally, our school’s association with the annual Lismore City Council Kids in the Community awards night revealed the breadth of community interest among our students. Three students received awards respectively for “Caring for Others” and “Achieving Against the Odds”, two respectively for “Serving Our Community” and “Leading Peers”, while individual students were also recognized for issues such as the environment, charity and cultural diversity. A total of 14 students were recognized.
Leadership

Our school enjoys a strong and dynamic tradition of student leadership, based on our well established leadership groups, the Student Representative Council, Leo’s and the Student Equity Group. Whole school student leaders have traditionally been drawn from Year 12 SRC membership.

During 2012, the process through which School Captains would be elected was reviewed and formalized by the Principal. Henceforth, our formally elected Student Leadership Team would consist of six senior students, the boy and girl School Captains were to be drawn from Year 12, while two girl Vice Captains and two boy Vice Captains would be drawn from Year 11.

All students from these year groups would be free to nominate, provided these nominations were seconded by another student or teacher. A committee of staff, students and community representatives would then assess all applicants based on set criteria. A total of no more than 12 candidates would then be required to present their case to a full staff and student assembly, with a formal election process to follow.

Congratulations are extended to our first formally elected Student Leadership Team for 2013: School Captains Zoe Galea and Sam Nilon, along with Vice Captains Josie Coles, Chelsea Mangan, Damon Lewis and Oliver James.

Academic

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

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

Year 7: from Band 4 (lowest) to Band 9 (highest for Year 7)
Year 9: from Band 5 (lowest) to Band 10 (highest for Year 9)

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

The My School website provides detailed information and data for national literacy and numeracy testing (NAPLAN).

Click on the link http://www.myschool.edu.au and enter the school name in the Find a school and select GO.

Significant programs and initiatives

Aboriginal education

While Richmond River High School caters to a relatively small component of students who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander compared to neighbouring schools, we still consider Aboriginal education as “our business”. Our school leadership team has benefitted enormously from engaging with the ‘Stronger Smarter’ school leadership philosophy, with its strong emphasis on closing the gap between indigenous and non indigenous student levels of achievement.

Our school leaders have worked with staff and students to enhance our distinctive sense of a Richmond River High School culture which is inclusive, tolerant and based on high expectations for all members of our school community. This strong cultural focus, in turn, provides our school community with the platform upon which to acknowledge and celebrate the cultural perspectives our indigenous students apply to their experience of school.
Our whole school focus on embracing and celebrating different cultural perspectives, and in particular those of indigenous students, can be seen not only in the Aboriginal perspectives embedded into teaching and learning programs in all subject areas, but also in the Acknowledgement of Country which prefaces all of our formal assemblies, our re-engagement with explicit Positive Behaviour for Learning based on our core school values of self reliance, acceptance, respect and social responsibility and the range of extra-curricular opportunities offered to indigenous students at our school.

Mrs Nancy Hamer, our Norta Norta Coordinator, has ensured that Aboriginal cultural identity complements student success at our school. Students at our school participated in the sixth annual ‘National Close the Gap Day’. This is the biggest national event addressing health inequalities between indigenous and non indigenous Australians. Students, teachers and community members examined the linkage of health with educational success. Indigenous students have also benefitted from programs offered by Southern Cross University, the Gold Coast Titans Rugby League Club, and the National Rugby League, which have seen high profile speakers of indigenous heritage showing by their own example the many pathways to success that are open to young indigenous people.

Further, our Learning and Support Team continued to offer in class tutoring targeting Years 7 and 8 students who were achieving below national benchmarks in literacy and numeracy. Each student received a combination of withdrawal and classroom assistance from a trained teacher, providing excellent opportunities for students to improve their learning outcomes. This has proven to be a particularly positive experience for many of our indigenous students.

**Multicultural education**

The community from which Richmond River High School draws its students is not significantly “multicultural” in the sense of different countries of origin, but it is certainly “multicultural” in the sense of a diverse community holding a range of “world views”. Our students bring with them perspectives ranging from the traditional and conservative to the alternative and eclectic. Accordingly, our school’s mission statement emphasises the values of self reliance, acceptance, respect and social responsibility.

These values, based on our “multicultural” sense of school identity, translate into the learning experiences of our students in many ways. Our Student Equity Group organise an annual ‘Harmony Day’ which celebrates tolerance and acceptance of diversity in terms of culture and sexuality. Year 8 students completing their Personal Interest Projects are encouraged to draw on different cultural and world view perspectives in the completion of their work, resulting in outstanding visual art works, musical pieces, culinary extravaganzas and environmental investigations. Senior students completing Cultural Studies as part of their HSC participate in an annual visit to our local Hare Krishna temple – Cultural Studies generally renders some of our best HSC results every year.

In terms of supporting our students positive ongoing interaction, our approach to the DEC 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 fulfill their mandatory requirements in line with our core values.

**Transition**

Our school has always benefitted from the diversity of our drawing area, which incorporates parts of Lismore and a far flung range of rural communities, totaling some 27 partner primary schools. One of our great challenges has been to ensure a smooth transition from primary school into high school for our students. Indeed, this has become one of our key strategies for development within our School Improvement Plan (2012 – 14).
Accordingly, in 2012, a team led by Relieving Deputy Principal Peter Howes was successful in gaining $25,000 funding from Student Engagement in order to implement a transition program based on middle school pedagogy and online learning. The transition program was given the working title “Connected River Community” and focused on the use of the ‘Edmodo’ online learning facility as a means to connect teachers and students in Years 7 and 8 at Richmond River High School with teachers and Years 5 and 6 students across our partner primary schools in preparing and sharing units of work on common themes. The program also has potential for “virtual lessons” across participating schools using smart board technology.

As part of the external funding agreement, representatives from all schools participating in the Connected River Community attended a Middle Schooling Conference in Sydney over two days in September. The conference proved to be an invaluable opportunity for teachers across our schools to share expertise and enhance their capacity to engage students in the middle years of schooling through our agreed online format.

Although still in its early stages, this significant initiative is already yielding significant positive outcomes in terms of a more positive transition experience for students entering Year 7, and the development of strong and dynamic links between Richmond River High School and its partner primary schools.

**Learning Support**

Richmond River High School is proudly public and comprehensive. We cater for students from a diverse community, many of whom live with significant challenges impacting on their ability to engage effectively with learning. Accordingly, under the leadership of our Head Teacher Welfare, Louise Savins, the systems and procedures through which our Learning and Support Team operate have been significantly revised in 2012, in accordance with our School Improvement Plan (2012 – 14) and mandated recommendations from our School Review in 2011.

Our school’s Learning and Support Team, led by Ms Savins, consists of the school’s Senior Executive, our School Counsellor, our Learning Support Teachers, School Learning Support Officer and our Student Support Officer.

Ms Savins coordinates available financial and human resources and has implemented a range of intervention programs and alternate curriculum options to support the individual learning plans. In 2012 the Learning Centre was established in the library, where SLSO support is offered to improve learning outcomes for identified students. It also coordinates with the Maths KLA to run the ‘Flash Maths’ program across Year 7-9 for students requiring additional numeracy support.

The Work In Schools Program (WISP) and ‘Green Team’ kicked off, and the Chrysalis and Beautiful Programs were implemented to support female students. The anti-bullying policy is in the process of updating and review ready for community consultation.

Our two Learning Support Teachers, Jane Ryan and Susie Hancock, liaise between students with identified needs, their families and relevant staff at school and at Regional level to plan on how best to allocate resources available to the school in order to meet the learning needs of these students. This vital planning work is the “engine” driving the ongoing effectiveness of the Learning and Support Team.
The School Counsellor, Carl Moore provides invaluable professional service to students in need and in guiding the Learning and Support Team with identification of specific student needs. In 2012 RRHS has acquired three new Student support positions - a permanent School Learning Support Officer, Cathy Tavener who coordinates the learning centre and SLSO timetabling, a Student Support Officer, Scott Harrison who provides coordinated and incidental support to students in need, and a Transition Officer, Lachlan Klose who supports the transition of students from school to employment prior to Year 12.

The Senior Executive continues to lead planning for students whose disengagement with learning is expressed through unacceptable behaviour.

Overall, with improved communication of planning for identified students to teaching staff, we are able to focus more on curriculum delivery and pedagogy, and less on behaviour management. The emergent success of the Learning and Support Team is reflected in the improved engagement of disengaged students and the relative decline in our suspension rates during 2012.

School Culture

During 2011, our staff spent a considerable amount of time developing a “mission statement”, which is essentially a shared statement of what the purpose of our work as teachers was. We agreed that we all wanted to provide a rich and dynamic learning environment which is safe and caring, and which promotes the values of self reliance, acceptance, respect and social responsibility.

We also developed a “vision statement” in which we set out our ultimate aspirations for Richmond River High School. We wanted our students to leave our school as well rounded and successful citizens of the 21st century. In order for this to be the case, our classrooms need to be characterized by quality teaching, innovative programs, excellent opportunities and student success. Staff were also clear that they wanted to take pride in their own achievements in a collaborative and supportive environment.

In 2012, our teachers agreed that they wanted to spend more time and energy on curriculum delivery and pedagogy, and less time dealing with the impact of disengaged learners. Essentially, there still appeared to be a gap between our sense of purpose, our “mission”, and what we wanted to achieve, our “vision”. Accordingly, members of our executive team, led by Deputy Principal Michael Hensley, drew on their learning from the Stronger Smarter leadership course, and in particular the metaphor of the palm tree as a means of representing the strength of a school’s culture.

The roots of the tree represented the sense of purpose shared by all staff, while the foliage at the top of the tree represented the health of the desired vision. The trunk of the tree represented the daily rituals observed by all stakeholders which linked their sense of purpose with their vision. As a group, our staff considered the things they could all do together which would allow our school to most effectively harness the strength of the group to realize its vision.

Staff identified a range of established systems and processes already existing in our school which were inconsistently engaged with. These identified systems and processes fell within the broad categories of communication, student management and meeting deadlines. During terms two, three and four, one aspect of these systems or processes was identified as the “weekly coconut”, and the success of a staff member in implementing these was celebrated during our weekly Friday morning tea.

The outcome was an emergent dynamic school culture in which the systems and processes within the school were acknowledged as the means through which all staff could invest their individual strengths and support each other in order to realize our collective vision for our school and its students.
Progress on 2012 targets

Target 1: Increase from 88% to 95% of partner primary school students choose to attend Richmond River High School in Year 7.

Our achievements include:

- Positive working relationships with partner primary schools enhanced through shared professional learning and on line teaching and learning programs.
- All Year 7 students (2013) have completed a portfolio of work, either via edmodo or hard copy based on shared ‘Connected River Community’ teaching and learning programs.
- Year 7 students placed in 2013 High Achiever class have common skills developed during Year 6 through ‘Connected River Community’ learning.
- All Year 7 students have been appropriately placed in classes for 2013.

Target 2: 100% of Stages 5 and 6 students are supported by a planned transition process to post school learning and / or working opportunities.

Our achievements include:

- A Transition Advisor has been appointed and has received DEC delivered training. The position has been supported by the school through a 0.4 relief of teaching allocation.
- Identified students in Stages 5 and 6 benefit from individual mentoring from the Transition Advisor. All students plan their pattern of study with a clear post-school outcome in mind.
- Reduced behavioural issues from these students, coupled with improved engagement with learning.

Target 3: All staff incorporate strategies devised by the Learning and Support Team (LaST) into teaching programs to support access to curriculum for identified students.

Our achievements include:

- Planning for students with identified learning needs is communicated to all staff via email and weekly bulletins. All faculties have designated staff member whose responsibility is to disseminate planning.
- Teaching and learning programs across all KLA’s include teaching strategies catering to students with identified needs.
- Faculty meeting minutes reflect regular discussion of LaST planning.
- Improved engagement in learning by students on LaST planning, coupled with fewer RISC entries.

Target 4: Key functions across the school are completed efficiently as per role statements.

Our achievements include:

- All executive participated in a development weekend during which an executive team mission and vision statement was developed which, in turn, informed the development of discussion and decision making protocols.
- All executive developed a role statement based on an Accountability Matrix developed by the entire executive team.
- All executive participated in individual executive coaching focusing on the realisation of role statements and contribution to executive mission and vision statement.

Target 5: 85% of whole school tasks are efficiently and sustainably completed.

Our achievements include:

- Executive team worked collaboratively to develop an Accountability Matrix, aligning individual executive role statements with a clear articulation and definition of all
functions to be completed across the school on an ongoing basis.

- Completion for all functions to be completed across the school defined in terms of ‘accountability’, ‘responsibility’ and ‘consultation’

**Target 6: All school faculty plans demonstrate a clear alignment with school improvement priorities.**

**Our achievements include:**

- Two executive meetings devoted to supporting linkage of faculty planning to priorities identified in School Improvement Plan (2012 – 14). Head Teachers shared faculty planning with colleagues, demonstrating alignment with school priorities.

- Executive Assessment Review Scheme (EARS) process revised to further support alignment of faculty planning with school planning.

- All budget submissions aligned to faculty and whole school priorities.

**School evaluation**

NSW public schools conduct evaluation to support the effective implementation of the school plan. In 2012 our school carried out evaluation of leadership and management.

**Background**

In the two years prior to 2012, Richmond River High School had experienced considerable and relatively unprecedented turnover of staff, including executive, given the cumulative impact of retirements combined with transfers and promotions. Consequently, given the departure of many key members of staff, an evaluation of executive role statements and whole school responsibilities became necessary in order to ensure the ongoing smooth functioning of the school.

Clarity in executive role statements was also identified as an area of concern in our 2011 School Review.

Under the leadership of Deputy Principal Michael Hensley, the executive team participated in an executive team development weekend, facilitated by retired School Education Director Toni Hughes. During this weekend, an executive team mission and vision statement was devised which would, in turn, prioritise our engagement with issues across the school.

Coupled with this was our engagement with the Accountability Matrix, in which all functions to be addressed across the school were articulated and defined in terms of who was ‘accountable’, who was ‘responsible’ and who was ‘consulted’. This work then formed the basis on which all executive role statements were rewritten.

**Findings and conclusions**

Our work with the Accountability Matrix revealed an element of imbalance across the executive in terms of whole school functions. It also revealed some shortcomings in our completion of key functions across the school in terms of accountability, responsibility and consultation, along with what an appropriate balance between the three should look like.

The above was particularly the case in the following areas:

- Learning and Support Team
- Finance Committee
- School planning and budgeting
- Formal assemblies
- Praise and merit scheme

**Future directions**

Our executive team have worked to ensure there is an equitable and sustainable spread of accountability, responsibility and consultation in all of the above areas. In particular, we will be focusing on ongoing developmental work on school and faculty planning and budgeting through our EARS processes and through
coordinated professional learning in support of this and other identified whole school priorities.

The above is outlined in detail in our School Improvement Plan (2012 – 14) under our ‘Leadership and Management’ priority area.

Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction

In 2012 the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school. Their responses are presented below.

Parent views as represented by the P and C, and reinforced by the consistent feedback from parents when phoned by both Deputy Principals indicated an ongoing concern with student compliance with the school's expectations regarding uniform, the school’s capacity to follow up on student truancy and the school’s capacity to manage unacceptable behaviour by means other than formal suspension from school.

Student views were sought through a range of student forums conducted with representative groups of students from each year group. These groups of students expressed their concern with levels of aggression being displayed by a small group of students, the presence of illegal substances within the school and the inappropriate manner in which some students chose to wear aspects of their uniform.

Teacher views were sought through workshops conducted during staff development days during terms two, three and four. Teachers continued to express concerns about the impact of disengaged learners on teaching and learning.

The school has responded to the above concerns through the following strategies:

- A daily Year meeting for all students in Years 7 to 10, to be implemented in 2013, will allow staff to effectively follow up on reported instances of truancy from the previous day, along with students not complying with uniform expectations.
- A revised approach to Positive Behaviour for Learning, along with increased staff uptake of ‘Mindfulness’ as a practice to focus students on learning to the exclusion of pre existing anxieties will promote our school values of acceptance, social responsibility and tolerance.
- The above revision of the school’s engagement with Positive Behaviour for Learning forms the first step in the process of the school’s review of its discipline policy as per the mandated recommendations of the 2011 School Review.
- A drug education program was implemented, beginning with student wellbeing days conducted during Term 4 of 2012 for Years 7 to 10, and continuing with aspects of curriculum delivery in PE classes during 2013.

Professional learning

During 2012, all of our staff benefitted from a range of professional learning activities, both internally and externally delivered. The areas of focus included syllabus implementation, leadership, quality teaching, student welfare, catering to gifted and talented students, first aid and effective engagement with whole school policies and procedures.

Average spending on each staff member in terms of professional learning in 2012 figured at $906.00. Overall, our total expenditure on professional learning for the year was $57,101.00.

The above expenditure included spending on three new scheme teachers seeking to gain accreditation through the Institute of Teachers. To date, we have eight new scheme teachers on staff who are required to maintain accreditation at Professional Competence.

Our Staff Development Days proved to have a significant impact on the ways in which staff approach their work in our school. We continued to refine our mission and vision statements, with a view to aligning our work in the most effective way in order to meet our most pressing identified
challenge – the impact of disengaged learners on overall teaching and learning.

This overarching theme informed our work as a team on our engagement with policy and procedures across the school, our engagement with ‘Mindfulness’, our re-engagement with Positive Behaviour for Learning and the many ways through which all of our staff could support the priority areas identified in our School Improvement Plan (2012 – 2014).

School planning 2012—2014

The school planning policy provides direction for the preparation and implementation of school plans including the identification of priority areas, intended outcomes and targets that are consistent with the NSW State Plan and the Department’s planning documents.

School priority 1: Engagement and attainment

Outcome for 2012–2014

A common approach to programming and assessment embeds best practice in teaching and learning, supported by a cohesive link between homework and assessment.

2013 Targets to achieve this outcome include:

- All faculties reflect agreed elements of commonality when writing teaching and learning programs and accompanying assessment tasks. These are aligned through scope and sequence documentation also using a common proforma.
- All staff have access to delivering quality curriculum
- All assessment tasks attempted by RRHS students are preceded and supported by at least two homework tasks relevant to the skills or knowledge being assessed.
- Greater proportions of students achieving in the upper bands in Semester Reports

Strategies to achieve these targets include:

- Share identified scope and sequence best practice in PDHPE.
- Cross faculty focus group to devise common proforma to scope and sequence and assessments for all years.
- Engage with QT framework.
- Revised Homework Policy articulates link between assessment tasks and specific homework tasks which build relevant skills and knowledge.
- Policy to contain a definition of the nature and purpose of homework.
- Investigate capacity of SBSR to provide data to measure achievement of targets.
- Engage in QT framework re backward mapping (PL).

School priority 2: Leadership and management

Outcome for 2012–2014

Leadership roles and procedures are aligned with the RRHS Executive Team Mission and Vision statements.

2013 Targets to achieve this outcome include:

- 100% of staff are fully and authentically engaged with the TARS and EARS process and the development of Professional Learning Plans in line with school priorities.
- 100% of staff consistently manage student behaviour according to the school’s discipline policy

Strategies to achieve these targets include:

- Development of whole school Professional Learning Plan.
- Development of individual Professional Learning Plans.
- Development and implementation of revised TARS and EARS policy
- Use of GROW model as basis for TARS and EARS.
- New Scheme Teacher Orientation.
Daily Year Meetings provides immediate follow up for truancy, uniform and Executive Detentions.

PBL revised and taught explicitly during Morning Muster.

Mindfulness lessons / presentations during Morning Muster.

Review of SAM Room procedures.

Discipline policy revised in line with revised PBL

School priority 3: Literacy and numeracy

Outcome for 2012–2014

Literacy and Numeracy teaching strategies are evident in teaching programs across all KLA’s

2013 Targets to achieve this outcome include:

- 100% of faculties engage in TPL to build the capacity to meet the literacy and numeracy needs of students.

Strategies to achieve these targets include:

- Staff meetings delivering TPL on NAPLAN testing and data analysis.
- Faculty planning sessions/extended Faculty TPL meetings.
- Individual Professional learning Plans which correlate to Literacy and Numeracy priorities.
- Development and implementation of a HSC marking policy.
- Scaffolding of Stage 6 assessment tasks to ensure student understanding and employment of benchmarking practices.

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.