



Annual Report 2019





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Executive Director Report



This report outlines the operations of Worawa Aboriginal College for the 2019 school year.

Founded in 1983 by Aboriginal visionary Hyllus Maris, Worawa is owned and governed by Aboriginal people. Registered with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) as a Specialist Girls School, the specialist nature of the College's operations lie in its integrated model of education, culture and wellbeing.

Combining personal development, intensive health and well-being programs with strong formal education principles and cultural activities led by Aboriginal Elders. In 2017 Worawa amended its registration from a middle school to a senior secondary school. Delivery of the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) commenced in 2018.

At the formal opening of the College in 1983, founding Patron, Pastor Sir Douglas Nicholls said: "Aboriginal children must be educated in the way of our People. They must learn their history, about their great ancestors, the language and the lore. It's time for them to know and understand themselves. They must also be educated in the ways of the society in which they live, in the very best of what it has to offer, so they can truly be a part, not only of Australia's past, but also its present and future..." Over the years the Worawa program has evolved, and continues to do so, to meet the education needs of First Nations children now and into the future.

The Worawa curriculum is underpinned by the Australian Curriculum and is carefully designed to ensure that approaches to knowledge and culture

are as inclusive as possible and build upon Aboriginal understandings and values. Pedagogical approaches give attention to Indigenous-focused pedagogies, with particular respect to knowledge illuminating Aboriginal ways of Knowing, Doing and Being.

The 2019 school year commenced with an enrolment of 69 students from Aboriginal communities across the country. We were particularly pleased to welcome back returning students – a tribute to them and their families for their commitment to education and a reflection of the strong partnership between the Worawa school community, Aboriginal communities, parents and students. Parents who send their children to Worawa wish to see them complete their secondary education and be prepared for future education and work opportunities, as well as taking on leadership roles back in their home community. Worawa staff work together and in partnership to provide students with positive experiences and support their engagement in learning.

Worawa values are Relationship, Responsibility, Respect and Rigour these reflect Aboriginal beliefs and values in relation to land and in a boarding education



environment, the issue of relationships is fundamental. The relationships that are developed and formed between students and staff provide a predictable secure base where students feel seen, heard, safe and secure. This provides an environment where students feel safe when they are appropriately challenged; facilitating learning experiences to help them explore and learn.

Throughout 2019 a key focus of the College was co-design of the Worawa Model of Wellbeing. Worawa has worked to evolve its wellbeing hub where research and evidence-based practices have led staff training to create a community of practice that can lead young Aboriginal women into their adult lives and beyond.

The 2019 Presentation Day was a particular celebration when we farewelled the College's first Year 12 graduates of the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL). Chairman Tom Bell spoke about the significance of this occasion when he said: 'It is with pride that we commend our first graduands of Senior VCAL 2019. Much more than a usual Senior VCAL, these students have spent long months away from home, boarding here with us, working to create lives that will positively impact their communities and families... they have achieved a senior level of education and through their own effort, they have increased their choices and the opportunities open to them.'

I wish to acknowledge with gratitude the commitment and support of all staff as well as external support services, for their outstanding support to students.

I am most grateful to the Worawa Advisory Committee under the leadership of Dr Martin Comte OAM for providing oversight and guidance in the delivery of a holistic education to young Aboriginal women with a focus on all three aspects of the school's integrated model: education, wellbeing and culture.

I wish to acknowledge the work of the Worawa Social and Emotional Wellbeing Advisory Committee under the leadership of Dr Karen Adams.

I sincerely thank the Board of Directors under the leadership of Mr Thomas Bell for their strategic advice and commitment to ensuring that Worawa Aboriginal College maintains its unique position in the Indigenous education landscape.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to the parents of all of the girls that have presented at Worawa and thank them for their trust in Worawa as their school of choice.

Dr Lois Peeler, AM
Worawa College Principal/Executive Director



Vision / Philosophical Statement

Sending young Aboriginal women out into the world with confidence in who they are, where they want to be and what they can contribute to their communities and to the wider world.

Worawa Aboriginal College will provide an education based on the best elements of both traditional Aboriginal and current Australian education, aiming to produce an Aboriginal person versed in her traditions and proud of her identity who has the tools and necessary qualifications to contribute effectively to the Australian community.

Worawa Statement Of Intent

Worawa Aboriginal College provides a holistic education and boarding experience for Aboriginal young women in the secondary schooling with emphases upon;

- Affirming and fostering students' pride in their cultural identity, knowledge and respect for their heritage, languages and place as part of the nation's diverse First Australian peoples
- Flourishing in a bi-cultural learning environment that provides pathways for life-long learning, participation and success in cross-cultural learning contexts
- Mastery of core learning skills, knowledge and understandings, with particular emphasis upon the acquisition and development of essential skills in literacy and numeracy
- Offering Aboriginal communities and families an education choice for their young women to participate in a mainstream education opportunity to achieve their full academic and intellectual potential
- Preparing and equipping young Aboriginal women with positive and optimistic attitudes and the life skills required for their futures in their home communities and the wider world
- Nurturing and developing students' creativity and self-expression, talents and capabilities, as well as their confidence and motivation to strive for excellence
- Developing students' personal self-confidence, respect, responsibility, stamina, rigour and commitment in all their pursuits, while also enabling and equipping them for making significant life choices
- Students being engaged, challenged and fulfilled through participating in Worawa's total education program and open and equipped to link with education opportunities at the College's partner schools
- Developing and maintaining good moral, emotional, mental and spiritual health and well-being as well and physical fitness
- Developing meaningful, respectful and quality relationships between students and between students and staff
- Providing students with opportunities for personalised learning through negotiation and development of personalised learning plans relating to academic, social, cultural emotional and physical learning
- Sending young Aboriginal women out into the world with confidence in who they are, where they want to be and what they can contribute to their communities and to the wider world.

Overarching Educational Strategies and Directions

Throughout 2019, focus was on consolidation of the teaching team and a comprehensive review of the skills sets and knowledge within the team to best meet existing and new student cohort needs.

Relational and responsive teaching skills, proficiency with subject expertise and the ability to scaffold and differentiate is an essential requirement.

From student selection, educational participation and through to completion and assessment, at every year level it is vital that there is a well-articulated approach that works towards building not only outcomes for students, families and communities but also the

reputational aspirations of the College within an evolving Aboriginal education context. The aim and purpose of Worawa education programs continues to be the development of every girl and young woman to reach her potential and to understand her strengths, confidence and sense of hope and opportunity in a culturally informed setting.





Learning and Teaching

The Worawa curriculum is based on the Australian Curriculum. The 'Worawa Way' an Aboriginal learning model grounded in Aboriginal values and ways of knowing, doing and being is used to shape the curriculum.

Worawa teaching staff are well equipped to ensure that Worawa achieves its primary objective to provide a total education program for young Aboriginal women. The College recognises the importance of its teaching staff in achieving optimal outcomes for its students Working with staff to be adaptable to the development of a responsive and at times a necessarily agile and reactive learning program that has appropriate review intervals has been the direction sought in 2019.

The overarching College theme of Cultural Connections is reflected in programs planned in each of the five Learning Centres throughout the year. The curriculum plan calls for Learning Centres for Languages, Mathematics, Science, The Arts and Health and Physical Education. Information Technology is available across all learning activities. The curriculum design is on a two-year pattern. This enables the following features:

1. Coverage of all curriculum areas for a given student
2. Flexibility of timetabling in response to different possible enrolment patterns
3. Suitability for Personalised Learning Plans

Worawa students present with varying levels of English proficiency and placement of students according to their level of educational attainment, age and literacy skills remain critical in targeting educational development of students across the ACARA curriculum. Teacher Aides assist in catering strategically to the needs of students at various levels of English language proficiency by providing in-class and individual support.

The Reading to Learn program provides literacy acceleration in context and develops the ability of all staff to identify and attend to the literacy needs of students. A continued focus on EAL/D awareness and skills across the entire teaching team remains. In 2019, the team has participated in training with Dr David Rose and will continue to do so for another 12 months to reinforce knowledge. This approach is designed to teach literacy skills across the curriculum from Physical Education to Maths.

Senior Secondary Certificate - Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL)

At the completion of 2019, five students graduated from Worawa Aboriginal College with a Senior VCAL qualification heralding their successful completion of Year 12. These students were primarily 'first in their family' to complete their senior secondary qualification. As well as their Certificate II in Community Services,

these students also achieved a number of accredited entry level industry qualifications. One student went on to complete her Certificate III in Business through a traineeship at Victoria Police Mooroolbark Station. A huge celebration and contribution to this student's goal of joining the ADF or NT Police.





Vocational Training for Senior Students

Apart from the required vocational component, VCAL students in years 10-11 had the opportunity to participate in Food Handling, First Aid and Barista training. Critical to a successful formula for preparation for full-time, part-time and traineeship work opportunities was the acquisition of entry level vocational qualifications as well as a deeper understanding of the social and professional expectations of contemporary work environments.

Senior students facilitated formal and informal meetings and were introduced to appropriate workplace presentation including attire, workplace communication modes and social expectations through participation in Pathways to Womanhood, a program designed to support young women to make a healthy transition to adulthood.

Transitions and Pathways

Worawa students undertake a targeted career education program in year 10 and along with their families are provided with curriculum advice and information on all senior secondary offerings provided by the school and its partners. Each student engaged with the College's Careers and Pathways program to introduce them to the possibilities available for further education or work opportunities.

During 2019 Worawa auspiced a small number of VET units through a local RTO to assist Year 10 students to develop competencies in food handling, barista and customer service to enhance skills needed for work experience in the Yarra Valley region. The College's Cadet Ranger Program which operates in partnership with the Healesville Sanctuary, also engaged in 2 units of competence from the Horticulture training package.

Senior Secondary Outcomes

In 2019 100% of Year 12 students successfully completed their qualification. All VCAL students successfully completed the Certificate II in Community Services or credits within this qualification.

Completing Year 12 students had the following goals in terms of post school destinations. 80% of students applied and were successful in gaining places at tertiary institutions.

Proposed destinations include:

- Employment – Teacher aide and mining
- Further Education – nursing, design, engineering, law

In all instances, students have deferred tertiary study so that they can work within their home community for 12 months and then pursue these opportunities in 2021. 80% of students are currently employed with the remaining 20% considering employment options.



Student Survey Outcomes

Student satisfaction surveys were conducted on Survey Monkey, across all College activities from engagement in sport and fitness, homework, catering and boarding programs.

Responses endorsed Worawa's approach to holistic education and commitment to students' educational needs and social, emotional, wellbeing.

Whilst identifying that schooling can be challenging at times, there was a resounding message that whilst adjustment to a different and more structured way of living, the majority of students understood the need and benefits of this as well as broad acknowledgment that Worawa offers unique opportunities.

Development of the Teaching Team

Advancing the teaching team is assisted by the use of highly customised Professional Development Plans which are based on a 2 year cycle. There are three pillars to these plans which include intra-school reconciliation, optimisation of student participation and team work.

These plans comply with the following AITSL standards:

- 2.4 Understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians
- 4.1 Support student participation
- 6.3 Engage with colleagues and improve practice



National Literacy and Numeracy Benchmarks

Percentage Of Year 7 and 9 Students Reaching National Literacy and Numeracy Benchmarks:

SUBJECT	YEAR LEVEL	2017	2018	2019
Reading	7	13%	34%	38%
	9	20%	57%	66%
Writing	7	26%	17%	16%
	9	40%	36%	50%
Spelling	7	40%	50%	65%
	9	50%	57%	50%
Grammar and Punctuation	7	20%	No data	36%
	9	30%	43%	50%
Numeracy	7	64%	42%	46%
	9	90%	71%	60%

Student Rates of Attendance

2019 Attendance Rates	
Year 7	89.17%
Year 8	84.41%
Year 9	82.38%
Year 10	89.77%
Year 11 VCAL	87.47%
Year 12 VCAL	89.95%
Whole of School	86.75%



Managing Student Non Attendance

Worawa Aboriginal College has a Student Attendance Monitoring and Management policy in place which provides student attendance requirements and management strategies.

Student school attendance is managed through a digital student management system, whereby attendance is marked for each class. The system also manages student movements between class and the school nurse or pastoral care worker. The College Registrar manages the overall responsibility for student attendance.

Students who are found to be consistently late to class or demonstrating class avoidance may be requested to attend an interview with the Head of Learning and Teaching, the Boarding Supervisor and the Principal for interview or to attend the Student Review Committee (SRC). The SRC determines strategies to be implemented to improve attendance. Parents and guardians are notified by the Principal where appropriate. Worawa has a School Nurse, Head of Student Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Worker who provide wellbeing support and health care to students.

Student Learning Outcomes (as outlined on the MySchool website)

2019										
	Reading		Persuasive Writing		Spelling		Grammar & Punctuation		Numeracy	
Year 7	424 395 - 453		355 321 - 389		439 409 - 469		405 373 - 438		418 390 - 445	
		ALL 546		ALL 513		ALL 546		ALL 542		ALL 554
Year 9	482 445 - 518		436 387 - 485		465 424 - 506		449 408 - 490		498 467 - 530	
		ALL 581		ALL 549		ALL 546		ALL 574		ALL 592

2018										
	Reading		Persuasive Writing		Spelling		Grammar & Punctuation		Numeracy	
Year 7	408 378 - 438		329 295 - 363		413 381 - 445		299 265 - 344		414 385 - 442	
		ALL 542		ALL 505		ALL 545		ALL 544		ALL 548
Year 9	490 463 - 518		423 386 - 460		490 459 - 521		447 416 - 479		502 478 - 527	
		ALL 584		ALL 542		ALL 583		ALL 581		ALL 596

2017										
	Reading		Persuasive Writing		Spelling		Grammar & Punctuation		Numeracy	
Year 7	394 366 - 421		373 343 - 404		402 374 - 431		344 374 - 431		435 409 - 462	
		ALL 545		ALL 513		ALL 550		ALL 542		ALL 554
Year 9	449 417 - 482		433 389 - 476		461 425 - 498		417 380 - 454		503 475 - 532	
		ALL 581		ALL 552		ALL 581		ALL 574		ALL 592

SIM Schools serving students from statistically similar backgrounds

ALL Australian schools' average

Student population below reporting threshold

Year level not tested

Selected school's average is:

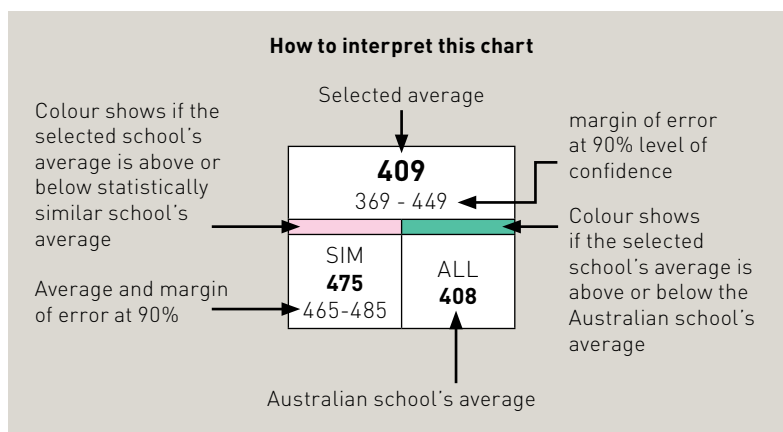
substantially above

above

close to

below

substantially below



Teachers Standards and Qualifications

All teaching staff hold registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching. In 2019 the academic qualifications held by staff included:

- Bachelor of Applied Science
- Bachelor of Art Education
- Bachelor of Arts
- Bachelor of Design
- Bachelor of Environmental Science
- Bachelor of Music
- Bachelor of Secondary Education
- Bachelor of Teaching
- Certificate IV in TAE
- Certificate of Education Integration Adie
- Diploma in Accounting
- Diploma in Community Services
- Diploma in Education
- Diploma in Management and Business Administration
- Graduate Diploma in Dance & Movement
- Graduate Diploma of Education (Secondary)
- Graduate Diploma in Teaching and Learning
- Graduate Certificate of TESOL
- Master of Counselling
- Master of Education
- Master of Education (International)
- Master of History
- Master of Special Education Needs
- Master of Teaching
- Post Graduate Certificate in Education



Leadership and Management

Worawa Aboriginal College operates within the current regulatory framework, on the principles of Aboriginal Self-Determination based on Aboriginal leadership and decision-making involving collective decision making approaches. The College has a multi-disciplinary approach to matters of student engagement, health and welfare. A Student Review Committee meets weekly

to monitor the progress of each student. The Head of Learning and Teaching is a member of the College Executive, which allows issues that relate to teacher satisfaction and development to be discussed and College strategies for continuous improvement to be enacted.

Workforce Composition

Workforce Composition	Non Indigenous		Indigenous	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Teaching Staff				
Principal				1
Teaching Staff FT	1	6		1
Teaching Staff PT		2		
Non Teaching Staff				
Specialist Support FT		1		
Specialist Support PT	1	6		2
Boarding Staff FT		5		1
Boarding Staff PT		11		
Admin & Clerical FT		1		
Admin & Clerical PT	1	2	1	1
Buildings & Other FT	1			
Buildings & Other PT	2	1		

Professional Learning

Worawa is a Professional Learning Community with Professional Learning Teams that meet weekly. Consistent with the philosophy of 'Walking Together', Worawa has a focus on 'continuous improvement' across all aspects of the College's operations.

The College conducts professional learning for all staff at the commencement and conclusion of each term. In addition to in-house professional learning activities, staff are released for professional development activities provided through affiliate organisations during the year. The Worawa integrated model of education includes professional development in aspects of health and wellbeing.

A whole-school approach to training and development in the Worawa Wellbeing Model has been a very important framework for the work of the College. A perpetual and important focus upon the training of all staff, and in particular teaching staff, to

provide culturally safe and culturally aware learning environments has again been a strong feature of the Worawa Professional Development calendar. A particular focus this year has been the development of the Worawa Model of Wellbeing.

An internal education committee which includes an ISV representative meets monthly, and teaching staff have representation on the Worawa Advisory Committee which reports to the College Board.

During 2019, \$59,303 was spent on staff professional learning.

School Financial Activity

Information on the school's financial activity has been provided to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC). The school community can access financial information from the ACNC website at <http://acnc.gov.au>.

School Income by Funding Source	
Revenue from government including capital grants	4,782,352
Donations and bequests	127,318
Fees and charges	46,513
Revenue from investments	57,696
Other revenue	102,137
Total Gross Income	5,116,016

Parent, Teacher and Community Satisfaction

Family/Community representatives are selected from student communities to chaperone students to and from the College. Chaperones typically spend two days on campus visiting classrooms, spending time in the boarding houses and having meals with students, enabling them to gain a good understanding of the College operations in the areas of Learning and Teaching, Boarding, Health and Wellbeing and extra-curricular activities. In addition the College conducts an annual School Community Forum for Worawa staff and carers/parents/families of students to workshop the year in review and plan for the coming year. Informal and anecdotal reports from families and agencies are positive. Interviews with families of students are available for viewing at www.worawa.vic.edu.au.







Worawa Aboriginal College

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We Believe in Education, Culture + Wellbeing