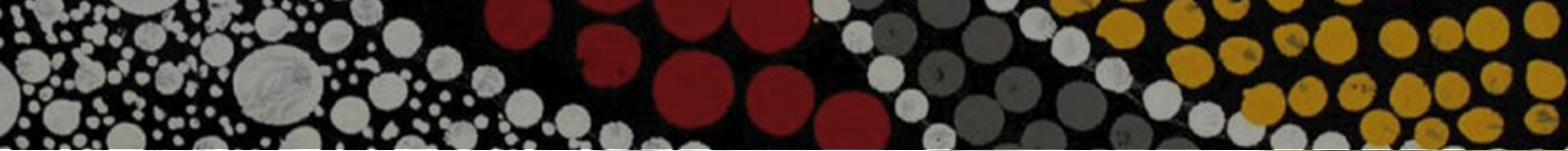




Annual Report 2016





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Executive Director Report

This report outlines the operations of Worawa Aboriginal College for the 2016 school year

Worawa Aboriginal College is Victoria's only Aboriginal owned school. An Aboriginal initiative, founded by Aboriginal visionary Hyllus Maris, Worawa commenced operation in 1983. An independent school, situated to the east of Melbourne on land that once formed part of the Coranderrk Aboriginal Reserve, Worawa is owned and governed by Aboriginal people.

Worawa Aboriginal College continues to honour the ideals of its founder, Aboriginal visionary Hyllus Maris who, at the official opening of Worawa said:

"..in this, the first Aboriginal school in Victoria, the educational curriculum has been specially designed to suit Aboriginal students to bring them to their full potential... Aboriginal culture will be imparted not only as a school subject in each class's timetable but as an integral part of every-day life at the school..."

Worawa caters exclusively for students in Years 7 – 10 providing a quality education in a safe, culturally supported boarding school environment for up to 70 Aboriginal young women from urban, regional and remote communities throughout Australia. Students have varied success in formal education and the College provides a number of support structures in recognition that progress may be difficult and uneven. The College has a multidisciplinary model of assessment and case conference and feedback to facilitate a shared understanding of a student's strengths, struggles and needs across developmental areas to inform a personalised learning plan for the student. This enables the College to deliver an intensively supported education for students that is both culturally supportive and adaptable to a range of post Year 10 educational and training pathways.

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 Indigenous ways of Knowing, Doing and Being. Indigenous ways of knowing involve learning from the land, supporting community interest, building from local language and history, respecting the knowledge and participation of Elders, working collaboratively and incorporating local ceremony and lore as appropriate.

This approach means that when working with Indigenous communities, non-Indigenous people must respect local knowledge and culture and not impose practices that act in contrary ways. At Worawa, rigorous learning has a particular meaning and includes pedagogical approaches that encourage cultural, critical and creative learning, structured personalised learning and high expectations in keeping with mainstream educational expectations.

Pedagogical approaches give particular attention to Indigenous-focused pedagogies, with particular respect to knowledge illuminating Aboriginal ways of Knowing, Doing, and Being. These reflect the communal and relational nature of Indigenous knowledge that connect individuals with family and kin, country, culture and spirituality. The College's culture curriculum utilises the calendar of Aboriginal community history, special events and celebrations



to provide a key focus for whole school and group activities which reinforces the learning. Central to Worawa's philosophy and practices is the concept of 'Walking Together'.

Our 2016 school year commenced with 60 students and 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 is a 7-10 Middle School. On completion of their studies at Worawa girls transition to further academic studies, VET/VCAL studies or the world of work. During their final year of studies at Worawa, girls are provided with the opportunity to participate in Work Experience and they undertake classes to help them prepare for future experiences, including interviews, development of a resume, subject and course selection. Staff members work with the students and their families to prepare an appropriate pathway for each girl. In 2016, 22 parents attended the annual School – Community Forum.

The holistic nature of the College's education, culture and wellbeing approach enables it to directly tackle 'Closing the Gap' priorities in education and contribute directly towards improving Indigenous retention, engagement, literacy and numeracy rates. Whilst a focus on student wellbeing is integrated across all of the College's curriculum and activities, specific wellbeing programs aim to equip Worawa students with the skills, values, knowledge and attitudes to enable them to focus on education and the ability to Walk in both Worlds.

Worawa staff work together and in partnership to provide students with positive experiences and structures that promote and protect their health

and social and emotional wellbeing and support their engagement in learning. Throughout 2016 student health care was delivered through a range of partners including Eastern Health, EACH Dental, Yarra Ranges Immunisation Services, Australian Audiology, Australian College of Optometry and other service providers who were key to the delivery of a comprehensive primary health care and mental health program. The College's approach to primary health care is underpinned by health education and a whole school approach to personal fitness, good nutrition and engagement in sport and physical activity.

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.

The Worawa Advisory Committee is one of a number of professional supports in the continued development of Worawa Aboriginal College. 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: academic, wellbeing and culture.

I sincerely thank the Board of Directors under the leadership of Mr Mark Thomson 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.

Lois Peeler, AM
Worawa College Executive Director & Elder

Worawa Vision and Mission statement

'Our children of today are our leaders of tomorrow' *(Pastor Doug Nicholls)*

Bubup-nganyin yalingbu nanggiti-nganyin buyburrung gurridhan. (Woiwurrung)

Our educational purpose is to create stronger communities through: 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.

Statement of Intent

Aboriginal College provides a holistic education and boarding experience for Aboriginal young women in the middle years of schooling (Years 7 – 10) 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.



Characteristics of Student Population

Students come from highly disadvantaged backgrounds and families are means tested against ABSTUDY requirements for eligibility under 'Home Conditions'. As a result of such testing many of the young people who meet the criteria are from communities/families experiencing one or more of the identified 'stress' factors and may be considered 'at risk'. Characteristics include:

- Parents / families who are low income and meet eligibility requirements for ABSTUDY.
- Students who display stress, anxiety or depression from personal trauma.
- Students having had a negative educational experience.
- Students referrals from community support services.
- A need for strong welfare / counselling support.

Students come from a range of schools and arrive with a range of educational challenges that include disengagement and interrupted education. Many of the young women present with complex issues.

The Worawa pedagogy is based on 'Improving the Learning' and is designed to respond to high achieving students as well as students who have experienced individual factors such as exposure to trauma, violence, family or community dysfunction, anti-social peer groups, lack of engagement in education and previous adverse experiences in formal education.

Recognising and redressing the effects of these factors with strong wellbeing and residential support is central to the Worawa model and a critical enabler of engagement and educational success.

Student Class Groupings

Class groupings are assigned according to students' literacy levels, as informed by PAT Reading and PM Benchmarking or PROBE 2. Advice as to within-class differentiation is also provided to teaching staff. Class groupings are complemented with a summary of the unique needs of each grouping as informed by the assessments.

Teachers use innovative approaches to ensure that the information imparted is delivered in a manner that provides relevance and understanding to the learning experience. By adding Indigenous perspectives across the curriculum and respecting Aboriginal ways of Knowing, Doing and Being, learners are able to connect with education in a meaningful way.



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.

The teaching staff at Worawa 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.

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 four-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
4. Accommodation of "orbiting" students – students who enter part way through a term.

Cross-curriculum priorities and General Capabilities are mapped across subject areas and, like many of the learning areas, form part of an integrated approach to curriculum delivery at Worawa. Similarly literacy, numeracy, information technology and Aboriginal perspectives are threaded through all subject areas. Culture and language are localized cross-curriculum priorities as is environmental studies. Students are exposed to current information technologies and critical thinking and conflict resolution strategies as well as relevant skills and attitudes that provide platforms for educational success. The incorporation of financial literacy into mathematics programs provides all students with skills and knowledge required beyond the classroom. Senior students' transition to adulthood is addressed in programs designed to support healthy transitions to adulthood including the College's unique Pathways to Womanhood program, designed to meet the present and future demands they will face in education and employment settings.



National Literacy And Numeracy Benchmarks

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

| SUBJECT | YEAR LEVEL | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |
|-------------------------|------------|------|------|------|
| Reading | 7 | 11% | 80% | 53% |
| | 9 | BRT* | 17% | 41% |
| Writing | 7 | 0% | 20% | 38% |
| | 9 | BRT* | 11% | 25% |
| Spelling | 7 | 0% | 20% | 46% |
| | 9 | BRT* | 17% | 34% |
| Grammar and Punctuation | 7 | 22% | 60% | 61% |
| | 9 | BRT* | 22% | 25% |
| Maths | 7 | 44% | 40% | 62% |
| | 9 | BRT* | 67% | 58% |

*Below Reporting Threshold

Student Learning Outcomes (as outlined on the MySchool website)

| 2015 | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| | Reading | | Persuasive Writing | | Spelling | | Grammar & Punctuation | | Numeracy | |
| Year 7 | 460 431 - 489 | | 428 395 - 461 | | 424 394 - 455 | | 439 406 - 472 | | 440 413 - 467 | |
| | | ALL 541 | | ALL 515 | | ALL 543 | | ALL 540 | | ALL 550 |
| Year 9 | 466 432 - 485 | | 387 338 - 409 | | 444 403 - 462 | | 405 389 - 460 | | 482 469 - 517 | |
| | | ALL 581 | | ALL 549 | | ALL 580 | | ALL 569 | | ALL 589 |

SIM Schools serving students from statistically similar backgrounds

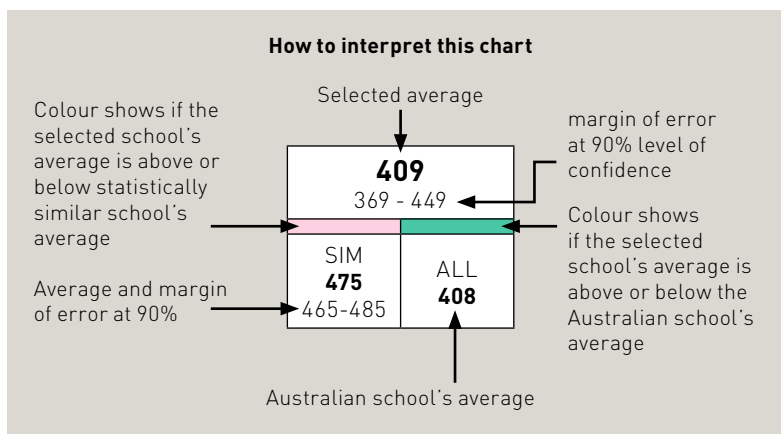
ALL Australian schools' average

Student population below reporting threshold

Year level not tested

Selected school's average is:

- substantially above**
- above**
- close to**
- below**
- substantially below**



Student Attendance

As a secondary school, students transition to Worawa from mainstream schools. For many their school experience may have been negative with attendance histories that may range from regular at best, to intermittent and irregular at worst. Worawa's boarding program provides a learning environment where routine is valued and class attendance closely monitored.

Many of young women that attend Worawa are from remote communities where Aboriginal culture is deeply embedded in community life and Aboriginal language is the norm. Worawa acknowledges the cultural obligations of students, who, at times may be required to return home for cultural ceremonies and this is acknowledged as legitimate reason for non-attendance. This orbiting in and out of the school can affect the attendance figures.

| 2015 Attendance Rates | |
|-----------------------|-------|
| Year 7 | 89% |
| Year 8 | 87% |
| Year 9 | 83% |
| Year 10 | 87% |
| Whole of School | 86.5% |

Managing Student Non Attendance

Worawa Aboriginal College believe that a high level of consistent school attendance is an essential element in aiding students to realise their full potential. Worawa has a Student Attendance Monitoring and Management policy in place which provides student attendance requirements and management strategies.

Teaching and Boarding staff take a student roll which is an essential accountability requirement in monitoring class attendance and this is cross checked by the Registrar.

The Deputy Principal - Head of Learning and Teaching and Head of Boarding monitor student attendance and identify students who are consistently late to class or demonstrate class avoidance.

Students who are found to be consistently late to class or demonstrating class avoidance may be requested to attend an interview with the Deputy Principal - Head of Learning and Teaching, the Head of Boarding and the Executive Director, for interview or to attend the Student Review Committee for the purpose of reviewing the attendance. The Student Review Committee would determine what strategies can be implemented to improve attendance. Parents would be notified by the Executive Director where appropriate. Worawa has a School Nurse and Wellbeing team to provide support and health care to students who are unwell during the school day.



Transitions And Pathways

Worawa caters for the middle years of schooling aiming to build a firm foundation for further learning pathways for all students, thus assisting them to reach their personal learning goals and the aspirations of their parents and communities. With this end in mind, the College is continuing to build relationships with external organisations and partner schools to give students every opportunity for a smooth and meaningful transition post Worawa.

Each student engages with the College's Careers and Pathways program which introduces them to the possibilities available for further education or work opportunities. Many of the College's departing students go on to further studies in High Schools, Colleges or TAFE institutions in Melbourne or in the home communities/towns, or into jobs in their communities.

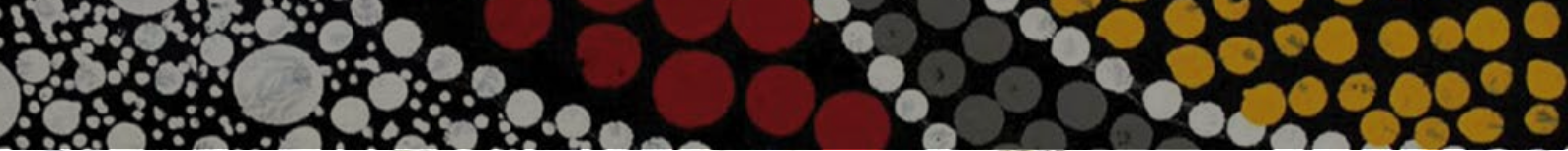
Through our regular shared programs with partner schools in Melbourne and interstate students have the opportunity to explore the possibility of a Years 11 & 12 education experience in a mainstream secondary

school. The College also maintains links and builds relationships with schools in the students' home communities to ensure the students' smooth transition to complete their senior years of schooling in their home communities or the world of work in a community setting.

At the end of the 2016 school year 9 girls transitioned out of Worawa to attend mainstream schools or to return to community. Another 3 students chose to repeat year 10 at Worawa.

The College commenced consultations with a proposal to introduce VCAL as identified at the College's School-Community Forum. An academy approach was proposed to cater for student learning opportunities in industries relevant to their communities. The academies identified included Caring for Country (environment), Sports and The Arts to provide experiences for potential pathways to further studies and eventual employment.





Leadership and Management

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 on a weekly basis, and our strategies for continuous improvement to be enacted.

Workforce Composition

| Workforce Composition | Non Indigenous | | Indigenous | |
|-----------------------|----------------|--------|------------|--------|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| Teaching Staff FT | 1 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| Teaching Staff PT | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Boarding Staff FT | 1 | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| Boarding Staff PT | 0 | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| Admin & Support FT | 4 | 4 | 0 | 1 |
| Admin & Support PT | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 |

Professional Learning

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 College gratefully acknowledges the support it receives from Valley Primary Health Centre, Eastern Health, Berry Street, ECASA, EACH, Australian Boarding Schools Association, Independent Schools Victoria, and Yarra Ranges Council Immunisation Program in providing professional development programs and support.

During the year \$11,155.00 was spent on staff professional learning



Teachers Standards and Qualifications

All teaching staff hold registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching. In 2016 the academic qualifications held by staff included:

- Bachelor of Applied Science
- Bachelor of Arts
- Bachelor of Education
- Bachelor of Science
- Bachelor of Fine Arts
- Bachelor of Electronic & Electrical Engineering (Honours)
- Bachelor of Arts in English
- Bachelor of Interactive Media
- BA (Hons) Degree Humanities/Politics
- Diploma in Education
- Diploma in Accounting
- Diploma in Piano Teaching
- Double Diploma in Management and Business Administration
- Geography, History & Religious Studies
- Graduate Certificate of Indigenous Education
- Graduate Certificate of TESOL
- Graduate Diploma in Education (Secondary)
- Graduate Diploma in Adolescent Health & Wellbeing
- Graduate Diploma in Dance & Movement
- Masters in Special Education Needs
- Master of Studies
- Master of Science
- Master of Secondary Teaching
- Masters of Teaching
- Masters in Journalism
- Masters in History
- Masters in Education
- Post Graduate Bachelor of Teaching
- Post Graduate Certificate in Education
- Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching (Secondary)

Parent / Community Satisfaction

Family/Community representatives are selected at the community level to chaperone students on flights to and from the College at the beginning and end of each term. Chaperones spend two days on campus visiting classrooms, spending time in the boarding house 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, 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.

School Financial Activity

Information representing financial activity taken from the Department of Education and Training (Federal DET) Financial Questionnaire and audited reports.

| Recurrent Income (Tuition and Boarding) | |
|--|------------------|
| School fees | 7,103 |
| Abstudy allowances | 1,526,348 |
| Private Income | 128,842 |
| State government recurrent grants | 477,642 |
| Commonwealth government recurrent grants | 1,710,739 |
| Total Recurrent Income | 3,850,674 |

| Recurrent Expenditure | |
|------------------------------------|------------------|
| Salaries and related expenses | 2,471,277 |
| Non-salary expenses | 1,511,089 |
| Total Recurrent Expenditure | 3,982,366 |

| Capital Income and expenditure | |
|--|----------------|
| Commonwealth Government Capital Grants | |
| Other Capital income | |
| Total Capital Income | |
| Total Capital Expenditure | 203,870 |

| Loans (for Capital Purposes) | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| Opening Balance | 18,672 |
| Closing Balance | 10,769 |





Worawa Aboriginal College

Phone: 03 5962 4344 | Email: admin@worawa.vic.edu.au | ABN: 18 371 286 615
visit worawa.vic.edu.au

We Believe in Education, Culture + Wellbeing