



Annual Report 2017





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Executive Director Report

This report outlines the operations of Worawa Aboriginal College for the 2017 school year.

The 2017 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.

Throughout 2017 the College catered specifically for girls in the middle years of schooling (Years 7- 10) from urban, regional and remote areas across Australia. During 2017 however the College made application to the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) to amend registration to include additional year levels to enable the College to deliver the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL). Amended registration was granted on 6 December 2017, recognising Worawa Aboriginal College as a senior secondary school delivering the VCAL Program.

Worawa Aboriginal College continues to honour the ideals of its Founder, Aboriginal Visionary Hyllus Maris who, in 1983, established Victoria’s first Aboriginal school, owned and governed by Aboriginal people. At the official opening of Worawa, Hyllus Maris 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...”

Today, Worawa is the only Australian boarding school dedicated to young Aboriginal women and is supported by a Special Assistance school classification. The College provides a holistic education program based on an integrated education, culture and wellbeing model.

The Worawa model represents a highly effective, culturally responsive approach to improving outcomes in Indigenous schooling. What is additionally unique about the school is that it focuses not only on the academic learning of the girls and young women attending, but also the development of knowledge and life-skills through a structured program of curricular and extra-curricular experiences. During their time at Worawa girls are provided with the opportunity to participate in Work Experience in a diverse range of mainstream organisations.

Worawa is supported by a Special Assistance school classification as, despite significant outcomes achieved at completion, students originate from compromised backgrounds and high levels of disadvantage, with previous adverse experiences in formal educational settings. 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.

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 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.

Worawa staff work together and in partnership to provide students with positive experiences and support their engagement in learning. 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'.

The integrated approach to the education of our young people includes diagnostic assessments upon entry to determine the level of achievement and the social and emotional wellbeing of each student. The College's approach to primary health care is underpinned by health education and a whole school approach to good nutrition, sleep hygiene and engagement in sport and physical activity. Throughout 2017 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.

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



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.



Characteristics of Student Population

Most if not all students come from highly disadvantaged backgrounds where English is a second language. All share socioeconomic backgrounds whose families meet the means-tested eligibility criteria for ABSTUDY, with several students being placed by family welfare organisations. As a result 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 unemployed or have low income or high rates of family mobility
- single parenting or extended family networks and domicile arrangements
- parents / communities where trans-generational trauma or multiple stress factors for chronic ill health are common
- students who display stress, anxiety or depression from personal trauma
- students having educational challenges that include disengagement and interrupted education
- student referrals from community support services
- students in need of strong welfare / counselling support

Learning and Teaching

Worawa's integrated education, culture and wellbeing model develops the intellectual, social, physical, emotional and cultural wellbeing of each student through a combination of mainstream education with Aboriginal pedagogy and values.

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.

The Worawa curriculum is based on the Australian Curriculum. The 'Worawa Way' is an Aboriginal learning model grounded in Aboriginal values and ways of knowing, doing and being and is used to shape the curriculum. These values and principles will be applied to the VCAL program in 2018 to create a seamlessness to the education program.

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 commitment to developments in education as a whole and in particular developments in Aboriginal education is at the forefront of the teaching professional development program at Worawa. High expectations of staff ensures that students are offered the best learning opportunities through the most current teaching and learning methodologies. Strategic and targeted EAL/D and literacy programs underpin the learning in all other subject areas.

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 which 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.

In 2017 Worawa applied to VRQA for the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL), a senior secondary qualification, and this will ensure students transition more successfully to employment and tertiary education in the future.

Student EAL/D and Literacy 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.



National Literacy And Numeracy Benchmarks

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

SUBJECT	YEAR LEVEL	2015	2016	2017
Reading	7	80%	53%	13%
	9	17%	41%	20%
Writing	7	20%	38%	26%
	9	11%	25%	40%
Spelling	7	20%	46%	40%
	9	17%	34%	50%
Grammar and Punctuation	7	60%	61%	20%
	9	22%	25%	30%
Maths	7	40%	62%	64%
	9	67%	58%	90%



Student Learning Outcomes (as outlined on the MySchool website)

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

2016										
	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

2015										
	Reading		Persuasive Writing		Spelling		Grammar & Punctuation		Numeracy	
Year 7	419 376 - 462		300 252 - 348		393 347 - 438		401 352 - 449		424 385 - 463	
		ALL 456		ALL 511		ALL 547		ALL 541		ALL 543
Year 9	458 432 - 485		374 338 - 409		432 403 - 462		420 389 - 460		493 469 - 517	
		ALL 580		ALL 547		ALL 583		ALL 568		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:

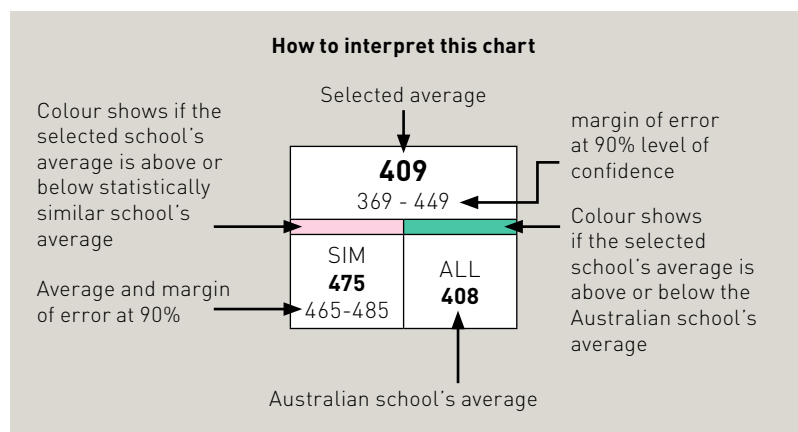
substantially above

above

close to

below

substantially below



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 the 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.

2017 Attendance Rates	
Year 7	91%
Year 8	87%
Year 9	83%
Year 10	85%
Whole of School	86.5%

Managing Student Non Attendance

Worawa Aboriginal College believes 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 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 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 their 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 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.

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

The College also supports options for students to continue schooling in their home communities to facilitate a smooth transition for students to continue their senior years of schooling or the world of work in their community setting.

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.

During 2017 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.

In 2017 the College submitted an application to the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) to amend its registration to deliver the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL). This arose from expressed wishes of parents/community at the College's annual Community Forum where families expressed the desire for Worawa to provide senior secondary education that provides hands on learning opportunities that synchronise with students own unique and personal learning styles and exposure to workplace training.

Students seeking direct university entry after their secondary education and therefore an ATAR, may still be referred to a partner school for VCE study.





Teachers Standards and Qualifications

All teaching staff hold registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching.
In 2017 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
- Bachelor of Art Education
- Bachelor (Hons) of Humanities/Politics
- Bachelor of Design
- 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
- Master 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)



Workforce Composition

Workforce Composition	Non Indigenous		Indigenous	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Teaching Staff				
Principal				1
Teaching Staff FT	1	4		
Teaching Staff PT	2	3		
Non Teaching Staff				
Specialist Support FT		1		
Specialist Support PT	1	3		
Boarding Staff FT		8		
Boarding Staff PT		6		
Admin & Clerical FT		1		
Admin & Clerical PT		3		1
Buildings & Other FT	3			
Buildings & Other PT	1	2		

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.

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 General Practitioner, Dr Barbara Hoare, Eastern Health, EACH, Berry Street, ECASA, Yarra Ranges Council Immunisation Program, Australian Boarding Schools Association and Independent Schools Victoria in providing professional development programs and support.

During 2017 \$29,322 was spent on staff professional learning.



Parent, Teacher and 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 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.

The College conducts a questionnaire amongst the student body and provides opportunity for anecdotal feedback through the student leadership group, teachers, boarding staff, Pastoral Care Worker and School Nurse.

Worawa is a Professional Learning Community with Professional Learning Teams that meet weekly. An internal education committee which includes an ISV representative, meets monthly. Teaching staff have representation on the Worawa Advisory Committee which reports to the Board. Teachers are engaged through collaborative decision making processes based on Aboriginal Ways of Doing.

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	
Australian government recurrent funding	1,877,652
State government recurrent funding	767,964
Fees, charges and parent contributions	565,570
Other private sources	232,827
Total Gross Income	3,444,013
Less income allocated to capital debt servicing	10,769
Total net Recurrent Income	3,433,244





Worawa Aboriginal College

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We Believe in Education, Culture + Wellbeing