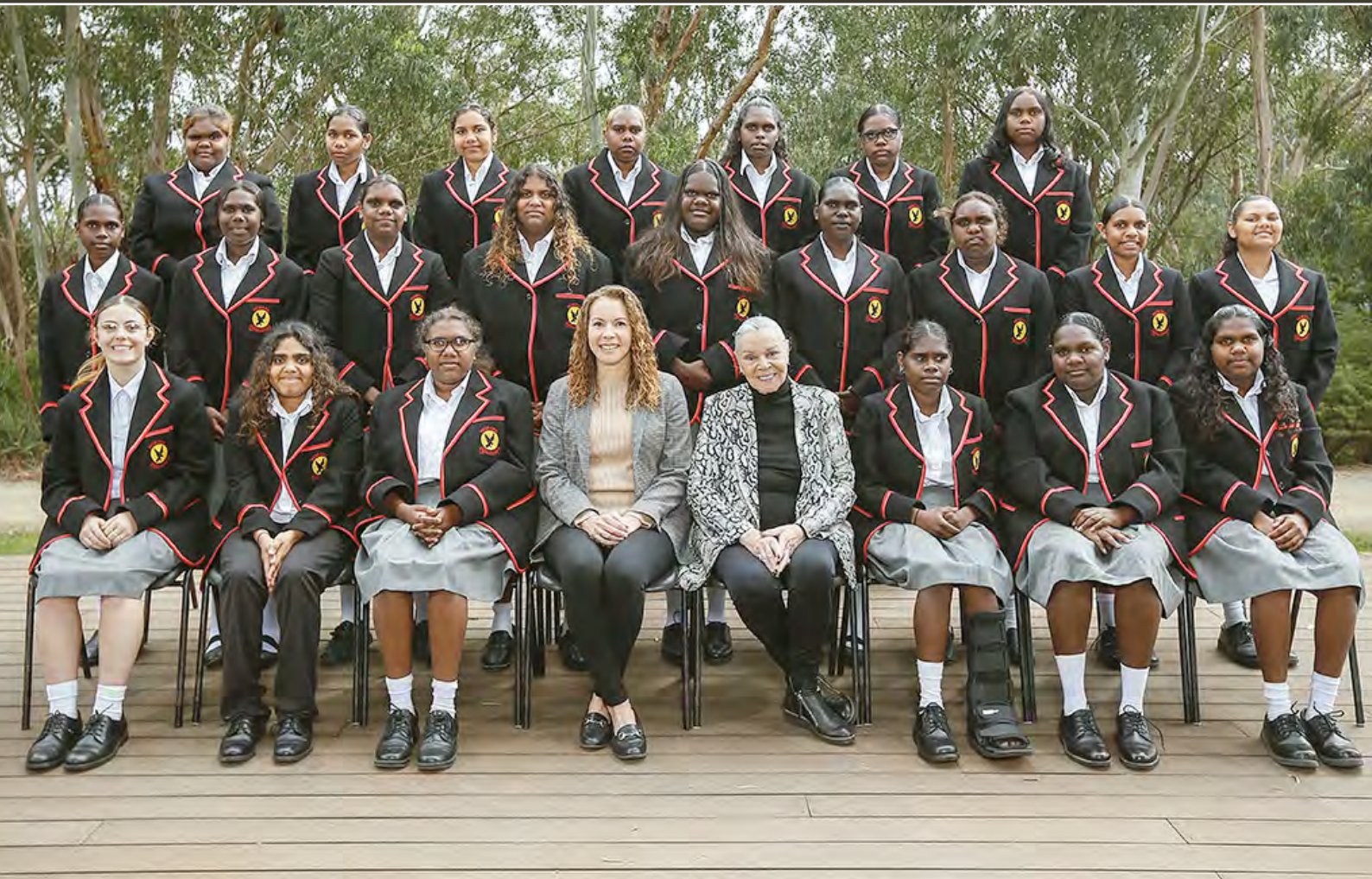




# Annual Report 2024





**Victorian  
Registration &  
Qualifications  
Authority**

Worawa Aboriginal College, recognised by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) as a Specialist Girls School, stands as a beacon of excellence in Indigenous education. Our unique integrated model melds personal development, comprehensive health and wellbeing programs, formal education, and cultural enrichment led by Aboriginal Elders. Proudly owned and governed by Aboriginal people, Worawa holds the esteemed classification of an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO).

# Contents

Vision / Philosophical Statement	5
Worawa Statement of Intent	5
Worawa Aboriginal College Overview	7
Statement of Commitment to Child Safety	7
Executive Director Report	9
Leadership and Management	10
Staff Composition	10
Student Voice	11
Parent and Community Satisfaction	11
Boarding and Student Life	11
Overarching Educational Strategies and Directions	13
Learning and Teaching	13
Student Rates of Attendance	14
Staff Development and Training	14
Student Learning Outcomes (as outlined on the MySchool website)	15
School Financial Activity	16





## 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 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.



## Worawa Aboriginal College Overview

Worawa Aboriginal College is Victoria's only Aboriginal school. An Aboriginal community initiative Worawa is owned and managed by Aboriginal people. Worawa provides a holistic education program through an integrated education, culture and wellbeing model where Aboriginal culture has a central place. The diversity of Indigenous Australia is reflected in the student cohort of young women in secondary years of schooling (Years 7-12) who come from urban, regional, remote and very remote communities throughout Australia. The curriculum is aligned with the Australian Curriculum enriched by Aboriginal cultural perspectives.

The 55-hectare site provides an aesthetic and culturally safe boarding school environment on land of cultural and historical importance to Victorian Aboriginal people. It was previously the site of a traditional camping site that became a government-controlled Aboriginal Reserve, Coranderrk, in 1863 until its closure in 1924.

Worawa Aboriginal College directly targets and redresses several 'risk factors' for Aboriginal disengagement from education. As a boarding school Worawa provides a culturally safe learning environment for students, delivering a rigorous education enriched by Aboriginal cultural perspectives. The College has adopted the Aboriginal values of Relationship, Responsibility and Respect as the basis for College life.

## Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Worawa Aboriginal College

- has zero tolerance for child abuse
- has systems to protect children from abuse, and will take all allegations and concerns very seriously and responds to them consistently in line with the organisation's policies and procedures
- is committed to promoting physical, emotional and cultural safety for all children
- actively works to listen to and empower children
- is committed to providing a safe environment for all children





# Executive Director Report

This report outlines the operations of Worawa Aboriginal College for the 2024 school year.



I am pleased to reflect on what has been a tremendously successful year for Worawa Aboriginal College. As a College dedicated to the education of Aboriginal girls in secondary schooling (Years 7–12), we proudly welcome students from communities across Australia. Guided by the Worawa Education Model, which integrates Education, Culture and Wellbeing, we place a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy while offering diverse learning experiences that enable our students to thrive both academically and personally.

In 2024, we began the school year with 40 students enrolled from areas that include urban, regional, remote and very remote communities. At Worawa, we remain deeply committed to providing experiences that inspire and uplift our students while building the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to thrive. Throughout the year, students participated in a broad range of opportunities designed to nurture creativity, strengthen leadership and deepen their cultural connection. These experiences not only enriched their learning but also fostered pride in both their personal and collective achievements.

This year also marked the beginning of an exciting new chapter in the College's journey, with the approval of funding for a new boarding facility. We progressed through the design phase in 2024 and look forward to commencing construction in 2025. Importantly, students have contributed their voices to the design process, ensuring that the new spaces reflect their needs and aspirations. This collaboration underscores our commitment to

amplifying student voice and shaping an environment that is nurturing and culturally responsive.

I would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of our staff in creating a positive and inspiring learning environment, and I extend my gratitude to the Board of Directors, led by Mr Thomas Bell, for their strategic guidance and unwavering support. To the families who entrust us with the education and wellbeing of their daughters, thank you for walking alongside us.

We concluded the year by celebrating the graduation of four students from the Victorian Certificate of Education Vocational Major (VCE VM). Each graduate leaves us with a clear pathway to further study or employment. Their accomplishments reflect not only their individual effort but also the collective support of the entire Worawa community. Together, we continue to demonstrate the power of education as a bridge to opportunity and success.

*Tanya Peeler,  
Executive Director/Principal*

## Leadership and Management

Worawa Aboriginal College operates under the guidance of a majority Aboriginal governance body, ensuring that our leadership is deeply connected to our community's cultural heritage. The day-to-day operations are overseen by our Executive Director/Principal, Tanya Peeler, a proud Aboriginal woman with ancestral connections to the Yorta Yorta, Wiradjuri, and Wurundjeri peoples.

The College adopts a collaborative approach, working closely with our non-Indigenous colleagues while maintaining cultural appropriateness in all interactions and decisions. This ensures that our educational environment remains respectful, inclusive, and effective in meeting the needs of our students.

## Staff Composition

Division	Non Indigenous		Indigenous	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Leadership		1		2
Administration	3	4		1
Academic - Teaching	1	6	1	
Academic - Non Teaching	1	2		
Boarding (FT,PT,Casual)		13		
Operations	3	1	1	



## Student Voice

Every term, student voice surveys are conducted by the academic team. Additionally, the Principal holds yarning circles with all students to facilitate open discussions and gather feedback on their experiences. The feedback from both activities is shared with the Leadership Team to identify areas for improvement and ways to enhance our program.

## Parent and Community Satisfaction

Worawa Aboriginal College places a strong emphasis on understanding and addressing the needs of our students' families and communities. Each year, we hold an Annual Community Forum with the families and carers of our students. This forum provides valuable insights into their desires and needs. By listening to their perspectives, we can tailor our education program to better develop our young women, equipping them with the skills and knowledge needed to seize opportunities and become future leaders.

## Boarding and Student Life

Our boarding program is designed to prepare students for young adulthood by building independence, responsibility, and essential life skills such as cooking, housekeeping, and self-care. With the guidance of staff, students are supported to develop the confidence and capability needed for life beyond school.

Sport remains a central part of boarding life, with many students participating in local football and basketball clubs. Students also broadened their horizons through Melbourne's vibrant arts scene, attending plays, musicals, and concerts, which helped them develop a deeper appreciation for the arts. Regular social activities such as movie nights, beach trips, shopping excursions, and city outings provided balance to their academic achievements and supported their overall wellbeing.





## Overarching Educational Strategies and Directions

In 2024, our priorities were aligned with Closing the Gap Target 5, which focuses on increasing Year 12 attainment. Our approach centred on enhancing the student experience and demonstrating that education is the bridge to future opportunities. A key initiative was the appointment of a Careers Practitioner, dedicated to supporting students in exploring future pathways, engaging in work experience, and preparing for their transition beyond school.

We also prioritised strengthening literacy and numeracy skills. To achieve this, we increased classroom support by recruiting additional learning support staff, enabling a more tailored and targeted approach to meet the individual needs of our students. As a result, we have observed significant improvements across all year levels, particularly in English, with notable gains in reading, writing, and comprehension.

Our Arts program was further expanded through the introduction of music into the curriculum, including the establishment of a school choir. This provided students with greater opportunities for creative expression and engagement, culminating in an end-of-year school production at a local theatre involving all students.

## Learning and Teaching

As a Specialist School, the Australian Curriculum is adapted to target the specific learning needs of our student cohort. The challenge of prioritising a cultural overlay is addressed through our unwavering commitment to the Worawa Way, as outlined in our Gananggurr curriculum framework.

### Our classes are designed to cater to:

1. **Multi-age/grade classes** that suit differentiated teaching and learning.
2. **Cross-curricular learning** that allows for deeper exploration of given topics.
3. **Suitability for Personalised Learning Plans** to meet individual student needs.

Our overarching aim remains the development of each girl and young woman, helping them to reach their full potential while understanding their strengths, building confidence, and fostering a sense of hope and opportunity within a culturally informed setting.



## Student Attendance

### Managing Student Non Attendance

Worawa Aboriginal College has a robust Student Attendance Monitoring and Management policy, ensuring clear attendance requirements and effective management strategies. Attendance is taken at the start of every class and recorded in our student management system.

Students who are consistently late or show signs of class avoidance may be requested to attend an interview with the Head of College Operations or the Principal.

During the interviews strategies are discussed and implemented to improve attendance. Where appropriate, parents and guardians are notified by a member of the Leadership Team.

### 2024 Student Attendance:

93% Attendance Rate

## Staff Development and Training

Staff development remains a key priority across the organisation, ensuring our team has the capability and confidence to support our students effectively. All staff participate in mandatory training, and they are actively encouraged to pursue additional professional development to enhance their skills and increase job satisfaction.

In addition, we place a strong emphasis on culturally relevant training. This is delivered by our Elder in Residence, Executive Director/Principal, and Indigenous external facilitators, enabling staff to deepen their cultural knowledge and strengthen their capacity to engage with students in a culturally responsive and respectful way.



# Student Learning Outcomes (as outlined on the MySchool website)

## NAPLAN student results

The table below shows the average student results at this school for 2024.  
<https://myschool.edu.au/school/46288/naplan/results>

2024										
	Reading		Writing		Spelling		Grammar		Numeracy	
Year 7	<b>379</b> 332 - 426		<b>380</b> 327 - 433		<b>410</b> 361 - 460		<b>348</b> 295 - 401		<b>411</b> 368 - 453	
	SIM <b>382</b>	ALL <b>535</b>	SIM <b>385</b>	ALL <b>540</b>	SIM <b>408</b>	ALL <b>540</b>	SIM <b>377</b>	ALL <b>537</b>	SIM <b>397</b>	ALL <b>540</b>
Year 9	-		-		-		-		-	

Due to the small size of the Year 9 cohort, comparative analysis of NAPLAN results against national benchmarks is not available.

NAPLAN participation for this school is 100%  
 NAPLAN participation for all Australian students is 95%

**SIM** Students have a similar background as determined by parental occupation and education. The background of students has been shown to have an impact on NAPLAN results

**ALL** Australian schools' average

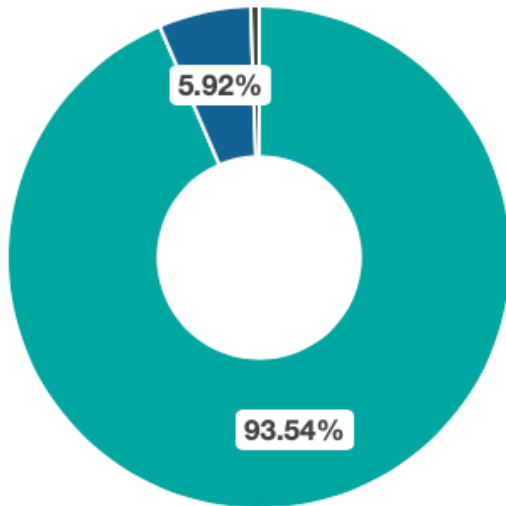


# School Financial Activity

Financial information from the latest AIS.

## Revenue

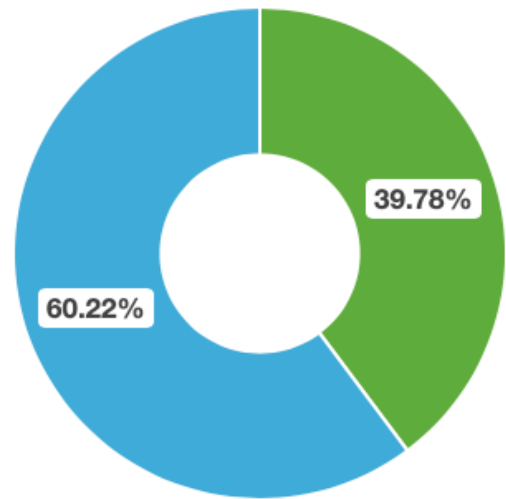
Total revenue: \$5,096,614.00



- Revenue from Government
- Other Revenue
- Revenue from Donations and Bequests
- Revenue from Goods or Services

## Expenses

Total expenses: \$4,894,294.00



- Grants and donations made for use in Australia
- Grants and donations made for use outside Australia
- Interest expenses
- All other expenses
- Employee expenses







**Worawa Aboriginal College**

Phone: 03 5962 4344 | Email: [admin@worawa.vic.edu.au](mailto:admin@worawa.vic.edu.au) | ABN: 18 371 286 615  
visit [worawa.vic.edu.au](http://worawa.vic.edu.au)

**We Believe** in Education, Culture + Wellbeing