



# Annual Report 2018





# Contents

Executive Director Report	4
Vision / Philosophical Statement	7
Worawa Statement of Intent	7
Overarching Educational Strategies and Directions	8
Learning and Teaching	9
Transitions and Pathways	10
Senior Secondary Certificate – Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL)	10
Vocational Training for Senior Students	13
Student Survey Outcomes	13
Future Directions	13
Percentage of Year 7 and Year 9 students reaching National literacy and numeracy benchmarks	14
Student Rates of Attendance	14
Student Learning Outcomes (as outlined on the MySchool website)	15
Teachers Standards and Qualifications	16
Leadership and Management	16
Workforce Composition	17
Professional Learning	17
School Financial Activity	18
Parent, Teacher and Community Satisfaction	18



# Executive Director Report



Worawa Aboriginal College is an Aboriginal initiative, owned and governed by Aboriginal people. The College is registered with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) as a Specialist Girls School.

The specialist nature of Worawa's operations lie in its integrated model which combines personal development, intensive health and well-being programs with strong formal education principles and cultural activities led by Aboriginal Elders. Worawa Aboriginal College applied to the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) to amend registration from a middle school to a senior secondary school. Amended registration was granted on 6 December 2017. Throughout 2018 the College delivered the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL).

The 2018 school year commenced with 71 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.



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.

Worawa staff work together and in partnership to provide students with positive experiences and support their engagement in learning. 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. Diagnostic assessments of each student upon entry assist in determining the level of achievement and social and emotional wellbeing of each student. 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'.

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 sincerely thank the Board of Directors under the leadership of Mr Mark Thomson throughout 2018, for their strategic advice and commitment to ensuring that Worawa Aboriginal College maintains its unique position in the Indigenous education landscape. 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 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 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

Critical to the educational landscape at Worawa Aboriginal College is a focus upon continuous improvement of the various moving parts that make up educational strategy and delivery.

From student selection, educational participation through to completion and assessment, at every year level it is vital that there is a well-articulated approach that works towards building outcomes for students, families and communities. Worawa remains committed to providing excellent educational outcomes for Aboriginal girls and young women and in particular those who are ready for an aspirational education program within a boarding school environment.

It is widely acknowledged that health and welfare are inextricably linked with the capacity of any child to learn. Despite the improvements that have occurred in some areas, the health and welfare profile of Indigenous children, is significantly worse than for their non-Indigenous counterparts. The challenges faced by girls and young women attending Worawa are not

to be underestimated hence the appropriateness of its specialist classification. A closer look at Worawa's academic performance when benchmarked against other schools and in particular other Specialist schools, bears out the complexities and challenges faced by our student body.

Despite these challenges Worawa remains an enriching cultural environment for its students where they can find companionship, like experiences and cultural diversity as well as solidarity within the student community and beyond. For most students at Worawa, feedback gleaned highlights the resounding positives for students that an Aboriginal context provides. It is something that stays with the student community well beyond their days and years at Worawa.

## Learning and Teaching

The ongoing strategy of 'Improving the Learning' continued in 2018 with a marked focus upon analysing learning data gathered when students commence their studies, with a particular focus upon literacy skills.

An EAL/D Specialist was engaged to work with staff to develop pedagogical knowledge to meet the needs of EAL/D students. In addition, the College secured the services of Literacy specialist, Bronwyn Parkin who worked with the College to refine student initial formative and summative literacy assessments. A key recommendation arising from the Parkin Report was the engagement of Dr David Rose and the Reading to Learn program which has been embedded in the College's strategic direction to build efficiency for outcomes into our education programs.

Worawa teaching staff are highly skilled in meeting the diverse educational needs of students who come from Aboriginal communities across the country where English is not the first language.

In 2018 two Teacher Aides were appointed to assist in catering strategically to the needs of students at various levels of English language proficiency.



## 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 2018 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.

Following the expressed wish of parents/community at the College's annual Community Forum. Worawa sought amendment to its registration to deliver the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) however students seeking direct university entry after their secondary education and therefore an ATAR, may be referred to a partner school for VCE study.

## Senior Secondary Certificate

## Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL)

In the first 12 months of VCAL implementation, students completed either Foundation or Intermediate VCAL at year 10 or 11. Students participated in Certificate II or III in Business as part of the vocational component of this senior secondary qualification. The College engaged Registered Training Organisation Skillinvest for the business qualification which introduced students to online vocational training mixed with applied assessment and training tasks.

Students have enjoyed a more flexible and self-paced delivery mode that has allowed them to begin to develop skills they will need in the workforce and for higher education. The program has included under its various Strands a range of work experiences, university exposure programs and interactions with the wider community.

VCAL students worked with local schools to provide cultural awareness programs and in doing so, fostered a sense of community connection. Driver education, workplace entry qualifications and practical skills for independent living beyond life at school were also features of programs.

As part of students' Personal Development Skills programs they contributed to their school and local community through mentoring, cultural and sports development programs. On a more personal front students worked with specialist staff including Aboriginal martial arts champ, Shantelle Thompson on their attitude, fitness and self-esteem and St Martin's Youth Theatre.

### **VCAL outcomes included the achievement of:**

- 2 Foundation VCAL qualification
- 8 Intermediate qualifications
- 10 credits towards Certificate II in Business
- 2 completions of Certificate II in Business
- 2 students worked towards completion of the Certificate III in Business as part of their Victoria Police traineeships secured early in 2018.
- Students completed their business training within a simulated office environment that provided administration services to the wider school community.





## 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.

To this end, students participated in Aboriginal Community forums, Pathways to Womanhood program, facilitated formal and informal meetings and were introduced to appropriate workplace presentation including attire, workplace communication modes and social expectations.

## Student Survey Outcomes

Student Satisfaction surveys continue to endorse Worawa's commitment to students' social, emotional, wellbeing and educational needs. Despite some students being critically challenged by being away from home for the purpose of study and preparation for future independence, there was a real recognition of the aspirational goals and vision of the college. This was across all items from fitness, catering to boarding house environments and homework programs.

## Future Directions

Acknowledging the complex issues that some students present with, the incorporation of trauma informed approaches to pastoral care in the classroom as well as to the effects of trauma on knowledge retention and ability to learn is critical as we move towards a more efficient approach to teaching and learning. Pre and post term based literacy and numeracy assessments for years 7-10 are scheduled to be built into education provision as are incremental goals to build upon critical foundational knowledge for Worawa students across curriculum areas. Evolving a greater level of strategy around student placement and selection criteria will assist in the further development of strong education programs, academically stimulating and highly relevant in terms of current directions in education, and ever evolving mainstream and Aboriginal societies and systems of knowledge and practice.



# National Literacy and Numeracy Benchmarks

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

SUBJECT	YEAR LEVEL	2016	2017	2018
Reading	7	53%	13%	34%
	9	41%	20%	57%
Writing	7	38%	26%	17%
	9	25%	40%	36%
Spelling	7	46%	40%	50%
	9	34%	50%	57%
Grammar and Punctuation	7	61%	20%	No data
	9	25%	30%	43%
Numeracy	7	62%	64%	42%
	9	58%	90%	71%

## Student Rates of Attendance

2018 Attendance Rates	
Year 7	84%
Year 8	82%
Year 9	84%
Year 10	76%
VCAL	85%
Whole of School	83%

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.

## 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.

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 overall responsibility of student attendance.

The Head of Learning and Teaching and Boarding Supervisor 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 Boarding Supervisor and the Principal 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 Principal where appropriate. Worawa has a School Nurse, Pastoral Care Worker and Student Support team to provide support and health care to students who are unwell during the school day.

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

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

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

2016										
	Reading		Persuasive Writing		Spelling		Grammar & Punctuation		Numeracy	
Year 7	<b>460</b> 431 - 489		<b>428</b> 395 - 461		<b>424</b> 394 - 455		<b>439</b> 406 - 472		<b>440</b> 413 - 467	
		ALL <b>541</b>		ALL <b>515</b>		ALL <b>543</b>		ALL <b>540</b>		ALL <b>550</b>
Year 9	<b>466</b> 432 - 485		<b>387</b> 338 - 409		<b>444</b> 403 - 462		<b>405</b> 389 - 460		<b>482</b> 469 - 517	
		ALL <b>581</b>		ALL <b>549</b>		ALL <b>580</b>		ALL <b>569</b>		ALL <b>589</b>

**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:

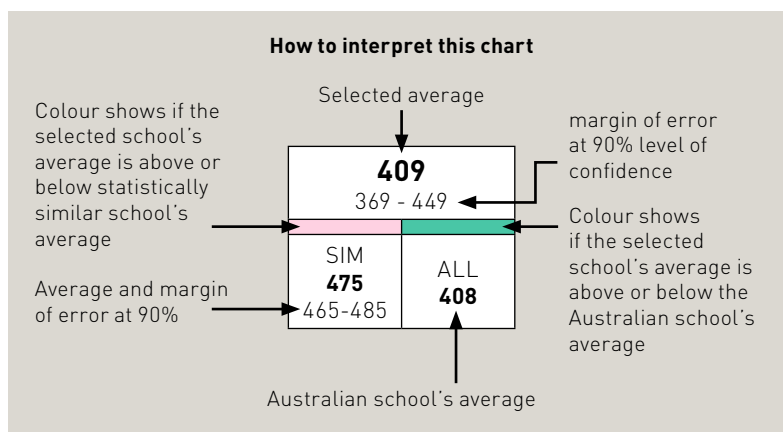
**substantially above**

**above**

**close to**

**below**

**substantially below**



## Teachers Standards and Qualifications

All teaching staff hold registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching. In 2018 the academic qualifications held by staff included:

- Bachelor of Applied Science
- Bachelor of Art Education
- Bachelor of Arts
- Bachelor of Design
- Bachelor of Music
- Bachelor of Secondary Education
- Cert IV in TAE
- Diploma in Accounting
- Diploma in Education
- Diploma in Management and Business Administration
- Graduate Diploma in Dance & Movement
- Graduate Diploma of Education (Secondary)
- Graduate Certificate of TESOL
- 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
<b>Teaching Staff</b>				
Principal				1
Teaching Staff FT	2	5		
Teaching Staff PT		4		
<b>Non Teaching Staff</b>				
Specialist Support FT				
Specialist Support PT	1	3		
Boarding Staff FT		10		1
Boarding Staff PT		4		
Admin & Clerical FT		1		
Admin & Clerical PT	1	3		1
Buildings & Other FT	3	1		
Buildings & Other PT	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.

Worawa continues to build staff capacity so that there is a strong connection between specialist subject knowledge and skills and foundational literacy and numeracy skills and knowledge.

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.

During 2018, \$53,302 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	5,291,599
Donations and bequests	93,851
Fees and charges	83,673
Revenue from investments	35,909
Other revenue	161,959
<b>Total Gross Income</b>	<b>5,666,991</b>

## 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](http://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.







**Worawa Aboriginal College**

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