

# Tallowood School Annual Report



2017



5459

## Introduction

The Annual Report for **2017** is provided to the community of **Tallowood School** as an account of the school's operations and achievements throughout the year.

It provides a detailed account of the progress the school has made to provide high quality educational opportunities for all students, as set out in the school plan. It outlines the findings from self-assessment that reflect the impact of key school strategies for improved learning and the benefit to all students from the expenditure of resources, including equity funding.

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R/Principal

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# School background

## School vision statement

'Creating Pathways for Life'

Our school is committed to each student achieving maximum independence and engagement for their post school life in their communication abilities, emotional wellbeing and respect for self and others.

## School context

Tallowood School is a Public, Private Partnership SSP School (School for Specific Purpose) located in Kellyville. The school enrolls students from Kindergarten to year 12. The current enrolment is 99 students. All students have a moderate or severe intellectual disability and many students have additional physical and sensory disabilities, autism or other syndromes. The school population is drawn from seven local council areas including The Hills, Holroyd, Parramatta, Blacktown, Penrith, Hawkesbury and Hornsby. The school opened in 2004 and is purpose built with a range of facilities. It provides a safe, attractive and caring learning environment for our students. Every student has a Personalised Learning Plan (PLP), designed in collaboration with families and carers, to identify specific learning priorities. Our skilled staff uses a holistic approach to differentiate the NSW Education NSW Australian Curriculum, overseen by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA), in the key learning areas to meet the individual learning needs of our students. Our school has a range of innovative programs including work experience, hydrotherapy, Riding for the Disabled (RDA), Sailability, Zumba, Bounce, Music Engagement, Men's Shed, Tallowood Farm and community access programs. The school is generously supported by The Hills community.

## Self-assessment and school achievement

### Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

This year, our school undertook self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework. The framework supports public schools throughout NSW in the pursuit of excellence by providing a clear description of high quality practice across the three domains of Learning, Teaching and Leading.

#### Learning:

In 2017 staff developed personalised learning goals for each student, in collaboration with parents and therapists. These SMART goals focused on students developing their skills in the areas of independent living, social skills and self-help skills. As well, classroom activities focused on addressing the curriculum requirements of the Department of Education and NSW Education Standards Authority according to student's individual needs and abilities. All skills and needs are explicitly taught and throughout the year staff's high expectations challenged and supported students to work towards or achieve their personalised learning goals. Students in year 12 participated in successful transition programs to their chosen post school option. Student wellbeing was supported through the school's PBL program with regular explicit teaching and learning sessions in class and student acknowledgement during daily whole school morning assemblies.

#### Teaching:

In 2017 teaching staff used the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers to reflect on their practice and plan for and monitor their own professional development to improve their performance. Working collaboratively staff participated in observation and reflection sessions to identify and improve aspects of their teaching and learning activities along with professional learning sessions targeted to school priorities, the needs of their students and the achievement of their professional learning goals. A variety of assessment strategies and data collection methods were used by staff to reflect on teaching effectiveness, student achievement and future directions for students and their class. Collaborative planning saw the sharing of lessons and units of work differentiated to meet each student's needs.

#### Leading:

Throughout 2017 team leadership supported staff professional development and provided opportunities for all staff to embrace relieving leadership roles and/ or organisation and supervision of committees and school targets. The leadership team worked with all school staff in the process of planning, implementation, monitoring and self-assessment around the school plan and school needs moving towards the 2018 –2020 school plan. In 2017 the school participated in Tell Them From Me with results providing future directions for the school.

For more information about the School Excellence Framework:

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/school-excellence-and-accountability/sef-evidence-guide>

## Strategic Direction 1

Each student will be an engaged and successful learner with a voice.

### Purpose

To develop a collaborative and supportive learning environment that has high expectations for our students' learning and meets their individual needs and abilities and celebrates their achievements.

### Overall summary of progress

In 2017 Tallowood School enriched our student's engagement and communication through the expansion of personal communication dictionaries for students, professional learning around SMART goals and PBL training across the school community.

By the end of 2017 a communication dictionary was developed or updated for all students using wheelchairs and for 25% of mobile non-verbal students. As well, professional learning was undertaken in the use of Augmentative and Alternate Communication and the development of the required resources to enable this to occur. Generic communication resources for staff were developed and stored for use by the whole school staff.

Throughout the year ongoing professional learning and collaboration was undertaken to increase student achievement of their individual learning goals.

Parent and carer knowledge and understanding of PBL was enhanced through a PBL information page included in the school's fortnightly newsletter.

### Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
Parents and staff are informed on Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) and PBL is embedded in school practice.	\$3980 was expended on school signage and 2 teacher release days.	During 2017 PBL continued to focus on positive student behaviour. Students received acknowledgment of their achievements during morning assembly and within their class. Permanent signage was obtained and installed in the foyer and front entrance to the school. Throughout the second part of the year a PBL information pages was included in the school's fortnightly newsletter which was distributed to the school community via parent and carer email and the school website.
2 students in each class will have a communication dictionary identifying their communicative behaviours and appropriate staff interaction		In 2017 personalised communication dictionaries detailing each student's communicative behaviours and how staff should respond were developed for 32 mobile students. This built upon the communication dictionaries developed in 2016 for all students using wheelchairs, providing more students with a voice.
80% of individual priority learning goals are achieved as stated in their SMART goal.		Progress on priority learning goals (PLG) for each student were reported on in the Semester 2 report that was sent home to all families/carers. This assessment will inform planning for PLGs for each student in 2018. An analysis of the percentage of students achieving priority learning goals showed deficiencies in assessment and reporting procedures. This will be addressed in the 2018 – 2020 school plan.

### Next Steps

Future Directions: expansion of student communication dictionaries so that every student has an individualised communication profile; enhanced communication in programming and the use of core language boards. Improved assessment and reporting procedures to give explicit information about the achievements of each student.

## Strategic Direction 2

Our staff will be high performing and student needs focused.

### Purpose

To develop staff skills and capacities in providing quality teaching and learning programs to raise the level of student achievement.

### Overall summary of progress

To ensure that our staff are high performing and student needs focused Tallowood School updated and implemented the induction booklet to support staff with programming, examined and evaluated the schools practices and supported early career teachers to gain their accreditation at proficient. All staff were provided with feedback on their teaching through collaborative lesson observations and feedback sessions.

Throughout 2017 a team of 3 teachers updated and documented a workbook to support staff to write teaching programs. Following professional development with teaching staff during term 3 the end of year survey indicated that 100% of respondents found the professional development sessions useful and would refer to the handbook when programming and would recommend the resource to colleagues.

During 2017 teachers at Tallowood School participated in two peer observation sessions around one of their Professional Development Plan goals. Professional learning sessions throughout the year provided teachers with information and support as to how to implement this process to improve their teaching practice.

During 2017 an assessment of the school using the self-evaluation framework provided staff with knowledge as to the schools current practices and the evidence collected to support this evaluation.

Support for early career teachers ensured that one teacher gained her accreditation at proficient.

### Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
80% of staff indicate the targeted professional learning sessions are valuable.		90% of teachers indicated that professional learning afternoons provided opportunities for teachers to increase their knowledge and practice around new teaching strategies for working with their students.
80% teachers will have implemented identified changes in their classroom as a result of the observation and reflection process.	\$5200 expended on teacher salaries for release for the observation and feedback process.	As a direct result of the observation and reflection practice 60% of staff indicated that their teaching practice had changed and improved.

### Next Steps

Future directions: consistent teacher judgement in assessment and programming and implementation of structured teaching practices across the school.

### Strategic Direction 3

Our community will be engaged and informed.

#### Purpose

To develop partnerships which are connected and effective. To develop productive networks which support student, staff and family well-being.

#### Overall summary of progress

To enable our community to be engaged and informed, Tallowood School implemented a number of strategies during 2017. One of these was the use of an app for the exchange of information between home and school. Following a successful trial with one class in term 1 this was extended to 50% of classes. 26 families responded to a term 4 survey. Of these 52% indicated they had used the SeeSaw app with their child's class teachers. Of these respondents, 96% agreed that the SeeSaw app had improved communication between home and school. SeeSaw will continue to be used at Tallowood School in 2018.

The second strategy was to relaunch PACT (Parents and Carers of Tallowood), a group focussing on information and training, and a new group, Tallowood Parent & Carer Social Club. Throughout the year 3 social and 2 information sessions were held at school and at local venues. A mid year survey indicated that parents enjoyed off site social events. Of the 26 families that responded to the survey 50% indicated that they would like to continue to receive information about social events for parents and cares, 46% indicated that they would like to continue to receive information about parent and carers meeting and information sessions.

#### Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
Parent surveys indicate a 10% increase in levels of effective communication between school and home.	\$5070 expended on training courses, teacher & SASS release to implement school Facebook page, update website, conduct training sessions for families.	<p>The development of a comprehensive communication hub with a range of options to meet the needs of our community was achieved.</p> <p>The introduction of the Seesaw app was well received by parents. Of the 26 families who responded to a survey 52% indicated that they had used the Seesaw app with 96% of those indicating an improvement in communication between home and school.</p> <p>Parent training and information sessions and informal social events were well received by parents with 50% of the 26 survey respondents indicating that they would like to continue to receive information about future events.</p> <p>Overall the school website, Facebook page and group emails have increased effective communication between home and school from 9% in 2016 to 75% in 2017.</p>
Staff surveys reflect a 20% increase in the feelings of being valued and acknowledged.		<p>Throughout 2017 staff participated in wellbeing workshops around aroma therapy and being active. Buddy week, held once a term, was well supported by staff and a highlight of each term. At the end of term 4 twelve teachers responded to the Tell Them From Me survey. While some staff indicated that they would have liked to have received more support (4 responses) overall the results were positive with staff stating that they like the way everyone works together and supports each other to benefit the students.</p>



## Next Steps

Future directions: social morning teas at a café off-site will be held once a term in 2018. Parent training/information sessions will be held when the parents/carers are in the school attending school activities in an effort to gain more attendees.

<b>Key Initiatives</b>	<b>Resources (annual)</b>	<b>Impact achieved this year</b>
<b>Aboriginal background loading</b>	\$5942	All funds were expended providing SLSO support to two students with high medical needs who identified as Aboriginal.
<b>English language proficiency</b>	\$5757.00	All funds were expended providing SLSO support to two students with high medical needs.
<b>Quality Teaching, Successful Students (QTSS)</b>	\$9751.00	Funds were expended providing AP support for teachers and learning programs.
<b>Socio-economic background</b>	\$13519.00	\$1200.00 was expended to allow students from low socio-economic backgrounds to access the curriculum.  \$12,319.00 was expended providing SLSO support to two students with high medical needs.
<b>Support for beginning teachers</b>	\$0.00	
<b>Targeted student support for refugees and new arrivals</b>	N/A	
<b>Norta Norta</b>	N/A	

## Student information

### Student enrolment profile

Students	Enrolments			
	2014	2015	2016	2017
Boys	71	71	72	73
Girls	27	27	25	26

## Workforce information

### Workforce composition

Position	FTE*
Principal	1
Deputy Principal(s)	1
Assistant Principal(s)	4
Head Teacher(s)	0
Classroom Teacher(s)	13.52
Teacher of Reading Recovery	0
Learning & Support Teacher(s)	0
Teacher Librarian	0.6
Teacher of ESL	0
School Counsellor	0
School Administration & Support Staff	19.28
Other Positions	0

\*Full Time Equivalent

In 2017 one staff member identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

### Teacher qualifications

All teaching staff meet the professional requirements for teaching in NSW public schools.

### Teacher qualifications

Qualifications	% of staff
Undergraduate degree or diploma	100
Postgraduate degree	45

### Professional learning and teacher accreditation

Professional learning in 2017 focussed on developing knowledge and capabilities around school

plan targets and on completing DoE mandatory training requirements. Teachers were trained in developing a Professional Development Plan (PDP) that was responsive to the needs of their students and themselves and supported school and DoE priorities. All teachers and School Learning Support Officers (SLSO) attended a conference on the School Development Day in term 3 that was targeted to support their roles. Several executive also attended leadership days at the SEPLA conference.

In 2017 one teacher achieved accreditation at proficient and two teachers submitted and achieved their first 5 year maintenance period. One teacher commenced working towards LEAD accreditation.

## Financial information (for schools fully deployed to SAP/SALM)

### Financial summary

The information provided in the financial summary includes reporting from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2017.

	2017 Actual (\$)
<b>Opening Balance</b>	260,310
<b>Revenue</b>	4,231,030
Appropriation	3,965,735
Sale of Goods and Services	26,164
Grants and Contributions	235,070
Gain and Loss	0
Other Revenue	0
Investment Income	4,061
<b>Expenses</b>	-4,136,773
Recurrent Expenses	-4,136,773
Employee Related	-3,808,717
Operating Expenses	-328,056
Capital Expenses	0
Employee Related	0
Operating Expenses	0
<b>SURPLUS / DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR</b>	94,257
<b>Balance Carried Forward</b>	354,567

The DGR fund of \$78960 has been committed to the purchase of a replacement school bus in 2018 with additional funds committed from School and Community Funding.

School and Community funds have been allocated as follows:

\$50000 replacement of school bus 2018 – including re-engineering cost for wheelchair placements and hoists.

\$20000 towards second bus replacement 2021

\$40000 upgrades to interactive communication boxes in classrooms

\$ 35000 grounds work to the rear of Block C

### Financial summary equity funding

The equity funding data is the main component of the 'Appropriation' section of the financial summary above.

	2017 <b>Actual</b> (\$)
<b>Base Total</b>	644,325
Base Per Capita	32,717
Base Location	0
Other Base	611,608
<b>Equity Total</b>	25,218
Equity Aboriginal	5,942
Equity Socio economic	13,519
Equity Language	5,757
Equity Disability	0
<b>Targeted Total</b>	3,066,797
<b>Other Total</b>	17,713
<b>Grand Total</b>	3,754,053

Figures presented in this report may be subject to rounding so may not reconcile exactly with the bottom line totals, which are calculated without any rounding.

A full copy of the school's financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the parent and/or community groups. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

## Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

Tallowood School participated in the Tell Them From Me surveys for parents and teachers in 2017. 85% of parent respondents overall felt welcome at Tallowood School. 91% felt that they could easily speak with their child's teachers and 88% reported that teachers listened to their concerns. 89% said that written information was in clear, plain language and that administrative staff were helpful. 77% reported that parent activities were scheduled at times when they could attend. 81% of parents felt that they were adequately informed about their child's progress, behaviour and social and emotional development. 85% of parents thought that behaviour issues were dealt with in a timely manner and 79% said their child felt safe at school. 81% of parents felt that teachers took account of their child's needs abilities and interests. 83% said that school staff take an active role in making sure all students are included in school activities. Teachers reported that the staff supported each other professionally and that Tallowood School had a great team environment.

## Policy requirements

### Aboriginal education

In 2017 staff engaged in professional learning with members of the Aboriginal Education and Wellbeing team. Staff collaborated to incorporate an Aboriginal perspective into learning activities across the curriculum. Learning was differentiated for each student in the areas of Aboriginal histories, perspectives and current Aboriginal Australia. Seven students have identified as being Aboriginal. All of our students have a Personalised Learning Plan to meet their individual learning needs.

### Multicultural and anti-racism education

The school acknowledges and values the wide cultural diversity of our students and families. On Harmony Day students and families participated in an interactive Lion Dance performance which was a wonderful experience for all concerned.

The school has a trained Anti Racism Officer. In 2017 there were no complaints or issues reported to this officer.