



# Annual Report 2004

## KEIRA HIGH SCHOOL

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### Principal's message

Keira High School is a comprehensive, co-educational secondary school located in central Wollongong. The school has a long tradition of delivering quality public education to the community of Wollongong since 1917. In 2004, Keira celebrated the 50 anniversary of the opening on its present site in Lysaght Street. Although the school is proud of its traditions, it can also look to the future confident that it is a dynamic and innovative school.



*Laying Keira's foundation stone - Lysaght Street site*

As can be seen in this Annual Report, Keira is a school with many dimensions and strengths: academic achievement, integrated technology, strong sporting traditions, performing and creative arts opportunities, effective welfare/discipline strategies, an inclusive curriculum and a quality teaching approach that, therefore, enables the school to cater for a comprehensive range of students: both boys and girls.

I certify that information in this report is the result of a rigorous school self-evaluation process and is a balanced and genuine account of the school's achievements and areas for development.

**M. Mulheron**

### Our achievements

#### Primary Links

Keira High School has made the transition to high school one of its priority areas. To this end the school has developed a range of successful primary links programs and projects including: the Science primary-high transition program; regular contact with local feeder school principals by phone, email and face to face meetings; the 2002-3 Primary Links Supplementation Program which released some staff to visit local schools; the development of a Keira Community of Schools Focus; the Years 5-6 Information Evening; the annual feeder school parent/caregiver information evening; the distribution of each edition of the Keira Newsletter to every local Year 5 and 6 student; the ongoing Quality Teaching Program professional development links; the Keira Community of Schools Staff Development Conference held in July 2004; Year 7 Adviser and student visits; the Year 6 Keira Community of Schools Prize; the Year 7 gender classes structure. All of these initiatives, involving many hours of sustained effort by Keira staff and students, have provided the foundation for a smooth transition to high school by our local feeder primary school students.

#### Performing and Creative Arts

Rock Eisteddfod: Keira High School entered the Rock Eisteddfod challenge for the sixth time, and, once again, was highly successful. With less than sixty performers on stage, Keira competed as a "small school" and this proved to be a wise strategy. The theme *The Samurai's Wife* was an appropriation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, translated to an ancient Japanese setting. Overall, Keira won nine awards, reflecting and celebrating our excellence in Drama, Stage Use, Choreography, Performing Skills, Concept, Visual

Enhancement, Soundtrack, School Community and the Spirit of Rock Eisteddfod Award. The team was drawn predominately from Years 8, 9 and 10 with representatives from all other years.



*Rock Eisteddfod performers*

**Southern Stars:** Keira High School students continued to be involved in Southern Stars in 2003 and 2004. The number of dancers continues to grow in 2004 fifteen students were part of the combined dance group. One of these dancers was also a featured artist showing his skills in Tap, Contemporary and Jazz items.

**Music:** In 2003 and 2004 there have been a number of music students performing as both singers and musicians. One of the teachers (with his trombone) joined the Southern Stars Band in 2004.

**Visual Arts:** A bi-annual exhibition of Year 12 artworks at the Wollongong City Gallery was held in 2004. One of our students was part of that show which showcases the creativity of senior visual students.

In 2005, Keira will be embarking on an ambitious program to increase performing arts opportunities for all students. In late 2004, the school negotiated with the Wollongong Conservatorium of Music to develop a band and jazz ensemble program. Keira will also be offering, from mid-2005, specialist voice and singing tuition after school to assist music and drama students. A circus skills workshop for girls has also been developed which will be offered to female students from Term 2, 2005. Later in the year this should be expanded to cater for boys.

## **Sport**

Keira again had a successful year in the sporting arena, continuing its fine tradition of involvement in sport at all levels and by the widest cross section of students, with the following features:

**Recreational Sport - Terms 1 & 4:** A wide range of sports was offered to allow for all levels of ability and experience by students.

Frisbee, introduced in 2003, continued to grow in popularity. The Girls Court Soccer group also continued to attract juniors, encouraging the participation of more girls in this active sport. This was particularly successful, leading to the fielding of both a senior and junior girls' soccer team in the Grade competition. Some sports were wound down, Pockets at Fairy Meadow ceased trading, and Tai Chi did not run.

**Grade Sport - Terms 2 & 3:** Teams were entered in all sports except Indoor Cricket. This was a dramatic development, given that Keira had won the competition every year for the last ten years. This was expected given that we were not able to raise a Year 7 team for the Thursday afternoon competition in 2003.

A new coach was able to field a softball team with the required number of girls and the team made it to the finals. This was a marked improvement on 2003 when the team was unable to collect any points despite winning every game, because they could not field the quota of girls. Eleven teams were in the finals, with five winning their competition.

Carnivals were held in swimming, cross-country and athletics. A number of students continued their success at these carnivals, representing zone and then at South Coast at State.

Individual success was achieved by a number of students in a range of sports - outstanding were Lisa Craig who broke yet another record in shot put at state, and following in her footsteps, Susannah Craig, who also broke a record at regional in discus and Matthew Cropper who was selected to play in the Australian School Boys' team currently touring Europe.

We had regional representatives in girls' and boys' basketball, water polo, cricket, hockey, boys' soccer and boys' tennis and swimming.

**Soccer:** This continued to be an area of strength. The Open Boys' soccer team performed well, (reaching the quarter finals); as did the teams which were entered in the girls' and boys' Bill Turner Cup. Indoor soccer was the highlight, with much of the success being due to the continued exemplary effort made the coach and school Soccer Organiser, Mr J. Cropper.

**Basketball:** Boys' teams made worthy efforts under the guidance of Mr T. Bush and Mr B. Garraway. The girls' team were successful in their competitions but elected not to continue to the finals.

The school community would like to place on record its appreciation of the work of the Sports Organiser, Ms McElroy, who stepped down from the position at the end of 2004.

# Key evaluations

## Educational and management practice

### Year 7 Class Organisation

#### Background

Throughout 2004 Keira evaluated the transition of students into high school and how they have performed as both a group and individuals. Their social and academic success has been the centre of our assessment. In particular, we have been evaluating the impact that mixed ability and gender classes in Year 7 have had upon the students and the school.

The evaluation has been both qualitative and quantitative. Parents/caregivers and teachers were surveyed in Term 4. The surveys allowed for direct responses and comment. Students were actively engaged in the evaluation through a series of consultations conducted in class groups.

In addition to these formal evaluation tools, anecdotal information was gathered through contact with parents/caregivers, teachers and students in the normal operation of the school and at specific events such as parent teacher evenings, Parents and Citizens Association meetings and formal school ceremonies.

The evaluation was conducted by Mr D. J. Robson Deputy Principal and Ms L. Wells Support Teacher Learning Assistance.

#### Findings and conclusions

Transition of Year 6 into Year 7: Survey results document that a significant number of Year 7 students enjoyed a successful move into Keira High School.

96% of parents/caregivers agreed or strongly agreed that their child had made a smooth transition from Year 6 into Year 7. This was supported by 94% of the surveyed who perceived a similar positive experience for their Year 7 students.

Parents/caregivers frequently cited orientation and transition activities, the gender classes, caring teachers and the school's welfare and discipline policy and procedures as factors contributing to their response. The school's commitment to student welfare and the availability of support structures such as the Year Adviser and peer support counsellors was also mentioned.

Teachers identified the single sex classes as the prime factors contributing to the successful transition process.

Students commented upon the school's safe, peaceful and welcoming environment as being important to their effective transition. The Science Primary Links

program, orientation activities at both primary and high school, peer support and the mixed ability and gender classes were also seen by students as contributing to their successful entry into secondary education.

Learning Success - Numeracy/Literacy: All aspects of the evaluation highlighted that significant numbers of Year 7 students have experienced learning success.

91% of parents/caregivers perceived improvement in their child's literacy and 77% responded that their child had improved in numeracy.

Teachers' response was interesting with 64% concluding that their students' level of literacy had improved but only 16% saw similar results in numeracy. Significantly though, 81% of teachers were undecided regarding their students' improvement in numeracy.

Of all students consulted only one felt that his literacy had not improved. The settled classroom environment with limited social distractions and behaviour issues was identified by students as helping them to learn. Significantly, students identified the single sex and mixed ability classes as contributing to this positive classroom experience. Students also appreciated the close connection between their Year 6 and early Year 7 class activities and teaching methods. The variety of subject materials and texts and the frequency of particular subjects throughout the week's timetable were also seen as contributing factors.

Mixed ability classing: Both teachers and students were supportive of the mixed ability-classing model.

55% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that the mixed ability composition of their class had contributed to their students' successful year. The benefits of such classing were identified by both teachers and students. Group work, peer tutoring, positive role modelling and the absence of negative class labelling were viewed as significant positive aspect. In particular, students valued the supportive yet challenging nature of a mixed ability class.

Of the 6% of teachers who did not believe that the mixed ability classing had benefited their students some indicated the difficulty in programming and delivery of lessons that catered for all students. Significantly those students who saw disadvantages in a mixed ability class recognised the risk of more able students becoming bored or not being challenged.

Single sex classing: Parents/caregivers, teachers and students were highly supportive of the single sex classing in Year 7.

97% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that the single sex classes had contributed to their students' successful year. 73% of parents/caregivers responded in a similar fashion. It is worth noting that 19% of

parents/caregivers were undecided regarding the impact of single sex classing.

Teachers frequently commented on the benefits of gender specific programming and the settled, focused nature of their classes. The supportive environment that single sex classing offered was seen as instrumental in allowing students to engage in class activities with confidence.

Both boys and girls stated that they would not have participated in many activities or discussions as freely had they been in a mixed gendered class. In particular, boys indicated that they would be less focused and more concerned with how they and their work would be viewed by the girls rather than their teacher. Those students who saw disadvantages in the single sex classing cited the lack of opportunity of social interaction with the opposite sex and the possibility of same sex conflict. Interestingly these students commented that they had developed friendships with students of the opposite sex in their year and 87% of parents/caregivers described as positive the relationships their child had formed in their single sex class.

#### **Future directions**

The evaluation strongly documented the successful transition of Year 6 students into Year 7 at Keira in 2004 and supported the notion of mixed ability and single sex classing.

It is recommended that this model be implemented again in Year 7 2005 and extended where possible into the Year 8 curriculum.

It is clear that programming must take into account the mixed ability nature of classes and that strategies be developed to cater for all students.

Numeracy must also be recognised as a key element in all learning areas and as such be embedded in faculty programming.

Primary links programs and Year 6 orientation activities must be recognised as being significant in supporting students as they move into the secondary environment.

#### **Quality Teaching Project**

##### **Background**

The teaching staff of Keira High School has been involved since the start of 2004 in an initiative called the Quality Teaching Project (QTP). It is model of teaching developed by Dr James Ladwig and Professor Jennifer Gore from the University of Newcastle in consultation with and on behalf of the NSW Department of Education and Training.

The teaching staff of Keira used the model to improve, revitalise and change the professional development

model in the school. The Action Learning Team (ALT) (consisting of eight teachers from different subject areas) together with an academic partner from the University of Wollongong went through a process of getting familiar with the NSW model of pedagogy. This involved a series of workshops and presentations.

Teachers in the ALT reflected on and critically analysed their own teaching based on the NSW QTP model of pedagogy. The eight teachers developed a thorough understanding of the dimensions and elements of the model and became 'experts' in leading across-school professional discussion about pedagogy. To support this they developed lessons of work in each subject area that aligned with the model. Lessons were taught and videoed. The team then coded, critically analysed and discussed each other's lessons. Following this, the ALT members led discussions around quality teaching within their faculty areas. The team then planned to strengthen the links with the school's feeder primary schools by sharing experiences of the professional development model at the School Development Day in Term 3, 2004.

A DVD resource was produced by the team, which included footage of actual classroom lessons, the planning and evaluation by teachers and the academic partner, examples of students participating in quality lessons and interviews with students as well as teachers not members of the action learning team. An official launch was held on Public Education Day attended by the project manager of QTP, officials from Department of Education and Training, parents and invited guests. The resource was given to all staff at the School Development Day and all teaching staff at feeder primary schools. On the day, small groups of teachers viewed sections of the DVD to encourage discussion around quality teaching.

#### **Findings and conclusions**

The intention of the project was to continue the focus on quality teaching on a number of levels that included:

- Continuation of the action learning team and their role in professional development;
- Developing each members' own practice in relation to quality teaching; and
- Involvement in the SIPA (*Systematic Implications of Pedagogical Action*) research project conducted by the University of Newcastle.

The school-based inquiry team decided to use the following five-phase methodology for the evaluative inquiry:

- Phase 1. The team leader conducted videoed focus group interviews with other action learning team members.
- Phase 2. Team members engaged in written reflection.

- Phase 3. Questionnaires were completed by Head Teachers in the school.
- Phase 4. The Action Learning Team leader conducted videoed focus group interviews with Year 7 students.
- Phase 5. Documentary evidence of engagement with the school/education community was collected.

1. Professional Support Needs, Challenges and Consequences of Engaging in Action Learning: The team leader videotaped interviews with six team members conducted in two groups of three. The interview data indicated that the teachers perceived the action learning project to have a number of benefits which included developing leadership skills, a shared understanding of problems and approaches, a common language for communication, teamwork, support and time for reflection.

The team members felt that they were supported in the endeavour by other team members and received sufficient resources for the project. However, some felt some anxiety towards being criticised by their peers (even though this did not occur), and a lack of clarity surrounding the NSW model of pedagogy.

The project appeared to offer a number of drawbacks and challenges. Generally, these were time related, that is, not having enough time to plan lessons and fit in other commitments. For some, it was confronting to hear student feedback on their lessons. The major challenge appeared to be in the implementation of the model of pedagogy and convincing other colleagues to adopt it.

2. Capacity to Sustain Action Learning: The action learning team continued beyond Term 1, 2004 with expansion into the faculties where action learning sub-groups were formed. The team continued to have a presence in School Development Days. The teamwork continued with a sense of common goals, confidence, leadership and a willingness to share ideas around quality pedagogy. As a consequence of the project, the team members perceived that they learned to "enjoy risk taking" and that the process has revitalised their teaching with one teacher commenting, "Action learning respects teachers' professionalism."

Data from the reflection sheet used in phase two indicated that the team has continued to factor the content of the project into their daily teaching by writing programs based on the model; transferring best practice to Years 8-12; and reflecting on and assessing programs against the model.

The School Management Plan for 2005 has emphasised that the ALT will be used as part of the overall approach to professional learning, and with a continuing focus on quality teaching. Faculty Heads will be responsible for implementing and programming of the new syllabuses (for every subject and course, Years 7-

10) using quality teaching principles. Input from the ALT members will continue to occur at executive meetings and with planning and implementing staff development days.

3. Ways to Share Knowledge with Others: Phase two indicated that the team members were accepted by other school staff as school leaders in the area of quality pedagogy. The team was able to engage other staff in developing an understanding of the model through faculty discussions on program development; lead general staff room discussions; modify and design guidelines for Year 7 units and provide a general framework for syllabus implementation.

In a survey of all Head Teachers in the school (Phase 3) it is apparent that the team was able to generate awareness, interest and discussion in each faculty and support program development. As a result, faculties have implemented a number of initiatives that include: incorporating higher order thinking into lessons and assessment tasks; developing units based on quality teaching; investigated ways and means to write up quality teaching programs; developing a scope and sequence across HSIE with quality teaching model. Faculties have used the DVD resource as a reference point to promote discussion and reflection on classroom practice.

The Head Teachers viewed the action learning process as an effective model of professional development for teachers in their faculties noting that the process highlighted great role models and teamwork with one head teacher preferring more staff to be involved in the action learning team.

Phase 4 involved the team leader conducting videoed focus group interviews with two groups of Year 7 students, one group of four boys and one group of four girls. These students commented on the impact of the teaching of two units (Science and English) developed by the action learning team members. Their views indicated that all aspects of the model were covered equally in the English unit. When later coding of the science unit assessment tasks occurred it was found that it had a high level of significance. Science and English teachers will use the interview data to assist their planning of future units of work.

4. Issues: One of the significant outcomes of the project was the production of a DVD that was used for professional development with the school and feeder schools. The ALT found this approach so successful that they wanted to use videoed focus group interviews as the main research technique in eliciting teachers' and students' thoughts about the project. As one of the team members commented on using the video methodology, ". . . it is a powerful tool in challenging ideas, raising awareness and generating discussion."

Team members believed that the enquiry process has built their capacity to research their own practice by providing them the opportunity to work as a team to collect and analyse data in a professional way. Team members also expressed the view that the evaluative enquiry had been worthwhile enabling them to reflect on the activities that were undertaken and assisting future planning. Other teachers will use the DVD/video process to analyse their own teaching when planning new units of work. The results have provided useful insights into teachers' and students' perspectives and whether or not the criteria contained in NSW model of pedagogy were addressed. One team member indicated that the process, ". . . has also shown us a way to move forward for 2005 . . . secure in the knowledge that we are building on what has gone before as opposed to heading off on a tangent."

#### **Future directions**

The Action Learning Team comprised experienced teachers from across all faculties and the approaches they have taken throughout the project and its evaluation have resulted in benefits for the team members themselves, other staff in the school and students. As well as raising awareness about quality teaching approaches and providing a focus for continued professional development, the project also appears to have had an enabling influence on developing school leadership. Team members have increased confidence in their own practice and are seen by their colleagues as leaders in the area of quality teaching. The team appears to have a continuing influence on policy and practice across the school. Although not specifically addressed in this study it may be the case that the culture of professional learning in the school is moving from one that relied on "advice from the outside expert" to one of "we have the capability to identify our own problems and solve them in collaborative ways."

## **Curriculum**

### **Stage 5 (Years 9 and 10)**

#### **Background**

In 2002 and 2003, the school undertook a review of the Stage 5 curriculum structure. This was to meet the changing demands of Geography and History once the Board of Studies Mandatory School Certificate Civics and Citizenship Test was implemented. As well, with the reconfiguration of reporting timelines for the School Certificate, as determined by the Office of the Board of Studies, the gathering of assessment data from Year 9 as well as Year 10 became difficult to manage in some courses.

## **Findings and conclusions**

Slight modifications to the curriculum pattern were made for students in Year 10, 2004, to overcome the main weakness identified during the review of curriculum. Students were able to study both Australian Geography and Australian History throughout Year 10 in preparation for the Civics tests in Australian Geography and Australian History.

The vertical elective structure for Years 9 & 10 remained in place for 2004. All students in Stage 5 undertook compulsory studies in English, Mathematics, Science, Australian Geography, Australian History, Personal Development, Health and PE together with 600 hours of elective courses based on their interests.

#### **Future directions**

From 2005, the pattern of elective studies is to be changed. Students will continue to study the compulsory subjects with increased time provided for studies in Australian Geography and Australian History. All core subjects will have a similar number of hours of study over Years 7 to 10. Students will have the opportunity to study elective courses for 400 hours in classes consisting of both Years 9 and 10 students. This vertical elective structure is to be maintained as it enables a greater choice for students. All electives will be offered in 100-hour modules that run for four periods per week for the year. This change overcomes the difficulty experienced previously in gathering assessment data for Years 9 and 10 to meet the Board of Studies timeline.

Students will still be able to combine elective modules to meet their individual needs and interest. A number of course combinations will be possible depending on student preferences: four 100-hour courses or two 200-hour courses or one 200-hour course and two 100-hour courses.

## **Other programs**

### **Resourceful Adolescent Program for Teachers**

#### **Background**

In 2004 Keira High School was chosen as one of two NSW schools to participate in the national trial of the Resourceful Adolescent Program for Teachers (RAP-T) which has been developed by a team based at the Queensland University of Technology. The program has been developed to help teachers promote the optimal school environment for healthy adolescent development, specifically addressing the protective factor of school connectedness which has been shown to enhance students' academic, social and emotional outcomes.

## **Findings and conclusions**

In 2004 97 Year 8 students were given parent consent to be involved in the trial. During Terms 2, 3 and 4 a group of 21 core Year 8 teachers participated. This involved ongoing staff development sessions, weekly newsletters and individual consultations to develop and implement strategies aimed at promoting school connectedness in the classroom and to assist teachers to manage their own stress and develop resilience in the students. Pre and post questionnaires measuring connectedness to school and general wellbeing were completed by the students, their parents and the Year 8 teachers.

## **Future directions**

In 2005 there will be booster staff development sessions and completion of follow up questionnaires by students at 6 monthly intervals.

## **Student Monitoring**

### **Background**

For a number of years a team of Head Teachers has taken responsibility for the monitoring the academic progress of senior students. Those students at risk of not reaching their academic potential are targeted for support. Those students who are achieving highly are rewarded.

## **Findings and conclusions**

In 2004 our student monitoring system was extended to the junior school. Each term the progress of each and every student was reported to the committee by teachers in all subject areas. Students who were working to the best of their ability across all of their subject areas were recognised with a certificate, morning tea with the Principal and a congratulatory letter was sent to parents/caregivers. Where students were identified to be causing concern due to unsatisfactory work ethic, non-completion of tasks, behaviour or attendance issues, parents were notified and the student interviewed by a member of the committee to try to resolve these concerns. In most cases, these students were not interviewed the following term, as there had been significant improvement in their outcomes.

## **Future directions**

Feedback from all involved has been very positive and the program will continue with Years 7, 8, 11 and 12 in 2005. The intention is to include Years 9 and 10 in the monitoring when more teachers are trained in the procedures.

## **Vocational Education Program**

### **Background**

During 2003, the Vocational Education Accreditation Board (VETAB) carried out a national accreditation audit and a positive report was attained with registration of the school as part of the Wollongong School Education Area Office Registered Training Organisation (RTO) until 2008.

## **Findings and conclusions**

In 2004 Keira High School had thirty-three Year 12 students achieving accreditation in Information Technology, Hospitality, Construction and Business Services.

Enrolments in Year 11 2004 were lower than in previous years with a total of thirty students as only two frameworks were offered, Information Technology and Hospitality.

## **Future directions**

Anticipated enrolments for Year 11 2005 appear to be much stronger with a total of seventy-three students. There are four frameworks offered - twenty-one students in Information Technology, twenty-six students in Hospitality, thirteen students in Construction and thirteen students in Furnishings.

## **Special Education: the Support Unit**

### **Background**

Keira High School continues to provide equity of access to learning for students with a variety of needs. A number of students have been identified and accommodated in the school community; thirty-three of them in the Support Unit, the remaining are being supported in mainstream classes with additional funding.

## **Findings and conclusions**

The school's Learning Support Team (LST) continued to meet regularly to address the needs of a variety of students. Several parents were invited along to participate in the development of Individual Learning Programs (ILPs) for their children.

The Support Unit introduced a personal development horse-riding program for junior students through the auspices of the Riding for the Disabled Association. This proved to be a great success and the program will be repeated for students in 2005.

The Stage 1 refurbishment of the Support Unit was completed in 2004 and Stage 2 of the building program should be completed by Term 2, 2005.

## **Future directions**

In 2005, the school will be presenting two candidates for HSC courses and four candidates for SC accreditation. Major emphasis for seniors is TAFE with

seven students enrolled for the first semester of 2005. The Support Unit continues to function as an integral part of the school community.

## Student performance

### School Certificate (SC) Information

In 2004, one hundred and forty six KHS Year 10 students presented for the formal School Certificate tests in English-literacy, Mathematics, Science, Australian History and Australian Geography as well as the Trial Computer Skills Test. Results were reported across six bands: Band 6 representing the highest achievement and Band 1 the lowest.

*English- literacy:* Performance in this test continued to demonstrate the strength of English-literacy in the school. Again a particular highlight was a good number of students (18%) achieving marks that placed them in the top performance Bands 5 & 6.

*Mathematics:* Results indicated that a trend of improvement in the top bands with 19% of Mathematics students achieving marks within these two bands. There was also a small improvement in results for students in the lower bands compared to previous years.

*Science:* The cohort performed strongly with 17% of students securing marks within the top performance bands. Although there was a small drop in the value-added results for middle performing students, there was a significant improvement in results for those students performing in the lower bands compared to previous years.

*Human Society and its Environment:* This Key Learning Area covers both the History and Social Science faculties. This is the first year that trend data has been available. However, in both subjects students' performances were strong.

*Trial Computer Skills Test:* Keira High School volunteered to be a trial school for this new test. While there are no specific band results available, there was a significant group of high achieving students in both the higher and middle bands.

In addition to the external tests, the school awards a grade for each School Certificate course studied including mandatory courses and a number of electives. School-based assessment data, gathered throughout Years 9 and 10 and reflecting syllabus outcomes, are used to determine the grades. Each grade represents a student's achievement as it relates to Course Performance Descriptors.

The school offered twenty-one School Certificate courses in 2004 including a number of 100-hour and 200-hour courses. Because of the school's elective organisation, some grades were determined when

students completed courses in Year 9 but were not awarded until students completed their School Certificate year.

### High School Certificate (HSC) Information

Excellent results were attained in all Key Learning Areas demonstrating outstanding value-added performance. A significant number of students performed well above their anticipated level of achievement, as predicted by School Certificate results.

The 2004 Year 12 cohort group achieved 25 Band 6 scores across a range of courses. Band 6 scores are very hard to achieve as students must achieve scores between 90-100%. The group also achieved 89 Band 5 scores of between 80-89%.

There were some excellent individual performances as well. Lauren Robertson achieved 1<sup>st</sup> in the state in Design and Technology. Byron Kemp's Personal Interest Project (PIP) for the Society and Culture course earned him a High Distinction, placing him in the top 17 in a course that had over 3600 candidates. His PIP has been selected for publication in the journal of the Society and Culture Teachers' Association and he and his teacher were invited to a special awards ceremony at the Mitchell Library. Emma Butler attained a UAI of 95.30. Emma has been awarded a scholarship and admitted into a Dean's Scholar degree at the University of Wollongong where she intends to major in History and Politics and Psychology.

Our results did not just favour the so-called high achievers. One girl who had been placed in the literacy class in Year 7 & Year 8 received a UAI of 78 and a 1<sup>st</sup> round offer at the University of Wollongong.

The results of the 2004 cohort are a valid measure of the school's great success in providing for the personal improvement and achievement of all students.

*English:* Results indicate students performing well in all courses. In particular, of the 33 students studying Advanced English, 31 achieved scores of between 70% and 89%. Our Extension 1 English students, as a group, achieved above state average. In Standard English, of the 71 students, 50 achieved marks between 60% and 89%.

*Mathematics:* The HSC Mathematics results were very among the best for these courses in recent years. The students who sat for the more difficult 2 Unit Mathematics course achieved just on average results as a group.

*Science:* Strong performances were recorded in Physics and Chemistry. Notably, students examined in Biology secured excellent results consolidating upon the success that this course enjoyed in previous years.

*Human Society and its Environment:* This broad key learning area encompasses history as well as social science. Outstanding results again were recorded in Society and Culture, establishing this course as a consistently successful area where top performance bands are frequently secured. Students in Ancient History and Modern History also performed very well. Results in Business Studies were outstanding with the group achieving well above state average. The results in Legal Studies indicated varying degrees of success.

*Technology and Applied Studies:* Excellent results were enjoyed in Design and Technology with one student achieving a first in the state. There were a number of strong individual performances in Software Development and Design. Performances Industrial Technology indicated varying levels of performance.

*Personal Development, Health and Physical Education:* This subject has been firmly established as an area of high academic success in the school. Again students have secured fine levels of performance. Of the 23 students who sat this course, 6 students achieved Band 6 scores and 11 achieved Band 5 scores.

*Creative and Performing Arts:* Performance in Visual Arts demonstrated significant improvement with excellent results being recorded including of the 12 students who completed this course, 9 achieved HSC scores of between 70% and 89%. There were excellent results in Music. Although there was only a small group of 9 students, the class achieved a number of Band 6, Band 5 and Band 4 scores. The individual student results in Drama were strong and consistent with previous years.

## **Our targets**

### **Progress on 2004 targets**

#### **Target 1. To improve links with local feeder schools**

Our achievements include:

- Joint training and development activities with primary school teachers including the School Development Day Conference in July 2004.
- The implementation of the Keira Community of Schools Academic Prizes for Year 6 students.
- The Science KLA joint primary-high school project.
- Regular visits to primary schools by Keira staff and students.

#### **Target 2. To engage with the Quality Teaching Project (QTP) model.**

Our achievements include:

- The use of the Quality Teaching Project model as a basis for faculty program review.
- The ongoing work of the Action Learning Team to generate professional development activities.
- The production of the Keira QTP DVD as a training and development resource now used in other schools throughout the state.
- Joint professional development activities with local primary teachers.

#### **Target 3. To ensure the transition to high school is successful.**

Our achievements include:

- The creation of single sex classes in Year 7.
- The class structure encouraged a more settled and productive transition year for both boys and girls as shown by surveys and in-school evidence.
- A significant reduction in discipline referrals as well as fewer reported instances of bullying and harassment.
- Improved intervention by the Support Teaching Learning Assistance with those students with low-support needs.

#### **Target 4. To extend academic monitoring of students to junior years**

Our achievements include:

- An increase in the number of students across the school who are monitored and interviewed by senior staff regarding academic progress.
- More students receiving positive rewards for being successful students.
- Increased parent/caregiver contact for those students in need of support.

## Targets for 2005

### Target 1 - Quality Teaching Project (QTP):

To ensure that teaching and learning strategies are underpinned by quality teaching principles.

#### Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Continuing priority given to QTP in all professional training and development activities.
- Ongoing support for Action Learning Team.
- Use of School Development Day to maintain ongoing links with teachers from feeder primary schools around quality teaching principles.

Our success will be measured by:

- Increased number of teachers at Keira engaging in the QTP model
- Increased professional development contact and joint activities with our primary school colleagues.
- Improved student engagement in learning and improved student outcomes.

### Target 2 - School/Classroom Organisation:

To develop organisational structures that support quality teaching and improved student outcomes.

#### Strategies to achieve this target include:

- The establishment of a new School/Classroom Organisation Team to audit and evaluate existing school/classroom organisation.
- The team is to develop means to improve systems particularly using information technology.

Our success will be measured by:

- Wider and more effective use of technologies to support teaching and learning.
- New streamlined procedures that reduce unnecessary workload and eliminate duplication of administration processes.

### Target 3 - School Culture:

To foster a culture of high expectations in every aspect of school life.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- The establishment of a new School Culture Team.
- The development of a new Category Gold reward system for students to replace existing Gold Awards.
- The continued refinement of the school's Category discipline system to ensure stable and productive classrooms.
- Ongoing analysis of all aspects of student outcomes from examination results to assessment tasks within a quality-teaching framework.

Our success will be measured by:

- The number of students qualifying for Category Gold.
- The number and type of student contact within the Category system.
- Continued improved student outcomes.

### Target 4 - School-Community Partnerships:

To strengthen ties with members of the wider school community, particularly parents, caregivers and local feeder schools.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- The establishment of a new School-Community Partnership Team that will develop a range of projects and programs designed to continue to strengthen our feeder school links and to devise new ways of involving our parents and caregivers in the life of the school.

Our success will be measured by:

- Increased parent/caregiver participation.
- Ongoing professional development links with local public schools,
- Renewed advocacy for Keira High School within our local community.

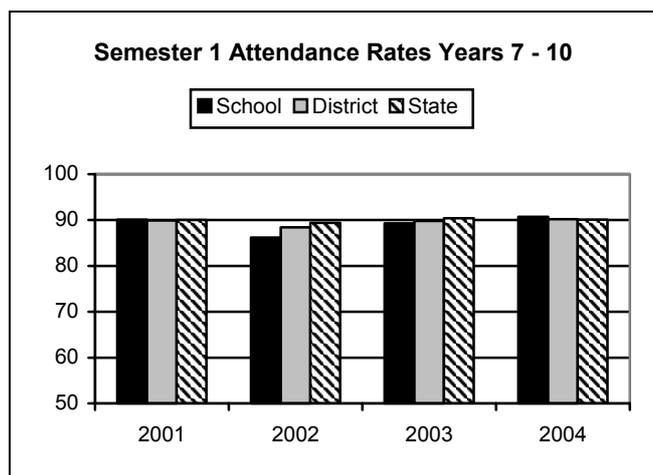
## Our context

### Enrolment profile

Keira's current enrolment is approximately 750 students. The school's allocated feeder primary schools are Balgownie Public School, Coniston Public School, Fairy Meadow Demonstration School, Mt Ousley Public School, Pleasant Heights Public School and Wollongong Public School. There are a significant number of non-local enrolment applications each year.

### Attendance profile

There has been a significant improvement in attendance rates. After an evaluation of school procedures, a new Attendance Policy and supporting systems were developed in late 2003 and introduced at the start of the 2004 school year. Keira High School's attendance rates are now above both district and state average. The new Attendance Policy will be evaluated during 2005 to ensure that the improvement is sustained.



### Equity Programs

#### Aboriginal Education

Aboriginal perspectives are integrated into faculty programs through Board of Studies syllabi. The aims of an Aboriginal focus within faculty programs are:

- to assist to improve the educational outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students; and
- to promote positive relationships between, and awareness of the needs of Aboriginal Torres Strait Islanders, in the wider community.

A variety of teacher resources and texts were purchased and added to library resources. Year 8 participated in performance by a visiting Aboriginal dancer, storyteller and musician.

In 2004, the school introduced the concept of 'welcome to country' at all formal assemblies. This involves recognition of the traditional indigenous custodians of the land. It is intended as a sign of respect and an acceptance of our heritage. It is pleasing to note that the Department of Education and Training has recommended that this 'welcome' is to be acknowledged in all NSW public schools from 2005 onwards.

#### Multicultural Education

Keira High School has a diverse multicultural population with a number of students from a language background other than English. Many of these people have experienced hardship and difficult conditions in their home countries, so they very much appreciate the public education system that our country provides and are often highly motivated.

A main priority of Keira High School, its executive and staff, is to provide a secure, harmonious environment for all students - one which recognises and respects individual differences and which promotes tolerance, understanding and acceptance of others.

During 2004 we have held afternoon teas with many of the parents and caregivers where we discuss aspects of schooling in Australia. This enables the school community to work together, supporting each other towards the best outcomes for our children. We liaise with community representatives and have a friendly relationship with various community groups. Interpreters are often used and are readily available if required for meetings during and after school.

Students in all years are benefiting from the support provided by the English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher who helps within the classroom but is also available for consultancy when students book in. In 2004, the school secured additional staffing support in this area.

### Student Leadership

#### Student Representative Council & Interact Club

The school has twenty students and the elected school captains representing the student body. During 2004, the students and the teacher adviser have been working on a restructuring to improve the direction and effectiveness of the council. This has involved substantial changes and policy formulation. Despite this, the representatives have been able to act as appropriate role models for their peers and as ambassadors of the school at many school and community functions.

The school's Year 11 Interact Club continues to enjoy strong relations with the local Rotary organisation.

## Financial statement summary

This summary covers funds for operating costs and does not involve expenditure areas such as permanent salaries, buildings and major maintenance.

There was a drop in revenue from canteen sales in 2004. As well, the school made increased expenditure on short-term relief and refurbishment of the main office as two priority areas. Consequently, the school's retained earnings figure for the 2004 financial year was slightly lower than previous years.

Date of financial summary:	30/11/2004
<b>Income</b>	<b>\$</b>
Balance brought forward	269 047.31
Global funds	352 437.53
Tied funds	110 626.63
School & community sources	211 457.23
Interest	13 201.83
Trust receipts	116 025.15
Canteen	185 646.26
<i>Total income</i>	<u>1 258 441.94</u>
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Teaching & learning	
Key learning areas	111 433.37
Excursions	36 998.97
Extracurricular dissections	69 885.89
Library	14 697.33
Training & development	2 330.38
Tied funds	108 899.60
Casual relief teachers	70 355.62
Administration & office	174 064.57
School-operated canteen	177 894.62
Utilities	34 439.53
Maintenance	109 897.44
Trust accounts	132 319.75
Capital programs	17 686.49
<i>Total expenditure</i>	<u>1 060 903.56</u>
<b>Balance carried forward</b>	<u><u>197 538.38</u></u>

A full copy of the school's 2004 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meeting of the school's P&C Association. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

## About this report

In preparing this report, the self-evaluation committee has gathered information from evaluations conducted during the year and analysed other information about the school's practices and student learning outcomes. The self-evaluation committee has determined targets for the school's future development.

Members of the school self-evaluation committee included:

Maurie Mulheron, Principal  
 David Robson, Deputy Principal  
 Annette Brunt, Head Teacher Visual Arts  
 Pam Gregg, Head Teacher Social Sciences

A regional chief education officer has provided guidance to the school during the self-evaluation process and validated the analysis of student performance data contained in this report.

**Pamela Hunt**  
**Chief Education Officer**  
**Illawarra & South Coast Region**

The school education director has endorsed the targets contained in this report, which will be used to facilitate area planning and allocation of area resources.

**Chris Carroll**  
**School Education Director**  
**Wollongong North**  
**Illawarra & South Coast Region**

