



Annual Report 2005

KEIRA HIGH SCHOOL

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Principal's message

Keira High School is a comprehensive, co-educational high school that draws students from central Wollongong and suburbs adjacent to North Wollongong. The school has a long tradition of delivering quality public education to the community of the Illawarra since 1917.

Although the school is proud of its traditions, it can also look to the future, confident that it is a dynamic and innovative school.



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 enables the school to cater for all 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.

Mr M. Mulheron

Our achievements

Performing and Creative Arts

A priority of the school in 2005 was to invest heavily with time, money and specialist staff in extending and developing a comprehensive performing arts program for students at Keira. Throughout 2005 the school:

- Developed a partnership with the Wollongong Conservatorium of Music by employing Mr Eric Dunan, Director of Jazz Studies, to run our band program.
- Created a new advanced band ensemble program.
- Started a beginners' band.
- Employed professional circus performers to train students in the art of circus skills.
- Secured the services of the renowned Jeannie Lewis, one of Australia's most accomplished soloists and cabaret performers, to develop a series of singing and voice workshops.
- Formed a talented dance troupe.

All of this was in addition to our existing music and performing arts programs such as guitar tuition, Rock Eisteddfod, drama and vocal ensemble. Some of our talented musicians and dancers were featured artists in the DET Illawarra and South Coast Region's *Southern Stars* production. Twenty-six of our dancers successfully auditioned to perform in *Southern Stars*.

One of our talented HSC Visual Arts students, Gordana Gorgiesvka, had her major work chosen to be included in the prestigious ArtExpress Exhibition,

a showcase of the most exceptional works from the 2005 HSC.

Sport

- Keira again had a successful year in the sporting arena, continuing its fine tradition of involvement in sport at all levels by the widest cross section of students, with the following highlights:
- Recreational Sport (Terms 1 & 4) - A wide range of sports was offered to cater for all levels of ability and experience including lacrosse, tennis, swimming, basketball, netball, soccer, cricket, table tennis, ten-pin bowling, martial arts, surfing, squash, kickboxing, beach volleyball and lawn bowls.
- Keira High School has an outstanding record of achievement in competitive sport and takes pride in the number of grade and knockout teams that it is able to field.
- Grade sport, during Terms 2 and 3, resulted in eleven Keira teams making the Finals with six teams being victorious.
- The Year 7 swimming program was established to develop skills and water competencies.
- There was high attendance and participation in our successful athletics, swimming and cross-country carnivals.
- Nineteen Keira students were selected in various regional teams. Karouna Micheal (soccer), David Murphy (cricket) and Lisa Craig (athletics) were selected to represent in NSW CHS teams. Lisa Craig was selected to compete in the Pacific Schools Games, winning U20s Hammer with a new record. As well, Lisa received a prestigious South Coast Blues Award.
- The Boys' Shell Cup Basketball Team won five elimination matches in succession to reach the final six teams in the statewide competition. This was an excellent effort as the knockout tournament had over 400 entries.

Key evaluations

Educational and management practice

Gender classes – Years 7 & 8

Background

The 2004 Annual School Report documented the successful transition of Year 6 students into Year 7 at Keira based on the notion of mixed ability and single

sex classing. Following a comprehensive survey of parents and teachers, as well as interviews with Year 7 students, it was recommended that this model be implemented again in Year 7 2005, and extended where possible into the Year 8 curriculum. In the first phase, the class structure was designed to provide a stable learning environment for the first two years of high school with the emphasis on the social development of the students.

The second phase, which occurred during 2005, was to evaluate the extent to which the class structure had a positive effect on student performance. This was achieved by aggregating the data available within the school including class assessments as well as English Literacy and Language Assessment (ELLA) and Secondary Numeracy Assessment Program (SNAP) results, to provide a measurement of the effectiveness of the class structure in terms of student outcomes.



A Year 7 girls' History class

Findings and conclusions

Year 8 students in 2005 achieved outstanding results that confirm that the school has created a stable learning environment and a positive learning culture. This was particularly evident in the school's literacy results from the ELLA Test. Most significantly, the boys' level of literacy has been greatly enhanced, contrary to both national and international trends. An extensive evaluation of the school's ELLA results revealed outstanding performances by students in both Years 7 and 8. Significantly the school is out performing many of its neighbouring schools and is achieving above state average results in many areas. In particular, the reading skills of our students in Year 8 were reported as being markedly superior to both participating schools in our region and throughout the state at large.

Other school-based data indicated that there was a significant drop in the number of Year 7 discipline referrals including placements on the school's Category Red as well as a reduction in suspensions for Year 7 and improved attendance rates.

Future directions

The gender classes will continue. In 2006, the school will continue to both monitor and formally evaluate this important initiative using the full range of data available.



Ex-Keira student, the 'Sandman' (Steve Abbott), addressing a boys' English class

Priority Schools Funding Program (PSFP)

Background

2005 was Keira High School's first year on the PSF Program. Our inclusion in the program coincided with the launch of a new set of directions for the school. To ensure the integration of PSFP with school's new directions, we developed a School Plan called *Keira High School – The Next Phase 2005 - 2008* that coincided with the quadrennium period of the PSF Program.

As well, we developed our four School Plan focus areas from those that underpin the PSFP Program: 1. Quality Teaching. 2. Classroom/School Organisation; 3. School Culture; and 4. School-Community Partnerships.

Our next approach was to develop a PSFP management structure based on the Keira Enrichment and Equity Project (K.E.E.P.) a committee oversaw each focus area team of the School Plan. PSFP funding priorities were developed from the School Plan.

We were determined that the Program would be innovative and dynamic with projects (short-term) and programs (long-term) designed to reach a broad cross-section of the student population.

Findings and conclusions

Our class size reduction program has been an immediate success allowing us to create gender classes in Year 7 and 8 which addressed some important gender equity issues. We created an additional class in both Year 7 and Year 8. The

structure was three boys' classes and two girls' classes in each Year. The average class size was approximately 22. Teachers of Years 7 and 8 met and developed strategies to combat gender stereotyping before taking their classes. The program has been an outstanding success and is widely supported by our entire school community including students.

The school has made the professional development of teachers around the Quality Teaching Framework a priority which will continue for the life of PSFP and, hopefully, beyond. As well, Keira teachers were selected to participate in the University of Newcastle's *Systemic Implications for Pedagogy and Achievement in NSW public schools* (SIPA) research project. The first comprehensive and independent evaluation of our implementation of the DET Quality Teaching Framework by the SIPA team has been very encouraging. This has given new impetus to teachers to continue their involvement in the Quality Teaching Model. The SIPA results will also provide a starting point for planning professional development in early 2006.

As a school, we have had reinforced the importance of developing and maintaining strong links with our community but more particularly, our feeder primary schools, one of our highest priority areas. The creation of a part-time Community Liaison Officer (CLO), funded by PSFP, has assisted in this regard as we keep extending the notion of a Keira Community of Schools. Our experiences to date have shown us all that a strong sense of a community of schools is critical not just for the growth of the public education system but makes for a more effective high school. We will be extending this program even further in 2006 and have created a Year 6 Adviser position.

The School Plan identified creative and performing arts as an area that needed a stronger whole-school commitment. In conjunction with the Wollongong Conservatorium of Music, the school developed an advanced band, which is performing publicly, and a beginners' band comprised largely of students who have had no musical tuition and generally do not own a musical instrument. The school has used its own resources to supply instruments to these students. In conjunction with Circus WOW, a local women's circus, we developed a girls' circus class. This will be extended to boys in 2006. We also ran a weekly voice class for singing and drama students employing the renowned cabaret performer, Jeannie Lewis, to conduct these classes. The Visual Arts Faculty employed professional artists to work with our students, as well as students from our feeder schools, to create sculptures.

Other long-term programs such as the numeracy enrichment teacher will need to be evaluated over a

longer period of time and measured against a range of data.

Future directions

The success of these programs will be measured in both the short term and the long term. In the short term, there has been a large increase in the number of students involved in creative and performing arts within the school leading to an increased sense of 'connectedness'. The band program may eventually be self-sustaining with the advanced band being fed members from the beginners' band. Our next phase in this program is to form a music links program with our feeder schools. Many of the students who have been participating in the activities are students who may never have been provided these opportunities before. In the long-term, we hope that the program will involve more and more students. If we can involve large numbers of students in school activities, we will enhance school connectedness generally whilst at the same time improve student outcomes.

The K.E.E.P. Committee provided leadership development opportunities for existing Executive, classroom teachers and SASS staff. The school Executive will now need to expand this model in 2006 to ensure that new and interested staff members are given opportunities to become part of the program and to replace those who have either retired or moved on.

We will need to review the K.E.E.P. structure. Although it is still our preferred model we have had a variety of staff changes and extended leave that has made some of the work of the committee stagnate. In 2006, we will need to develop a structure that is less dependent on any one individual.

Curriculum

Numeracy support

Background

Numeracy support has been delivered traditionally by the school's Support Teacher Learning Assistance (STLA). However, due to time limitations, the school was not in a position to offer numeracy support to a greater number of students without adversely affecting the school's successful literacy programs. The school's SNAP results confirmed some fundamental weaknesses in the lower bands of achievement. Using PSFP funds, the school extended the STLA program by employing a specialist teacher to organise a numeracy enrichment program for three days a week. Students experiencing difficulties in numeracy in Years 7 and 8 were targeted. The approach involved the creation of a small Year 8

class in Mathematics and the withdrawal of selected students in Year 7. Team-teaching was the other mode of delivery.

Findings and conclusions

The initial findings show a retrieval of Year 8 mathematics students who had become disengaged. There were significant improvements in across-the-year tests. It was also identified that any weaknesses in numeracy could not be generalised. Quite specific areas were identified necessitating the need to be flexible in delivery. It became clear that a number of modes of delivery; a dedicated small class group, withdrawal of targeted students and team teaching, were sufficiently flexible enough to affect positively a wide range of students.

Future directions

There is a need to develop an overall approach that caters for all students not just those with high needs. The numeracy program will need to be reassessed during 2006 to ensure that all students are catered for not just those students performing in the lower bands.

Other programs

Celebrating Success

Background

The 2005 School Plan identified the need to continue to raise the expectations by creating more opportunities to reward student achievement. In 2005, the school created a range of new academic awards. This was to reward those students, regardless of age, whose achievement was significant. We also initiated the Keira Community of Schools Award in collaboration with our feeder primary schools. This set of awards celebrates the academic achievement of a Year 6 student from each feeder school.

Findings and conclusions

The awards became a central feature of the annual presentation evening and were well received by the school community. To symbolise the significance of academic achievement, visiting university staff assisted in the presentation of the awards. The principals from our local public primary schools assisted in the presenting of our Keira Community of Schools Awards.

Future directions

The awards will be further promoted during 2006. The next challenge is to broaden the recognition of achievement by developing a merit-based category that complements the existing welfare/discipline system.

Back to School Day

Background

A joint initiative of DET and the NSW Teachers Federation has been the Back to School Day when prominent ex-students return to public schools to celebrate the achievements of public education. Keira invited three of its students; Frank Moorhouse, Miles Franklin Award winning Australian novelist; Hugh Craft, retired Australian diplomat; and Wayne Gardner, Australian motor-cycle champion.

Findings and conclusions

Frank Moorhouse and Hugh Craft addressed senior students about aspects of their lives and careers since leaving school. Students gained some interesting insights that they used in their HSC courses. Wayne Gardner addressed the Year 8 group on goal setting.

Future directions

The school will be participating in the 2006 Back to School Day as a means of promoting Keira High School specifically and public education in general.

Student performance

School Certificate (SC) Information

In 2005, 135 Keira Year 10 students presented for the formal School Certificate tests in English-literacy, Mathematics, Science, Australian History and Australian Geography. 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. A particular highlight was the number of students, 35 students, representing 25.92% of the cohort, who achieved marks that placed them in the top performance Bands 5 and 6. 34.81% of students were placed in Band 4. 20.73% of students received results that placed them in the lower bands. In general, there has been a significant improvement on our 2004 results.

Mathematics: Results indicated a very slight improvement in the top bands with 39.99% of Mathematics students achieving marks within the top three bands. There was also a small improvement in results for students in the lower bands compared to the results of previous years. In terms of 'value-added' data, students in all groupings – lower, middle and higher – performed better than the cohorts of 2001 to 2004.

Science: There was an overall improvement in science results compared to the results of 2004. The cohort performed strongly with 37 students or 27.4%

securing marks within the top performance bands of 5 and 6. Relative to BST results, the 2005 cohort achieved significantly better 'value-added' results in all three groupings – lower, middle and higher.

Human Society and its Environment: This Key Learning Area covers both the History and Social Science faculties. The results were excellent for both Australian History and Australian Geography. In Australian History, 41 students, or 30.36% of the cohort, achieved results in the top performance bands of 5 and 6 compared to only 8 students, or just 5.92% of the cohort, who received results in the lower two bands. In Australian Geography, 35 students, or 25.92% of the cohort, achieved results in the top performance bands of 5 and 6 compared to only 8 students, or just 5.92% of the cohort, who received results in the lower two 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 2005 including a number of 100-hour and 200-hour courses. The school's grading pattern would indicate that there are a higher proportion of students achieving top grades in a 200-hour course compared to its 100-hour counterpart.

Higher School Certificate (HSC) Information

In 2005, 82 Keira Year 12 students presented for the formal Higher School Certificate examinations in 31 courses as well as five community language subjects taught through the Saturday School. Results were reported across six bands: Band 6 representing the highest achievement and Band 1 the lowest.

English: Results indicate students performed well in most courses. In particular, students in English Standard achieved results that were higher than the 2004 cohort with an improvement of 0.17 for a Within School Analysis and an improvement of 0.14 for School versus State comparison. This result did not hold for the English Advanced and Extension English courses with a slight decline in results compared to the 2004 cohort. However, the performances were strong when measured against predicted achievement based on the 2005 cohort's 2003 School Certificate English results.

Mathematics: Compared to the strong results in 2004, the 2005 HSC Mathematics results were disappointing, particularly the 2 Unit Mathematics performances. Students in the General Mathematics

course generally performed stronger than their 2 Unit counterparts.

Science: Students examined in Biology achieved strong results with an improvement that measures Within School Comparison from a score of – 0.9 to + 0.15. Because of the small size of the groups studying Physics and Chemistry, it is difficult to validly compare the 2005 and 2004 cohorts although the results indicate a slightly lower mean.

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 performed well. The results in Legal Studies saw a significant improvement on last year's results.

Technology and Applied Studies: Excellent results were enjoyed in Design and Technology with the group securing results that were above state average. The results in Information, Processes and Technology and 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. The group secured an above state average performance in the course.

Creative and Performing Arts: Performance in Visual Arts demonstrated significant improvement the group scoring a mean above state average. There were too few students in Music and Drama to make any valid judgement but there were strong individual performances.

Our targets

Progress on 2005 targets

Target 1. Quality Teaching Project (QTP)

Our achievements include:

- The school's involvement in the DET Quality Teaching Project and the SIPA study. The study involved extensive classroom observation, assessment tasks and analysis of student work in four key learning areas: English, Mathematics, Science, HSIE and PD/H/PE. Some of the preliminary findings include:
- Observation of the Intellectual Quality dimension showed that Keira scored 18.54 compared to the mean of 15.11 for secondary schools.

- Observation of the Quality Learning Environment dimension showed that Keira scored 17.36 compared to the mean of 15.08.

- Observation of the Significance dimension showed that Keira scored 16.55 compared to the mean of 13.75 for secondary schools.

Target 2. School/Classroom Organisation

Our achievements include:

- The reduction in class sizes from an average of 28 students per class in Year 7 to 23.8 and in Year 8 from 29 students per class to 21.7. This initiative had a positive impact on the learning environment.

Target 3. School Culture

Our achievements include:

- The revitalised performing arts program that has led to a significant increase in the number of students engaged in extra-curricula activity.
- The creation of a school based set of prestigious academic awards for each key learning area.
- The development of a school diary policy and program to enhance student organisational skills.

Target 4. School-Community Partnerships

Our achievements include:

- The smooth transition involved in the name change of the school by the deletion of 'technology' from the school name. This has signified new directions that the school is taking.
- Increased parent and community participation in school based activities including the primary links open night, subject information evenings, multicultural parent afternoon teas and P&C fundraising ventures.
- The creation of a dedicated Community Liaison Officer.
- Ongoing links with feeder primary schools including music and dance performances, visual arts workshops and model lessons in Japanese.

Targets for 2006

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:

- The creation of a training and development budget that more closely aligns with the school plan.
- A focus on the (SIPA) analysis of the school's assessment tasks to improve their quality and effectiveness.
- The use of available SMART data at a dedicated School Development Day for cross-faculty analysis to identify strengths and weaknesses in student outcomes.
- Our success will be measured by:
 - Over 75% of training and development activities relating directly to the school's priorities as outlined in the School Plan 2006.
 - The data supplied by the second SIPA research following the team visit, interviews, classroom observations and student work samples.

Target 2. School/Classroom Organisation

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

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- The continuation of a dedicated STLA Numeracy position to target students in need of support.
- The continued creation of single sex classes to facilitate a smooth transition to high school and to provide a settled learning environment.
- The formation of an additional Year 8 boys' class in order to reduce average class sizes.

Our success will be measured by:

- An increase in students receiving assistance. Improved results in mathematics class tests. A 10% reduction in the number of students performing in the elementary achievement levels in the SNAP tests.
- Improved student outcomes in Stage 5, as measured by both school-based assessment in Year 9 2006 and the 2007 School Certificate results.

Target 3. School Culture

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

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- The development of a dedicated school diary with a policy that mandates its use across all year groups.
- The creation of a beginners' band that incorporates a primary links band.

- The refurbishment of the school playground and the general physical environment of the school.

Our success will be measured by:

- An increased rating on student reports that reflect greater completion of homework and assignments.
- 25% of beginners graduating to the senior band. The number of primary members of the beginners' band.
- Increased student use of a refurbished senior area.

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 creation of a new Keira web page for external use.
- Targeting of feeder primary school P&C meetings with Keira guest speakers.

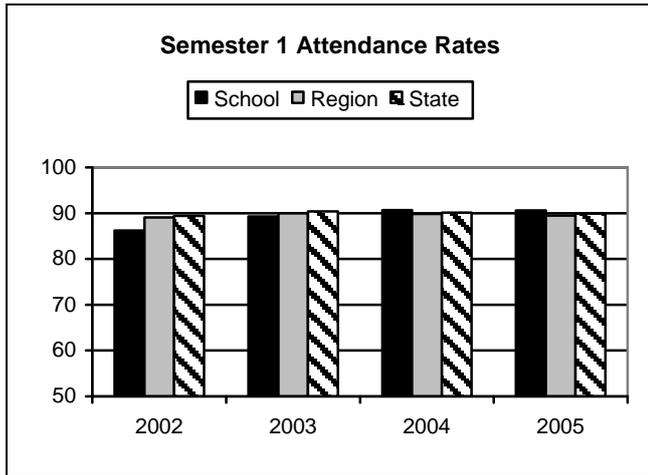
Our success will be measured by:

- The number of visitors to the new web page.
- A 15% increase in retention of primary students enrolling at Keira High School from feeder schools.

Our context

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 is constantly evaluated to ensure that the improvement is sustained.



Enrolment profile

Keira's current enrolment is approximately 770 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.

Financial statement summary

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

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:

Mr M. Mulheron, Principal
 Mr D.J. Robson, Deputy Principal
 Mrs B. Wall, Deputy Principal
 Mrs L. Wells, Support Teacher Learning Assistance
 Ms S. Blackstock, Federation Representative
 Mr J. Bell, President P&C Association

Date of financial summary:	30/11/2005
Income	\$
Balance brought forward	197 538.38
Global funds	396 322.68
Tied funds	197 876.29
School & community sources	197 288.71
Interest	16 382.29
Trust receipts	51 241.21
Canteen	179 702.51
Total income	1 236 352.07
Expenditure	
Teaching & learning	
Key learning areas	89 998.77
Excursions	49 044.71
Extracurricular dissections	62 913.77
Library	5 831.69
Training & development	629.10
Tied funds	153 436.05
Casual relief teachers	69 107.04
Administration & office	185 516.84
School-operated canteen	167 579.27
Utilities	33 913.26
Maintenance	54 702.83
Trust accounts	51 381.49
Capital programs	28 013.29
Total expenditure	952 068.11
Balance carried forward	284 283.96

A full copy of the school's 2005 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meeting of the school's P&C. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

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

Wayne Ash
School Development Officer
Illawarra and South Coast Region

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

Chris Carroll
School Education Director
Illawarra and South Coast Region

