

Keira High School Annual School Report

NSW Public Schools – Leading the way



Messages

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 the 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

P&C message

Once a month during the school term, the Keira High School Parents & Citizens (P&C) Association holds its meetings. All parents, carers and interested community members are encouraged to support the students enrolled at KHS by attending our meetings. New families are always welcome and interpreters can attend meetings if requested.

The P&C is actively involved in decision making processes with many parent representatives on committees to represent parents' interests. Another way parents and caregivers support the school is through fundraising, which has helped to provide senior students with an aesthetically pleasing seating area for their use.

I would encourage all interested parents and caregivers to support the students and staff of KHS by attending meetings. When parents, students and staff work towards a common goal, great things can be achieved at KHS.

Lauren Borst, Secretary

Student representative's message

Keira High School's Student Representative Council (SRC) is an initiative which encourages students to take on leadership roles within the school and in the wider community. As a member of the SRC, I have had the privilege to attend and participate in numerous functions focused on preparing young people to become the leaders of tomorrow, gaining experience through attending lectures, conferences and forums.

These activities give high school students an opportunity to voice their opinions and discuss contemporary issues facing our generation. One function attended was the Young Leaders' Youth Forum where prominent figures spoke about their own experiences in being role models and leaders of today.

Being involved in this activity allowed me to gain personal insight into what it means to be a leader and a representative of my school. From these experiences and interactions between other SRC members from a range of schools throughout New South Wales, we have been able to apply what we have learnt within our own school environment. This has helped us to improve the SRC so that we can effectively represent the student body and be leaders within the school community.

Sarah Stevens (Year 11, 2006)



School context

Student information

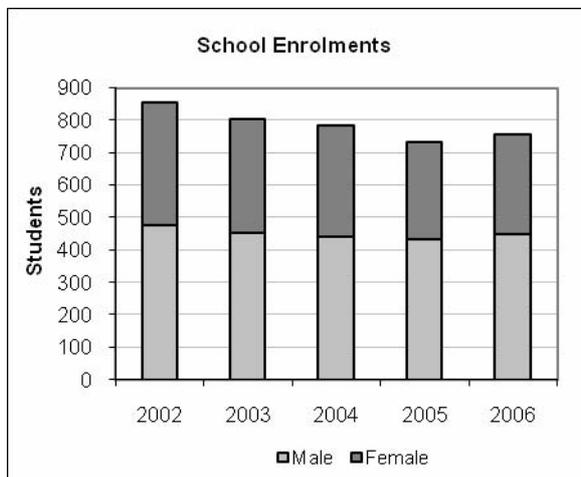
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Student enrolment profile

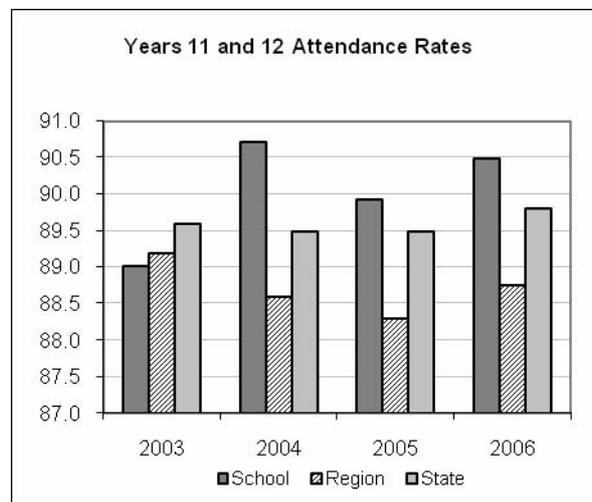
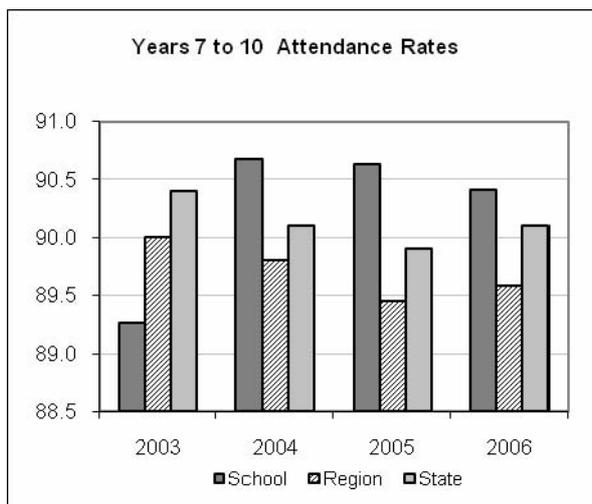
Keira's enrolment in 2006 was 769 students. This includes the school's Support Unit. The school's allocated partner primary schools that comprise the Keira Community of Schools, are Balgownie Public School, Coniston Public School, Fairy

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.

It is pleasing to note that Keira High School's enrolments are increasing and, on projected figures for 2007 and 2008, this growth is likely to continue.



Student attendance profile



Regular attendance at school is vital for success at school. At Keira High School, regular attendance is a school priority. 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. Since then, Keira's attendance rates continue to be above both region and state average. As well as school rolls being marked each day, each student's attendance at every class is recorded by class teachers and reported to parents twice a year.

Structure of classes

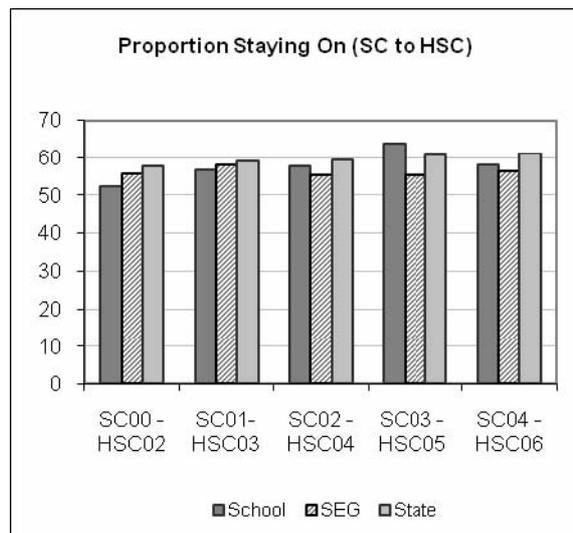
In Years 7 and 8, the school has created single-sex classes. This initiative is combined with a class size reduction program. Additional classes have been created in both Year 7 and Year 8 to allow for an average class size of approximately 22. Both these initiatives are designed to foster a positive transition to high school.

In Years 9 and 10, the elective classes are vertically structured to allow for greater subject choice. These elective subjects are offered as either 100 or 200 hour courses.

Years 11 and 12 are traditionally structured but with an emphasis on relatively small class sizes in those subjects other than English and Mathematics.

Retention to Year 12

It is an important focus at Keira to encourage students to remain at school beyond Year 10 and to gain their HSC. With this in mind, the school offers a broad range of both academic and non-academic pathways for senior students. Between 2002 and 2006, the trend in our retention rates shows it is increasing.



Post-school destinations

Almost one in two students in Year 12 (48%) successfully gained university entrance, with the vast majority now attending the University of Wollongong. The majority of the remainder of Year 12 are either in full-time TAFE study combined with casual or part-time work. A very small number of students are working without engaging in any industry training. In our post-school survey, the school ascertained that every student was in full or part-time study or had gained employment.

Staff information

It is a requirement that the reporting of information for all staff must be consistent with privacy and personal information policies.

Staff establishment (2006)

Position	Number
Principal	1.0
Deputy Principals	2.0
Head Teachers	10.0
Classroom Teachers	43.2
Teacher of Mild Intellectual Disabilities	2.0
Teacher of Moderate Intellectual Disabilities	2.0
Support Teacher Learning Assistance	0.9
Teacher Librarian	1.0
Teacher of ESL	1.2
Counsellor	1.0
Careers Adviser	1.0
School Administrative Manager	1.0
School Administrative Officers	9.0
Teacher's Aide Special	2.0
General Assistant	1.0
Total	78.3

Staff retention

Keira High School has enjoyed a period of stability with staff retention rates being very high. 95% of the permanent teaching staff remained teaching at Keira in 2006 from the previous year. Of the five that left, two were due to retirement; one was a service transfer to gain a full-time position with the remaining two teachers gaining a promotion in other locations.

Staff attendance

Staff have access to leave entitlements such as sick leave. In 2006 the average daily attendance rate for staff, as determined by the Department, was 96.5%

Teacher qualifications

All teaching staff meet the professional requirements for teaching in NSW public schools. (This is in stark contrast to the non-government school sector which is exempt from such requirements.)

Qualifications	% of staff
Degree or Diploma	100%
Postgraduate	27%

Financial summary

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

Date of financial summary:	30/11/2006
Income	\$
Balance brought forward	284 283.96
Global funds	363 334.52
Tied funds	187 334.47
School & community sources	305 301.11
Interest	18 213.69
Trust receipts	56 464.04
Canteen	201 349.02
Total income	1 416 280.81
Expenditure	
Teaching & learning	
Key learning areas	82 746.31
Excursions	76 079.34
Extracurricular dissections	67 890.73
Library	7 218.37
Training & development	2 511.77
Tied funds	184 130.08
Casual relief teachers	60 794.49
Administration & office	170 325.88
School-operated canteen	182 289.82
Utilities	37 058.05
Maintenance	103 227.98
Trust accounts	59 297.56
Capital programs	0.00
Total expenditure	1 033 570.38
Balance carried forward	382 710.43

A full copy of the school's 2006 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the parent body. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

School performance 2006

Achievements

Arts

Throughout 2006 we continued our development of an outstanding performing and creative arts program. This included the following highlights.

A partnership with the Wollongong Conservatorium of Music and its Director of Jazz Studies, Eric Dunan, continued in 2006. This included an advanced band ensemble program and a joint beginners' band, which comprised of local primary students and junior Keira students. This program is designed to feed graduates into the advanced band.



Since 2005, our circus skills class has both boys and girls. We are hoping to build on its success by exploring ways in which we may be able to incorporate this into the school curriculum, particular in Drama classes.

We secured the services of Jeannie Lewis, one of Australia's most accomplished soloists and cabaret performers and who has conducted master singing classes for Schools Spectacular, to run an after-school singing class.

Dance is being offered as a subject choice in 2006 to be taught in 2007 for the first time and the classes are already full with a waiting list.

We employed a professional guitar teacher from the Wollongong Conservatorium of Music to run weekly guitar classes.

Some other highlights for 2006 were:

Three Year 11 students were accepted from over 600 applicants into the Extension Art course held at the National Art School Darlinghurst during the July and October holidays.

Our Senior band performed in the Engadine Music Festival and at the Public Education Dinner.

The school organised a successful combined Japanese and Music cultural excursion to Canberra.

Southern Stars is a regional production similar to the state's Schools Spectacular, organised by the Illawarra and South East Region of the DET as a showcase for performing arts students from Kindergarten to Year 12. Keira was well-represented in the 2006 production. Eighteen Keira students were involved in dance. One student was a featured artist as a singer and three students and one Keira teacher were selected to perform in the show band.

The school held its annual Music Arts Dance and Drama (MADD) concert in term two at the TAFE auditorium. The theme was 'the celebration of youth'. Over fifty students and six teachers were involved over two nights. There were full houses both nights.

In September, the school held a Year 12 Major Works Showcase evening in the school library. The works included performances from the Year 12 HSC Drama class, the HSC Music performance pieces along with Design and Technology HSC major works. Also displayed were the Visual Arts HSC artworks. The evening was very well attended by parents, staff, students and friends. It is hoped that this will continue to be an annual event.

In December, the school held its Annual Arts Exhibition which was popular with students, parents, caregivers and staff.

Once again Keira was successful gaining funding for an installation artwork involving all Year 8 students. The work was titled The Pathways Project and its theme was the celebration of the diversity of cultures in our school. It was displayed at North Beach in September.

Sport

Keira had another successful year in the sporting arena, continuing its fine involvement in sport at all levels.

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, gym squash, surfing and beach volleyball.

Grade Sport: During Terms 2 and 3, Keira fielded 29 different sporting teams in the Northern Illawarra Baron Shield Competition which resulted in thirteen teams making finals with seven being victorious.

The Year 7 swimming programme continued for its third year accommodating all levels of swimming ability.

There was high attendance and participation in our successful swimming, cross-country and athletics carnivals with talented athletes representing the Northern Illawarra Zone at Regional Carnivals.

Thirty-one students were selected in various regional teams and five were selected in NSWCHS State teams.

Swimming: Keira 15 Years Boys Relay team (Julian Badman, Christian King, Mitchell Anderson and Braden Borst) represented South Coast at SSCHS Championships.

Cross Country: Keira 15 Years Boys Relay team (Kyle Kruger, Oliver Walker, Jarrad Anderson, and Jacob Robinson) were Regional Champions and South Coast Representatives along with Stephanie Badman 16 Years Girls.

Athletics: Keira 15 Years Boys Relay Team (Dean McGoldrick, Corey Brees, Kyle Kruger and Nathaniel Richardson) along with Brad Innes (15 Years 200m, Hurdles 10th, 100m Hurdles 9th), Susannah Craig (15 Years Girls Shot 11th, Discus 4th), Mathew Gatwood (17 Years High Jump 6th), Nathaniel Richardson (15 Years 100m 17th), Streto Kljajic (14 Years 100m Hurdle) and Kate Robinson (14 Years Shot Put) were all regional representatives.

Tennis: Sarah Stevens Open Girls Regional Representative.



Soccer: Girls Regional Soccer, Maniso Michael.

Girls CHS State Selection: Maniso Michael

Boys Regional Soccer Representatives: Jacob Miller, Adam Kumcevski, Matt Cropper and Drew Pinazza.

Boys CHS State Selection: Jacob Miller and Adam Kumcevski.

State All Schools Selection: Jacob Miller.

Hockey: Boys Regional Selection: Nathan Nikolich and Oliver Walker.

State CHS Selection: Nathan Nikolich.

Basketball: Boys Regional Selection: Tyson Bell.

Water Polo: Boys Regional Selection: Shea O'Neill and Nicholas Humphery.

Cricket: Boys Regional Selection 2007: David Murphy (Captain).

Boys CHS Selection 2006: David Murphy.

The Open Boys Puma Cup Soccer Team made it to the State semi-finals losing to Westfield Sport High. This placed them in the top four of some four hundred teams from across the state.

Priority Schools Funding Program (PSFP)

The PSF Program has made a significant difference to the school's capacity to meet the needs of the vast bulk of students. The Program is innovative and dynamic with projects (short-term) and programs (long-term) designed to reach a broad cross-section of the student population. This includes the large performing arts program that has increased steadily over the last two years and has the potential to be self-sustaining and now involves close links with our partner primary schools.

Our class size reduction program has been an immediate success allowing us to create smaller gender based classes in Year 7 and 8 which not only addressed some important gender equity issues but also provided additional support for those students in need of individual teacher time.

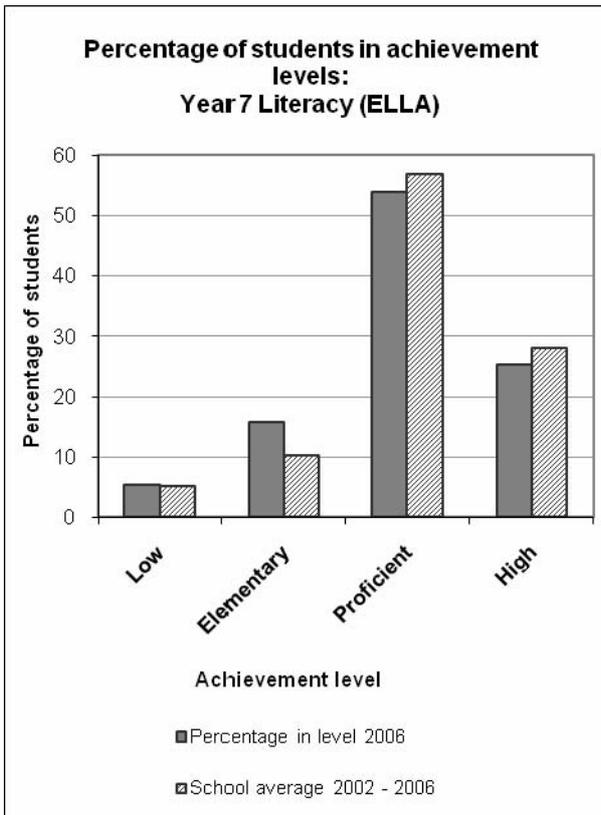
Another long-term program, such as the numeracy enrichment teacher (STLA), will need to be evaluated over a longer period, although anecdotal evidence from the Head Teacher Mathematics and the STLA is that this program is very worthwhile.

Academic

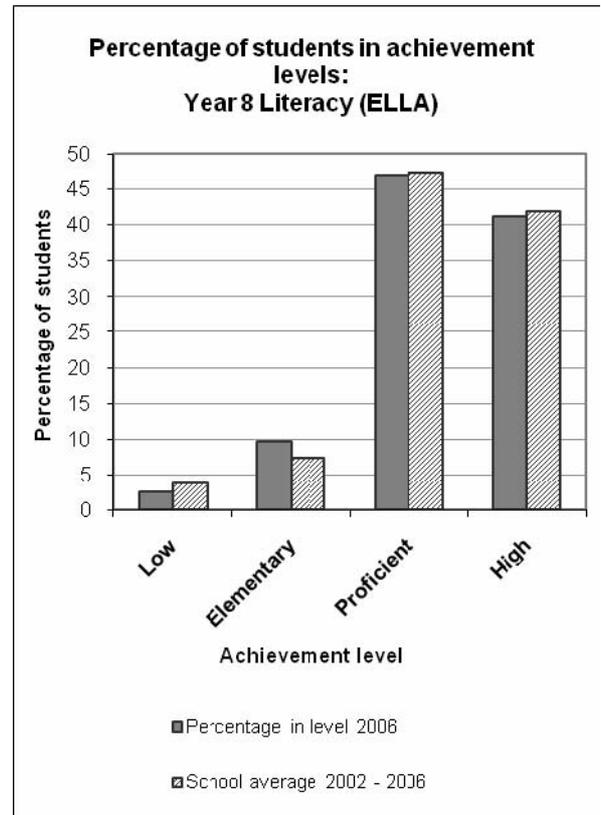
In the School Certificate and the Higher School Certificate, the performance of students is reported in performance bands ranging from Performance Band 1 (lowest) to Performance Band 6 (highest).

The school continues to perform strongly across a range of tests and examinations with continued success in the area of literacy.

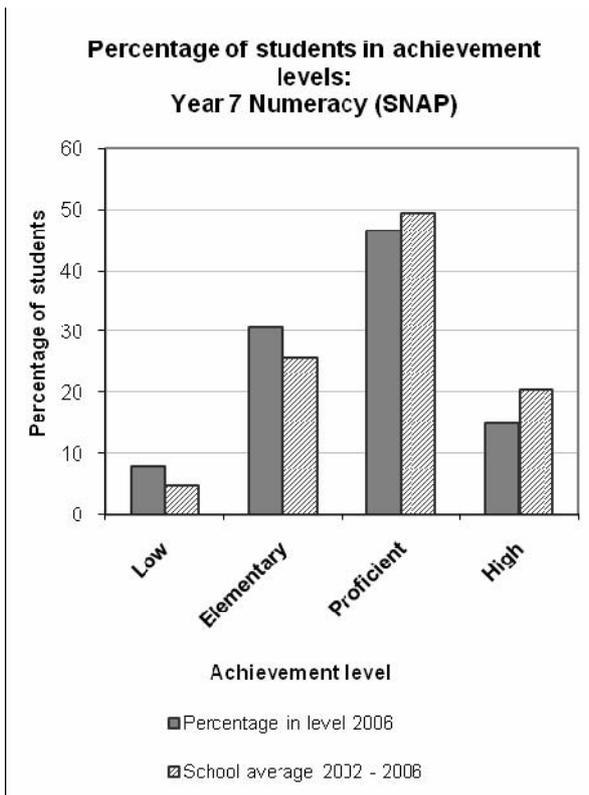
Literacy – ELLA Year 7



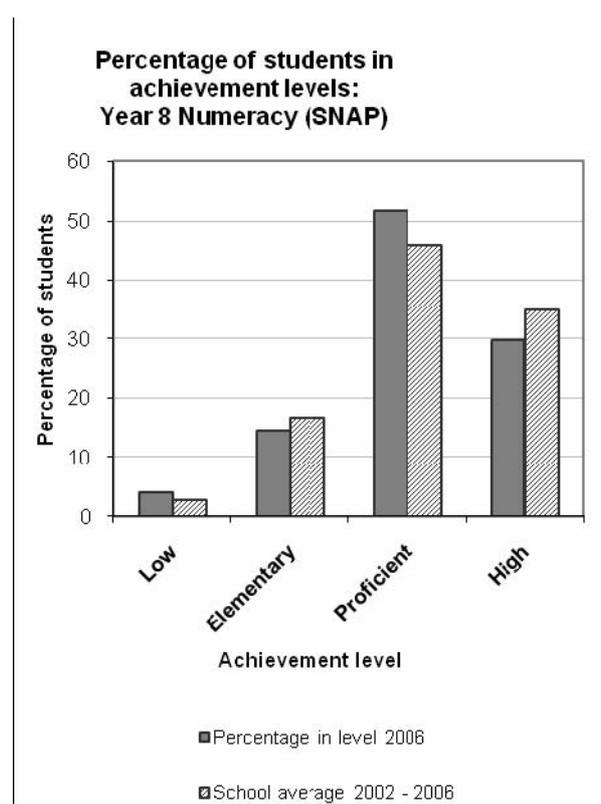
Literacy – ELLA Year 8



Numeracy – SNAP Year 7

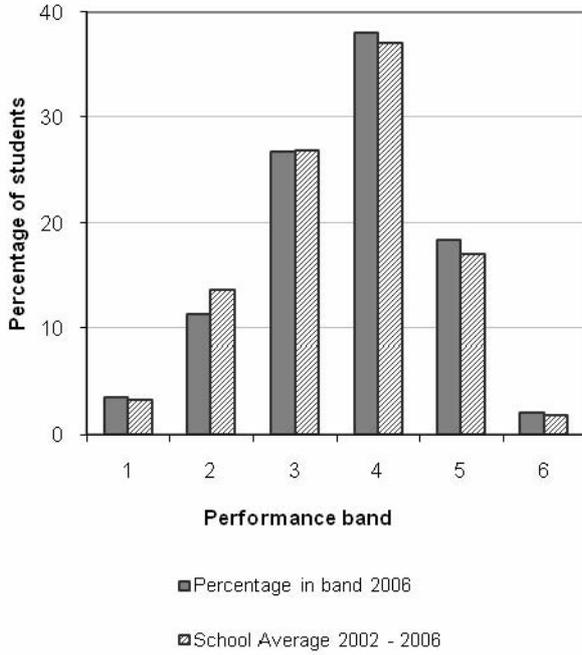


Numeracy – SNAP Year 8

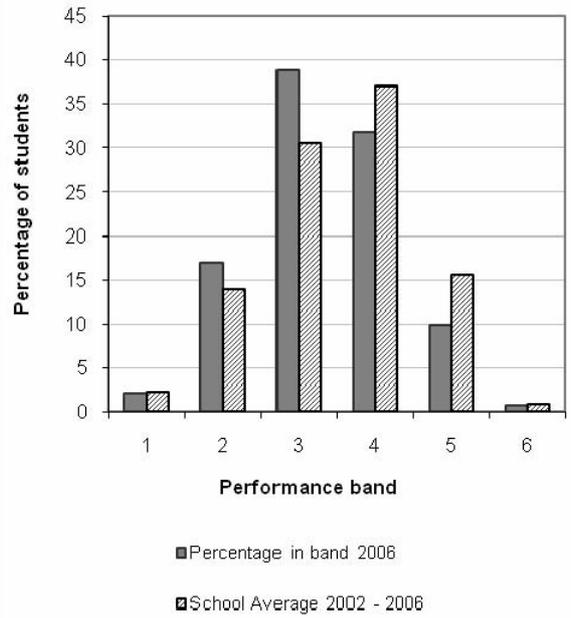


School Certificate

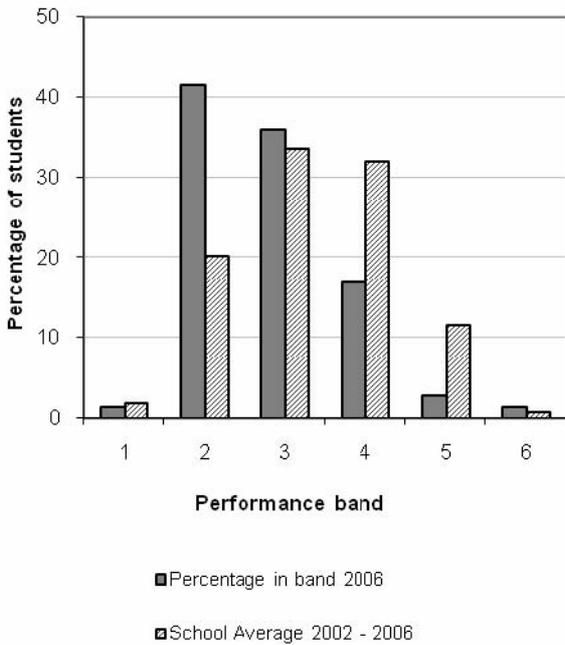
Percentage of students in performance bands: School Certificate English-literacy



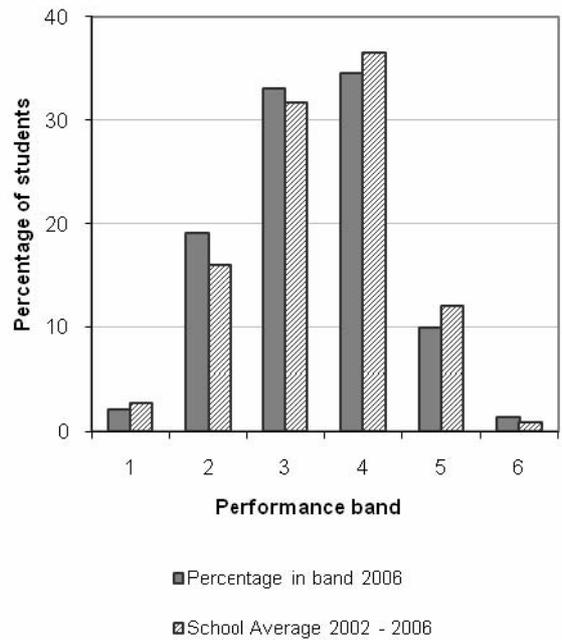
Percentage of students in performance bands: School Certificate Science



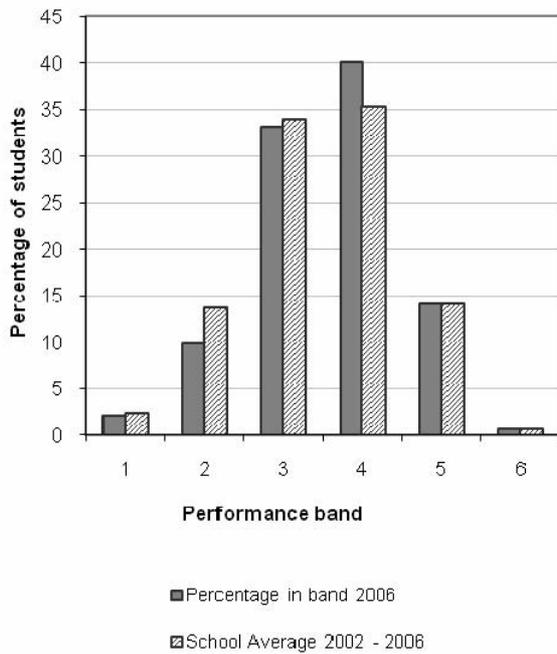
Percentage of students in performance bands: School Certificate Mathematics



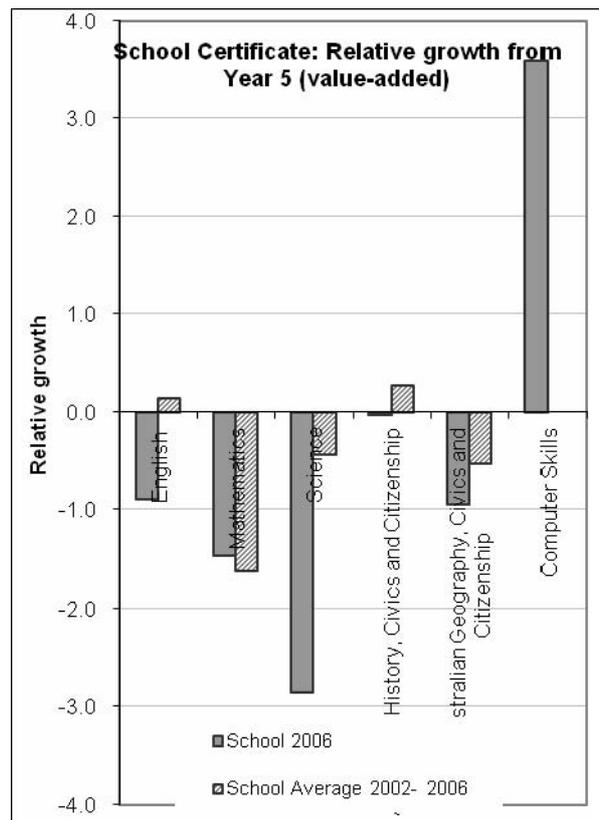
Percentage of students in performance bands: Australian History, Civics and Citizenship



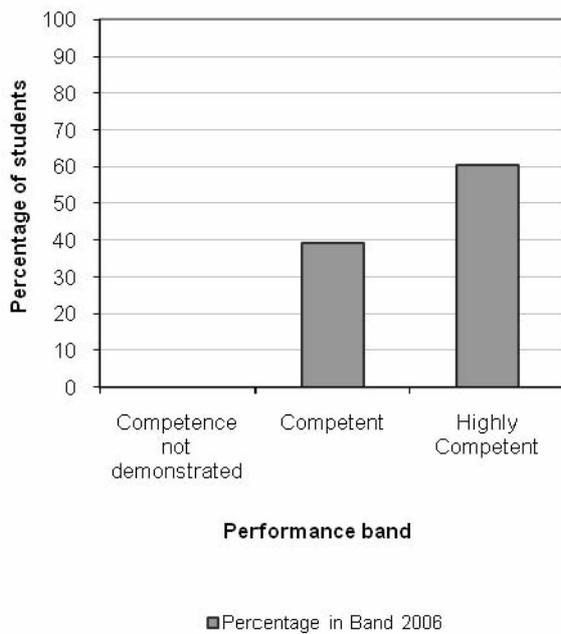
Percentage of students in performance bands: Australian Geography, Civics and Citizenship



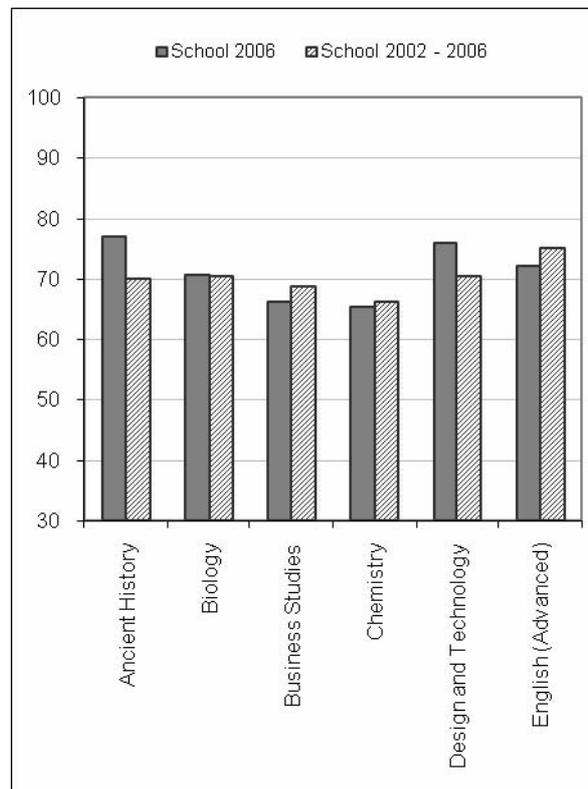
School Certificate relative performance comparison to Year 5 (value-adding)

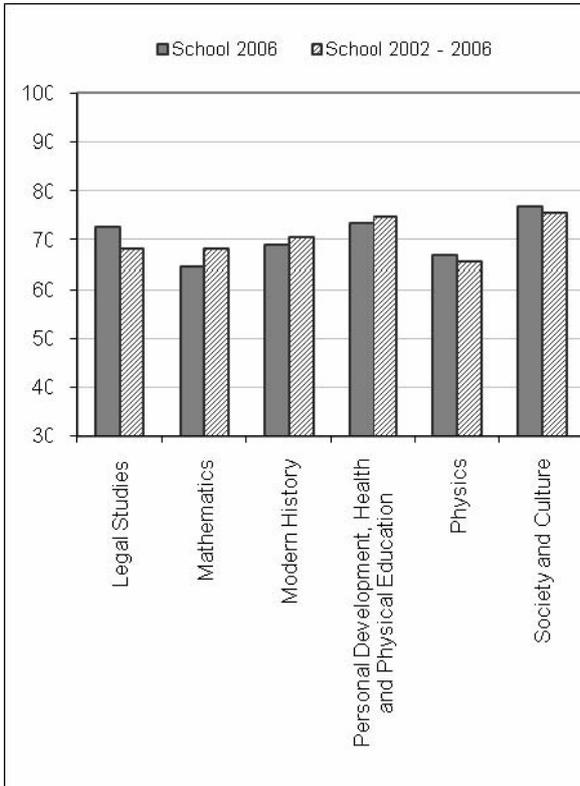
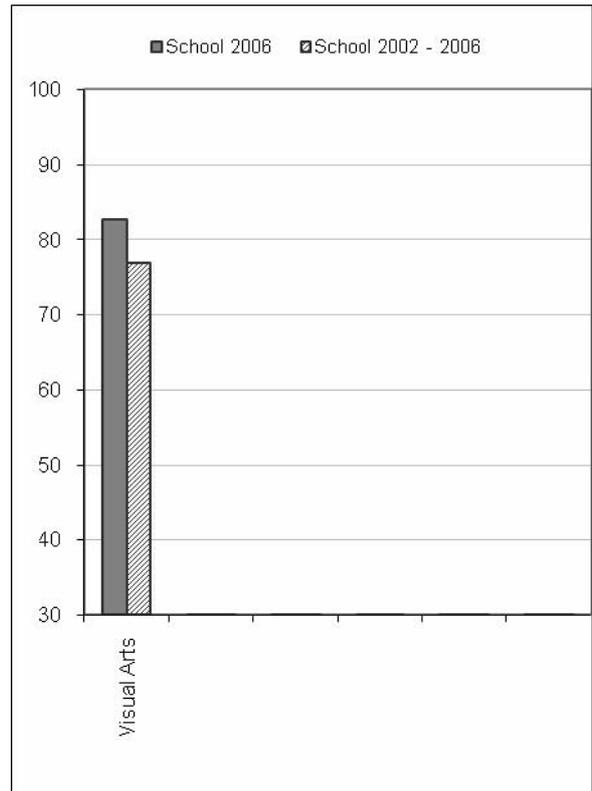
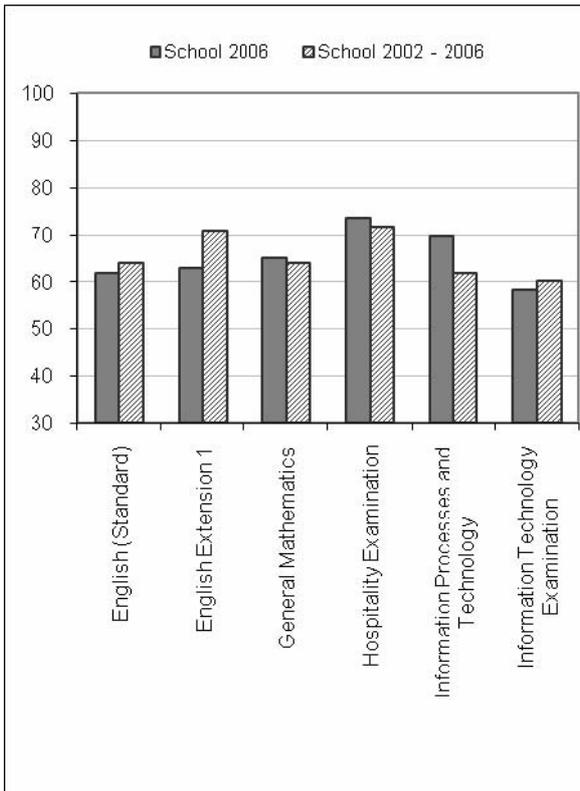


Percentage of students in performance band: Computer Skills

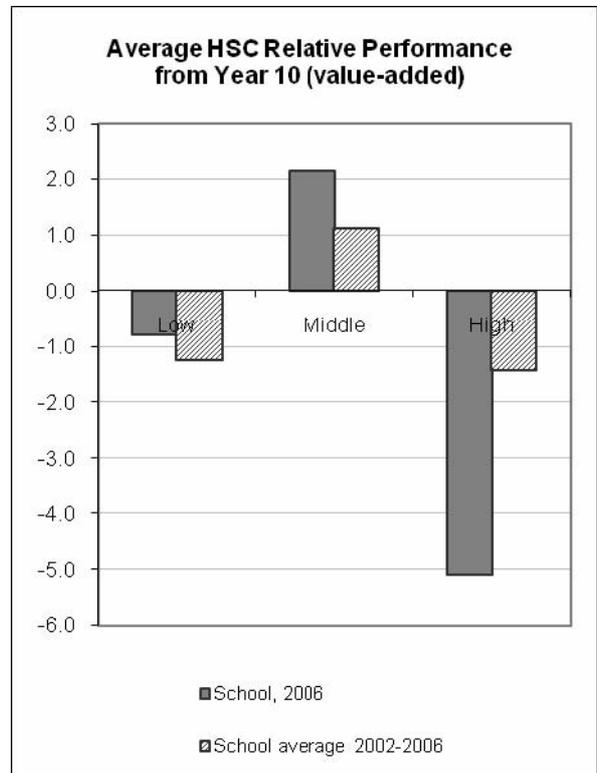


Higher School Certificate





Higher School Certificate relative performance comparison to School Certificate (value-adding)



National benchmarks

The Commonwealth Government sets minimum desirable standards for reading, writing and numeracy at particular ages. These are referred to as national benchmarks.

The performance of the students in our school in the Year 3 and the Year 5 Basic Skills Test (BST) is compared to these benchmarks. The percentages of our students achieving at or above these benchmarks are reported below.

The performance of the students in our school in the Year 7 English Language and Literacy Assessment (ELLA) and the Year 7 Secondary Numeracy Assessment Program (SNAP) is compared to these benchmarks. The percentages of our students achieving at or above these benchmarks are reported below.

Percentage of Year 7 students in our school achieving benchmarks in 2005 and 2006

Percentage of Year 7 students meeting national benchmarks				
	2005		2006	
	School	National	School	National
Reading	84.7	*	81.7	*
Writing	90.3	*	84.4	*
Numeracy	73.6	*	67.5	*

* National benchmarks were not available at the time of printing this report.

Significant programs and initiatives

Aboriginal education

In March a morning tea was held with indigenous students and their parents and caregivers. An indigenous community member came and spoke to the group.

The school's indigenous students' program was coordinated throughout the year by two teachers. ISIEP funds were used to make contact with parents and caregivers regarding retention and student attendance at school.

The school's Executive resolved to devote the School Development Day, term 3, 2007, to Aboriginal education.

Multicultural education

Keira is proud of its diverse enrolment which includes approximately 37% of our students who come from a language background other than English. The school is a fine example of multiculturalism at work. Indeed, the school's policy is to move beyond mere tolerance towards the celebration of difference.

A range of strategies and programs have been devised to ensure our students are successful at school. We are well-supported in this by the DET Regional Multicultural Education consultant who liaises with staff, parents and caregivers on a regular basis including attending our parent information meetings.

Each year the school hosts parent afternoon teas for people with a language background other than English. This also involves students, consultants and staff and is designed to break down barriers as well as to celebrate diversity.

The school has formed English as a Second Language (ESL) classes effectively across all years to try to meet ESL language needs. This included a group of students studying the English (ESL) Preliminary HSC who will sit for the English (ESL) HSC in 2007. This is a rigorous academic course which students can take if they have had five years or less of instruction in English before the preliminary year.

Students from Keira High School joined with students from other schools to attend the 2006 Multicultural Youth Conference at the University of Wollongong at the beginning of June.

Year 9 participated in an excursion to see Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet at the Seymour Centre. We also visited the University of Sydney. For many of the students it was the first time they had seen a live performance in a theatre. For some it was a learning experience in how to travel by public transport in Australia.

There are two ESL teachers at Keira. The role of the ESL teachers is to support students and teachers and work in a flexible manner to best help students as the need arises. Students can also consult with these teachers individually.

Respect and responsibility

Students at Keira High School are encouraged to develop a respect for themselves, for others within the school community and to extend this to their dealings with the wider community and society. In this regard, the school's has made the wearing of the school uniform, respect for the learning and teaching within the classroom as well as caring for the built and natural environment, high priorities. These principles underpin the school's Student Welfare and Discipline Policy.

The school has active student groups which promote and encourage respect and responsibility throughout the school community including the SRC, Interact and a Human Rights Group.

Interact is an important student leadership group that involves Year 11 students working with Wollongong Rotary. Interact has been involved in both fund raising and service throughout 2006 and raised many thousands of dollars for local charities.

In 2006 the school started a Human Rights Group. Over the last 6 months the group has been involved in a number of different activities including the Siev-X Project that acknowledged the loss of 353 lives, mainly women and children, who were on their way to be reunited with their fathers and husbands in Australia when the small boat they were in sank and they drowned. The group developed an art project that was displayed in Canberra. Keira was the only school or group in our region to participate in this project. The artwork is now featured on the 2007 school diary cover and a letter of gratitude was received from a father of some of the children who drowned.

Other activities of the Human Rights Group included raising money for UNICEF, inviting guest speakers to our school such as the United Nations worker from Liberia and a woman who trains teachers in Tanzania and works with orphans whose parents have died from AIDS.

The school held an assembly to highlight World Refugee Day on 20th June. Another activity of Keira students was the celebration of the International Day of Peace on 21st September. Keira students also participated in the Human Rights Day held in the Wollongong City Mall on 9th December.

The group accessed copies of "Face the Facts", a publication of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission with questions and answers about refugees, migrants and indigenous people in Australia. As a result, copies were given to each member of the group and a class set was given to the Social Science Faculty in Keira High School for use in the classroom

Keira students presented woollen rugs made by Human Rights Group members to the Red Cross Director for the South Coast Region. The students involved in making the rugs had written to various outlets in Wollongong to ask for support for their work in the form of supplying wool. Much of the wool was supplied by local business for this project.

Two Keira students were selected to attend OXFAM day at the University of Wollongong. This valuable learning experience was shared with students back at school after the event.

Student Representative Council (SRC)

This body at Keira is made up of teams of students from Years 7 to 11. Most members are elected by their peers but some members are volunteers filling vacancies when a by-election is not feasible. The collaborative process is aided by the elected captains and vice captains from Year 12. The SRC evaluates and acts on student initiatives for the betterment of both the physical and social environments of the school and provides leadership opportunities for its members. These opportunities include attendance at various leadership days, meetings with students from other schools, parliamentarians and representing the school at civic functions.

A new initiative trialled during 2006 was the leadership meeting which took place each Tuesday over ten weeks leading up to the nominations by candidates for the role of school captain. At these meetings students were able to discuss the role and receive advice about building a positive image and establishing credentials as a worthy candidate. Students from Year 11 attended these meetings along with peers who were already members of the SRC.

During 2006 the functioning of the SRC was reviewed and processes were commenced to allow the SRC to become more effective and self-sufficient. This allowed the SRC to play a more significant role within the school and its wider community. The role of the SRC adviser also evolved to a team rather than one person. This allowed for greater continuity and efficiency. The processes of change are ongoing.

Career Choices Workshops

All Year 10 students were surveyed during Term 2 to determine individual future employment, training and education goals. Based upon the survey results a Career Choices Workshop Day was co-ordinated.

Students participated in a range of 40 minute interactive, informative workshops led by local business people or representatives from TAFE, University of Wollongong and the Defence Forces.

The purpose of the workshops was for students to obtain relevant, current and practical information regarding their range of career choices, as well as making contact with potential future employers.

An unexpected but wonderful outcome of the day was one student being offered and accepting an apprenticeship with a local business and many other students being given contact names and numbers of potential employers.

The response from local business representatives was overwhelmingly positive and all made a commitment to participate in the Careers Choices Workshops 2007.

Special Interest Days

A reflection of the strengthening Primary Links between Keira High and its partner Primary schools has been the implementation of a number of special interest days for students in Stages 3 & 4.

Regular meetings between the executive of all schools resulted in the collaborative development of programs specifically to utilise the expertise of staff in each of the partner schools and to provide educational experiences or enrichment activities for students.

The inaugural Keira Chess Challenge took place with a team from each partner school participating in a whole day round-robin competition. The successful team represented Wollongong Public School. The challenge will take place again in 2007.

An Italian 'Experience' Day and an Italian 'Enrichment' Day were hosted by Keira High. The experience day provided an opportunity for Stage 3 & 4 students who had limited or no Italian language to be immersed in Italian language and activities. The enrichment day allowed students with Italian language experience an opportunity to hone their language skills and undertake a range of different Italian language experiences.

Fairy Meadow Demonstration school hosted a technology day with a group of talented students representing each of the schools, composing and producing their own music which was then used as a soundtrack for a movie created on the day. The success of each day has resulted in a commitment by all partner schools to expand the program in 2007.

Progress on 2006 targets

Target 1

Quality Teaching Project (QTP)

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

The University of Newcastle SIPA team's analysis of the school's assessment tasks was used by faculties improve their quality and effectiveness leading to the development of a new Stage 5 Assessment Schedule.

A dedicated School Development Day included cross-faculty analysis of the DET SMART data and was used to identify areas of both strength and weakness in faculty programs.

There were increased targeted training and development activities that related directly to the school's priorities as outlined in the School Plan 2006.

Target 2. School/Classroom Organisation

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

Strategies to achieve this target included the appointment of a dedicated STLA Numeracy position to target students in need of support.

The continuation of single sex classes facilitated a smooth transition to high school and provided a settled learning environment leading to a reduction in Year 7 discipline referrals.

The formation of an additional Year 8 boys' class led to a reduction in average class sizes to 21 students.

Target 3. School Culture

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

In 2006 the school mandated the use of a dedicated school diary to support and encourage students to adopt a more organised approach to their studies.

A beginners' band that incorporates a primary links band was created from which students graduated into the senior ensemble.

The school playground and the general physical environment of the school has been a priority with the refurbishment of the junior girls' toilet block and the creation of a new senior area.

Target 4. School-Community Partnerships

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

A new Keira web page for external use is being developed and should be launched during 2007.

The school has made primary links its highest priority and has developed excellent relationships with our partner public primary schools. A Keira Community of Schools group has been created and meets each term to plan activities.

Enrolments in Year 7, 2006, increased by 28.23% from the average enrolments of the previous two years. As well, the gender balance

was 50:50 for the first time in 16 years. This is attributable to a large degree to the single sex classes in Years 7 & 8.

Key evaluations

It is a requirement for all NSW public schools to conduct at least two annual evaluations – one related to educational and management practice and the other related to curriculum. In 2006 our school carried out evaluations of the Year 6 into 7 Transition Program and the Stage 5 Assessment Policy.

Educational and management practice: Year 6 into 7 Transition Program

Background

The emphasis on developing and maintaining strong links with our partner primary schools continued throughout 2006. Regular dialogue and discussion between the public schools and the high school led to the development of a comprehensive transition plan targeting Stage 3 as opposed to Year 6 students only.

Anecdotal evidence suggested that students who had positive experiences of high school were more likely to experience a smoother transition and manage the demands of high school eagerly.

The transition plan developed was multi faceted, addressing curriculum, social interactions and hands on experiences of high school.

The first phase of the transition plan, focused upon the Stage 3 and Stage 4 teachers participating in a planned Training and Development Workshop. The purpose of the workshop was for staff from all schools to discuss the curriculum content, demands and resourcing of Stage 3 and Stage 4 syllabuses. In particular the focus was upon areas of curriculum crossover.

This resulted in follow up workshops for staff to share resources and develop an understanding of Stage 4 expectations as well as enhancing collegial support between the high school and the public schools.

Throughout terms 2, 3 and 4 the second phase of the transition program was implemented. Executive staff accompanied by Stage 4 students attended meetings with the Stage 3 cohort in each of the public schools. The emphasis was to share experiences of high school, provide information and importantly, respond to questions or concerns held about life at high school. Throughout term 4, the 2007 Year Adviser and peer support leaders for 2007 addressed incoming students a number of times and coordinated a fun filled, activity based official

orientation day. In conjunction with the official orientation day extensive individual transition plans were developed and implemented for students identified as requiring support in the transition process.

A particular success of the transition program was the number of Special Interest Days that were offered. Students in Stages 3 & 4 from all schools were given the opportunity to participate in activities including, a chess challenge day, an Italian experience day, Italian extension day and a technology day developing i-movies and soundtracks.

To ensure that incoming students were placed in appropriate classes the information sought from public schools was evaluated, modified and expanded. The comprehensive information supplied by classroom teachers on individual students allowed for considered, informative class placements to be made. A planning meeting with all Year 6 teachers and KHS Learning Support team enabled further fine tuning of class placements to occur.

Findings and conclusions

The Training and Development workshops were identified by public school and high school staff as being extremely worthwhile and valuable, resulting in ongoing communication between the science and mathematics faculties in the sharing of knowledge, resources and providing opportunities for public school students to engage in enrichment activities.

Regular and ongoing communication between high school staff and students and public school students resulted in primary students being confident and excited about the prospect of beginning high school. Incoming students formed positive relationships with students from other public schools, the high school and with KHS staff by the end of term 4, 2006.

The comprehensive information provided by Year 6 teachers enabled the Year Adviser, Deputies and executive to develop individualised learning, social and behavioural plans to ensure a successful transition to high school for all students.

Future directions

The success of the comprehensive transition program at all levels has led to a commitment to implement a similar framework of support in 2007.

Curriculum: Stage 5 Assessment Policy

Background

In 2002, the school developed new Stage 6 (HSC and Preliminary) Assessment Policies that were designed to streamline the assessment process for senior students, to provide a uniform approach across all courses and to ensure that all assessment tasks met Board of Studies requirements. In 2005, the school Executive discussed the importance of using this approach with Stage 5 (Years 9 and 10).

Findings and conclusions

An evaluation was made of existing Stage 5 assessment tasks across a range of subjects. It was clear that, although the tasks were within Board of Studies requirements, there was wide disparity in design, content and quantity. In 2006, the school Executive led faculty discussions in the design of a new Stage 5 assessment policy and schedule. Each faculty developed a new set of Stage 5 assessment tasks based on a template that all faculties were required to use. This new policy and assessment schedule were published in booklet form and distributed to all Stage 5 students and teachers.

Future directions

It is anticipated that the new approach should make it clearer for students to develop a systematic approach to their studies. As 2007 will be the first year the new Stage 5 Assessment Booklet is being used, there will be a need to evaluate its effectiveness and refine those areas that may need improvement. This should occur prior to it being republished in 2008.

Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction

In 2006 the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school.

Their responses are summarised below.

The school community has a very positive attitude towards the school. The school's emphasis on uniform, the Year 7 & 8 gender classes and the school's performing arts program were viewed favourably by parents. Staff also responded favourably to the school's class size reduction program in the junior years as well as to the gender classes. Students remarked on the enhancement of the school's performing arts program, the improvements to playground space and the explicit expectations regarding behaviour and uniform.

Professional learning

The staff at Keira High School take seriously their responsibility to continually develop professionally. Both SASS and teaching staff members engage in a range of activities to this

end, some developed within the school and many offered as external courses. The school expended the tied funds of \$37,324 on teachers' professional learning in 2006. The teaching staff's focus has been the NSW Quality Teaching Framework. The other areas of professional development included syllabus implementation, student welfare and equity, career development, beginning teachers' programs, literacy and numeracy and the integration of information technology.

School development 2005 – 2008

In 2007 the school will have entered the third year of a four-year plan that was developed at the end of 2004. The new directions were detailed in the document *Keira: The Next Phase 2005 – 2008* that was published at the start of 2005.

Directions

The essential tenet of the document is that Keira will set the directions for the quadrennium 2005 – 2008 to reflect the life of the PSFP program. It was established that the four focus areas of the PSFP would also be central to the School Plan. As well, within each focus area, there will be specific objectives that will not change from year to year. Each area will have a range of projects and programs that reflect that are designed to fulfil the objectives.

Building on the previous year's work

For the life of PSFP, each annual School Plan builds on the previous year's plan. Therefore, each year's plan must be seen in the broader context. Not all objectives can be met in a single year but may be met over the four-year period.

Keira Enrichment and Equity Program (KEEP) Teams

Each focus area of the annual School Plan is driven by a team, led by a member of the school's Executive. Staff members are encouraged to join a team. While the school's Executive, with input from staff, will develop a range of proposals for each team, there will be scope for each team to also develop short term projects and longer term programs.

Funding

To ensure that the School Plan is well resourced, each team will be offered funding from Global, TPL or PSFP funds. Some specific grants may also be used where appropriate.

Targets for 2007

Target 1

To increase and maintain Year 7 enrolments

In launching *Keira: The Next Phase 2005-2008*, the school community determined that the school had to increase its enrolments, particularly in Year 7, needed to redress the gender imbalance and had to reduce the reliance on 'out-of-area' enrolments in preference for local placements.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- ongoing Keira Community of Schools meetings and activities;
- the continuation of the class size reduction program and the gender classes in Years 7 & 8; and,
- the continued enhancement of performing arts programs and projects.

Our success will be measured by:

- an increase by 8% of Year 7 enrolments; and,
- a maintenance of the gender balance in Year 7 as achieved in 2006.

Target 2

To enhance the explicit teaching of numeracy across the curriculum.

The school Executive, in consultation with faculties, has highlighted the need to devote a School Development Day to numeracy.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- devoting training and development funds and activities to allow teachers to develop appropriate strategies and resources including a dedicated School Development Day; and,
- the development of an integrated Stage 4 teaching and learning unit with a specific numeracy focus to be used as a template for class programs.

Our success will be measured by:

- participation of representatives from every faculty in the development of the integrated unit
- 100% of Stage 4 students participating in the project.

Target 3

To develop a more environmentally sustainable school.

With the heightened consciousness within the broader community around climate change, the school has an obligation to increase students' awareness around the issues of global warming and the extent to which the school can 'think globally but act locally'.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- devoting training and development funds and activities to allow teachers to develop appropriate strategies and resources;
- establishing a Environmental Education Taskforce; and,
- raising the issues with the school's SRC.

Our success will be measured by:

- a reduction by 10% of our utilities use; and,
- an increase by 15% our recycling of paper and waste.

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 and school planning committee have determined targets for the school's future development.

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