

GETTING RESULTS

VOLUME
2



GONSKI FUNDING IN AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS

NOTE ON SOURCES

This research report was compiled in late 2016 using information from the following sources:

Demographic data from the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) My School 2015 website

School profile references to SES data and SES quartiles are from the My School website showing the distribution of students in a school across four 'Socio-Educational Advantage' (SEA) quarters, representing a scale of relative disadvantage (bottom quarter) through to relative advantage (top quarter). These quarters are calculated using student-level factors such as parental occupation and education and give contextual information about the socio-educational background and composition of the students in the school. (www.acara.edu.au/_resources/About_icsea_2014.pdf)

Individual school annual reports 2014 and newsletters 2014 and 2015: Available on individual school websites

Departmental funding data

Queensland Department of Education, Training and Employment, 'Great Results Guarantee' and Investing for Success Agreements between the Department and individual schools: Available on school websites

Information on new programs and educational initiatives in individual schools made possible by their Gonski funding, how their students and schools are benefitting and results to date, as well as what the continuation of Gonski funding beyond 2017 would mean for their students and schools, has been provided by schools.



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FOREWORD

I grew up in Streaky Bay, a small country town in South Australia, 700km from Adelaide. I recall vividly how hard my teachers worked, and the extra hours they put in, to make sure that we had every opportunity to succeed at school, despite the limited resources and isolation of our community.

The Gonski Review warned us that teachers such as mine cannot do the job on their own – they need to be backed with the resources to give each child the education they need.

Differences in educational outcomes must not be the result of differences in wealth, income, power or possessions.

– David Gonski

If we do not distribute educational resources fairly, and lift all schools to the resource standard they need, then we won't be able to harness the full potential of Australia's students. That's why needs-based Gonski funding is essential for our future.

Gonski funding began flowing to schools in 2014, and by the end of 2016 schools had received about 20 per cent of the extra funding outlined in the Gonski agreements.

This is the first step towards fixing systemic inequalities in how we fund our schools. However, there is still a long way to go before our nation reaches the goal of every school having the resources they need.

This second Getting Results report is a celebration of what schools have achieved so far with needs-based funding and what they will do in the future if Gonski funding is delivered in full.

It is a record of a long-overdue change in the way we fund our schools, to a system which puts student need at the centre of funding decisions and recognises the extra need in disadvantaged schools.

It is a story of how education can change lives and how individual schools are making a difference with the additional resources provided. Schools are using Gonski funding to provide extra learning support for students such as literacy and numeracy programs, speech therapy, occupational therapy and one-to-one support in class.

Secondary schools are engaging their students in academic support programs, resulting in improved student retention levels and Year 12 results. These life-changing programs help disengaged students stay in the education system and prepare them to be successful beyond their schooling.

Teachers and support staff are able to participate in enhanced professional learning programs as schools invest in their staff, encourage greater collaboration and adopt innovative new ways of teaching that best suit their students.

In 2016 we released the first Getting Results report, a snapshot of how individual schools were using extra resources to address disadvantage and lift results for their students.

This report is more evidence of the success of needs-based funding.

Our school communities know what their students need. They understand the unique challenges that their students face and the programs that will make a huge difference for each child.

Berserker Street State School is one of the schools in this report. Its principal, Rebecca Hack, says:

The problem is that so much of what we do is dependent on funding and, if our kids don't get that support here, they won't get it anywhere else.
– Rebecca Hack

This theme runs through many of these stories. Support makes a real difference to disadvantaged students. When they can get it – through in-class aides or extra programs, as well as access to a broader curriculum and extension programs for gifted students – then lives are being changed.

Principals are in no doubt about the benefits of extra resources.

Shelby Papadopoulos, principal of Colac Primary School, says:

We're coming from a position of never having had the financial ability to provide the level of support our students require. It would be heartbreaking if, having had a sense of what can be achieved through our 2016 Gonski funding, we lost not only the capacity to maintain what has been achieved but also the possibility of being able to make that same difference for all our students.
– Shelby Papadopoulos

Gonski funding is providing the opportunity to change our students' educational outcomes. That's why we need the full six years of Gonski funding delivered to schools.

There are strong links between social disadvantage and lower achievement at school. The gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students is equivalent to three years of schooling by the time students reach Year 9.

This is not acceptable, and certainly not in our long-term interests as a nation. We cannot expect to close these achievement gaps unless schools are properly resourced.

Needs-based Gonski funding continues to be the single most important investment any government can make in our students and their future.

The evidence is clear that Gonski needs-based funding is working, so why would any government try to walk away from our schools and our students by not continuing this funding?

As a nation we have a fundamental responsibility to ensure that every child in Australia has access to a properly resourced school so that they can achieve their dreams.

Correna Haythorpe
AEU President

BERSERKER STREET STATE SCHOOL



Berserker Street State School in the Queensland city of Rockhampton is a highly disadvantaged school with an ICSEA rating that makes it one of the lowest 5 per cent of schools in Australia. Ninety per cent of Berserker Street's 490 students are in the lowest two SES quartiles; 67 per cent in the lowest. Indigenous students make up 30 per cent of the school population and 42 per cent of students in Prep. Almost 100 students have identified disabilities. There's a special education program with six separate classrooms and 17 full- or part-time staff working with special-needs children in the classroom and in small groups. Berserker Street enrolls a significant number of children in care — including those in residential facilities — who have complex needs. About 60 students are from non-English speaking backgrounds. These include Pacific Islander children and refugee children with no formal education or English skills who require intensive support.

GONSKI FUNDING

Prior to its Gonski funding allocation, Berserker Street received needs-based funding under the former Low Socio-Economic Status School Communities National Partnership. Berserker Street has received approximately

2009 → 2016
\$59,730
NEEDS-BASED FUNDING

2014 → 2016
\$600,000
GREATER RESULTS GUARANTEE AND
INVESTING FOR SUCCESS FUNDING



OBJECTIVES

Low-SES National Partnerships funding enabled Berserker Street to develop a three-year school renewal strategic plan. Together with Gonski funding, which allowed the continuation of the renewal process, the school has undergone a transformation.

The key objectives at the heart of the transformation were the provision of more support to classroom teachers and increased levels of intensive support for students. Essential to the process is a deep understanding that every teacher in the school needs to be able to teach students with complex needs – those with disability, with significant behavioural problems, or recovering from trauma – in a consistent way across the school.

Somewhat ironically, Berserker Street has become considerably more complex as a result of receiving significant needs-based funding, with the success of the programs it has established encouraging many parents of children with complex needs to enrol them at the school.



STRATEGIES

Berserker Street has invested heavily in personnel, resources and training to help its students overcome the multiple educational disadvantages they face.

These include:

- improving the quality of teaching and classroom practice by opening up classrooms and sharing best practice, achieved through releasing teachers to mentor, model, observe, coach and plan, and employing expert teachers in specialised leadership roles to coordinate the process.
- giving every teacher who arrives at the school a six-month intensive training program, whether they are new to teaching or have experience in other schools.
- employing extra teaching and support staff to work with very complex case-managed children and investing in specialist literacy/numeracy teachers and teacher aides in all classrooms.
- supporting all school programs with quality teaching and learning resources and providing staff with quality professional learning to build their skills and knowledge.
- purchasing screening kits and training staff in identifying students who require extra cognitive and speech therapies, and oral language support.
- engaging a 0.8 speech language pathologist to work intensively with the many children who enter school more or less non-verbal due to their disability or environment, as well as specialised therapists to develop programs in areas such as occupational therapy and motor skills.
- providing intensive support to families in need by funding a full-time guidance officer, who collaborates with many community services, as well as a full-time youth worker.
- cabling two whole blocks of classrooms, which had no connection to the network or internet, and purchasing 'XO' laptops – purpose designed and built by Massachusetts Institute of Technology engineers to provide a low-cost and durable computing solution for children in low-SES communities and developing countries – for every child in the school. This is critical, as many families do not have computers or the internet at home, which further increases the educational disadvantage of their children.
- not charging fees and providing one basic uniform to any child who needs it, which has led to a greater sense of student engagement.

BENEFITS OF THE GONSKI INVESTMENT

Principal Rebecca Hack says she's frustrated when she hears it said that providing schools with extra funds doesn't make any difference. The transformation of the school, which has occurred since she arrived at Berserker Street in 2008, and the benefits to students, staff and the school community would not have been possible without additional needs-based funding.

The problem is that so much of what we do is dependent on funding and, if our kids don't get that support here, they won't get it anywhere else.

– Ms Hack

The transformation is reflected not only in achievement data, but by any number of measures that cannot be adequately captured by testing programs such as NAPLAN. Ms Hack says, “if you want to talk about the cost of funding our schools properly, you also need to talk about the broader benefits.”

The school has been able to develop a whole-school comprehensive curriculum and pedagogical plan, supported by high-quality documentation to support teachers and support staff in their day-to-day work.

The BOSS – Berserker One Stop Shop – brings together these signature pedagogies and expectations and makes induction and training of new staff more effective and efficient, but it was time and resource intensive to develop and could not have been produced without additional funding.

Ms Hack says there are students at Berserker Street who have a strong likelihood of entering the justice system, through juvenile detention or as young adults. She says that engaging these children in education and providing the support to meet their complex needs has the potential to save the country more than the costs of National Partnerships or Gonski funding over the long term. Additionally, greater engagement of children who had previously been continually suspended or on limited hours has enabled parents who had been unable to work to enter the workforce and contribute through taxes rather than needing welfare to provide for their families.

WHAT THE CONTINUATION OF GONSKI FUNDING MEANS TO BERSERKER STREET STATE SCHOOL

At Berserker Street “we don't give up on any child, and we don't expect any government to give up on the Gonski funding we need,” says Ms Hack.

Disadvantage isn't spread evenly across our society or our school system, and schools like ours have had to become experts at dealing with clusters of extreme disadvantage. We need to do things differently, and with the help of extra resources through Gonski funding we have created a program that is letting kids thrive.

– Ms Hack

With the complexity of the Berserker Street school community and the needs of its students, Ms Hack is fearful about losing the certainty of funding because much of the extra support for students and teachers won't be able to continue without it.



BOX HILL HIGH SCHOOL



Box Hill High School is an established multicultural co-educational secondary school in Melbourne's eastern suburbs with about 1,230 students. Of these, 825 students are English-speaking and 450 speak, in total, more than 53 different languages. Box Hill receives funding under Victoria's Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD) for seven students with disabilities. A further 12 have 'substantial disabilities' and receive no additional funding and another 77 students have diagnosed disabilities and have been identified as needing 'reasonable adjustments'.

GONSKI FUNDING

Box Hill High received approximately

JAN 2016 ● → DEC 2016

\$59,730

AND WILL RECEIVE

JAN 2017 ● → DEC 2017

\$57,297



OBJECTIVES

Box Hill High School has a diverse student population with a complex range of needs. The Gonski funding received to date has been welcome but is not enough to allow the school to meet the full range of its students' needs.

In 2016, the focus has been on using the money to assist the school maintain much-needed student support services. Box Hill High has a strong emphasis on providing an inclusive and positive learning environment for all of its students, fundamental to which is their emotional and social wellbeing. The school's student wellbeing services were jeopardised due to the loss of National School Chaplaincy funding, which had been used to fund a social worker, but Gonski funding was used to continue the services in 2016. A further objective in 2016 has been to provide much-needed support for Box Hill's students with identified disabilities who are not funded under the state government's Program for Students with Disabilities.



STRATEGIES

Maintaining the social worker position has ensured that students or parents can continue to receive support or referrals to additional services, including psychologists, social workers, youth workers and speech pathologists who are available for student appointments at the school within school hours.

The Gonski money that Box Hill has allocated to the large number of unfunded students with disabilities helps to pay for an extra 3-plus integration aides, in addition to the position partially funded under the PSD.

BENEFITS OF THE GONSKI INVESTMENT

Box Hill High's principal, Kate Mitchell, says she is delighted to have received the Gonski funding because it's a constant struggle to meet the needs of all the school's students. Box Hill High is a high-achieving school, and its student learning data shows that overall Box Hill students achieve higher than predicted levels. But this success does not occur in a vacuum, and Ms Mitchell is confident that the school's ethos and commitment to funding student wellbeing and engagement services is central to maintaining its high achievement levels. The vulnerability of these services to changes in funding, such as the loss of National Chaplaincy Program funding, underlines the necessity of a sustainable level of needs-based funding over the longer term.

WHAT THE CONTINUATION OF GONSKI FUNDING MEANS TO BOX HILL HIGH SCHOOL

Ms Mitchell says that, while it is only the beginning of Gonski funding in Victoria, it's already made a difference at Box Hill by providing extra support to individual students and supporting the provision of welfare services and learning specialists.

She stresses the need for Gonski funding to be continued and significantly expanded. Additional needs-based funding would allow Box Hill to embed and extend major new initiatives. It would also enable the extension of much-needed support programs such as special 'immersion' classes for the large numbers of Year 7 and Year 10 English as an Additional Language (EAL) students arriving with very little English at any time during the school year. While EAL funding has paid for several classes, more are needed.

Box Hill also looks forward to offering programs designed to enhance literacy and numeracy skills to all its students. These programs are time-and-resource intensive to run and require the full Gonski funding commitment if all children are to receive the support they need and deserve. Similarly, fully funding the long-overdue Gonski commitment to students with disabilities is an absolute priority for Box Hill.

CAIRNS WEST STATE SCHOOL

Cairns West State School in Far North Queensland is central to the suburbs of Mooroolool, Manunda and Manoora, which have the highest density of public housing in Queensland. It is a low-SES school which has an enrolment of approximately 730 culturally diverse students with complex needs. A total of 74 per cent of students are from the lowest SES quartile; 95 per cent are from the lowest two quartiles. Most students are from non-English-speaking backgrounds and many speak more than one language. About 70 per cent are from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, and there are 10 per cent Cook Islander, 12 per cent Bhutanese and North African, as well as a number of Hmong, Nepalese and Sudanese students. Just 8 per cent of students are Caucasian, with less than 9 per cent of students having English as their first language. Home languages of the students include Torres Strait Creole, Kala Kawai Ya (KKY) and Meriam.

GONSKI FUNDING

Prior to receiving Gonski funding, Cairns West received needs-based funding under the former Low Socio-Economic Status School Communities National Partnership. Cairns West has received around \$1,740,000 in Greater Results Guarantee and Investing for Success funding.

2014 → 2016

\$1,740,000



OBJECTIVES

Cairns West's objectives have focused on maintaining and extending the benefits of its needs-based National Partnerships funding: explicit school-wide approaches to improving teaching and learning, increasing student engagement, wellbeing and attendance, and building community.

Specific objectives include:

- enabling all students to achieve the NAPLAN National Minimum Standards (NMS) for their year level, or be provided with an evidence-based individualised plan to address their specific learning needs.
- increasing the percentage of Year 3 students meeting the NMS and achieving in the NAPLAN Upper Two Bands (U2B).
 - significantly increasing the PM Benchmark Reading Assessment levels of Prep to Year 3 students.
 - improving whole school attendance by maintaining the Cairns West State School Early Years Attendance commitment and increasing the percentage of students qualifying for and eligible to sign up to the Cairns West Academic Success Guarantee (ASG), a partnership launched in 2009 that has parents commit to helping their child achieve a 95 per cent attendance rate if they fall behind.
 - increasing and measuring parental involvement in their children's academic learning.



STRATEGIES

The strategies adopted by Cairns West for using their needs-based funding to improve education outcomes for its diversity of students include:

- reviewing current practice to inform implementation of a whole-school reading, writing and numeracy program.
- building staff skills and knowledge in a consistent and effective approach to reading, writing and numeracy through school-wide coaching and focused explicit teaching.
- researching and implementing best-practice approaches to teaching oral language in classroom programs to improve literacy outcomes for all students and targeted support for EALD learners. The school developed and implemented an Oral Language Framework in 2015/2016.
- implementing a whole-school approach to the teaching of reading across all learning areas through focused coaching and professional development to build teacher capacity.
- reviewing student performance data every five weeks using a school-wide database; every two weeks for 'at-risk' students.
- individually case managing all students and providing support for teachers to create Individual Curriculum Plans (ICPs) for all Tier 2 and 3 students.
- individually case managing Prep to Year 3 students with attendance rates below 80 per cent.
- implementing a Closing the Gap Strategy specifically targeting Year 2 and Year 4 students.
- greater engagement with families and the school community to develop parents' skills in assisting learning and building awareness of the importance of school attendance to increase ASG eligibility.

BENEFITS OF THE GONSKI INVESTMENT

Principal Michael Hansen, who worked in several Indigenous schools in Cape York, says that National Partnership, Greater Results Guarantee (GRG) and now Investing for Success funding has allowed Cairns West State School to build teacher capability with strategies such as coaching and providing extra teacher support to improve student outcomes. "In my view, the most important aspect of the Gonski model is that the funding is needs-based, substantial and recurrent. Schools can take a long-term strategic view and make real changes to the learning outcomes for all students," Mr Hansen says.

Cairns West's Academic Success Guarantee program has resulted in more students attending school more often and they're showing a greater rate of improvement in their learning and engagement. In particular, NAPLAN results have improved over the time the funding has been in place, with an increased number of students reaching year level benchmarks in reading. The school, which has a high level of transient students, has been able to establish a Head of Student Services position that manages all new enrolments after the census date (upward of 200 annually), student attendance, and Year 6 transition to secondary school. In addition a Community Participation Officer has been engaged to support partnership building between parents and the school and promote the importance of the ASG. The funding pays for a pedagogy coach who works with teachers and school leaders to continue developing capability through coaching and feedback, and a Head of Equity and Inclusion position to support the development of ICPs for at-risk students and increase the number of students achieving in the upper 2 bands of NAPLAN.

In 2017 the school will employ a third deputy principal using I4S funding, whose task will be to drive consistency in school curriculum and pedagogy practices.

WHAT THE CONTINUATION OF GONSKI FUNDING MEANS TO CAIRNS WEST STATE SCHOOL

Mr Hansen says the continuation of additional needs-based funding is vital for Cairns West.

The full implementation of the Gonski funding reforms over six years would allow the school leadership of Cairns West State School to more effectively plan for future implementation of strategies that mitigate the social disadvantage experienced every day by students and families attending the school. It would go a long way to levelling the playing fields for our students and teachers.

CANLEY VALE HIGH SCHOOL



Canley Vale High School is in south-west Sydney. Its student population has been increasing by about 50 students each year for the past seven years, and its current enrolment of 1,455 students is drawn from local enrolments, international students and new arrivals to Australia. There are high levels of educational disadvantage within the school community. Canley Vale High serves a community that is in the lowest 5 per cent for socio-economic status in NSW. Almost 90 per cent of students are in the lowest two quartiles of socio-economic disadvantage, with 60 per cent of students in the lowest quartile. A total of 96 per cent of students are from non-English speaking backgrounds, predominantly Chinese (Cantonese and Mandarin), Vietnamese and Khmer as well as students from Pacific Islander and Middle Eastern backgrounds. English is the second language for 88 per cent of students.

GONSKI FUNDING

Prior to receiving Gonski funding,
Canley Vale received

2010 → 2013

\$3,000,000

UNDER THE LOW SES SCHOOL
COMMUNITIES NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP

2014 → 2016

\$4,041,476

IN RAM EQUITY (GONSKI) FUNDING



OBJECTIVES

Given the nature of its student population, Canley Vale has made improving literacy a school-wide priority for the use of its needs-based funding.

Key targets include ongoing and consistent improvement in NAPLAN results and significant value adding for all students in the area of literacy from Year 7 to Year 9 and Year 9 to Year 12 for the HSC.

Surveys and case management data have identified a range of student wellbeing issues associated with the different language backgrounds, level of socio-economic disadvantage, and family and peer pressures, which combine to make a complex student experience.



STRATEGIES

At the heart of the strategies adopted by Canley Vale are individual literacy programs for all students in Years 7, 8 and 9 and specialist staff in classrooms to support literacy teaching across the curriculum. There are dedicated and timetabled literacy periods, there's the withdrawal and support of students with higher needs, and teachers are supported with professional learning and team teaching.

The genesis of the program was a situational analysis of the school's NAPLAN results undertaken to inform the use of their National Partnerships funding. The number of Canley Vale students whose results were in the lower bands of NAPLAN was significantly above the state average, while those in the middle and high bands were below the state average. In the words of Canley Vale's principal Peter Rouse, "this is totally where you don't want to be in terms of data". In 2011 all Years 7 and 8 students had two periods a week (80 minutes) devoted to the literacy program. When Mr Rouse arrived at the school, the program was reshaped following a further strategic analysis of what had been achieved from 2011 to 2013. Gonski funding from 2014 was critical to the process as it allowed more time to be devoted to the literacy program and its extension to Year 9, as well as a focus on writing in addition to reading. The literacy team has expanded to nine specialist teaching and non-teaching staff, and the funding has allowed for release time for professional learning and building teacher expertise right across the school.

BENEFITS OF THE GONSKI INVESTMENT

Mr Rouse says the program has made a "phenomenal difference" to students. The results show that schools can overcome the disadvantages attached to so-called 'postcodes of disadvantage'.

In particular, he points to the results from 2015:

- 97 per cent of Year 9 students achieved at or above the National Minimum Standard across literacy and numeracy.
- the growth in literacy has placed Canley Vale students in the top 1 per cent of schools nationally for 'value adding' (2015), the only comprehensive public high school in NSW to achieve this result. This was the third consecutive year Canley Vale had been placed in the top 10 schools in NSW in this category.
- retention of students from Year 10 to HSC increased from 81.4 per cent in 2010 to 93 per cent.
- the percentage of HSC students eligible for an ATAR (university entry) had increased from 82 per cent in 2010 to 92 per cent.
- 52 per cent of students achieved at least two Band 5-6 results in the 2015 HSC.

WHAT THE CONTINUATION OF GONSKI FUNDING MEANS TO CANLEY VALE HIGH SCHOOL

What Canley Vale has achieved is “outside the box” and demonstrates why Gonski is so important, says Mr Rouse. Genuine school improvement requires, among other things, building teacher and team expertise and consistency among staff. That takes time and, crucially, continuity over time. This requires the political will to look beyond the short term, and this, he says, is where the power of Gonski comes in. The school achieved much with its National Partnerships funding, but this funding was of limited duration and, without Gonski to provide continuity over time, he fears that much of what had been achieved will be lost. Subsequent cohorts of students will bear the cost of the failure to deliver ongoing funding, Mr Rouse says.

The students have completed the school’s literacy programs and developed language skills that underpin all aspects of learning. They have been involved in some of the most innovative programs the school has ever run and they now have opportunities that would not have been within their reach three years ago. Their literacy teachers have worked together as a team since 2010 and have become exemplar teachers. The loss of their passion, dedication and expertise, which has been sustained by knowing the significant effect they’re having on the lives of others, is incalculable.

– Mr Rouse





COLAC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Colac Primary School in the rural Colac Otway shire of Victoria has 236 students, most of them from low-socio-economic backgrounds. Indigenous students make up about 4 per cent of the school population and another 4 per cent are from non-English-speaking backgrounds. The school also has 5 per cent of students who are funded under Victoria's Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD), which provides resources to schools for eligible students with moderate to severe disabilities.

GONSKI FUNDING

Colac Primary received

JAN 2016 ● → DEC 2016

\$268,000



OBJECTIVES

A large number of Colac Primary's students in the early years are developmentally vulnerable, particularly in the area of language, and require intensive support. Almost 60 per cent of Preparatory students, for example, require a high level of language support, and a large number of students across the school require both literacy and numeracy support. The school's key objectives for the Gonski funding have centred on better coordination of student wellbeing support, intensive language support and specialist intervention support for literacy and numeracy.



STRATEGIES

The school's three key strategies were to appoint:

- a student wellbeing case manager to co-ordinate student support services.
- a 0.6 FTE speech pathologist to work with students whose language development is six or more months behind.
- an extra 1.6 FTE specialist staffing to provide targeted literacy and numeracy intervention and support for students six or more months behind.

Colac Primary's principal Shelby Papadopoulos is disappointed that the first of these three strategies, which would have provided a strong foundation for other initiatives, has not been implemented. The school has advertised the position three times and has so far been unsuccessful, which Ms Papadopoulos attributes to the lack of professionally qualified people in a small rural community.

The need for the wellbeing position has been heightened by the dairy crisis in mid-2016, which has hit the Colac community hard. Many local families have experienced trauma and the number of families in vulnerable socio-economic circumstances increased suddenly. Colac Primary already had a significant number of socially and socioeconomically vulnerable children, who in general are those most academically at risk, and the number has now increased because of the crisis.

Ms Papadopoulos says Colac has had much more success with its other strategies, although they have both had to be modified from the school's original plans because there was insufficient funding. Just six weeks into term one, it became clear that the number of speech pathology hours made possible by Gonski funding was inadequate to meet the level of student need. The school had to make the difficult decision to modify the intensive language support strategy from working with all students whose language development was six or more months behind to just the large number of eligible Prep students, given the crucial importance of providing intensive support to vulnerable students as early as possible in their schooling.

The specialist literacy and numeracy intervention also had to be scaled back. The program was re-targeted to students who were 12 months or more behind rather than the original six, because the funding was not sufficient to enable the school to meet the needs of the large numbers of students requiring it.

BENEFITS OF THE GONSKI INVESTMENT

Despite the frustration of not being able to provide the full level of student support required, Ms Papadopoulos is encouraged by what the school has been able to achieve.

In Grade 1, three terms of daily interventions – 20 to 30 minutes in small groups of three – for students behind in their reading have seen more than 12 months in growth for 23 out of 25 students. Similar gains have also been in Grade 2. One student who was reading at level 2 in term 1 is now reading at level 19, while another has improved from level 3 to level 22.

PAT testing data also shows strong benefits from the school's decision to invest in professional development and staff coaching in the teaching of numeracy. There has been a significant increase in the level of student engagement in maths, and significant growth is being made in PAT(Maths) results for Years 3 to 5.

WHAT THE CONTINUATION OF GONSKI FUNDING MEANS TO COLAC PRIMARY SCHOOL

From Colac Primary's experience of Gonski funding in 2016, Ms Papadopoulos is acutely aware of both its benefits and the fact that it has not been enough to fully meet complex student needs. With almost 40 per cent of students more than six months behind in literacy and numeracy, losing Gonski funding would not only jeopardise the successful interventions that have been made to date, but also mean that Colac would be in the unenviable position of not being able to extend the same level of support to meet the identified needs of all its students.

Needs-based funding — and the necessity for schools in communities with socio-economic profiles in decline to respond quickly to changing local needs — is crucial to the future capacity of schools to meet the needs of their students.

"We're coming from a position of never having had the financial ability to provide the level of support our students require," says Ms Papadopoulos.

It would be heartbreaking if, having had a sense of what can be achieved through our 2016 Gonski funding, we lost not only the capacity to maintain what has been achieved but also the possibility of being able to make that same difference for all our students.

COWANDILLA PRIMARY SCHOOL



Cowandilla Primary School, in Adelaide's inner western suburbs, has an enrolment of 440 students who come from a wide range of socioeconomic, cultural and language backgrounds. A significant percentage of students are eligible for South Australia's School Card scheme for low-income families. Almost 70 per cent of students are from non-English-speaking backgrounds and Indigenous students make up 4 per cent of the school population. Cowandilla has five Intensive English Language classes for new arrivals and 16 mainstream classes. The school's population is transient, with many students regularly changing schools.

GONSKI FUNDING

Prior to the introduction of Gonski funding, Cowandilla received needs-based funding through the Low SES School Communities National Partnership. Cowandilla received approximately \$50,000 in Gonski funding, known as Better Schools Funding in South Australia.

2014 → 2016

\$50,000



OBJECTIVES

Maintaining the provision of additional literacy and numeracy support for all students has been a priority for the additional funding.

This is particularly important for a school with a high number of new arrivals students from other countries, some of whom are pre-literate and require intensive academic and socio-cultural support to prepare them for mainstream classes.

Cowandilla has also focused on increasing student growth between annual NAPLAN tests, improving student engagement for Aboriginal students, and improving access to digital technologies and e-learning for all students.



STRATEGIES

Cowandilla's key strategies for use of its Gonski funding have been to enhance a numeracy intervention program for students in Years 1-6, and to train staff in 'Scaffolded Literacy', a whole-school theoretical and pedagogical approach to teaching reading and writing.

The numeracy intervention program involved hiring a maths consultant to train teachers and school services officers in relevant areas of the Australian Curriculum, as well as strategies to tutor and gather data on student learning. The data identifies who is to be involved in the intensive tutoring and also shows where and what further professional development is needed. Identified students are tutored three times a week for a term and then re-tested. Results have been very positive.

All new staff have been trained in Scaffolded Literacy strategies, which teach children how to read different texts, and how to appropriately use what they have learnt from reading each text. At Cowandilla Primary, teachers now use this approach with every year level.

BENEFITS OF THE GONSKI INVESTMENT

Principal Julie Hayes says that, while the amount of Gonski funding received by Cowandilla is not enormous, the school has been able to use it to enhance programs that boost student achievement and students' sense of wellbeing and engagement with the school.

Ms Hayes says the school now has an impressive database from before-and-after testing associated with the numeracy intervention program that shows very positive results. Every child made major improvements, with some lifting their performance by a substantial amount.

Analysis of student NAPLAN results also reveals significant improvements. Ms Hayes says each cohort has shown growth over previous tests.

Cowandilla teachers have used the Australian Curriculum's Literacy Levels, which reflect the language and literacy levels students need to access the curriculum across learning areas at their year level from R-10 (14 levels across R-10), to moderate and assess student work in English. In the 12 months to term 4 2015, 78 per cent of students have showed strong growth of one or more levels.

WHAT THE CONTINUATION OF GONSKI FUNDING MEANS TO COWANDILLA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ms Hayes says a continuation and expansion of Gonski funding is crucial.

“Improving teaching and learning programs for all students does not occur in a resource-free vacuum.”

For example, she says, schools like Cowandilla with large numbers of high-needs students face greater ongoing costs to provide their students with the technology required for 21st century learning because many do not have access to technology such as computers at home.

Principals at disadvantaged schools are always keen to make sure they're able to level the playing field by providing these things at school cost. So, if we had significant money it would help support that – a new way of learning.
– Ms Hayes

Extra needs-based funding would also help increase and improve professional development for teachers and support staff, she says.

“All the aspects of innovative teaching, such as quality professional development, sharing practice, co-planning and observing each other, cost significant amounts of money as well.”





CRAIGMORE HIGH SCHOOL



Craigmore High School in Adelaide's outer northern suburbs has around 950 students. Almost two-thirds are from the lowest SES quartiles with 85 per cent from the lowest two quartiles and around one-third of students eligible for South Australia's School Card scheme for low-income families. Craigmore has 62 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and 84 students from non-English-speaking backgrounds. The school has around 150 students with identified disabilities, and houses a regional Disability Unit, which opened in 2015 and now has 28 students.

GONSKI FUNDING

Prior to the introduction of Gonski funding, Craigmore High received needs-based funding under the Low SES School Communities National Partnership. Its 2013 NP funding entitlement was \$66,000. Over the period 2014 to 2016 Craigmore has received approximately \$1 million in Gonski funding.

2014 → 2016

\$1,000,000



OBJECTIVES

Given its complex student population and the number of students identified as being at risk, the key objectives set by Craigmore for use of its Gonski funding have focused on teaching and learning practices designed to improve student engagement and achievement as identified in the SA Department's Teaching for Effective Learning (TfEL) framework. These include:

- targeting additional support to students identified as being at risk, including the wellbeing and resilience of students with identified trauma, emotional and social issues.
- identifying and implementing more effective literacy and numeracy strategies.
- a strong focus on 'student voice'.



STRATEGIES

Gonski funding has been used to provide the release time necessary to create numeracy coordinator and literacy coordinator positions, to improve literacy and numeracy teaching and learning across the school and provide additional support in classrooms for both students and teachers. It has also funded two Quicksmart literacy and numeracy student support officer (SSO) positions to provide additional targeted support to the school's literacy and numeracy improvement program. The Quicksmart numeracy SSO managed and delivered the intervention program to 18 low-achieving Year 8 students, with the literacy program also being delivered to 18 low-achieving Year 8 students.

Funding has also been used to support the creation of a student voice and TfEL coordinator position and release teachers to support student voice and other identified TfEL initiatives, which include connecting with local partnership schools through the Uleybury Partnership Student Learning Commission. It allowed the school to engage four groups of Year 10 students in the Youth Opportunities Personal Leadership program focusing on communication, relationships and goal planning, and four groups of Years 8 and 9 students identified as highly at risk to participate in the Labs 'n' Life program.

A special education liaison officer, who also acted as a youth worker for students at risk, was engaged, in addition to the school funding an additional 21.5 hours per week to support pastoral care in the school as part of the middle school support team.

BENEFITS OF THE GONSKI INVESTMENT

Principal Graham Jennings says the benefits to Craigmore have been the ability to create leadership positions and support projects focused on engaging teachers and students in co-designing new learning tasks, assessment activities and feedback processes to improve student learning outcomes.

The 2015 TfEL project saw 44.6 per cent of students move up one grade or more between terms 2 and 3. A total of 43 per cent of those students had previously failed to achieve passing grades of C or above. In addition, completion and submission of assignment tasks increased by 36 per cent to 90.5 per cent.

The focus in 2016 has been on the impact of co-design on attendance. Mr Jennings says there are many significant individual success stories from the 2016 project. Overall, 58.3 per cent of students increased their attendance rate from term 2 to term 3, and 25 per cent of students increased their grade by one band or more.

The teaching and learning strategies adopted have led to an increase in metacognition of learning and increased engagement in effective, productive dialogue between students and teachers. Students are productively challenging the teachers about pedagogy, increasing their capacity to be involved in co-design activities and establishing effective and trusted 'feedback loops'.

Many students have also benefitted from the development of a student support team that uses a case management approach to identify, respond and support students who experience emotional and anxiety issues, trauma or relationship issues. A significant benefit has been the capacity to respond more effectively to issues that negatively affect students' ability to attend school, engage in the curriculum or form positive and productive relationship with staff and peers.

Both Quicksmart intervention programs, based on three 30-minute lessons a week, saw significant improvement in student speed, accuracy and understanding, with pre- and post-PAT data showing all students improving at least one level and several improving three levels. The 2016 NAPLAN results also show an improvement in reading, writing, punctuation and grammar and numeracy performance.



WHAT THE CONTINUATION OF GONSKI FUNDING MEANS TO CRAIGMORE HIGH SCHOOL

Mr Jennings says that the continuation of Gonski funding would allow the school to continue to provide equity of access to learning for all students.

It will allow us to provide focused intervention for targeted students to build literacy and numeracy skills that allow students to build automaticity and fluency skills, which in turn gives them the confidence to successfully engage in the learning process. It will allow us to continue to build teacher capacity to engage in high-quality teaching and learning practices that effectively use 21st Century learning techniques, engage all students in intellectual 'stretch' activities and use appropriate differentiation techniques. Our hope is to ensure that all students are able to achieve their entitlement of achieving at or above their age-appropriate level of achievement.

– Mr Jennings

Continued Gonski funding would also allow the continued provision of a supportive and responsive student support team, qualified to provide referral to appropriate services, which promotes and operates with a strong wellbeing framework. Mr Jennings says a student wellbeing team that connects both government and non-government services is critical to help address the many and complex issues, such as domestic violence, youth and adolescent suicide, substance abuse, homelessness and unemployment.

The extra funding would also allow ongoing development of deep and effective 21st Century pedagogy to allow teachers to build stronger connections with students and embrace the power of students in co-designing their learning; empowering students to use their voice; and building engaged and resilient learners, Mr Jennings says.

EMERALD STATE SCHOOL



Emerald State School is an established primary school located in Central Queensland. It has a socially and economically diverse enrolment of around 340 students. Half of the school's student population are from the two lowest socio-economic quartiles. It has a small cohort (3 per cent) of Indigenous students and 8 per cent of students are from non-English-speaking backgrounds. A small number of students have identified disabilities and are integrated into classrooms with the support of specialist school-based staff.

GONSKI FUNDING

Emerald State School has received approximately \$313,000 in additional Greater Results Guarantee and Investing for Success funding between 2014 and 2016.

2014 ● → 2016

\$313,000



OBJECTIVES

Prior to receiving Gonski funding, analysis of school data showed that NAPLAN performance had declined at the higher end of the achievement spectrum over a period of several years. As a result, the school set ambitious literacy targets for improving the number of students reading at regional and state benchmark levels for Years 3 to 5 and Years 5 to 6, and improving student writing to approved levels for Years 3 to 6.

Emerald's plan for achieving these objectives focused on professional development to build staff capacity in effective teaching practices and the implementation of high-yield strategies designed to improve student achievement in reading and writing.



STRATEGIES

Strategies have included:

- engaging a pedagogical coach to work with teachers in the development of more effective teaching and learning programs, including ensuring consistency across the school in the teaching and assessment of writing.
- developing a common approach to curriculum scope and sequence and monitoring its implementation across the school.
- participating in the regional School Improvement Through Instructional Leadership (SITIL) Network focused on improving students' writing skills.
- implementing a five-week data cycle for all year levels in reading and writing, which involves using TRS time to release teachers for training in analysing data to target students' needs and progress and plan for improvement.
- building greater parent engagement with the school and encouraging support for their children's reading and writing through parent workshops using Support a Writer and Ready Readers strategies to use at home.
- professional development of teacher aides as well as teachers in high-yield literacy strategies.
- student participation in Project 600 Reading, a targeted online reading program to develop reading comprehension skills.
- using external experts, including Yvana Jones, Rod Campbell and Jackie French, to work with staff.

BENEFITS OF THE GONSKI INVESTMENT

Principal Rhonda Jones says the extra funding has been invaluable to Emerald State School. She stresses the importance of being able to afford both the time and expertise to build staff capabilities by using experts to coach and mentor staff in effective teaching and support strategies for improving student's literacy skills and providing release time for teachers for quality professional development.

Staff capability, in both the analysis of data and how to use it to develop new approaches to their teaching practice, has been significantly enhanced and staff are now more skilled in identifying and targeting students' learning needs.

Ms Jones also highlights the role of the funding in boosting leadership capacity within the school. Emerald only had a very small leadership team, consisting of the Principal and an 0.5 FTE Deputy, and the funding has allowed for an additional 0.5 FTE Master Teacher in Literacy over three years.

The pattern of NAPLAN underperformance has been reversed. Year 3 and 5 NAPLAN achievement in reading is now above the national average and writing has improved to be on par with the national average. Over three years, Year 3 performance in all areas of NAPLAN is trending upwards and Emerald is now equal to the nation, and very close in Year 5.

WHAT THE CONTINUATION OF GONSKI FUNDING MEANS TO EMERALD STATE SCHOOL

Ms Jones says that without additional needs-based funding both the level of provision and also the quality of professional development within the school will suffer.

If the capacity to bring in experts to work with staff on proven improvement strategies, and the release time that is required for effective staff participation in professional learning, are lost it is difficult to see how the level of improvement in student literacy achievement could be maintained.





GLENELG PRIMARY SCHOOL



Glenelg Primary School, in the Adelaide beachside suburb of Glenelg, has 760 students from a diverse range of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Approximately 20 per cent of students are from non-English speaking backgrounds and there are nine Aboriginal students. About 16 per cent of students are eligible for South Australia's School Card scheme for low-income families. There are a number of transient families, particularly from other countries, with parents having work tenures of six to 24 months who live locally during this time.

GONSKI FUNDING

Glenelg Primary has received approximately \$84,000 in Gonski funding between 2014 and 2016.

2014 ● → 2016

\$84,000



OBJECTIVES

The school has used most of its additional funding for intervention programs for children requiring intensive support in literacy and numeracy development. There has also been increased investment in professional learning and in the development of more effective assessment practices and pedagogies. A particular focus has been on an R-7 coordinated approach to literacy to improve literacy outcomes for all students.



STRATEGIES

The key strategies adopted by Glenelg Primary for use of its Gonski funding have included:

- supporting the provision of SPA (speech pathology) support, and Mini-Lit, Multi-Lit and QuickSmart maths intervention programs. The school now has roughly 120 hours of school services officer (SSO) hours allocated to 1:1 support each week. This is further supported with additional teacher time for reading support across the school, learning support in each classroom and a one-day-a-week stretch program to extend children's thinking skills.
- engaging consultants to work with staff on developing their knowledge and skills and collaborative lesson preparation and sharing of effective practices across the curriculum; analysis of data; and formative assessment to support all learning areas.
- purchasing resources such as PAT-R and PAT(Maths) tests to provide a rich source of data on student learning in Years 1-7 reading and mathematics, and the data program Scorelink to store data and provide an additional source of information to identify student needs.
- training SSOs in the programs they will be running and establishing routines so that student progress is reported back to teachers weekly and parents every term.

BENEFITS OF THE GONSKI INVESTMENT

Principal Rae Taggart says the decision to focus much of the use of Gonski funding on improving literacy and numeracy across the school has been successful. The school's capacity to generate data has been enhanced by the new data resources it has acquired, and professional development in the use of PAT-R and NAPLAN data to more effectively target students requiring additional literacy support has been invaluable.

The extension of literacy intervention support based on this data has seen an improvement in student achievement, and was sufficiently impressive for the school's Governing Council to approve additional funding for literacy support. This led to the successful implementation of the Multi-Lit program for reading intervention for Years 4-7.

Analysis of PAT-R data from September 2015 to September 2016 shows increases in the numbers of students progressing to a higher band or improving their performance within a band. In Year 3 for example, 84 per cent of students improved their achievement.

Ms Taggart says the Gonski funding was a huge support to fund this. "The money allowed for additional staffing and resourcing for students, which not only helps the students who are struggling with their learning but also frees up some funds and time to support every child in the school to be the best they can be by providing that extra little push along to improve their achievement."

WHAT THE CONTINUATION OF GONSKI FUNDING MEANS TO GLENELG PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ms Taggart says the withdrawal of Gonski funding will jeopardise the programs successfully implemented in the school.

"The funding has supported the implementation of intervention programs in their true sense. That is, to intervene in every child's learning program to address and support their specific needs, from those who are struggling to gifted students requiring extension."

Allowing each child to realise their potential through the provision of funding that creates better learning opportunities, and the development of in-school programs, practices and pedagogies that encourage and assist learning across the full range of capabilities, is something every child deserves, she says.

HARRISTOWN STATE HIGH SCHOOL



Harristown State High, in the Queensland city of Toowoomba, has about 1600 students. Three-quarters of Harristown's students are from the lowest two SES quartiles. Indigenous students make up 13 per cent of the school population and about 14 per cent of students are from non-English-speaking backgrounds. There are EALD students from 32 different countries. The school has a Special Education Program delivered through a Special Education Unit, with students also undertaking an educational off-campus program situated on the grounds of the Toowoomba West Special School.

GONSKI FUNDING

Harristown State High School
has received approximately \$1.7 million
in additional Greater Results Guarantee
and Investing for Success funding.

2014 → 2016

\$1,700,000



OBJECTIVES

As a large low-SES school with significant cohorts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-English speaking background students, Harristown State High School had a range of objectives for use of its additional needs-based funding from 2014 to 2016.

The key objectives included focused professional development and teaching and learning improvement strategies to:

- improve the school's NAPLAN achievements in Years 7 and 9 in reading, spelling and numeracy by boosting the numbers of students meeting the NAPLAN National Minimum Standards (NMS) and increasing the percentage of students achieving in the NAPLAN Upper Two Bands.
- significantly increase the numbers of Year 12 students gaining their Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE). In 2015 Harristown State High set the goal of increasing the percentage of Year 12 students gaining their QCE by the completion of Year 12 from 70 per cent to 90 per cent.



STRATEGIES

One of Harristown's cornerstone strategies for school improvement, which has been made possible by its needs-based funding, has been the establishment of a three-year YuMi Deadly Maths Program in the junior secondary school to support the achievement of the school's numeracy targets. A substantial component of funding has been allocated to additional teaching staff (2.8 FTE positions) to create more flexible student groupings to get maximum benefits from the program. This has been complemented by an additional allocation for the Teacher Release Scheme (TRS) and other staff release, and the professional development costs for all the teachers involved in the ongoing training associated with the program.

A further investment has been made in staffing through the purchase of significant additional teacher aide time of approximately 65 hours per week to provide daily in-class support for students who need to build their literacy and numeracy skills.

Harristown has also created several new positions and brought in personnel and resources to support its overall NAPLAN and QCE attainment improvement goals including:

- a dedicated part-time QCE data analysis teacher position that supports the principal, deputy principals, heads of departments, guidance officer and teachers in understanding the progress or barriers to individual students' QCE attainment and targeting specific strategies as required.
- TRS personnel to take designated classes to provide the time required for teachers to effectively use student data, and for literacy and numeracy teachers to develop individual plans for every student below the NAPLAN NMS. It also allows for the implementation and monitoring of each plan, and the effective implementation of structured observation, feedback and coaching for all teaching staff across the whole school.
- a 0.6 FTE Youth Support Coordinator at work with at-risk students in Years 7 to 9 for NAPLAN and Years 10 to 12 for QCE attainment.
- the purchase of much-needed numeracy-related and literacy-related classroom resources and kits to assist in developing students' literacy and numeracy skills.

Other strategic initiatives include the purchase of additional administrative officer time to support the achievement of the school's attendance rate improvement target.

BENEFITS OF THE GONSKI INVESTMENT

Principal Ken Green says Harristown State High has made significant, statistically verifiable progress towards the achievement of the targets it set for use of the funding. Among the most important direct benefits are the tangible improvements in 2015 NAPLAN achievement. A total of 97 per cent of Year 7 and 93 per cent of Year 9 students attained the NMS in reading; 95 per cent in Year 7 numeracy and 97 per cent in Year 9. These figures include EALD students; without their inclusion 100 per cent of eligible students would have attained the NMS.

Harristown's other major improvement goal, QCE attainment, was equally impressive. For a number of years, the rate for successful completion of the QCE in Year 12 hovered between 70 and 75 per cent. In 2014 only 73 per cent of Year 12 students successfully completed the QCE. In 2015 the figure had risen to 93 per cent. Particularly outstanding was the fact that the 2015 Year 12 cohort included 28 Indigenous students. All 28 successfully achieved their QCE, compared to 92 per cent of non-Indigenous students.

WHAT THE CONTINUATION OF GONSKI FUNDING MEANS TO HARRISTOWN STATE HIGH SCHOOL

Mr Green says the achievements would not have been possible without the additional needs-based funding from 2014 to 2016. If it is discontinued, these achievements will be jeopardised and the school's ambitious future plans for embedding and extending the successful initiatives will be in doubt.

Gonski gave the school the chance to finally implement plans and strategies that had previously only been able to be dreamt about. Having seen how successful they have been, it would be letting down students and the community for it to be discontinued.





HAYES PARK PUBLIC SCHOOL

Hayes Park Public School in Dapto, a suburb in the NSW city of Wollongong, has 540 students in 21 mainstream classes and a support class for students with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities. A growing number of students are identified as having a low-SES background. The Department currently recognises 67 per cent of students as low SES, with 41 per cent of students in the lowest SES quartile. Indigenous students make up 6 per cent of the school population and 8 per cent of students are from a non-English-speaking background.

GONSKI FUNDING

Hayes Park Public School received about \$109,000 in needs-based Gonski funding in 2015, \$134,285 in 2016 and it expects to receive \$284,441 in 2017.

2015 ● → 2016
\$243,285

JAN 2017 ● → DEC 2017
\$284,441



OBJECTIVES

The school's objectives for the use of the additional funding have included:

- improving the literacy skills (reading, phonemic awareness, writing and spelling) of targeted students in the school's Stage 1 and 2 cohorts.
 - additional professional development for staff.
 - raising the level of technology available for student use.
- greater co-ordination of learning support for individual students.



STRATEGIES

The strategies adopted by Hayes Park Public School have centred on:

- employing a learning and support coordinator one day per week to coordinate a dynamic learning support team and case management of students with particular learning support needs.
- employing two school learning support officers 20 hours per week for targeted intervention in reading, writing, phonemic awareness and spelling for students in small groups.
- employing a specialist teacher to coordinate the running of the Learning Lab over the period of a year (topping up the department's allocation).
- employing a computer coordinator one day a week to drive technology and student engagement, allocate and purchase resources, support staff and manage the BYOD program.
- creating an assistant principal position to drive literacy and numeracy teaching and learning. The role involves mentoring, modelling and coaching in classrooms, data collection and analysis. This is supplemented by the schools' Quality Teaching, Successful Students allocation that enables time for teachers to learn, view demonstrations, visit classrooms, put new pedagogies into practice and gain feedback.
- employing a fully qualified speech therapist one day a week to target speech, language and articulation issues in years K-2 as an early intervention strategy.
- the purchase of iPads for student use to supplement the BYOD initiative and classroom activities.
- provision of an additional day in the office to support the rollout of the Learning Management and Business Reform initiative by freeing the deputy principal and principal to focus on teaching & learning.

BENEFITS OF THE GONSKI INVESTMENT

Hayes Park Principal Phil Seymour says the additional funding has made a significant impact on the learning and performance of students.

This is the first time we have ever had any supplementary funds that we can utilise to meet the particular needs of our students. Whilst it is early days yet, we are confident that the results will continue and more and more of our students will reach their potential in literacy.

The Learning Lab has been the most successful Gonski-funded initiative with 96 children having 'graduated' since Term 3, 2015. It is an intensive program of 40-minute sessions five days per week, which focuses on enabling students to read at an independent level with fluency and comprehension of the text; spell 100 of the most used words; and consolidate their knowledge of vowels, consonants and blends.

At the end of Term 4 2016, 46 students were in the program with an average growth of 7.5 reading levels, with 24 per cent of students achieving 10 or more reading levels.

Mr Seymour says the program is highly regarded across the school community and he says the following is typical of the feedback received:

Classroom teacher:

“The Learning Lab has been fantastic for us in the classroom. The students are more confident when reading and in their abilities, they really want to learn, they want to try harder.”

Parent:

“We have noticed a big difference with writing and [our son] wants to do homework. Thank you for all your support in Learning Lab.”

Student:

“Learning Lab is awesome. Learning Lab has helped me with my reading, spelling and maths. I can now read the words to my maths questions.”

WHAT THE CONTINUATION OF GONSKI FUNDING MEANS TO HAYES PARK PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr Seymour says the Learning Lab and other initiatives are an incredible benefit to the school's students, staff and community and would not be possible without the continuation of current funding levels. With the full roll-out of Gonski funds the school could:

- continue with the Learning Lab and extend it to numeracy to cater for a wider and different range of students.
- further lift the quality of teaching by funding more quality professional development, including classroom visits, demonstration lessons, and gaining feedback on performance.
- have an instructional leader ‘off class’ full-time to support quality teaching in classrooms and give increased support to teachers in the collection and analysis of data to drive their teaching programs.
- further increase the level of resourcing and provision of equipment and facilities in the IT area to support teaching, learning and student engagement.





KAMBRYA COLLEGE



Kambrya College is a secondary school in Berwick in Melbourne's outer south-eastern suburbs. It has a socioeconomically and culturally diverse student population of 1,200. Nine per cent of Kambrya's students are from non-English-speaking backgrounds, with 5.1 per cent requiring English as an Additional Language (EAL) support. Within this group, there are 27 different ethnic backgrounds, with a significant representation of students who speak Chinese Mandarin. The school has a small cohort, 1 per cent, of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Kambrya has a high number of students from low-SES backgrounds: 70 per cent of students are in the lowest two SES quartiles, with about 400 in the lowest quartile. Kambrya came to national attention in 2016 as the subject of the ABC's series *Revolution School*.

GONSKI FUNDING

Kambrya College received \$31,500 in Gonski funding in 2016 as part of its total equity funding package.

JAN 2016 → DEC 2016

\$31,500



OBJECTIVES

Kambrya's overarching objective for the use of its 2016 Gonski funding was to further embed and expand what was kick-started by its needs-based National Partnerships funding.

In 2008 Kambrya's academic results had been among the lowest 10 per cent of schools in Victoria but the extra funding enabled a remarkable turnaround. Analysis of its NAPLAN results and trend data shows that Kambrya's student performance in literacy and numeracy is now improving at a rate higher than the national average. VCE data has continued to improve and over the past four years its results put Kambrya among the top 25 to 30 per cent of state schools, with the pass rate for senior VCAL close to 100 per cent. Accompanying this has been an enormous surge in positive feedback from students, parents, staff and the local community.

Kambrya had targeted its National Partnerships funding to programs aimed primarily at high-needs

students, employing a leadership coach and additional leading teachers with expertise in literacy and numeracy. Collaborative teaching teams were established to support teachers in improving their teaching and develop new strategies for different groups of students.

In addition to maintaining these initiatives, specific Gonski-funded objectives for 2016 included:

- establishing a class to cater for a significant number of students entering high school who were struggling academically and without the skills to transition effectively from primary to secondary schooling.
- intensive numeracy and literacy support for students predominantly in Years 7 and 8.



STRATEGIES

Meeting these objectives has driven the establishment of an effective Accelerated Learning Program targeting Years 7 and 8 students who are performing well below their age level in literacy and numeracy.

It is an intensive program requiring more staff in the room; namely additional teacher and teacher aide time, including specialist speech and occupational therapy support, and the physical resources needed to support student learning and development.

The traditional timetable has been put aside, as have been standard issue text books. Rather the focus has been on teaching at the point of need with staff developing specialised resources to respond to the developmental needs of students.

BENEFITS OF THE GONSKI INVESTMENT

Acting Principal Joanne Wastle says Kambrya's achievements in turning around its performance over the last eight years could not have been achieved without needs-based funding, first through the National Partnerships and now through Gonski funding.

It has allowed the school to continue supporting students most in need by enabling the staffing and resources necessary to deliver the highly differentiated learning programs these students require to expand and develop their engagement with learning.

The ABC's Revolution School series largely focused on Kambrya's work with a team of experts from the University of Melbourne over the previous 18 months, with some commentators overlooking or downplaying the role of eight years of additional needs-based resourcing. But the school makes the point that it takes time and resources to provide a school environment that supports leadership, teachers and staff to develop more effective teaching and learning practices and improve performance across the board.

WHAT THE CONTINUATION OF GONSKI FUNDING MEANS TO KAMBRYA COLLEGE

Ms Wastle says the remarkable achievements to date are at risk if needs-based Gonski funding does not continue. The improvements brought about by National Partnerships funding were significant, but the time-limited nature of that funding underlines the requirement for long-term needs-based funding, which is what Gonski was designed to deliver.

Without the levels of funding anticipated under Gonski, Kambrya's much-needed programs would be at risk, which would seriously compromise all that the school has achieved.





LE FEVRE HIGH SCHOOL



Le Fevre High School, in Adelaide's western suburbs, has a student population of around 550, half of whom are from low-SES backgrounds. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students make up about 15 per cent of Le Fevre's school population. About 20 per cent of students are from non-English-speaking backgrounds, 13 per cent have an identified disability, and around 40 per cent are eligible for South Australia's School Card scheme for low-income families.

GONSKI FUNDING

Le Fevre High has received approximately \$330,000 in Gonski funding from 2014 to 2016. Prior to this Le Fevre received needs-based funding under the Low SES School Communities National Partnership.

2014 → 2016

\$330,000



OBJECTIVES

Le Fevre's main objective for its Gonski funding has been to give the existing programs it successfully implemented using its National Partnerships funding both a future and a new impetus, and to provide a kick-start for the development and implementation of new initiatives.

Particular objectives include:

- greater support for student wellbeing and engagement through a focus on a whole package of pastoral care.
- improving education outcomes for Le Fevre's Aboriginal students. Historically, the school's Aboriginal students have rarely completed Year 12 but, in recent years, programs to better engage students have raised achievement levels. Embedding and expanding these programs has been a key focus.
- changes to the school's staffing configuration to enhance teaching and learning programs for all students across the school.



STRATEGIES

Key strategies to achieve these objectives include:

- creating new programs that benefit all students, and continuing existing programs as ad hoc, time-limited funding sources have dried up.
- supporting enhanced pastoral care by funding time release of year level coordinators.
- targeting resources to Aboriginal students, including additional Aboriginal education workers and other support staff, to offer the one-on-one support students need to lift their achievement and expand their post-school options. Additional programs supported by Gonski funding include the teaching of the local Kaurna language and participation in the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience program run with the University of South Australia, where students are exposed to various university courses in an intensive year-long program.
- running a literacy intervention program to improve literacy for Year 8 students. The program benefits all students at risk of lower achievement than their peers and becoming disengaged from schooling but is particularly important for Aboriginal students.
- creating more flexible roles for teachers and support staff, employing extra teachers, including Indigenous teachers, and support staff for the language program, as well as releasing curriculum coordinators from year level duties and creating a new third assistant principal role covering 'innovative programs and wellbeing' across the school.

BENEFITS OF THE GONSKI INVESTMENT

Principal Rob Shepherd says Gonski funding has enabled the school to expand learning opportunities and improve post-school opportunities for all students and it's been significant for Aboriginal students. Le Fevre has gone from being a school where very few Aboriginal students have successfully completed Year 12 to one where the majority not only attempt it, but most pass successfully, then go on to TAFE, traineeships or university courses.

Mr Shepherd says participation in the AIME program has been highly motivating for students. It provides them with the opportunity to feel supported by the Aboriginal adults accompanying them, and to meet Aboriginal people in the venues they visit who are engaged in studying and part of the delivery program.

Mr Shepherd says that the Kaurna language program has also had a very positive impact on students.

It's important to have an environment where Aboriginal students can be really proud of who and what they are, and their cultural links. And there's no doubt that access to Indigenous language is a powerful self-esteem issue for Aboriginal people because the languages were not allowed to be spoken. This is highly significant because of the many stolen generation Aboriginal people who have been a part of the community.

– Mr Shepherd

It's really reinforced the sense of cultural celebration and acknowledgement, as well as academic success, because they're interlinked – wellbeing, esteem, being valued, having a voice, having a presence, being recognised, and being an important part of the school community.

– Mr Shepherd

WHAT THE CONTINUATION OF GONSKI FUNDING MEANS TO LE FEVRE HIGH SCHOOL

Mr Shepherd says that improving the learning opportunities and post-school options for all Le Fevre's students requires an investment in resources that recognises the learning barriers many of them face and offers the individual support they need. He says that Aboriginal students, in particular, often face barriers not experienced by others.

Academic success for Aboriginal students is linked so strongly to their wellbeing and their feeling of being valued at school, which is a time and resource-intensive process. Without a continuation of ongoing, needs-based Gonski funding the significant improvements achieved by Le Fevre High School are at risk.





THE RIVERS SECONDARY COLLEGE: LISMORE HIGH CAMPUS



Lismore High Campus is part of The Rivers Secondary College, which was formed in 2015 along with Richmond River High Campus and Kadina High Campus. The school has an enrolment of 365. About 80 per cent of students are from the lowest two SES quartiles; 56 per cent from the lowest quartile. Aboriginal students make up one-fifth of the student population and 7 per cent of students are from non-English-speaking backgrounds. The school has a more diverse student cohort than some other schools in the Lismore area due to a significant enrolment of foreign students whose parents are studying at Southern Cross University. Lismore also has a support unit with three classes and 30 students.

GONSKI FUNDING

Lismore High Campus has received about
\$1.4 million in Gonski funding.

2014 ● → 2016

\$1,400,000



OBJECTIVES

The school has focused its Gonski funding on improving the quality of teaching and learning for all students and providing opportunities for students to access learning experiences not usually available to country students.

Because of the diverse nature of the school, student welfare remains a high priority but it sits within a comprehensive suite of measures designed to improve learning outcomes for all students and enhance student wellbeing and engagement across the school. Specific objectives include improving access to technology for students, given that surveys in 2015 and 2016 showed 50 per cent of students do not have access to computers at home, and improving outcomes for Aboriginal students.



STRATEGIES

The key strategies that have been made possible by Gonski funding include:

- improving the analysis and use of data from NAPLAN and HSC results at the start of every year to target improvements in teaching and learning practices.
- implementing a new project-based curriculum and teaching program beginning with the whole Year 7 cohort across the key learning areas of English, maths, science and human society and its environment in 2015, which has been retained in 2016 and extended to the Year 8 cohort. In 2017 this will be expanded into Year 9. This has involved significant reorganisation and major structural changes: new staffing configurations with release time for staff engaged in developing the new teaching programs to undertake training in the new methodology, a new approach to timetabling and a total redesign of physical spaces including the library within the school.
- a significantly increased budget for teacher professional learning including a time allocation for relevant staff as part of their planned teaching load, and project teams developed for Years 7 and Year 8 project-based learning.
- a substantial investment in new technology, including the purchase of educational software that supports learning in literacy and numeracy and new computers. All students in Years 7 and 8 now have access to their own laptops, which has freed up access for students to other computer laboratory spaces.
- a new senior study program for Years 11 and 12 students, using individual planning sessions as well as group activities focused on enabling students to achieve their academic goals.
- improving student wellbeing through the provision of more effective support by restructuring the operation of the learning and support team and student support services.
- a tailored package of individual support for Aboriginal students including greater access to mentoring programs, an ART program, a teacher allocated to support Aboriginal students, an Aboriginal Community Officer and tutoring using literacy and numeracy software.
- more targeted support for EALD students, including explicit language instruction in grammar and academic reading and writing, and the establishment of an ESL HSC Year 11 class to cater for the needs of students requiring greater EAL/D support.
- a greater focus on gifted and talented students by investing Gonski funding in providing training for all staff in the University of NSW Gifted and Talented program, a time and money consuming commitment.
- creating learning spaces that engage students in the learning process such as a gymnasium and outdoor learning area.
- improved communication practices with parents, students and the community.

BENEFITS OF THE GONSKI INVESTMENT

Lismore High's principal, Nigel Brito, says Gonski funding has made a significant difference to the school.

Quite simply, it has allowed the school to provide the opportunities and access to resources that students would not normally have access to. Funds are used to provide resources directly to improve the teaching and learning of students or via their teachers. For example, it is difficult to successfully implement new STEM initiatives when the socio-economic circumstances of the community are such that 50 per cent of students do not have access to computers at home.

– Mr Brito

Students, staff and parents are all very positive about the project-based learning program. Feedback shows that it is successfully engaging students in developing the higher order thinking skills associated with 21st century learning. Significantly, student misbehaviour in class has decreased dramatically.

School attendance rates are the highest in five years and enrolments, which had been decreasing, are on the rise. NAPLAN results are the highest in seven years with growth levels at or above state-level, and 2015 Higher School Certificate results are the most improved in 10 years, with data showing they exceed the improvement measure set by the school in its objectives. For the first time, NAPLAN Year 9 results show that students in two strands (reading and spelling and punctuation) are above the state average. Additionally, there has been a particularly significant improvement in the NAPLAN achievement of Aboriginal students.

Analysis of the 2015 HSC data shows that Lismore High Campus achieved an exceptionally high result for government schools in the North Coast area, with 37 out of 38 full-time students awarded their HSC. Mr Brito attributes this success to the effectiveness of the Gonski-funded Aspirations Program and the positive impact it has made on Year 11 and 12 teaching and learning programs.

WHAT THE CONTINUATION OF GONSKI FUNDING MEANS TO LISMORE HIGH CAMPUS (RIVERS SECONDARY COLLEGE)

Mr Brito says these significant improvements could not have been achieved without Gonski funding. Continuation of the Gonski funding will allow embedding and extending the successful initiatives put in place by the school, with a particular focus on:

- expanding professional development in project-based learning to the whole teaching staff.
- implementing the project-based learning model across all classrooms and year levels based on its success to date.
- improving curriculum differentiation for students by developing teacher skills to cater for gifted and talented students.
- reviewing and improving student wellbeing practices.



LOGANLEA STATE HIGH SCHOOL



Loganlea State High School is a 7–12 secondary school in Brisbane. It has an enrolment of around 600 students from a range of cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, with over 85 per cent of students from the two lowest SES quartiles. Around 80 students (13 per cent) identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, with a further 10 per cent of students from non-English-speaking backgrounds who are supported by ESL staff. Loganlea has a purpose-built Special Education Program facility catering for the diverse learning needs of students with disabilities.

GONSKI FUNDING

The school received around \$620,000 in additional Greater Results Guarantee and Investing for Success funding between 2014 and 2016.

2014 ● → 2016

\$620,000



OBJECTIVES

Loganlea's objectives for use of the additional equity funding were focused on lifting student achievement by:

- improving Year 7 and 9 NAPLAN literacy and numeracy results.
- lifting senior secondary outcomes.
- monitoring and improving student attendance and engagement.
- building teacher capability and quality of instruction through focused coaching and professional development.



STRATEGIES

Loganlea's starting point for improving NAPLAN results was to develop and implement targeted literacy and numeracy intervention strategies for all students who were not achieving the National Minimum Standards in Years 7 and 9 reading and numeracy. This included developing individual learning plans for all low-performing Years 7, 8 and 9 students. Multi-Lit, school-wide Reading Comprehension and Tactical Teaching of Reading strategies were among the range of programs deployed to support the overall improvement strategy.

Professional development in the teaching of reading and numeracy was provided for all teachers of Years 7, 8 and 9, by creating the positions of master teacher and numeracy coach and providing teacher release time to allow for coaching, mentoring and collaborative learning, as well as participation in professional development facilitated by the Queensland University of Technology. The capability and number of teacher aides engaged and trained in Multi-Lit was also boosted, as well as the capability of learning support teachers working with students in need of intensive targeted reading and numeracy intervention.

Loganlea invested in quality teaching and learning resources including diagnostic aids such as PAT(Maths), PAT-R and Probe testing, marking and data analysis programs, the Accelerated Reader and Mathletics reading comprehension and numeracy programs for Years 7-9, and the intensive numeracy intervention program YuMi Deadly Maths XLR8 for Years 7-9. A Junior Secondary Reading Framework was implemented across all curriculum areas to lift the reading skills of students in Years 7-9, supported by Reading Comprehension strategies including 'Question-Answer Relationships' (QAR), SIMPA, 'Reciprocal Reading', 'Marzano's Six Step Process to Building Academic Vocabulary', and a 'Books in Homes' strategy for targeted Year 7-9 Indigenous and Multi-Lit students.

The focus on improving the performance of higher achieving students and increasing the number of students achieving in the upper two bands of NAPLAN saw the extension of the reading and writing skills of Years 7-9 students through a Signature Academic Excellence Program. 'Inspire' camps, an aspirational program featuring creative writing, SOSE and Science – learning in and about the natural environment – were introduced for all Years 7, 8 and 9 students. In the senior years, students were tracked, monitored and supported in order to improve successful completion of the QCE and transition to post-school further education, training or employment.

The newly created engagement team and engagement officer positions are focused on improving student attendance rates and supporting student engagement.

BENEFITS OF THE GONSKI INVESTMENT

Principal Belinda Tregoe says the benefits to the school have been remarkable. "Using our needs-based funding we have been able to improve attendance and personalise education programs to meet the diverse needs of our students."

In addition to improvements in attendance, our results include a significant decrease in school disciplinary absences, improvements in literacy and numeracy outcomes and excellent senior school outcomes such as higher retention rates and 100 per cent of our Year 12 students achieving their Queensland Certificate of Education and one or more Vocational Education Training certificates.

– Ms Tregoe

In 2014-16, senior students at Loganlea achieved above state mean for QCE attainment — exceeding system improvement expectations, up from 68 per cent to 100 per cent over the last three years.

WHAT THE CONTINUATION OF GONSKI FUNDING MEANS TO LOGANLEA STATE HIGH SCHOOL

Ms Tregea says, while money doesn't fix the problem of educational disadvantage, needs-based resourcing in the form of skilled, quality staff and evidenced-based programs have made a proven difference to the students over the past three years. "When the issues faced by our students include poor rates of attendance, poverty and health issues as well as behavioural and academic challenges, the ability for us to employ additional specialist staff to support our students to access school and learning makes a tangible difference," she says.

Educational disadvantage, whether associated with socio-economic factors, disability, social and emotional needs or gaps in learning, can be addressed by the strategic use of additional funding to employ staff who believe in the students, who invest in them as people and who enable them to take advantage of the excellent opportunities offered by our school. "Once our students develop some self-belief, resilience and trust, they are able to engage positively in school," Ms Tregea says.

Our student performance and attainment data has shown a steady trajectory of improvement over the past three years and we are well placed to continue these successes with additional trained staff supporting our staff and students.

– Ms Tregea

"Site-based solutions and needs-based resourcing are the keys to redressing the educational disadvantage associated with a child's low SES postcode," she says.





MAGPIE PRIMARY SCHOOL



Magpie Primary School is a small rural school on the outskirts of Ballarat in Victoria. Just over half its 2016 enrolment of 88 are from the lowest SES quartile; 85 per cent from the lowest two quartiles. It has a small cohort (4%) of Indigenous students. Many families receive Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund funding for eligible low-income families.

GONSKI FUNDING

Magpie Primary School has received approximately \$112,000 in Gonski funding in 2016, and anticipates a further \$250,000 in 2017.

JAN 2016 ● → DEC 2016

\$112,000

AND ANTICIPATES

JAN 2017 ● → DEC 2017

\$250,000



OBJECTIVES

Prior to receiving Gonski funding in 2016, Magpie Primary School had received needs-based funding under the former Low Socio-Economic Status School Communities National Partnership. This funding contributed to an ambitious four-year plan to improve the quality of teaching in the school and boost student literacy and numeracy levels. Under the plan, there has been a strong focus on the creation of teaching consistency across the school with the clear aim of all children becoming successful independent life-long learners.

In 2016 Gonski funding was allocated to support the continuation of key objectives associated with this plan, specifically:

- increasing staffing levels to improve teaching practice through more effective staff professional development and learning.
- increasing access and positive community engagement with the school.



STRATEGIES

Magpie Primary has employed an additional part-time teacher to enable the release of staff for TRIPS (Teacher Release for Instructional Practice Scheme), a practice-based collaborative approach to professional learning and developing the skills and knowledge of teachers and support staff.

Teachers regularly visit other classrooms in the region and gain new knowledge and experience from working with their peers and the school's integration aide is being trained to work alongside teachers to provide extra learning support. Being able to engage additional teaching and administrative support staff also allows the principal more time to focus on school improvement strategies than on administrative tasks.

The financial circumstances of many families in the Magpie community are such that it has been a limiting factor on full engagement in the educational programs run by the school. Because of this, reducing the costs of schooling for low-SES families has been a priority. Gonski funding is being used to reduce booklist fees and subsidise school excursions, as well as fund an extra-curricular sports program aimed at keeping disengaged students, and their parents, with the school.

Principal Peter Clifton says that Magpie has had students who have never been to the beach or on a train except with the school, and more than half had never been on a tram. Now, he says, it only costs \$3 per student for each excursion. No-one is getting left behind because their families are unable to afford it, and students are having their horizons expanded and gaining a greater sense of the options available to them.

BENEFITS OF THE GONSKI INVESTMENT

Peter Clifton has seen first-hand the benefits of additional funding targeted to need in schools such as his, initially through Low SES National Partnership and now Gonski funding. Mr Clifton says that needs-based funding is having an "amazing" impact on students, and that most of Magpie Primary School's results are now well above state average.

Parent satisfaction and engagement with the school has increased, and the last several years have seen a significant increase in its enrolments with the student population more than doubling in several years, from 43 to 88.

Extra funding to invest in staff professional learning and development has also led to positive improvements in staff morale. This is particularly significant for a non-metropolitan school that had struggled to pay for relevant professional development opportunities.

Mr Clifton says he can see the flow-on effects of investing in staff professional development whenever he enters classrooms and sees students engaged, for example, with new technologies. He is acutely aware that this has only been made possible by developing the skill sets of his teachers and support staff, which the extra funding has allowed.

WHAT THE CONTINUATION OF GONSKI FUNDING MEANS TO MAGPIE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Through direct experience of the benefits of National Partnerships funding, and having had to wait until 2016 for Gonski funding to begin flowing to Victorian schools, Magpie Primary School is clear that the continuation of needs-based funding is crucial for students, schools and school communities. Depriving schools of ongoing funding, sustained over the long-term, will mean that hard-won gains are jeopardised, and plans for school improvement are in doubt.

For low-SES school communities like Magpie, Mr Clifton says the Gonski funding is “a ‘hand-up’ not a ‘hand-out’. It’s helping to change the learning outcomes for a generation of kids who deserve a chance”.



MAHOGANY RISE PRIMARY SCHOOL



Mahogany Rise Primary School, at Frankston North in Melbourne's south-east, is a low-SES school with 147 students. More than 90 per cent of students are from the two lowest SES quartiles. A total of 19 per cent are from a non-English-speaking background and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students make up 7 per cent of the school population. There is a high level of transience in the school's student population, and a complex mix of student needs. Mahogany Rise is part of the Kids Matter Australian mental health initiative.

GONSKI FUNDING

Mahogany Rise received approximately

JAN 2016 ● → DEC 2016

\$226,000



OBJECTIVES

The school had previously received needs-based funding under the Low SES School Communities National Partnership enabling it to build a strong foundation to improve student outcomes and keep students engaged with their learning, with a focus on literacy and numeracy improvement. It was committed to using its Gonski funding to maintain and extend these benefits to students and the school community.

Specific objectives for the use of Gonski funding have been to:

- refine the whole-school approach to oral language learning and teaching.
- target resources to literacy and numeracy intervention, with a focus on explicit teaching and learning.
- maintain and extend the school's focus on student wellbeing.



STRATEGIES

Mahogany Rise has adopted several innovative strategies to achieve its objectives. Speech pathologists and teachers work together with a whole-class approach each week targeting the specific needs of students. Assessments are done across the school twice a year and these assessments provide a rich source of data for school, class and individual programs to be developed. The data has been collected over the last four years and shows that explicit teaching in this area of the curriculum can and does have a huge impact.

Recognising that the complex nature of the school community and the wellbeing needs of students and families requires the support and expertise of many agencies and stakeholders, the school has created and developed a community hub. A student wellbeing coordinator brings together a range of services which includes two speech pathologists, a youth worker, a family engagement worker, an occupational therapist, two psychologists, a paediatrician, a paediatric fellow and a lawyer. The provision of these services within the hub has created a vibrant and positive environment, with staff able to interact with a range of specialist workers and services. This enables them to make informed decisions about their students' needs and develop more effective strategies for improving their learning outcomes.

BENEFITS OF THE GONSKI INVESTMENT

Principal John Culley says the results of needs-based funding have been positive. Over the past two years, the school's NAPLAN results have been improving. Year 5 results have shown particularly significant gains, which he attributes to the innovative approaches to teaching and learning the funding has enabled the school to develop and deliver.

Similarly, the focus on student wellbeing and engagement, through an extensive welfare program and outreach to parents, carers and the school community, is building greater engagement of students and the parent community with the school.

Mr Culley says needs-based National Partnership and Gonski funding has provided Mahogany Rise with the capacity to meet the ever-increasing challenges of educating high-needs students in a complex environment. Students and families are being afforded the opportunity to fully participate in the education process, which is critically important.

WHAT THE CONTINUATION OF GONSKI FUNDING MEANS TO MAHOGANY RISE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mr Culley says that needs-based funding is crucial to maintaining the strategies and programs the school has been able to develop and implement, initially with National Partnerships funding and further developed with Gonski funding.

Gonski funding is vital to the goal of providing equal opportunity and access for all to the best possible education that every child in this country is entitled to. Without the funding, this 'small school with a big heart' would be unable to provide the richness in education that this community deserves.
– Mr Culley





NARARA VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

Narara Valley High School is an established comprehensive high school near Gosford in the Central Coast region of New South Wales. It has a diverse student population of around 1,100, with a third of the school's students in the two lowest SES quartiles. Indigenous students make up 6 per cent of the school population and a further 6 per cent of students are from non-English-speaking backgrounds. Narara Valley also has a support unit of 35 students.

GONSKI FUNDING

Prior to the implementation of Gonski funding, Narara Valley High had received needs-based funding through the National Partnership on Improving Literacy and Numeracy in 2013. In 2016, Narara Valley High received about \$285,000 in Gonski funding and will receive \$400,000 in 2017. Between 2014 and 2017 Gonski funding has totalled approximately \$900,000.

JAN 2016 ● → DEC 2016

\$285,000

JAN 2017 ● → DEC 2017

\$400,000



OBJECTIVES

Narara Valley's National Partnerships funding enabled the school to focus on improving pedagogy and learning outcomes for students in numeracy. Since 2014 Gonski funding has been targeted to building on and expanding those improvements, with a specific focus on reading and numeracy.

Offering professional learning to teachers to encourage new and effective approaches to teaching and learning practices, and expanding initiatives to build student wellbeing and engagement are key elements of Narara Valley's use of its needs-based funding.



STRATEGIES

The approach adopted by Narara Valley to improving the professional learning of teachers and staff was based on the Quality Teaching Rounds model developed by the University of Newcastle's School of Education. Building a collaborative teaching environment informed by research is integral to the model. Teachers worked together to develop a shared approach to good teaching practices across the school, especially in writing, literacy and numeracy. This model of professional learning is possible due to the Gonski funding because it provides the flexibility to hire more staff as needed.

An extra learning and support teacher was employed to support and guide the team along with two additional student learning support officers trained

in literacy and writing skills. Together they work with small groups across the school. Team meetings to develop opportunities for engagement in collaborative practice were central to the strategy.

The key strategies for enhancing student wellbeing and engagement included:

- increasing the number of student learning support officers with a major focus on the junior years.
- creating smaller classes in Years 7 and 8 than the system staffing formula allows through 'topping-up' the school staffing entitlement.
- allocating resources to the Positive Behaviour for Learning model, a comprehensive, integrated whole-school approach to student wellbeing and behaviour, adopted by the school.

BENEFITS OF THE GONSKI INVESTMENT

Principal Michael Smith says analysis of the school's NAPLAN results shows that the strategies to improve literacy, and more specifically writing and reading, using the extra Gonski funding are paying dividends.

The data shows significant improvements compared to state averages, the results of similar schools and Narara Valley's past results. This is particularly noticeable as students move from Year 9 to Year 12.

There has been an across-the-board increase in the number of students achieving at or above National Minimum Standards, with positive gains made in all Year 9 NAPLAN results. This is measured in School Measurement, Assessment and Reporting Toolkit data where school averages have risen to that of similar schools and writing has significantly improved. There have been strong improvements for Year 9 Aboriginal students and retention rates of senior students completing the HSC. The focus on wellbeing and instructional feedback is most noticeable when measuring the results of low-SES students who are performing above other similar schools.

Mr Smith says the collaborative teaching through professional learning has been so successful that the school plans to extend this approach to STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) subjects in 2017.

WHAT THE CONTINUATION OF GONSKI FUNDING MEANS TO NARARA VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

Mr Smith says the school's achievements reflect the benefits of increased resourcing on student learning outcomes. Maintaining Gonski funding and embedding practices derived from extra human resources and targeted programs will ensure the benefits accrued will be sustained over time. He emphasises that this is not only about the immediately obvious improvements in academic results, but also the positive impact on the general ethos and wellbeing of a comprehensive high school serving a community with a diverse range of needs. Writing in a school newsletter, Mr Smith told his school community:

While schools are economically and politically measured by the MySchool website, HSC and NAPLAN results, many of the unmeasurable aspects make up our core business. It is a core business built around student wellbeing that has allowed us to provide a comprehensive education that provides students [with the] opportunities to explore diversified interests and develop the skills necessary to transition into: Full-time employment, Part-time employment, Tertiary studies, Travel, TAFE and apprenticeships or combinations of all of the above...all the staff, programs and resources that can be offered have been put to good use to support your education.

SANCTUARY POINT PUBLIC SCHOOL



Sanctuary Point Public School is a large comprehensive public school located on the shores of St Georges Basin about 200 kilometres south of Sydney. It is part of the Bay and Basin Learning Community, centred around Vincentia High School, which serves the educational needs of primary and secondary students in the local area. Sanctuary Point has more than 520 students, most of whom are from low-SES backgrounds, with 85 per cent of the school's students in the lowest two SES quartiles, and 59 per cent in the lowest. There are about 100 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and around 40 students in five special-needs support classes.

GONSKI FUNDING

Prior to receiving Gonski funding, Sanctuary Point Public School received needs-based funding under the Low SES School Communities National Partnership from 2011 to 2014. It has received approximately \$1.5million in Gonski funding over the years 2014 to 2016.

2014 ● → 2016

\$1,500,000



OBJECTIVES

Sanctuary Point Public School, and the surrounding community, face numerous challenges. Data from NAPLAN and in-school testing has indicated that many students have learning difficulties and the average standard of student achievement has been relatively low. Issues around student attendance, engagement, aspirations and resilience have all been clearly identified as significant indicators of student performance. For example, the school's research shows that a substantial number of students in the lower bands of NAPLAN, who are also identified by in-school data as underachieving academically, have attendance rates below 90 per cent. This in turn is linked with low aspirations, levels of engagement and resilience among some in the local community.

The school has acted on its belief that students with learning difficulties and low academic achievement can improve with effective strategies to address the issues and barriers they face. It has invested in:

- improving student engagement and student and staff wellbeing by developing strategies that recognise the major influence of family and community on student achievement in low-SES communities.
- engaging the local community in the school and engaging the school in the community.
- implementing more effective 21st century curriculum and pedagogies.



STRATEGIES

Consistent with these objectives, Sanctuary Point has used a significant proportion of its Gonski funding on building the capacity of the community to support children's engagement in schooling and improve their learning.

A full-time family support employee works with individual families and other staff and community organisations. The school has also established several innovative programs to foster student wellbeing and engagement including a breakfast program and the 'Sanctuary Point Dollars' scheme. Under the scheme, in which the school has invested \$10,000, families are assisted with educational costs such as uniforms, lunches and excursions. For every hour a parent volunteers in the school – listening to students read, working in the garden, the canteen or the library – they receive five Sanctuary Point dollars towards these costs.

Sanctuary Point has also made a substantial investment in embedding 21st century learning into classroom practice and building the expertise of staff through professional learning and training for staff in implementing the new maths syllabus.

BENEFITS OF THE GONSKI INVESTMENT

Principal Jeff Ward says that, beginning with its Low SES National Partnership funding 2014 and then continuing with 'Gonski dollars', Sanctuary Point has been able to change the whole community and with it the learning achievements, engagement and wellbeing of many of its students. It has led to a major growth of parent and community engagement with the school and also in the community itself.

Mr Ward says that seven years ago, before the National Partnerships and Gonski needs-based funding, the low-SES Sanctuary Point community could have been characterised as a 'heads down, hoodies up' community but now the surge in pride in the school and the community through the school's investment in 'whole of community' initiatives has led to it becoming 'hoodies off, heads up'.



The nature of our community is such that the school isn't able to just work with its kids. We have to work with the whole community if we want to achieve better things for our kids. Programs such as the Sanctuary Point Dollars scheme have had enormous benefits for students because they see their parents and other members of the community working in the school and they see the positive experience it is for them.

– Mr Ward

Student attainment has improved and school attendance rates are now close to the NSW state average, although there are still attendance issues with some students and the school has identified that parent-condoned absenteeism remains a problem to be tackled with some families.

WHAT THE CONTINUATION OF GONSKI FUNDING MEANS TO SANCTUARY POINT PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr Ward says what has been achieved by Sanctuary Point Public School for its students, staff and local community would not have been possible without its four years of Gonski funding, or the National Partnerships funding that preceded it. The extra funding has provided the school with the resources to improve student learning.

Without Gonski funding, Mr Ward says it's difficult to see how the improvements can be maintained or further inroads into once seemingly intractable problems made.

At Sanctuary Point the benefits of Gonski funding show that it is more than an investment in education. It is an investment in community that will have long term educational, economic and social benefits.
– Mr Ward





SARAH REDFERN HIGH SCHOOL



Sarah Redfern High School is a comprehensive co-educational high school at Minto in the Campbelltown district of south western Sydney. It was established in 1981 as part of the Sarah Redfern Complex, comprising a high school, primary school, special purpose school, library, gymnasium, hall and playing fields. The school was built for students from the Minto public housing estate but, since 2005, a Housing NSW Community Renewal Project has brought about significant changes in both the geography and demography of Minto. Most of the school's 600 students are from low-SES backgrounds. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students make up 8 per cent of the school's population and almost two-thirds of students are from non-English-speaking backgrounds. The school has four support classes catering for the needs of students with disabilities.

GONSKI FUNDING

Sarah Redfern High received approximately

2014 → 2016

\$1,378,000



OBJECTIVES

Prior to the implementation of Gonski funding in NSW in 2014, Sarah Redfern High School received needs-based funding through the Low SES School Communities National Partnership. This funding provided innovative curriculum and management structures to support the learning needs and improve outcomes of students at the school.

Gonski funding is being used to build a culture of high expectations for staff, students and parents, as well as working closely with the community to build a great future for all the school's disadvantaged students. Funds have been used to improve teaching quality through quality professional development and to support student learning through technology in the classroom to ensure that each student achieves their potential, not just at school but also throughout their lives.



STRATEGIES

The strategies adopted at Sarah Redfern High have included:

- establishing an innovative management structure to create a school culture focused on engaging students in learning, building staff capacity and greater engagement with the community. A senior management team now oversees the portfolios of student wellbeing, strategic planning, operations, business, curriculum, leadership and learning.
- providing professional development for all staff in a pedagogical framework 4MAT; an open-ended learning model that offers teachers a method for broadening their delivery of instruction and encompasses strategies that appeal to the diverse approaches students bring to their learning.
- implementing an innovative middle school model for Stage 4 with a strong focus on literacy and numeracy and individual learning plans to support students' learning needs.
- implementing an innovative curriculum in Stage 5 with Years 9 and 10 students in the same classes based on ability and development not age, an approach that is based on the latest research aimed at providing additional support to students and/or accelerating those who have demonstrated higher level skills.
- strengthening community partnerships between Sarah Redfern High School and its four feeder primary schools and the wider community with a strong focus on strengthening the provision of public education.
- increasing the use of technology in the classroom through a school laptop leasing/purchase agreement for all students from Years 7 to 12, to prepare students for the 21st century workplace.

BENEFITS OF THE GONSKI INVESTMENT

Sarah Redfern High principal Karen Endicott says Gonski funding has allowed the school's educators to look at its structures in an innovative and creative way to maximise student learning outcomes for low-socio-economic students. "We need to do schooling differently if we're going to support these students to succeed. Gonski funding has allowed us to level the playing field so that all our students can have the same aspirations as our more advantaged students," she says.

Tangible benefits include an increase in enrolments and a high level of motivation and engagement, with the school acknowledged as 'adding value' academically, socially and emotionally to its students.



Our community now acknowledges the value and importance of education and how it is the one thing that can open doors and change students' lives.
– Ms Endicott

WHAT THE CONTINUATION OF GONSKI FUNDING MEANS TO SARAH REDFERN HIGH SCHOOL

The achievements over four years of needs-based funding through the Low SES National Partnership and then Gonski funding reinforce the effect of long-term funding on meaningful school improvement, says Ms Endicott.

The continuation of funding will allow us to build on our success, which has already been recognised at state and national level. It will allow us to challenge the status quo and build a secondary school structure which has meaning to our students. Our staff will continue to build a culture where our students see that school is relevant, supportive and influential and helps them to become honourable citizens and agents for positive change in their world.

– Ms Endicott



SPINIFEX STATE COLLEGE

Spinifex State College in Mount Isa is a modern college that opened in 2003 with a junior campus (Years 7–9), a senior campus (years 10–12) and a residential campus. About half of the school's 850 students are from low SES backgrounds, with three quarters in the lowest two SES quartiles. There are 335 (38 per cent) Indigenous students and 16 per cent of students are from non-English-speaking backgrounds. The residential campus, which has the capacity for 57 boarders, was the first state-run boarding facility for students attending a state school and aims to provide quality secondary education for students in outlying remote communities. The college has close links with TAFE and local industry, including Mount Isa Mine. Spinifex has a Skills for Tertiary Education Preparatory Studies (STEPS) program for students who are not achieving success in the mainstream program, and also a junior campus Special Education Program and senior campus Special Education Class for the approximately 11 per cent of students with identified disabilities.

GONSKI FUNDING

The school received \$753,000 in additional Greater Results Guarantee and Investing for Success funding from 2015 to 2016.

2015 ● → 2016

\$753,000



OBJECTIVES

The objectives set by the College for use of the funding included:

- increasing student engagement and attendance, with a specific goal of lifting total attendance rates to 85 per cent.
- building teacher capacity in teaching reading through focused coaching and professional development, with the aim of 90 per cent achievement of 'C and above' for English in Years 7, 8 and 9.
 - increasing the Year 10 English pass rate from 77 per cent in 2015 to 80 per cent in 2016.
 - increasing the Year 10 maths pass rate from 70 per cent in 2015 to 80 per cent in 2016.
- increasing Indigenous pass rates from 61 per cent to 75 per cent in Year 10 English, and from 65 per cent to 80 per cent in Year 10 maths.
 - increasing the number of students achieving a QCE/QCIA in 2015 from 85 per cent to 90 per cent; and in 2016 from the 97 per cent actual achievement rate in 2015 to 100 per cent.



STRATEGIES

Overall, the funding has allowed the school to invest in additional qualified support staff, provide targeted professional learning, improve student outcomes by the strategic use of data, and to focus on students at risk.

Spinifex SC has implemented a reading strategy across the school, which includes employing a literacy coach to build the capacity of heads of department and teachers in explicitly teaching reading; and developing more sophisticated reading strategies to improve students' decoding and comprehension skills. Targeted professional development has been provided for staff, and teacher aides have been trained in strategies to provide support for students whose reading levels are significantly below their age cohort. Regularly reviewing student performance data is an integral component of the process. Funds have also been invested in new resources, including TrackEd software designed to make tracking student progress easier, as well as Reading and Robotics resources to support the delivery of intervention programs.

In the maths area, teachers are benefitting from

the provision of technology-based professional development in strategies to improve students' understanding of mathematical concepts.

An additional 0.8 FTE Community Education Counsellor has been appointed and a Student Resource Centre, staffed by school support personnel, has been established. The Centre aims to provide a welcoming environment and meet the social and emotional needs of students to improve attendance, engagement and retention. In addition, greater administration support has been provided to monitor and track attendance data and follow through as required.

A new Achievement Centre has been created for students needing targeted and individual small group tuition, and teacher aides have been trained to work in classes and with small groups of students to improve their achievement in maths and English. Students also benefit from an afternoon homework class which provides the opportunity to gain additional support from teacher aides and volunteer teachers. Year 12 students identified as needing extra support are also assisted with completing their assessment tasks.

BENEFITS OF THE GONSKI INVESTMENT

Spinifex SC Principal Denise Kostowski says the extra funding has produced a range of significant and measurable benefits across the college. Analysis of 2015 NAPLAN data for Years 7 to 9 reading shows upward trends in achievement for students at each of the three Year levels because of the Reading Intervention and the Explicit Teaching of Reading programs.

Meanwhile, Year 12 certificate rates increased in 2015 by 9 per cent, while the state's level of improvement over the same period was 3.8 per cent. An Education Queensland evaluation of the school's use of its GRG funding to improve Year 12 outcomes identified the key elements of the successful strategy. These included: consistency with the college's wider school improvement strategy; clarifying roles and responsibilities of all involved; tracking student progress and attendance data; more effective targeting of resources to support learning; and case managing students. The report notes the significance of GRG funding to implementing the strategies and processes that produced the achievement.

WHAT THE CONTINUATION OF GONSKI FUNDING MEANS TO SPINIFEX STATE COLLEGE

Ms Kostowski says that without the supplementary funding the college would not have been able to provide such focused and specific support for students with high levels of educational need.

The regular funding that schools receive does not sufficiently address the significant difficulties facing our teachers. Many of our students come to us having missed significant periods of schooling – for a variety of reasons – so their literacy levels are very low. This has the obvious impact of restricting their capacity to engage in the programs that we offer. Without additional needs-based funding we could not provide the extra support for students to begin to close the gaps in their learning.

SYDNEY SECONDARY COLLEGE LEICHHARDT CAMPUS



Sydney Secondary College is an inclusive multi-campus setting in the inner city, comprising two Year 7–10 campuses (Leichhardt and Balmain) and one Year 11–12 campus (Blackwattle Bay). The Leichhardt Campus, which has 900 students, is a socioeconomically and culturally diverse middle school with selective, comprehensive and special education streams. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students represent three per cent of the school population and there are many students from non-English-speaking backgrounds — about 10 per cent of students need assistance with English language proficiency.

GONSKI FUNDING

Sydney Secondary College Leichhardt
Campus received approximately

2014 ● → 2016

\$400,000



OBJECTIVES

The school has used the Gonski funding to enhance opportunities for all students in a supported learning environment, with a specific focus on providing extra support for students most at risk of not achieving their potential.



STRATEGIES

Strategies have included employing additional teaching and support staff to support the learning needs of at-risk Aboriginal and socioeconomically disadvantaged students.

Between 2014 and 2016, the school employed an additional 0.4 FTE Norta Norta literacy teacher, and, in 2016, a 0.2 FTE Norta Norta numeracy teacher was engaged to provide more support for Aboriginal students.

In 2016 the school was also able to employ an 0.4 FTE student mentor and supplement this with some external mentoring programs. A further two full-time learning support officers were employed to work with students.

BENEFITS OF THE GONSKI INVESTMENT

Principal Melinda Bright says the extra support and mentoring for students identified as being most in need has brought about the following achievements:

- Of the ten students considered to be most at risk of low achievement in 2015, all have improved, with eight no longer considered to be in the highest category for poor performance as a result of receiving some form of direct mentoring across 2015 and 2016.
- Two Year 9 and two Year 8 Aboriginal students, who received mentoring for literacy and numeracy, improved their overall grade average from a 'sound' to a 'high' in a six-month period in 2016.
- Another Aboriginal student who received the same level of mentoring from the Norta Norta teacher improved his grade from a 'limited' to a 'sound' in the same six-month period.
- At least two other students from disadvantaged backgrounds, who were involved in a targeted mentoring program for year 9 students, improved their overall academic grade average from a 'sound' to a 'high' in a six-month period in 2016.
- A number of other students from disadvantaged backgrounds who received additional learning support raised their grade average by one place in many cases over that same six-month period.

WHAT THE CONTINUATION OF GONSKI FUNDING MEANS TO SYDNEY SECONDARY COLLEGE LEICHHARDT CAMPUS

Ms Bright says Gonski funding has been proven to help to close the gap in educational outcomes for the school's Aboriginal students and those from a disadvantaged background.

It has enabled us to employ additional staff who are able to target individuals or small groups of students to support them to achieve their academic potential.
– Ms Bright

The discontinuation of Gonski funding would jeopardise SSC Leichhardt Campus's ability to maintain the successful interventions it has made in supporting students at risk of not fulfilling their potential, she says.

UPPER COOMERA STATE COLLEGE



Upper Coomera State College is an urban Prep to Year 12 school established in 2002 to meet the needs of Queensland's northern Gold Coast region. The school has around 2,200 students although the rate of transience can be as high as 35 per cent in some year levels due to rapid growth in the region. The student population is drawn from a diverse range of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Around 40 per cent of students are from the lowest SES quartile, and more than 40 nationalities are represented including about 150 EALD students. More than 30 per cent are from a Pacific Islander background, around 5 per cent are Indigenous students, and the main languages spoken at home include Dari, Maori, Arabic, Bosnian, Afrikaans, Turkish, Samoan, Tongan, Tagalog, Hindi, French and Mandarin. The school has a special education facility to support the needs of around 180 students with identified disabilities, with additional support for students with disabilities in mainstream classes.

GONSKI FUNDING

Upper Coomera State College received around \$1.9 million in additional Greater Results Guarantee and Investing for Success funding from 2014 to 2016.

2014 → 2016

\$1,900,000



OBJECTIVES

Upper Coomera's objectives for the use of the additional funding have included:

- implementing a literacy strategy to improve reading performance across the school, with a goal of increasing the number of students who improve their reading ability by more than one year as identified in standardised tests, enabling all students to meet the NAPLAN National Minimum Reading Standards and increasing the number of Year 5 and Year 9 students achieving in the NAPLAN Upper Two Bands.
- improving student attendance and engagement, with 2016 goals being to increase primary attendance rates from 87 per cent to 94 per cent and secondary from 88 per cent to 92 per cent, together with a 10 per cent decrease in school disciplinary absences.



STRATEGIES

Initiatives to improve the reading/literacy performance of students include:

- improving the quality of teaching through coaching and professional development including the implementation of Reading to Learn across the college, the engagement of an additional two heads of department to coach and mentor teachers in improved reading pedagogy and an 0.4 FTE speech language pathologist.
- providing additional in-class literacy support by employing and training three FTE literacy teacher aides and a 0.5 FTE reading volunteer coordinator teacher aide.
- reviewing student performance data every five weeks, including developing collaborative data inquiry processes to build teachers' ability to interpret data and develop more effective teaching practices through the targeted provision of Teacher Relief.
- engaging an educational consultant to assist with the development of personalised learning programs for students.
- significant investment in resources, including programs which provide data to enable teachers to effectively target student needs such as the online ACER PAT Reading Comprehension and PAT(Maths) testing licence. This enables Years 2 to 9 English and maths teachers to test their students in reading and maths and receive automatic, accurate and consistent diagnostic data. Gonski funding has also been used to buy new texts and novels aligning with the Australian Curriculum.

Key strategies for increasing student engagement include strengthening the community-based Early Years Network to aid the smooth transition of children into Prep; and participation in Positive Behaviour for Learning with improvements measured using pre- and post-test data comparisons. Students at risk of disengagement have been supported with additional student welfare resources including the employment of 1.0 FTE HOD student engagement, 2.0 FTE positive behaviours/behaviour management teachers and more access to speech language pathology.

BENEFITS OF THE GONSKI INVESTMENT

Executive principal Chris Capra says Gonski funding has enabled the college to work more strategically and effectively to meet the learning needs of students and improve outcomes.

In 2016 student attendance increased by a minimum of 3 per cent across the college. The lift is most noticeable in Preparatory year attendance, which has increased by 5 per cent. In addition, the number of students with an attendance rate of less than 80 per cent has decreased by 40 per cent.

In terms of student outcomes, the college has seen an improvement in the Relative Gains SQSS (Similar Queensland State Schools, an ICSEA-based tool for determining gains in student achievement) across an aggregate of all Year level cohorts and all NAPLAN test areas in 2016. There has also been a noticeable increase in the number of students receiving an A, B or C level of achievement in English across the school.

The most recent School Opinion Survey indicates that teachers are reporting the highest level of satisfaction in five years largely due to their access to professional development.

WHAT THE CONTINUATION OF GONSKI FUNDING MEANS TO UPPER COOMERA STATE COLLEGE

Mr Capra stresses the importance of the needs-based funding continuing.

Ongoing Gonski funding will mean that the college can continue to improve student attendance, engagement and academic success, as has been demonstrated in 2016.
– Mr Capra

WODONGA SENIOR SECONDARY COLLEGE/ BENALLA FLEXIBLE LEARNING CENTRE

Wodonga Senior Secondary College offers educational programs for students from Years 10 to 12 in a specialist senior secondary environment in Wodonga in northern Victoria, as well as a network of four re-engagement flexible learning centres in Benalla, Shepparton, Seymour and Wodonga. Complementing this, the college acts as a hub provider of specialist studies to students in other regional schools. The college has a total enrolment of around 1,130 students from a range of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, with small cohorts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (7 per cent) and English as an Additional Language (5 per cent) students. Benalla Flexible Learning Centre was established in February 2015 as a campus of Wodonga Senior Secondary College to provide an alternative educational program for young people aged between 14 and 19 years who have had difficulties with mainstream education and become disengaged from schooling. Many of the centre's students have experienced trauma of some form. The centre offers individual learning programs for each student, mentor support and involvement in the community. Enrolment varies over the course of a school year but averages around 50 students.

GONSKI FUNDING

Wodonga Senior Secondary College received approximately \$1.3 million in Gonski equity funding in 2016. The component of this funding allocated to Benalla Flexible Learning Centre was \$93,000.

JAN 2016 ● → DEC 2016

\$93,000



OBJECTIVES

Wodonga SSC has used its Gonski funding in two areas: building the capacity of staff and quality of teaching, and providing more effective career and transition programs for students. Benalla FLC has focused on improving student engagement and on increasing students' post-school options. In 2015, the first year of the centre's operation, just one student completed a work experience placement. Significantly improving this outcome was a major priority.



STRATEGIES

Wodonga SSC adopted many strategies to achieve these objectives. Strategies for building staff capacity and quality teaching have included:

- participation by all teachers in a two-day 'art and science of teaching' workshop, which provided a framework for improving the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms using research-based data and understanding the learning needs of students.
- effective induction, training and support for new teaching staff.
- professional development and learning for all staff, including leadership. Programs included the Unleash Learning and Mentoring model and the McREL leadership program, which focuses on leadership practices that enhance student achievement and staff success.

Strategies to improve student pathways included:

- establishing a graduate program involving Years 10, 11 and 12 students using Managed Individual Pathways (MIPs) and Career Action Plans (CAPs) transition program models to improve student engagement and increase school completion.

- researching and implementing a 'student connectedness' program to build student engagement, wellbeing and resilience.
- implementing an intensive literacy and numeracy intervention program for Year 10 students to increase their readiness for Year 11 and enable them to take better advantage of the options being provided by the new programs in Years 11 and 12.
- employing additional staff to support the new programs.

Wodonga SSC is also establishing an outdoor STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education facility to better engage students in STEM-focused subjects. The facility provides them with more practical and 'hands-on' activities to enhance both learning and future career aspirations.

The Benalla Flexible Learning Centre campus has focused largely on a specific strategy to achieve its objective of substantially expanding student engagement and increasing students' post-school options. Equity funding through Gonski has enabled the centre to employ a dedicated pathways and transitions teacher.

BENEFITS OF THE GONSKI INVESTMENT

Michele Ramage, Wodonga SSC assistant principal and campus principal of the Benalla FLC, says the pathways and transition coordinator has been working diligently with students to make a difference to their work prospects.

In 2015 we did not have the funding for such a position and consequently experiences for our students were limited. We have achieved so much more this year — it's an amazing outcome. It has basically opened doors for our students, many of whom are now looking to 'where to next' rather than facing the prospect of a life on welfare.
— Ms Ramage

Ms Ramage says so many new opportunities have opened up for students that would not have happened without the additional funding. From just one student completing workplace experience in 2015, numerous students have now successfully completed structured workplace learning and work experience programs, including 11 students undertaking a Vocational Education and Training in Schools program, seven in hospitality, and one in each of equine, beauty, hairdressing and individual support, five students completing a part-time work program, and three students now doing school-based apprenticeships. Almost all students now have well-structured resumés, which boosts their confidence and expands their options. The coordinator also worked with the local council to allow students without access to cars to learn to drive and successfully get their drivers' licences, by offering the L2P program at school.

Wodonga SCC principal Vern Hilditch says the new initiatives and the expansion of existing programs have been invaluable for the college. The result has been more learning support for students, which has led to increased confidence and engagement and more post-school options. Students are already showing a greater capacity to take on an expanded range of subjects, particularly in the vital STEM area. Other direct benefits include better retention rates.

Mr Hilditch says many of the initiatives could not even have been considered without the additional funding. This includes the STEM initiative Outdoor Education facility, which is so important at a time when increasing student participation and engagement in STEM is a national priority.

WHAT THE CONTINUATION OF GONSKI FUNDING MEANS TO WODONGA SENIOR SECONDARY COLLEGE/BENALLA FLEXIBLE LEARNING CENTRE

Ms Ramage and Mr Hilditch are both emphatic that much of what has been achieved cannot be maintained unless the additional funding continues. As Ms Ramage points out, the huge increase in the number of students involved in successful workplace and work-oriented programs depended on the funding.

Mr Hilditch says the successful new programs and others planned are at risk if the level of equity funding is not maintained or expanded beyond 2017. This includes previously un contemplated STEM-related initiatives such as ensuring that all students at the Wodonga campus complete at least Year 11 Maths.

Sustaining innovation and change requires time and consistent investment of resources in the long term. Without this schools such as Wodonga SSC have a limited capacity to provide different approaches to learning for students that consider barriers to achievement and aspirations. Regional and rural schools require a far greater investment to create a shift in student aspirations that leads to raised achievement levels.

Without sustained funding over a period of time new approaches will wither and die before they can prove their worth. Gonski funding has the potential to help us achieve better outcomes for all students; not just those who fit the 'traditional' model.

– Mr Hilditch



GLOSSARY

This glossary outlines the key terms and acronyms used in this publication.

ACARA: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority. It is the statutory authority responsible for the overall management and development of a national curriculum, the National Assessment Program (NAP) and national data collection and reporting.

ACER: Australian Council for Educational Research. ACER is a leading independent educational research centre. It undertakes contracted research and develops and distributes educational products and services.

ACLO: Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer. Role is to support and develop partnerships and understanding between the Aboriginal community and the school.

AEW: Aboriginal Education Worker. Role is to promote Aboriginal education by working with teachers to assist Aboriginal students to achieve their potential and by keeping the Aboriginal community informed of students' progress and achievements, and of school activities/events.

ATSI: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

ATAR: Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank. Calculated by the Universities Admissions Centre based on overall academic achievement in Year 12 for entry into most undergraduate-entry university programs in Australia.

AP: Assistant Principal

CLO: Community Liaison Officer. The CLO's role is to assist in the development of school and community links.

DECD: SA Department for Education and Child Development

DEC/DET: NSW Department of Education and Communities/New South Wales Department of Education and Training

DET: Queensland Department of Education and Training/Education Queensland

Differentiation: This refers to a wide variety of teaching techniques, lesson designs and assessment

strategies that educators use to meet the individual needs of a diverse group of students in the same course, classroom, or learning environment.

Early Action for Success (NSW): NSW department's strategy for implementing the state literacy and numeracy plan. It aims to improve students' literacy and numeracy skills through a targeted approach in the early years of schooling.

Early Start (Queensland): Queensland Department's resource kit for teachers containing optional literacy and numeracy materials for Prep-Year 2 student.

EALD: English as an Additional Language or Dialect. Students who speak a language other than English as their first language. EALD student support aims to develop EALD students' English language competence across the curriculum.

ESL: English as a Second Language. See EALD.

FTE: Full-time equivalent

GRG (Queensland): Greater Results Guarantee. Additional federal funding provided to Queensland schools from 2014. Now known as I4S: Investing for Success to reflect the change in funding allocation built on a new needs-based method to better direct funding to students and schools requiring the most support.

HSC: NSW Higher School Certificate (Senior Secondary Certificate)

ICP: Individual Curriculum Plan. ICPs are individualised learning programs developed by teachers to cater for the diverse learning needs of students who perform well below the year level expectations in the whole of a learning area or across the whole curriculum. ICPs are also developed for those students who are performing well above the expectations for their year level or who are undertaking an accelerated program. Also known as Individual Learning Plans (ILPs).

ICSEA: Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage. The ICSEA was created by ACARA as a measure of the socio-educational background of students in a school considering a number of student and school level factors. The lower the ICSEA value, the lower the level of educational advantage of

students who attend the school; the higher the value, the higher the level of educational advantage of students at the school.

L3 program: Language, Learning and Literacy Language program. NSW research-based classroom intervention program targeting text reading and writing for students in their first year of school struggling with language and literacy development.

LBOTE: Language Background Other Than English. See EALD.

Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership: Additional Federal funding provided to states and territories to improve the performance of students who are falling behind in literacy and/or numeracy, including targeted groups such as students from disadvantaged backgrounds and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Literacy Pro: An online program for improving students' oral reading and comprehension ability. It uses a system of measurement known as Lexile scale. Literacy Pro gathers the results from Lexile tests over time, so a student's reading development can be tracked.

PAT: Progressive Achievement Tests. Developed by ACER and widely used in schools across Australia to monitor progress in key skill areas.

PAT-R: Progressive Achievement Tests in reading

PAT(Maths): Progressive Achievement Tests in maths

PM Benchmark Reading Assessment: a widely used commercial reading assessment resource

PreLIT Program: a skills-based, early literacy preparation program for preschool children in the year before school. It is designed to complement a play-based learning environment and provides children with a sound foundation for learning to read.

Project 600: An Education Queensland literacy and numeracy strategic initiative for students from Years 3 to 9

QCE: Queensland Certificate of Education. Senior Secondary Certificate.

QCIA: Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement. The QCIA recognises the achievements

of students who are on individualised learning programs.

Quicksmart Literacy and Numeracy programs: Specialist intervention programs to improve the numeracy and literacy development of students who are experiencing learning problems or delays developed by the University of New England.

SACE: South Australian Certificate of Education (Senior Secondary Certificate)

SAO: (NSW) School Administrative Officer. School administrative officers provide support in maintaining school routines — assisting in the school library, science or home science areas, operating and maintaining classroom and office equipment and undertaking an administrative role in the school office or reception area.

SES: Socio-economic Status. The Australian Bureau of Statistics defines socio-economic disadvantage in terms of people's access to material and social resources as well as their ability to participate in society.

SLSO: NSW School Learning Support Officer. School learning support officers, under the supervision and direction of a teacher, assist in classroom activities, school routines, and the care and management of students with special needs.

STEM: Science, technology, engineering and mathematics

TfEL: Teaching for Effective Learning framework. A SA Department of Education and Child Development framework which identifies the characteristics of effective teaching and learning to establish broad domains of teacher action and relevant pedagogy.

VET: Vocational Education and Training

YuMi Deadly Maths: A maths strategy developed by Queensland University of Technology's YuMi Deadly Centre to improve teachers' capacity to effectively teach mathematics to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and low-SES students. It aims to enhance students' mathematics learning outcomes and improve employment and life chances and is aligned with the Australian Curriculum: mathematics.



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