Principal’s message

The 2012 school year began with a surge in enrolments, supported by families moving from interstate and overseas to access jobs in the mining industry, as well as new students transferring from other local schools.

School improvement and grounds management remained a strong focus with significant progress achieved over the course of the year, including the installation of 12 Smartboards, new signage, a retaining wall on the western side of the school, new carpet in the library, an upgrade of the Multi-purpose centre including lighting, and the planting of a number of gardens.

The school also spent over $30,000 on tree, mistletoe, weed and rubbish removal from the school site. This has led to very positive community comment, with many long-time Muswellbrook residents claiming it is the best the school site has looked in over 30 years.

It was pleasing that for the fifth consecutive year the school had three sporting teams finish in the top 16 teams in state competition. The U/14 Rugby League team won the Hunter Championships, the Boys’ Triathlon Team finished third in Combined High Schools (CHS) competition and the Boys’ Touch Football team made the top 10 teams.

Two outstanding individual achievements dominated our Higher School Certificate (HSC) results. Nicholas Logan achieved the second highest ATAR result in the Upper Hunter, achieving a score of 96.2, and Petra Franks scored 93.75, the best-ever result by an Aboriginal student in HSC achievement.

2012 saw a strong focus on high-quality staff training and development opportunities as part of our National Partnerships Teacher Quality Program. For the first time, teachers from Muswellbrook High School and our local feeder schools in Muswellbrook, Denman and Martindale joined together for a joint presentation with highly renowned educational speaker, Dr Christine Richmond. For the June staff development day, the school focused on Aboriginal cultural competence and awareness, led by representatives from the Dare to Lead organisation, 100% Knights and Regional Aboriginal Education staff.

The school also farewelled two long-serving members of school staff; Head Teacher English, Carla Walsh and School Administrative Assistant, Sue Cox. I would like to congratulate and thank Carla and Sue on their many years of dedication and service to Muswellbrook High School and public education.
I certify that the information in this report is the result of a rigorous school self-evaluation process and is a balanced and genuine account of the school’s achievements and areas for development.

Mr Gareth Erskine

P & C and/or School Council message

2012 has been another successful year for Muswellbrook High School, the P&C Association and the hard workers in our canteen.

May I take this chance to thank our members, the school staff and especially the school executive for their commitment to the wellbeing of our children.

Our school uniform, particularly black leather shoes, has been a priority for the executive this past year, and the solid and consistent effort by them, the school staff and parents to ensure all students adhere to the policy has been noticed in the community and by the P&C in general.

We are proud to see the students looking neat and in uniform. The pride of our school is reflected in the appearance of our students and it shows.

The long awaited school cap will be available this year in term two. Mr Erskine and Mr Copland have questioned and quizzed the students and included them in the design process from the beginning. I look forward to them being rolled out.

Vanessa Smith handed over the reins of the Treasury position (after three years of working hard and diligently as only Ness can) to Dianne Watts. Thank you Vanessa for your contribution as Treasurer and to Dianne for filling very big shoes with aplomb!

Stasia Gill has gone solo with the retirement of Maree Nimmo last year and has assumed the role of canteen manager seamlessly, continuing the high standard of healthy food available for our school population. This year, as in the past, the P&C has not been required to fundraise as the canteen profits for 2012 were above $40,000. Well done to all our volunteers and staff!

More than $22,000 has been utilised by the school and the various faculties to purchase textbooks, a drum set, library books, sports equipment and resources for our support classes. We again donated to Presentation Day Leaders’ gifts, the P&C awards and $150 to the Aberdeen Highland games. All of these donations were made possible by the ongoing commitment by the P&C to our children and their futures.

Mrs Jenni Bullivant

Student representatives’ message

2012 proved to be a successful year for the Muswellbrook High School Student Representative Council (SRC). The elected students approached their role on the SRC with enthusiasm and received incredible support from the school community. The SRC was involved in a number of initiatives focusing on fundraising, school improvement and the development of leadership skills. Through the various projects the students presented a positive image to the Muswellbrook community and demonstrated support for a number of worthy causes.

The year began with the Annual General Meeting, which involved a number of team building activities, the planning of events for the year ahead and outlining the roles and responsibilities for being a part of the SRC.

It was made clear that the main focus for the year was fundraising and school improvement as the SRC felt those areas were of great importance to the school.
The SRC was actively involved in a number of fundraisers for local, national and international organisations. We continued our support of World Vision through the sponsorship of a child, participated in Jeans for Genes Day, the Stewart House Donation Drive and raised money for the Cancer Council of NSW.

Additionally, Muswellbrook High School continued its support of the Westpac Rescue Helicopter and raised approximately $3000. To fundraise for Westpac, the SRC ran a chocolate drive, coin line and organised a lunchtime performance that showcased the outstanding talent that exists at the school. The entire school community was incredibly supportive toward these fundraisers, which highlighted the enthusiasm of the students and staff.

Our SRC was also involved in a variety of school and community based events which included Presentation Night, Orientation Days, the ANZAC Day Service and the Black Coal Cup. The manner in which the SRC conducted themselves at these events was of the highest standard.

In 2012 the members of the SRC were successful in their efforts to fundraise, improve the school environment and develop leadership skills, all of which could not have been achieved without the tremendous support of the staff and students of the school. The SRC looks forward to further success in the 2013 school year.

Liam King and Grace Rodham

### School context

### Student information

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

### Student enrolment profile

School enrolments increased significantly in 2012, largely due to families moving to the area to take on roles in the mining industry from interstate and overseas. The school also welcomed 30 new students from the local Catholic and independent schools and an increased percentage of Year 7 enrolments from our feeder Primary schools. However, the transient nature of Muswellbrook meant that whilst over 100 new enrolment meetings were held, our population increased, in real terms, by between 30-40 students at various stages of the school year.

### Student attendance profile

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<tr>
<th>School</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>89.9</td>
<td>89.9</td>
<td>89.2</td>
<td>89.1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
In 2012 the state and regional attendance statistics continued to decrease from the previous twelve months, with the increase in the school leaving age being the most significant contributor. This trend was similarly reflected at Muswellbrook High School. The attendance percentage was further impacted by a small number of school non-attenders who have had a significant impact on the overall school figures, particularly in Year 9 and 11.

**Whole school monitoring**

All teachers are assigned to a Home Group (or Year Group for Head Teachers) and the roll is marked daily to create the school absence records. All lessons have period by period electronic roll marking to easily identify truancy. Weekly Attendance Team Meetings involving the Principal, Deputy Principals, Head Teacher Administration, Aboriginal Education Worker, Learning Support Coordinator and Home School Liaison Officer are conducted to identify students who are of concern due to frequent absences. Year Advisors are provided with lists of students of concern due to absences each fortnight at the Learning Support Team Meeting. This monitoring has increased the level of parental contact via SMS, letter or phone call.

Acknowledgement of students with excellent attendance and a focus on making attendance at school a priority for student motivation is an integral part of the new plan. For 2013 a partnership with the Hunter Sports Group (Newcastle Knights NRL and Newcastle Jets A-League teams) has been established to provide prizes as rewards for positive attendance, along with vouchers from local businesses.

**Self-regulation**

Student self-regulation is another important aspect of attendance monitoring. With the electronic roll marking each period the identification of truancies occurs daily. A four step, progressive system sees students complete a detention for the first, and any following truancy, with an SMS to notify parents. For additional truancies, students may be placed on an Attendance Monitoring Card. If there is no further improvement students will spend a day in the Time Out Room. If there is still no improvement following the three steps of intervention, students may receive a suspension.

**Post-school destinations**

The number of students receiving University offers was relatively steady in comparison to 2011, however, a greater number of students are now deferring their studies. The only other significant change was a 6% increase in students who went into work, rather than other post-school pathways.

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**Management of non-attendance**

All student absences and truancies are managed through the student database, Millennium. From this system, a daily SMS is sent to parents whose child is either late or absent for the day. For parents without SMS, a letter is sent, indicating the absence and responses from either method of contact, or over the phone, are recorded into Millennium for OASIS uploads.

This has been the primary system for attendance monitoring over the past few years and had been developed from the 2001 Attendance Policy and Plan.

A new Policy and Plan was developed in 2012 and trialed in Term 4 for implementation in 2013. While the successful features of the existing plan have been maintained, there is now greater influence towards whole-school monitoring, student achievement and self-regulation. The key features are outlined in the following sections.
Year 12 students undertaking vocational or trade training

48.5% of Year 12 students undertook vocational or trade training in 2012.

Year 12 students attaining HSC or equivalent vocational educational qualification

100% of students attained an HSC in 2012. From a cohort of 72 students, 60 (83.3%) completed a mainstream HSC and 12 (16.7%) completed their HSC with one or more Lifeskills subjects. Thirty nine students were ATAR eligible.

Staff information

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

Staff establishment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Principal(s)</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Head Teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>43.3</td>
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<td>Teacher of Emotional Disabilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher of Mild Intellectual Disabilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support Teacher Learning Assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher Librarian</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Counsellor</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Administrative &amp; Support Staff</td>
<td>14.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>76.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The National Education Agreement requires schools to report on Indigenous composition of their workforce. 2.6% of Muswellbrook High School staff were from an Indigenous background in 2012.

Staff retention

Staff retention for 2012 was 92.2% with two staff members retiring, one staff member receiving a promotion to a Head Teacher position at a metropolitan school, two staff members receiving service transfers and one staff member accepting a position outside of the DEC.

Teacher qualifications

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

Financial summary

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward</td>
<td>701 334.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
<td>555 641.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>583 848.39</td>
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<tr>
<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
<td>528 008.56</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>33 764.53</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trust receipts</td>
<td>38 036.75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canteen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total income</td>
<td>1 739 299.79</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenditure</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching &amp; learning</td>
<td>119 313.43</td>
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<tr>
<td>Key learning areas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Excursions</td>
<td>282 729.27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extracurricular dissections</td>
<td>111 414.73</td>
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<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>7 344.15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training &amp; development</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>558 681.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual relief teachers</td>
<td>133 242.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration &amp; office</td>
<td>134 241.07</td>
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<tr>
<td>School-operated canteen</td>
<td>0.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>136 230.24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td>66 537.78</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trust accounts</td>
<td>33 100.91</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital programs</td>
<td>73 502.82</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total expenditure</td>
<td>1 656 338.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance carried forward</td>
<td>784 295.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Significant amounts of school funds were directed towards grounds management, school improvement and technology. The school was again fortunate to be well-supported by local businesses through donations and sponsorship, as well as commission from our on-site uniform shop.

A concerted effort was made to reduce minor items and tied grants within the school budget and the school’s focus on saving energy was rewarded with a reduction of over 20% in power consumption.

A full copy of the school’s 2012 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the School Council and/or the parent body. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

**School performance 2012**

**Achievements**

**Arts**

**Star Struck 2012**

Muswellbrook High School was very well represented in Dance and Music at Star Struck in 2012. The school was lucky enough to be invited to take 32 dancers to participate in the event. Of particular note was the inclusion of five of the students as featured instrumentalists in a Rock Band.

The schools’ dancers scored a spot in the item ‘Magical Mystery Tour’ and the finale. The group performed in four shows over a week that also included three major rehearsals. In order to be available for all the events, the team camped out with Mrs Amber Gallagher, Miss Rachel Murphy and Miss Jessica Redgrove in the basketball stadium all week. Miss Debbie Pitt and Mrs Lauren Gallagher also assisted with preparations.

The schools’ Rock Band representatives were Kyle Burgess (Guitar), Jake Cronin (Drum Kit), Jason Elphick (Bass Guitar), Damon Jones (Guitar) and Emily Lanyon (Keytar). The group auditioned for the song ‘Heads Will Roll’ by the Yeah Yeah Yeah’s and were successful in securing a place to perform that same song in the show. The Rock Band was required to attend many rehearsals in Newcastle to practise with featured vocalists and for major rehearsals and sound checks. The group rehearsed and prepared their audition with Mr Foy during lunchtimes.

A group of approximately 50 students was accompanied by Miss Parsons and Mr Foy to watch the schools matinee and were captivated by our performers’ enthusiasm and command of their craft.

**CAPA Night 2012**

On Monday 26 November, Muswellbrook High School’s Faculty of Creative and Performing Arts presented ‘CAPA Night’. The aim of this night was to showcase works derived solely from classwork in Dance, Drama, Music, Photographic & Digital Media, Visual Arts and Visual Design, as well as key school musical ensembles.

The night opened with a BBQ and opportunity for attendees to peruse an exhibition comprising works from our Photographic & Digital Media, Visual Arts and Visual Design classes. Thanks go to Mrs Merril Dixon, Mr Joel Faunt, Miss Angela Harris, Mr Lawrence Holdsworth and Miss Caitlin
McGrath for their efforts in setting up and populating the exhibition.

Following the exhibition was a program featuring the works of the performing arts part of the faculty. All students involved performed with excellence on the night. Some of the highlight performances were ‘Home’ (Phillip Phillips) performed by Emily Bartush, Kyle Burgess, Jake Cronin, Talisa Henderson and Sasha Roberts; ‘Rope’ (Foo Fighters) performed by Kyle Burgess, Jake Cronin, Damon Jones, Jason Elphick and Talisa Henderson and an original song by the band ‘Eat Your Heart Out’. The song was named ‘Two Kinds of Home’ and was performed by Andrew Anderson, Caitlin Henry, Jason Elphick, Jake Cronin and ex-student, William Moore.

**HSC Showcases**

As part of preparations for Practical Examinations, HSC Drama and Music classes each presented their own showcase concerts for family, friends and the school community. Both nights were held in the Neate Theatre and were well-attended.

**Muswellbrook & Upper Hunter Eisteddfod 2012**

Muswellbrook High School was very well represented in the schools sections of the Muswellbrook and Upper Hunter Eisteddfod in 2012. Excellent results were achieved in Drama and Music.

**Drama**

One Act Play (Years 7 – 9)
- Year 8 Group A: 1st Place for ‘Fossils’.
- Year 8 Group B: Highly Commended for ‘Baking a Cake’.

One Act Play (Years 10 – 12)
- Year 11 Drama Class: 1st Place for a modern adaptation of ‘The Crucible’ entitled ‘Lies’.

**Duologue in Costume**
- Blessing Sithole and Caitlin Bray: 2nd Place.
- Maddison Brands and Amy Foster: 3rd Place.

**Music**

Secondary Jazz or Stage Band
- Highly Commended for ‘Chameleon’.

**Rock Band**
- Jordi-Kiarnah Adam-Smith, Kyle Burgess, Jake Cronin Jason Elphick, Damon Jones and Emily Lanyon: 1st Place for ‘Heads Will Roll’.
- MHS Stage Band featuring Joshua Davis: Highly Commended for ‘Born to be Wild’.

The MHS Rock Band was invited to perform at the Muswellbrook & Upper Hunter Eisteddfod Showcase Concert, which highlighted the most outstanding performances from the entire Eisteddfod.

**Sport**

Muswellbrook High School offers a variety of sporting opportunities for students in a range of recreational and competitive sports. The school’s expanding sports program includes a diverse range of activities such as fitness boxing, swimming, indoor soccer, frisbee, squash, golf, YMCA gym, girls’ fitness (Curves), lawn bowls, water polo, power walking, skate boarding, tennis, zumba and weight training.

The sports on offer are ever changing to provide students with the best and widest variety of opportunities to become passionate about health and physical activity. Integrated sport has continued for students in Year 7. Here, students continue to learn and develop practical movement skills and exhibit their sporting prowess in an enthusiastic environment enhancing teamwork and peer relationships. Muswellbrook High School fosters an
environment that encourages participation in various traditional sports including rugby league, touch football, netball, cricket, soccer, basketball, jump rope for heart, dance, tabloids, target games and volleyball.

In 2012 three students broke a total of seven records at the annual swimming and athletics carnivals. Muswellbrook High school had 10 Hunter Region representatives throughout the year in swimming, basketball, athletics, cricket, touch football, hockey, triathlon, volleyball, as well as representatives in NSW CHS Athletics.

The school had continued positive results in CHS representative sports with the Open Boys’ Touch Football team and the Open Boys’ Triathlon team making the top 10 of the state in CHS competition. The Buckley Shield Rugby League team were Hunter Region champions and progressed into the knockout stage of the tournament. The Open Boys’ Triathlon team was named Muswellbrook High School’s team of the year after much deliberation over the success of many sporting teams. The three students finished 3rd in NSW in the CHS component and 14th overall in the combined schools division.

Muswellbrook High School participated and progressed well in the All Schools competitions including the Years 7/8 and 9/10 touch football competitions held in the Hunter Region.

Muswellbrook High School also enjoyed success in the Premier’s Sporting Challenge with Year 7 participation and achievement rates increasing in this valuable initiative.

Other
Agriculture
National Santa Gertrudis Junior School and Show

During the January school holidays, student Matilda Miller attended the National Santa Gertrudis Junior School and Show in Warwick, Queensland. She performed extremely well, earning a fifth place in the Judging Commercial Beef Cattle and first place for Novice Parader 17-18 years of age. In addition, the bull she was allocated, named Cree Govenor, won the Lead Bull Section, 13-14 months old, paraded by Matilda.
Singleton Show Cattle Judging

On the last day of Term 3 students participated in the Junior and Open Judging of Beef and Dairy Cattle at the Singleton Show. This competition is the zone final where the top 2 place getters are invited to compete in the state finals at the Royal Easter Show in Sydney in April 2013.

Results from this competition included:
- Junior Dairy Cattle Judging 2nd – Nathan Mitchell
- Open Dairy Cattle Judging 3rd – Brooke Said
- Open Dairy Cattle Judging 2nd – Ryan Symington
- Open Dairy Cattle Judging 1st – Kaitlin-Ann Roberts-Batty

Kaitlin and Ryan will now compete at the 2013 Sydney Royal Easter Show.

Wingham Beef Week

Two teachers and 12 students participated along with 280 other students in the Wingham Beef Week Competition, camping in tents at the Wingham Showground. Students competed in events such as judging, parading and meat judging and appreciation and were also able to attend a number of cattle industry-related educational workshops.

Results from this competition included:
- Encouragement Award 2nd Place – Kaitlyn Barr
- Parading Competition Finalists – Georgia Harris and Courtney Price
- Senior section of the Junior Judging competition 2nd – Matilda Miller.

Upper Hunter Beef Bonanza

The Upper Hunter Beef Bonanza was held 2-4 November at White Park, Scone with students competing in the Junior Judging, Parading, Herdsmen Team and Meat judging competitions. Prepared steers, ‘Rang Rang’ and ‘Tappy’ competed in their respective weight classes and various parading competitions, while ‘Curly’s unpredictable nature put him in the unled class. The Herdsmen Team was also assessed throughout the day on its presentation, teamwork, animal husbandry and knowledge, observed and questioned by an unknown judge.

Results from this competition included:
- 3rd on the hoof - Steer ‘Tappy’
- 2nd in the unled section - Steer ‘Curly’
- 4th open heavy middleweight class – Steer ‘Tappy’
- 4th in the parading competition - Georgia Harris
• 5th Junior Judging - Isobel Ladmore,
• 4th Junior Judging - Sarah Payton
• 1st Junior Judging – Kaitlin-Anne Roberts-Batty.

Academic

In the National Assessment Program, the results across the Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 literacy and numeracy assessments are reported on a scale from Band 1 to Band 10.

The achievement scale represents increasing levels of skills and understandings demonstrated in these assessments.

Yr 3: from Band 1 (lowest) to Band 6 (highest for Year 3)
Yr 5: from Band 3 (lowest) to Band 8 (highest for Year 5)
Yr 7: from Band 4 (lowest) to Band 9 (highest for Year 7)
Yr 9: from Band 5 (lowest) to Band 10 (highest for Year 9)

and/or

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

Reading – NAPLAN Year 7

Pleasing results were achieved in the aspect of Reading, with an increase in student performance in the higher bands and a reduction in students achieving lower bands.

Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 7

Whilst there was a significant improvement in Band 7 achievement and a slight increase in Band 9 scores, overall the results of this student cohort were below the five-year average.

Reading – NAPLAN Year 9
The results of this cohort were below the school average, consistent with their relative achievement in their Year 7, 2010 NAPLAN. An ongoing, holistic plan of support has been implemented for students in this cohort.

**Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 9**

![Percentage in bands: Year 9 Numeracy](image)

Similarly, student results in the aspect of Numeracy were lower relative to historical achievement. The QuickSmart program has been implemented to assist students in this aspect.

**Progress in reading**

Significant planning and progress has been made in this area since 2011. The Literacy strategies identified in the 2012-2014 School Management Plan have been actively implemented, with a dedicated committee meeting regularly to ensure that these strategies are adhered to across the school. These strategies and processes will pave the way for continued growth over the coming years.

**Progress in numeracy**

Numeracy results continue to show very strong value-adding, highlighting the significant improvement students are achieving through the school Mathematics programs. This is especially evident in ROSA and HSC results when a comparison is made to student entry level results in Year 7.

**Higher School Certificate**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>School 2012</th>
<th>School Average 2008-2012</th>
<th>SSG 2012</th>
<th>State DEC 2012</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>54.8</td>
<td>66.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ancient History</td>
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<td>68.0</td>
<td>58.5</td>
<td>66.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
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<td>60.3</td>
<td>66.8</td>
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<tr>
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<td>67.3</td>
<td>64.1</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English (Advanced)</td>
<td>71.3</td>
<td>74.1</td>
<td>71.0</td>
<td>79.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English (Standard)</td>
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<td>62.6</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>69.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Mathematics</td>
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<td>70.7</td>
<td>61.6</td>
<td>66.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>74.4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>69.4</td>
<td>65.3</td>
<td>72.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>63.7</td>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>65.7</td>
<td>76.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Development, Health and Physical Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visual Arts</td>
<td>74.2</td>
<td>77.7</td>
<td>75.9</td>
<td>77.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As in previous years, the school heavily outperformed the Similar Schools Group (SSG) in all subject areas. The school also outperformed the State Average (SA) in General Mathematics and Hospitality Examination and was equal with the SA in Legal Studies. English (Standard), Hospitality and Legal Studies performed above the school five-year average.
Significant programs and initiatives

Aboriginal education

Muswellbrook High School’s commitment to Aboriginal education and improving the outcomes and experiences of the 103 Aboriginal students enrolled for 2012, was evidenced by the following accomplishments:

Five Aboriginal students successfully achieved their Higher School Certificate with one student, Petra Franks, attaining 4 Band 6 results and a 93.65 Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR). This student is pursuing a double degree in Law and Social Research and Policy at the University of New South Wales. These results are the best Stage 6 achievements to date for an Aboriginal student at Muswellbrook High School.
A comprehensive consultation with the whole school community was undertaken in the form of a Dare to Lead Snapshot. This process revealed a number of commendations and recommendations regarding the current programs and initiatives that the school engages in with respect to Aboriginal education.

Commendations included the existence of a dedicated Aboriginal Education team and the payment of a highly skilled Aboriginal Education Worker from school funds. Recommendations focused on a whole staffing commitment to implementing and monitoring student Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs), thereby strengthening individual student, teacher and community relationships.

Significant investment was continued in the training and development of staff regarding cultural awareness and how best to educate Aboriginal students. The entire Staff Development Day for Term 3 was dedicated to Aboriginal policy and education, with all teachers attending workshops and lectures facilitated by the Regional Aboriginal Education team. 2012 also saw the seventh employee of Muswellbrook High School trained in the Stronger Smarter philosophy.

The importance of collaborative decision making was substantiated through the continued support of the local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG). The schools’ Aboriginal Education Worker (AEW) sustained her executive position of secretary, whilst monthly meetings were attended by the principal and at times, delegates of the Junior AECG.

Aboriginal annual calendar events such as Reconciliation Week and National Sorry Day were recognised at either formal school assemblies or through representatives attending functions within the wider community. NAIDOC celebrations included a student theatrical performance depicting the historical significance of the Tent Embassy and the associated rights and freedoms of Aboriginal people. Festivities concluded with the official revelation of the Aboriginal mural, designed by local artist Les Elvin and sponsored by local mining companies.

The Sistaspeak program was introduced as means of inspiring and motivating our female students. Fourteen girls across Years 8 and 9 participated in workshops facilitated by successful, local Aboriginal women. These mentors volunteered their time over a six week period to assist the girls in their understanding and awareness of various issues such as self-esteem, careers, culture and leadership.

Students across Years 7-10 attended the Meeka Youth Expo at Singleton. This excursion provided students with exposure to a range of services including health, employment and education. Workshops in cultural dance and indigenous art were also accessed.

Fostering student leadership and the importance of student input in Aboriginal education was supported by the attendance of three students to the “Leadership Forum for Junior AECG Members”. Our students travelled to and from
the seminar with other aspiring Aboriginal students from Scone High School, enabling local networking, ideas and future initiatives to unfold.

Norta Norta funding was implemented in the form of individual tuition for students in Years 8, 10 and 11. Twenty-four students accepted the offer of additional support, enabling a further improvement in the number of Aboriginal students achieving at or above national NAPLAN benchmarks.

The 100% Knights program provides assistance to students in Years 10-12 in identifying and accessing appropriate career pathways. Due to funding constraints, the program will only continue to assist 2012 Year 12 students.

Many students leapt out of their comfort zones, trying new foods, new activities and embracing Japanese culture.

In late July, students from Sayama Seiryo High School travelled to Australia to stay with local families in Muswellbrook. This was an exciting time as the last year’s planned visit was cancelled due to events surrounding the Tsunami in the Saitama prefecture.

**Multicultural education**

During April 2012, 12 students, three teachers and four parents travelled to Japan. The group flew to Tokyo, and then spent five nights in Kyoto whilst travelling to Inari, Nara, Osaka, Hiroshima and Miyajima Island. The group then returned to Tokyo before travelling to Muswellbrook High School’s sister school, Sayama Seiryo Senior High School. Here, the students were billeted by families and attended lessons, as well as participating in traditional Tea ceremonies, Calligraphy, Ikebana (flower arranging), Art (Kirimon), Chopstick and Furoshiki classes, English lessons and an excursion to Asakusa. A highlight for most students was the trip to the local primary school, Okutomi Elementary School, where students played games with spoken English, observed lessons, ate lunch and even helped clean the school.

The Japanese students participated in activities including bushwalking near Murrurundi, dolphin cruising, feeding lambs and kids with bottles and
patting koalas at Oakvale Farm, cooking lamingtons and ANZAC biscuits, doing origami, playing music and singing Australian songs, playing sport, a cultural tour of Muswellbrook, choosing Aussie foods to take back to Japan, assisting in Japanese lessons and taking part in a BBQ at the school Agricultural farm.

Japanese guests treated the school to a display of calligraphy, some Japanese games, origami, green tea tasting and a powerpoint presentation of Sayama Seiryo Senior High.

School staff held a welcome dinner for the visiting teachers from Japan, which was extremely well-attended.

This visit marks the 19th year of the sister school relationship, since the first visit to Japan in 1998. The school acknowledges the hard work, innovation and dedication of Fiona Bailey, who has organised all trips and visits since this time and will be now handing over management of the sister-school program to Bronwyn Tier.

To support the program, Head Teacher Special Education, Quinn Robertson was employed as a Head Teacher – Teacher Quality for 2012.

The program was a tremendous success, with a record number of staff accessing training and development opportunities. A particular highlight was the quality of external presenters and opportunities made available at Muswellbrook High School, including a behavior management presentation from Dr Christine Richmond, Smartboard and technology training, as well as Aboriginal cultural competence and awareness training with representatives from Dare to Lead, 100% Knights and Regional Aboriginal education staff.

Other programs

Graham ‘Polly’ Farmer Foundation Program

The Graham ‘Polly’ Farmer Foundation Muswellbrook Enrichment Centre ‘Partnership for Success’ began operation early in 2010 for local aspiring Aboriginal secondary school students at Muswellbrook High School. The program has involved a strong partnership between Muswellbrook High School, industry and private sponsors. The ongoing commitment of all the partners has contributed significantly to the sustainability and success of the Muswellbrook program.

The key objective of each Graham ‘Polly’ Farmer Foundation project is to assist Aboriginal students to complete high school and work toward entry into university, TAFE, apprenticeships, traineeships and other employment. This is achieved by selecting students who have the capacity to complete school, but for some, in the absence of additional support, are unlikely to do so. By providing this educational support these students are thus enabled to go on to tertiary studies, training or employment opportunities.

National partnership programs

Teacher Quality

In 2011 the school was successful in applying for a $150,000 grant for a National Partnerships Teacher Quality Program. The aims of the program were to support beginning and New Scheme teachers, deliver high-quality, locally based training opportunities, support staff in accessing training and the development of staff training plans and registers.
A group of around 30 students participated in the project at any one time and Project staff work closely with the students throughout their secondary schooling, to ensure that they succeed. Students are provided with intensive and targeted support through:

- after-school support and access to a safe and supportive study facility, equipped with educational resources and computers
- a full-time project leader along with tutors assisting with assessment tasks study skills and goal setting
- regular contact between parents and teachers to support student academic progress
- family and home support
- industry support
- educational excursions to develop resilience, leadership skills and career knowledge
- access to traditional culture and appropriate role models and
- access to tertiary motivational programs.

The Foundation’s Partnerships for Success has already produced many students with an enhanced sense of self-esteem through improved school based success. Since its inception in 2010, 18 students have graduated from the Muswellbrook program, with six entering university, six undertaking further training at TAFE, or by an apprenticeship or traineeship, four entering direct employment and two students remain unemployed, one of which is seeking employment.

School attendance of the students who attend the Enrichment Centre is improving and more students are achieving a 90% attendance rate or higher. Literacy, numeracy and science have continued to be the focus of student improvement to assist students to achieve higher grade levels in all subject areas.

The Enrichment Centre opens between 3.30pm and approximately 6pm Monday to Thursday to cater for the needs of students to access mentoring and tutorial assistance. Where necessary, hours outside the normal operating hours are used, to provide access to tutors and the facilities to complete assignments and meet school deadlines. In 2012 the number of Enrichment Centre support hours was 164 hours per semester, offering an increased opportunity for students to access the Centre’s program compared to 2011 figures, along with an increased number of experienced tutors.

In 2012 there was a pool of 18 tutors supporting the Partnership for Success program, including teachers from Muswellbrook High School and surrounding high schools along with community members. Students attending the Enrichment Centre have access to a range of tutors, who not only provide subject-specific tutoring, but are also excellent mentors and role models for the students.

The Enrichment Centre provides and encourages students to take up a variety of opportunities to enhance their education and help their personal development so they can be resilient, confident
young adults who are engaged in their community and wider world as well. In 2012, some of the student activities included:

- a one week stay at the University of Western Sydney at their Rural Indigenous Student Visit
- a one week stay at the University of New South Wales at their Winter School Program
- A BHP Billiton Mt Arthur Coal mine site visit, where students had the opportunity to invite a non-Aboriginal friend
- a one week cultural and leadership camp at Wollombi ‘Ngurra Bu’ and The Great Aussie Bush Camp
- a one week Earthwatch project in Melbourne
- attendance at local Art Awards
- training and performing traditional dances for others, led by appropriate adults in the community.

At the 2012 Upper Hunter NAIDOC awards, three students, past and present, were recognised and awarded Scholar of the Year, Artist of the Year and Sportsperson of the Year.

Progress on 2012 targets

Target 1

Improved NAPLAN and HSC Student Performance

1. More than 40% of Year 9 students will achieve a Band 8, 9 or 10 result in NAPLAN examinations from 37.2% (2009-2011) in the test aspect Numeracy.

2. Less than 30% of Year 9 students will achieve a Band 5 or 6 result in NAPLAN examinations from 32.4% (2009-2011) in the test aspect Numeracy.

3. More than 30% of Year 9 students will achieve a Band 8, 9 or 10 result in NAPLAN examinations from 23.1% (2011) in the test aspect Writing.

4. Less than 30% of Year 9 students will achieve a Band 5 or 6 result in NAPLAN examinations for the test from 53.2% (2011) in the test aspect Writing.

5. Year 12 students will record greater than 15 Band 6 results in the 2012 HSC (15 in 2011).

Our achievements include:

- 22.1% of students achieved a Band 8, 9 or 10 result in NAPLAN examinations in the test aspect of Numeracy.
- 42.5% of students achieved a Band 5 or 6 result in NAPLAN examinations in the test aspect of Numeracy.
- 19.5% of students achieved a Band 8, 9 or 10 result in NAPLAN examinations in the test aspect of Writing.
- 66% of students achieved a Band 5 or 6 result in NAPLAN examinations in the test aspect of Writing.
- Year 12 students recorded 10 Band 6 results in 2012, the second-highest number across all schools in the Upper Hunter.

Target 2

Enhanced Curriculum, Engagement and School Learning Environment

1. Installation of one new Interactive Whiteboard and at least one digital television for each faculty in the school in 2012.
2. Implementation of a new Stage 5 and 6 Curriculum structure including the delivery of VET courses in Stage 5.
3. Increase in retention from Year 10 to Year 12 from 54.4% in 2011 to 58% in 2012.

Our achievements include:

- Twelve new Smartboards were installed in classrooms. New digital televisions were installed in five faculty areas.
- New VET courses were introduced including Manufacturing and Business Studies/Retail in Stage 5 and Sport, Fitness and Recreation Studies in Stage 6.
- Three staff were trained in the delivery of the Sports, Fitness and Recreation (VET) course.
- Student retention for 2012 was 49.6%.

**Target 3**

**Aboriginal Student Achievement**

1. Improve the Year 7-12 Aboriginal student attendance rate from 78.6% in 2011 to 88% in 2012.
2. Improve the Aboriginal student Retention Rate (Year 10 into 12) from 28.57% in 2011 to 58% in 2012.
3. Personalised Learning Plans (PLP’s) completed for 100% of students, from 47% in 2011.

Our achievements include:

- Aboriginal student attendance for 2012 was 75.5%.
- Aboriginal student retention was 49.6%.

**Target 4**

**Attendance for Learning**

1. Improve the Year 7-12 Attendance Rate from 86.4% in 2011 to 88% in 2012.
2. Less than 28.5% of the total number of students who receive a Long Suspension will receive a second suspension within the next 12 months, compared with 46.42% in 2011.

Our achievements include:

- A new Attendance policy was written for implementation in 2013.
- Student attendance for 2012 was 85.9%.
- 58.33% of students who received a Long Suspension received a second suspension within the next 12 months.

**School evaluation**

NSW public schools conduct evaluation to support the effective implementation of the school plan. In 2012 our school carried out evaluation of Aboriginal education at Muswellbrook High School through a Dare to Lead snapshot.

**Background**

Dare to Lead is a project run by Principals Australia Inc and funded by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. The project provides support for Principals endeavouring to improve learning outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and to improve the curriculum across all schools about traditional and contemporary history and culture.

Dare to Lead was invited to complete an external, independent review of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education in the school.

The Snapshot of Aboriginal Education conducted at Muswellbrook High School included interviews with staff, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal parents, Aboriginal employees and school executive.

The overall enrolments at Muswellbrook High School have increased considerably since 2007 with a growth rate of 5.5% (38 students). Coincidentally the Aboriginal student enrolments have increased by 38 over that same time.

**Findings and conclusions**

The Aboriginal student enrolment trend at Muswellbrook High School indicates that Aboriginal students are staying on at school, especially between Years 7 and 10. The Aboriginal student retention rate between Years 10, 11 and 12 is encouraging.

The overall attendance trend at Muswellbrook High School is a concern for all students and especially for the Aboriginal students. In 2008, Aboriginal students were absent from school on average more than 17 days more than their non-Aboriginal peers. The best overall student
attendance data was recorded in 2010. The attendance rate for all students is below the regional and state levels.

In 2008, 2010 and 2011 the literacy results for Year 7 Aboriginal students at Muswellbrook High School were below the school non-Aboriginal student’s average in all aspects of literacy. The school Aboriginal students scored below the state Aboriginal students in all aspects of literacy in 2010, in spelling in 2008 and 2011 and grammar and punctuation in 2008.

In 2011 there was little difference between the school Aboriginal student average and the school non-Aboriginal student group in reading (-18 points), writing (-16), spelling (-33) and grammar and punctuation (-27).

The school Aboriginal students scored above the average for the state Aboriginal students in numeracy in 2009, data, measurement, space and geometry in 2009, 2010 and 2011 and number, patterns and algebra in 2009. Over a number of years the school Aboriginal students have recorded best results in the area of data, measurement, space and geometry.

The school Aboriginal students scored above the average for the state Aboriginal students in all aspects of literacy from 2008 to 2011 except in spelling in 2008 and 2009 and grammar and punctuation in 2009 and 2010.

Since 2008, the school Aboriginal students have scored below their non-Aboriginal school peers in all aspects of literacy.

The number of overall suspensions has increased since 2007. Aboriginal students have been increasingly over-represented in the school suspension data since 2007.

**Future directions**

Key recommendations from the snapshot are summarized below:

1. Continue to build positive Aboriginal parent engagement through PLP’s, NAIDOC celebrations, parent/teacher interviews, etc.
2. Develop teacher cultural competence and understanding through Aboriginal cultural immersion programs and training and development.
3. Strengthen Aboriginal student engagement in the classroom through the SMP’s focus on student engagement.
4. Strengthen Aboriginal student leadership opportunities within the school, including the Aboriginal student AECG, SRC, NAIDOC celebrations, Harmony Day, etc.
5. Continue to positively address issues of racism through the Anti-racism contact officer (ARCO) and promote their role within the school.
6. Continue to support Aboriginal student identity through the school newsletter and website.
7. Review and update Aboriginal content into teaching and learning programs.
8. Increase Aboriginal cultural symbolism within the school, including signage, acknowledgement statements, totems and murals.
9. Develop a centralised data set for Aboriginal students to help inform school planning and review of student performance and achievement.
10. Increase numbers of Aboriginal staff including support staff and/or trainee.
11. Further develop the Year 6 to 7 transition program to include Aboriginal staff from the High School and feeder Primary Schools.
12. Develop a community register to take advantage of local expertise for the planning and delivery of educational programs.
13. Improve the post-school aspirations of Aboriginal students, particularly in Stage 3.
14. Conduct an Aboriginal resource audit to help determine the future purchase of resources in support of Aboriginal education.
15. Reduce the number of staff on the Aboriginal education committee and invite two students and two community members to become members.
16. Encourage all staff in the school to become involved in the PLP process.
Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction

School Environment Survey

In 2012 the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school. Their responses are presented below.

Muswellbrook High School is focused on improving our school environment to support student learning and enhancing the appearance of the school. We are seeking your feedback on the progress of these changes and your opinions to help inform future priorities and planning.

1. Buildings and Facilities - Please rate the condition of the following buildings and facilities at Muswellbrook High School:
   - Classrooms
   - School buildings
   - Administration
   - Multi-purpose centre
   - Toilets
   - Neate Theatre
   - Library
   - Walkways
   - Playground areas
   - Canteen

   Staff rated the library (12.82%) and the MPC (7.89%) as being in the best condition, while the toilets (48.72%) and Neate Theatre (25.64%) were rated as being in a poor condition. Parents rated the library (13.33%) as being in excellent condition, while 57% of parents thought that the toilets were in poor or very poor condition. Students rated the library (33.33%) as being in excellent condition, while 52.63% of students felt the toilets were in very poor condition.

2. Over the last two years the school has spent over $240,000 on improving the school grounds, with assistance from our P&C and local companies. Please rank the actions that have made the biggest improvement to the school's appearance:
   - Removal of vegetation and weeds
   - Removal of mistletoe infestations in trees
   - Installation of new retaining walls near L Block
   - Fencing of hill area for livestock
   - Upgrading of the MPC area including lighting and fencing
   - Upgrading of driveway and entrance to the school
   - Installation of new seating
   - Installation of rubbish bins
   - Memorial garden
   - Planting of new gardens
   - Aboriginal Education area (including mural and bush tucker garden)
   - Updated school signage

   School grounds
Staff identified the installation of school signage (72.5%) and bins (55%) as contributing the biggest improvement on the appearance of the school grounds, while curiously, 30% of staff said that the upgrading of the entrance and driveway areas made no improvement. Parents identified the installation of bins, fencing of the hill area and updated school signage as having the biggest improvement on appearance, while they felt that the upgrading of the MPC made little difference in the appearance of the school. Students identified the installation of bins (63.16%) as making the biggest improvement on school appearance, while the new retaining wall near L Block was seen as having the least impact.

3. Through our 2012-2014 school Management Plan, Muswellbrook High School is looking to create a 21st Century learning environment for students and teachers. Please rate the effectiveness of the following technology that is used in the classroom to support student learning:

- Interactive whiteboards
- Clickview
- Digital Televisions
- Computer labs
- Projector in MPC
- DER laptops

Staff rated the projector in the MPC and Interactive whiteboards as being the most effective forms of technology, but rated the computer labs and DER laptops as being less effective. Parents also rated the technology in this order. Students identified the projector in the MPC as being most effective, however, they rated Clickview and the computer labs as being far less effective.
4. In 2012, the school had a focus on reducing the amount of rubbish in the playground. Please rate the current level of rubbish in the school playground:

Pleasingly, 84% of parents, 75% of staff and 64% of students said that the level of playground rubbish was low or very low.

5. School Improvement Priorities – The School Improvement Committee has identified a number of school improvement initiatives. Please rank the following in priority order:

- Air conditioning of the Multi-purpose Centre
- Upgrade of the school toilets
- Development of top oval as a sporting field
- Increased seating in shaded areas
- Painting of buildings
- Upgrading of drains and guttering
- Improving on-site and teacher parking

Staff identified the upgrading of the toilets and the air conditioning of the MPC as the highest priorities, whilst they saw the development of a sporting field on the top oval as a lower priority.

Overwhelmingly, parents identified upgrading the school toilets as the highest priority whilst rating improved teacher and on-site parking as a lower priority. Students also identified the upgrading of the toilets and air conditioning of the MPC as significant priorities, although they felt the painting of buildings was far less important.

6. Muswellbrook High School is a safe learning environment for students.

85% of staff, 69% of students and 97% of parents either strongly agreed or agreed that the school is a safe learning environment.

7. Muswellbrook High School has an active Student Representative Council that makes a positive difference to the school environment.

100% of staff, 94% of parents and 88% of students either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

8. Are there any additional comments that you would like to make regarding the school environment and school improvement priorities and initiatives?

Parents and students made further, significant comment regarding the toilets, especially soap dispensers and locks. Staff made a range of comments regarding future directions for school improvement. Many parents were keen to see lockers brought in for students.

Professional learning

Seventy six members of staff participated in school development day activities with a further 60 teachers attending professional learning workshops and conferences facilitated by the DET or external providers, a total of 328 days.

The school spent a total of $61,133 on teacher professional learning. This included $9,622 for beginning teacher training, $9,123 for Technology training, $9,794.39 on Quality Teaching, $5,382 on Literacy and Numeracy, $5,529 on Syllabus Implementation, $15,762 on Leadership and
Career Development and $5,921 on Welfare and equity. On average, $912.43 was spent per member of staff.

In addition, staff were supported through the employment of a Head Teacher – Teacher Quality through the National Partnerships Teacher Quality program. This position focused on providing high-quality school development day opportunities, assisting staff to access training through the development of teacher development plans and support for beginning and new scheme teachers.

The Term 2 school development day was moved to the last day of Term 1 for a presentation on behaviour management and leadership to Muswellbrook Local Management Group staff by Dr Christine Richmond, hosted by Muswellbrook High School.

Cultural competence and awareness training was undertaken by all staff during the Term 3 school development day. The final two school development days focused on student engagement, literacy and numeracy and technology.

Vocational Education and Training (VET) focused on teacher attendance at network meetings and continued maintenance of their industry currency.

One teacher attended the Stronger Smarter workshops in Aboriginal Education. Staff also attended faculty specific network meetings and professional association conferences.

Seven new scheme teachers were working towards accreditation in 2012, with a further 18 staff maintaining professional competence.

School planning 2012—2014

The school planning policy provides direction for the preparation and implementation of school plans including the identification of priority areas, intended outcomes and targets that are consistent with the NSW State Plan and the Department’s planning documents.

School priority 1

Improved NAPLAN and HSC Student Performance

Outcomes for 2012–2014

1. Students will achieve at or above the National Standards for expected growth in Literacy and Numeracy.
2. Students receive equitable, targeted support to improve literacy and numeracy.
3. Literacy and numeracy targets are supported through teaching in all key learning areas.

2013 Targets to achieve this outcome include:

- More than 35% of Year 9 students will achieve a Band 8, 9 or 10 result in NAPLAN examinations from 22.1% (2012) in the test aspect Numeracy.
- Less than 35% of Year 9 students will achieve a Band 5 or 6 result in NAPLAN examinations from 42.5% (2012) in the test aspect Numeracy.
- More than 25% of Year 9 students will achieve a Band 8, 9 or 10 result in NAPLAN examinations from 19.5% (2012) in the test aspect Writing.
- Less than 35% of Year 9 students will achieve a Band 5 or 6 result in NAPLAN examinations for the test from 66% (2012) in the test aspect Writing.
- Year 12 students will record greater than 15 Band 6 results in the 2013 HSC.

Strategies to achieve these targets include:

- Develop programs to foster students’ ability to read, discuss and write substantive texts in multiple genres.
- Provide reading experiences to enrich and extend student abilities.
• Explicit teaching of effective use information across a range of media including books, internet, etc. to develop:
  - Reading with understanding
  - Locating and using information
  - Following a process or argument
  - Summarise, synthesise and adapt what is learnt
  - Assess and interpret visual literacy
• Work collaboratively with feeder Primary schools within the Muswellbrook LMG to prepare students for the rigours of writing required for the secondary curriculum (7-9).
• Develop teacher capacity to improve student literacy and numeracy.
• Maintain and re-emphasise a whole-school writing focus, modelled, scaffolded and independently attempted within faculty context and a preparation of resources to support this strategy.
• Maintain and modify a targeted literacy program with a writing focus incorporating a systematic teaching of Text Type scaffolds and proformas.
• Provide extensive student feedback through marking rubrics with detailed, specific criteria for each assessment task.
• Implement NAPLAN style assessable examinations in English in Years 7, 8 and 9 and non-assessable NAPLAN style examinations in Mathematics in Year 8.
• Analyse SMART data, on an individual student basis, to provide all faculties with feedback and suggestions for improving literacy and numeracy.
• Implement a cross-faculty targeted literacy program for identified low ability Year 7, 8 and 9 classes.
• Provide targeted, intensive support for students achieving at or below the National Minimum Standard.
• Identify and target high-achieving and GAT students within class groups and provide mentoring and support.

School priority 2

Enhanced Curriculum, Engagement and School Learning Environment

Outcomes for 2012–2014

Enhanced Curriculum, Engagement and School Learning Environment.

2013 Targets to achieve this outcome include:

• Installation of 12 new Smartboards in January 2013.
• Introduction of Stage 5 Manufacturing (VET) in Year 9 and Stage 6 Sport, Fitness and Recreation Studies (VET) in Year 11.
• Increase in retention from Year 10 to Year 12 from 53.10% in 2012 to 56% in 2013.

Strategies to achieve these targets include:

• Improve teacher and student access to technology and enhance student engagement through:
  • Installation of three interactive whiteboards (minimum) per faculty area.
  • Installation of digital televisions in every classroom.
  • Access to Clickview as a teaching and learning resource.
  • Staff remote access to the school Terminal server.
• Support student learning through the provision of all assessment schedules and tasks on an improved and enhanced school website incorporating Moodle.
• Enhanced communication to parents through access to student information including attendance, assessment task completion and results, as well as school reports through the Parent Portal hosted by Millennium.
• Provide a safe working environment through:
  - Active Work, Health and Safety Committee
  - Comprehensive process for reporting WHS issues
  - Implementation of staff training programs
- Development of Grounds Management Plan (GMP) and execution of plan.
- Student achievement is recognised, celebrated and rewarded through the school Merit System, School Newsletter, School Assemblies and Student Reward days.
- Employment of a Head Teacher – Teacher Quality as part of the National Partnerships Teacher Quality Program:
  - Identify Teacher Professional Learning (TPL) opportunities
  - Maintain a Staff TPL register
  - New Scheme Teachers Accreditation
  - Induction and support of new teachers to school
  - Facilitation of TPL opportunities by external presenters
- Enhance and diversify school curriculum offerings including the:
  - Introduction of Stage 6 VET courses in Stage 5
  - Introduction of new VET courses in Stage 6
  - Introduction of Skill Pathway for Youth (SPY) courses
  - Targeting students to undertake School-Based Traineeships (SBAT’s) in areas of interest related to identified career pathways.
- Engagement of disengaged students in the middle years through access to courses and vocational opportunities including:
  - TAFE outreach
  - Participation Pathways Options that Work (PPOW)
  - Challenge Disability Service and Advanced Personnel Management
  - Career and Transition Programs (CATS).
- Development of a Grounds Management Plan (GMP) through the School Improvement Committee to inform the upgrading of school grounds and facilities.
- Work collaboratively with schools in the Upper Hunter Trades Training Centre (TTC) consortium to provide improved access, for all students, to VET courses in industry standard facilities.
- Improve student resilience through the school’s participation in the Healthy Schools, Healthy Futures (HSHF) project, Resourceful Adolescents Program (RAP), Lovebites and other welfare-based programs.
- Encourage extension of high-achieving and gifted students through the Year 7/8 Opportunity Class (OC) and Gifted and Talented Student Program (GATS). Invite high achieving Year 9 and 10 students to participate in the Newcastle University program where GATS students complete a university subject.

School priority 3

Aboriginal Student Achievement

Outcomes for 2012–2014

1. Aboriginal students achieve the same level of educational outcomes as non-Aboriginal students.
2. Improved relationships with Aboriginal students, parents and community.
3. Enhanced capacity for all teaching staff to deliver quality, culturally inclusive lessons.

2013 Targets to achieve this outcome include:

- Improve the Year 7-12 Aboriginal student attendance rate from 75.6% in 2012 to 80% in 2013.
- Improve the Aboriginal student Retention Rate (Year 10 into 12) from 36.4% in 2012 to 40% in 2013.
- Personalised Learning Plans (PLP’s) completed for 100% of students, involving all staff across the school.

Strategies to achieve these targets include:

- Up to 30 aspirational Aboriginal students will be selected for the Graham ‘Polly’ Farmer Foundation Program (GFPFP) involving students attending after-school tuition (at least) two days per week and cultural camps, excursions and educational opportunities.
• Allocation of Norta Norta Tutors to work intensively with students not meeting the Minimum National Standards in Years 8 and 10.

• Creation of an after-school homework centre in the school library to assist Aboriginal students with classwork, homework, assignments and examination preparation.

• Personalised Learning Plans (PLP’s) are completed each year for all Aboriginal students and attached to student profiles on Millennium.

• Construction of an Aboriginal Cultural Learning Centre at K Block, involving partnerships between DEC, AECG and corporate sponsors, to foster community engagement, cultural knowledge and enhanced student educational outcomes.

• Completion of a Dare to Lead ‘Snapshot’ to help inform future planning in Aboriginal Education and identify and address perceived deficiencies.

• Introduction of programs for students in Years 9 and 10 to develop cultural knowledge and awareness, including Sista speak and Bro speak.

• Employment of an Aboriginal Education Worker to liaise with Aboriginal parents and community and school staff, monitor student attendance and mentor, tutor and assist students with personal and school-related issues.

• Muswellbrook High School to become a Stronger, Smarter Hub School, enabling all school staff to be trained in the Stronger, Smarter Educational Philosophy.

• Mentors from the 100% Knights program to assist students in Years 10-12 to enhance learning and engagement at school, and identify and support students to access appropriate educational and career pathways.

• All school staff undertake training in improving Aboriginal student educational outcomes and cultural competence and knowledge.

• Celebration of NAIDOC week with a whole-school celebration assembly, community barbecue and related educational and cultural activities.

School priority 4

Attendance for Learning

Outcomes for 2012–2014

1. Improved attendance will result in enhanced student educational and vocational outcomes.

2. Reductions in the number and length of Long Suspensions will improve attendance and student educational outcomes.

3. Improved communication with parents will enhance the relationship between the school and home and help improve student attendance.

2013 Targets to achieve this outcome include:

• Improve the Year 7-12 Attendance Rate from 84.2% in 2012 to 86% in 2013.

• Less than 28.5% of the total number of students who receive a Long Suspension will receive a second suspension within the calendar year, compared with 58.33% in 2012.

Strategies to achieve these targets include:

• Develop and implement a detailed school based Attendance Plan, including policy and procedures.

• Maintain ongoing communication to parents regarding lateness and absence of their child from school through text-messaging, letters, phone calls and Millennium portal usage.

• Improve existing text-messaging capacity to better inform parents of student truancy (with a focus on timely notification with appropriate consequences).

• Shift the focus to Quality Learning to maximise engagement and enhance attendance – covered in previous sections.

• Reduce suspension recidivism through enhanced suspension re-entry process including:
  - Greater use of funding support and RSSSP funds
  - Year advisor intervention and progress reporting
- Increased use of Behaviour Management Plans
- School Counsellor intervention
- Girls’ Advisor
- Support Teacher Learning Assistance (STLA)
- External agency support including Upper Hunter Youth Services, Advanced Personnel Management and Challenge Disability Services.
- Itinerant Support Teacher Behaviour (ISTB) intervention

- Individual interviews with all students in Years 10-12 in regards to subject selection, academic performance, personal welfare, time management and career pathways.
- Student Mentor program to provide guidance, support and tuition for Year 12 students.

### About this report

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

Gareth Erskine  Principal  
Brian Druwe  Deputy Principal  
Scott Copland  Deputy Principal  
Jennifer Bullivant  P&C President  
Elizabeth Halsted  SAM  
Grant Herbert  HT PDHPE  
Kylie Kelly  HT HSIE  
Jason Foy  HT CAPA  
Tony Borg  Careers Teacher  
Samantha Wass  SRC Coordinator  
Debbie Douglass  Enrichment Centre  
Melisa Powell  AEW  
Grace Rodham  School Captain  
Liam King  School Captain

### School contact information

MUSWELLBROOK HIGH SCHOOL  
King Street, Muswellbrook, 2333  
Ph: 6543 1033  
Fax: 6543 3927  
Email: muswellbro-h.school@det.nsw.edu.au  
Web: www.muswellbrookhighschool.com  
School Code: 8164

Parents can find out more information about Annual School Reports, how to interpret information in the reports and have the opportunity to provide feedback about these reports at:  