2007 Annual School Report
Muswellbrook High School

NSW Public Schools – Leading the way
Messages

Principal's message

A feature of 2007 was the achievements of the Year 12 students at the Higher School Certificate. An increased focus on supporting the students attempting the HSC and the work ethic of the students of Year 12, have been identified as reasons for the commendable HSC results. Four students achieved a UAI over 90. They were Nicole Thompson, Emma Llewelyn, Scott Parkins and David Budden.

Nine students achieved Band 6 in a total of 15 courses at the HSC. This was one of the best HSC results for a public school in the Maitland Muswellbrook Education Area. Year 12 students also achieved marks of above 80 per cent on 56 occasions in a range of HSC courses.

Year 12 students were also the beneficiaries of a new scholarship program titled the Phipps Scholarship Trust, made available, for the first time in 2007, for students wishing to study at university. Dr Gilbert Phipps, a long term doctor and resident of Muswellbrook, left a grant for the students at Muswellbrook High School, as part of his estate.

Nicole Thompson, Emma Llewelyn, Emma Hayne, Scott Parkins and David Budden were the inaugural recipients of the scholarship award for university study in 2008.

I am pleased that along with the Bengalla Mine University Scholarships, the Phipps Scholarship will give students from this school, greater opportunities for assistance in their tertiary studies. In 2008, more students from the 2007 HSC year, then ever before, have committed to study at university.

At Muswellbrook High School, it is our stated aim, to have our students, "strive for excellence" and we continue to emphasise the importance of students setting high standards and expectations for themselves. The achievements of our students indicate the potential opportunity that exists at this school and the 2007 Annual Report demonstrates the efforts of the staff and the community to continue to evaluate how our processes and procedures for educating students can be fine tuned and improved.

My report finishes on a sad note. Stephen Palmer, General Assistant, at Muswellbrook High School, passed away suddenly on November 5. Steve was on leave at the time and was a very popular employee of the school. He was a well known member of staff, who performed a demanding job in a way that made him very appreciated by the school community. This was evident in the numbers of staff, students and members of the school community who attended his funeral at Denman on November 10. Steve is very much missed by all that knew him at Muswellbrook High School.

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 Peter Crick - Principal

P&C message

2007 was another successful year for the P & C. Through the operation of the healthy canteen, the P & C were able to contribute a substantial amount of money to the school to enhance the educational and teaching resources that are needed. Many thanks must go to the dedicated volunteers who man the canteen for their ongoing support.

The P & C meet on a regular basis to allow a forum to discuss the relevant issues that may concern the school. P & C representatives hold positions to assist the school in decision making through Curriculum, School Improvements, Budget Committee, Uniform, and where appropriate in the selection process for school personnel.

Parents and community members also assist by participating in the special programs and activities conducted at the school.

Mrs Noelle Duncan – President

Student representative's message

2007 was a very productive year for the Student Representative Council of Muswellbrook High School. They were involved in many initiatives around the school that aimed to raise funds for the school, for charities and to improve the physical environment of the school.

Term One started with a successful Valentines Day where the SRC sold carnations and chocolate hearts to be delivered to students in roll call. This was followed by a whole school World’s Greatest Shave. Students and staff from the school offered to shave their head or colour their hair to raise money for the Leukaemia Foundation. The school raised over $6000 which is an amazing achievement.

The other major charity that we supported again this year was the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Appeal. The SRC conducted a chocolate drive and coin line competition to raise $3100. This was presented to Margaret and Joe Matthews, coordinators of the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Appeal at the Appeal day by representatives of the SRC. The SRC also assisted to coordinate Dress Down Drug Free day to raise funds for Life Education and Flanno Friday in memory of Steve Palmer.

Mrs Noelle Duncan – President
Throughout the year the SRC held various other events eg. BBQ’s, out of uniform days, to raise money for the school.

The SRC contributed to many student welfare events. They donated $250 towards the cost of “The Hurting Game” a dramatised production that explored issues of growing up and bullying in schools. The SRC ran a very successful dodgeball competition that gave students something to do or watch at lunchtime. Members of the SRC were also involved in the Red Cross Breakfast Club initiative run by Mrs Gittoes which provided breakfast to students two mornings a week. Students were also heavily involved with assisting on Year 6 Orientation days.

Members of the SRC had many opportunities to represent their school at numerous events and on various committees throughout the year. They proudly marched on Anzac Day at both Muswellbrook and Denman with our school captains laying a wreath. We had a representative on the School Improvement Team and Stephen Langley and Billie Scott regularly attended P&C Meetings. This gave the students a valuable voice on school issues. Two of our Year 9 SRC representatives Heidi Mainey and Stephen Langley attended the Regional SRC meeting in Newcastle and two students from each year attended a Students Leadership Conference at Newcastle Uni. All of these were valuable experiences in improving their leadership skills.

On the physical environment front, after many requests from parents and students of the school the SRC purchased soap dispensers which have been installed in both the male and female toilets. As a part of Enviro Day the SRC developed a Japanese Garden near the front office.

Hannah Baum and Robert Bensley – School Captains 2008

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**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**

Enrolment figures for February 2007 showed student enrolments remained mostly unchanged from 770 in 2006 compared to 762 in 2007.

There were 594 students in year 7 to 10 including 295 males and 299 females. In years 11 and 12 there were 168 students enrolled including 59 males and 109 females.

33 students were in the student support faculty. There were 69 Aboriginal students who constitute 9% of the student population.

![Graph of School Enrolments](image)

**Student attendance profile**

Attendance rates in years 7 to 10 continue to reflect the rate within the region and state as a whole, although the schools rates are slightly below the region and state rates. This attendance rate has increased slightly from 2006 in line with the state and region.

Attendance rates in years 11 and 12 were above both the rates within the region and the state as a whole. This in a significant increase from 2006.

![Graph of Years 11 and 12 Attendance Rates](image)
In 2006 attendance rates for years 7 to 10 of 88.2% were slightly below the state average of 90.1%. This pattern continued in 2007 with an increase in attendance rates in years 7 to 10 to 88.5% below a regional attendance rate of 89.2% and the state rate which held steady at 90.1%.

In years 11 and 12 the schools attendance rate for 2007 of 89.9 was above the regional attendance rate of 88.8% and the state rate of 89.7%.

Retention to Year 12
Retention from Year 10 to Year 12 is a focus area for the school in 2008. The buoyant employment situation in the Upper Hunter and the greater number of students obtaining apprenticeships in 2005, were some of the key factors that resulted in students not completing the HSC after the School Certificate. Many of these students still went onto further formal education at TAFE and similar pathways after leaving school.

Post-school destinations
A high number of students gained university entry. At 43% this is up to ten percent higher than some state and national averages.

Eleven substantial scholarships for university study were gained.

Very low numbers of students are seeking employment, after their HSC in 2007. A number are in substantial employment hours per week, including those in casual work.

Eighty-Eight percent of graduating Year 12 students have accepted/enrolled in some form of continuing education beyond their HSC.

Yr 12 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 12 Destinations</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University Study</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University deferred</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>work/travel exchange</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAFE/Private College</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprentice/Traineeship</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking Employment</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Needs programs</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Year 10 Student Leavers 2007

| Transfers to other schools | 1           |
| TAFE                      | 6           |
| Apprentice/Traineeships    | 15          |
| Employment                | 10          |
| Total                     | 32          |

Very low numbers of students transferred to other schools with figures dropping to one percent from a figure of seven percent in 2006, reflecting positively on HSC opportunities and career and transition pathways of Muswellbrook High.

Year 11 Student Leavers

| Transfers to other schools outside of area | 3 |
| TAFE                                      | 6 |
| Apprentice/traineeships                   | 3 |
| Employment                                | 10|
| Seeking Employment                        | 4 |

Leavers seeking employment remains at a low percentage and are similar to 2006’s low figures.

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
The staffing establishment of the school, is influenced by the presence of a special education faculty on the school premises, which has 4
teachers and a Head Teacher as part of the staffing establishment. A staffing supplement of 0.5 for a teacher mentor, has been allocated to the school, to assist in the induction of the permanent and temporary teachers that have been newly appointed to the DET and the school.

<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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Teachers</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Emotional Disabilities</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Mild Intellectual Disabilities</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Moderate Intellectual Disabilities</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Severe Intellectual Disabilities</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Teacher Learning Assistance</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Librarian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careers Advisor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsellor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor Teacher</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>53.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**School Administration and Support Staff**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Administrative Manager</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Administrative Officers</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Assistant</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Assistant</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Aides Special</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Staff retention**

In 2007 86% of staff was retained from the 2006 staffing period.

Promotion | 4
Resigned   | 2
Transferred| 2
Retired    | 0

**Staff attendance**

Staff have access to leave entitlements such as sick leave. In 2007 the average daily attendance rate for staff, as determined by the Department, was 96.0%.

**Teacher qualifications**

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>% of staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree or Diploma</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Financial summary**

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

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Date of financial summary:} & \quad 30/11/2007 \\
\text{Income} & \quad $ \\
\text{Balance brought forward} & \quad 384,370.65 \\
\text{Global funds} & \quad 437,123.84 \\
\text{Tied funds} & \quad 295,960.10 \\
\text{School & community sources} & \quad 273,508.21 \\
\text{Interest} & \quad 29,679.43 \\
\text{Trust receipts} & \quad 27,655.45 \\
\text{Canteen} & \quad 0.00 \\
\text{Total income} & \quad 1,448,297.68 \\
\end{align*}
\]

**Expenditure**

- **Teaching & learning**
  - Key learning areas: 95,254.67
  - Excursions: 70,996.02
  - Extracurricular dissections: 82,836.06
- **Library**: 7,718.27
- **Training & development**: 37,121.91
- **Tied funds**: 222,063.08
- **Casual relief teachers**: 145,055.55
- **Administration & office**: 131,834.68
- **School-operated canteen**: 0.00
- **Utilities**: 83,613.57
- **Maintenance**: 50,949.14
- **Trust accounts**: 22,737.65
- **Capital programs**: 41,704.45
- **Total expenditure**: 990,985.05
- **Balance carried forward**: 457,312.63

A full copy of the school’s 2007 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 2007**

Following is a snapshot of achievements at Muswellbrook High School in 2007 in the Arts, Public Speaking and Sport. A detailed description of the school’s academic achievements is provided.

**Achievements**

**Arts**

Emma Llewellyn Honoured at H.S.C Drama ‘On Stage’ Award Ceremony

This year a contingent from Muswellbrook High School had the pleasure and privilege of attending an Award Ceremony for elite H.S.C Drama students whose works or performances had been selected as part of ‘On Stage’ – the best projects in the State for 2007.

Muswellbrook High School’s recipient was Emma Llewellyn, whose Costume Design project for the Medieval Morality Cycle play Everyman was displayed in a prime position in the Seymour Theatre’s foyer. The work consisted of four
renderings for the characters: Beauty, Goods, Good Deeds and Everyman. The skill of portrayal, attention to detail and depth of research into the highly specialised area of Medieval Costume Design, coupled with a simple but effective theatrical concept, created a body of work that was not only visually stunning in its authenticity but also of tactile interest in its display of naturally produced fabrics of linen and leather juxtaposed with rich brocades, furs and velvets.

Emma Llewelyn with her “On Stage” Drama display at the Seymour Centre, Sydney

Emma’s work was viewed by thousands of students and members of the public during the weeklong ‘Showcase’ and favourable comments and general praise for her efforts were readily forthcoming.

Sport

Muswellbrook High School offers a number of opportunities for students in a variety of recreational and competitive sports. The school’s expanding sports program includes a diverse range of activities such as Girls Self Defence, Boxing, Swimming, Girls Fitness (Curves), Golf, Indoor Soccer, Squash, Mini Tennis, Lawn Bowls and Body Balance. Our sports on offer are ever changing to provide students with the best and most wide variety of opportunities to become passionate about health and physical activity. Muswellbrook High School has continued its strong participation in traditional sports such as Rugby League, Girls Rugby Union, Touch Football, Cricket, Soccer, Basketball and Mountain Biking.

Sixteen new school records were set throughout the year in our annual Swimming, Cross Country and Athletics carnivals reflecting the sporting ability of our current students. Muswellbrook High School had twelve Hunter Representatives throughout the year in swimming, athletics, touch football, hockey and rugby league along with three representatives in the NSW Indigenous Athletics Championships.

The school had improved results in Cricket, Basketball, Rugby League and Mountain Biking. Our Open Boys Touch Football side was announced as team of the year following a highly successful year, finishing in the top eight in NSW.

Other

Public Speaking 2007

Numerous opportunities were made available to MHS students to hone their oratory skills during 2007 in the fields of Public Speaking and Debating. From Apex and Lions/Lioness Youth of the Year Quests to our very own annual MHS Public Speaking Competition and The Premier’s Debating Challenge they were placed in both prepared and impromptu situations. An impressive number of students composed and presented quality, thoughtful speeches at many different venues throughout NSW with some participating in more than one of these competitions. Adjudicators responded with positive feedback recognising their efforts and developing sophisticated communication and language skills.

Academic

Following are a number of graphs which summarise the achievement of the students at Muswellbrook High School, through a number of external testing instruments.

Literacy – ELLA Year 7

The Year 7 ELLA tests are held in the first two months of a student’s high school education. The school’s Year 8 ELLA results for 2007 indicates that 85% of the schools students are either high or proficient in literacy, and the number of students, in the low category, are at an historical low of 4%.

Numeracy – SNAP Year 7

The Year 7 SNAP tests are held in the first two months of a student’s high school education. The school’s Year 8 SNAP results for 2007 indicates that 65% of the schools students are either high or proficient in numeracy, and the number of students, in the low category, are at an historical low of 2%.
School Certificate

The 2007 School Certificate results indicate that Science and English-Literacy performed close to the school’s average in the past with most students achieving in the top three bands. Mathematics saw an increase in the number of students achieving in the top two bands, with an increase in the number of students achieving Band 2. The faculty is evaluating processes that may help increase the numbers of students achieving the higher bands.

The numbers of students achieving in the top three bands of Australian History and Australian Geography improved significantly in the 2007 School Certificate.
School Certificate relative performance comparison to Year 5 (value-adding)

The 2007 HSC results demonstrated significant improvement in the achievements of the HSC cohort at the school. The data shows that from a selected sample of HSC courses that most achieved above state average, as well as above the long term school average.

Value added figures confirm that many students performed most competently and that the middle group of students performed exceptionally well. Students in the high band also outperformed students from the previous four years, including the performance of other students in the local school group.

National benchmarks

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>80.5%</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>81.6%</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>86.7%</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>83.7%</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>59.5%</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>61.2%</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Significant programs and initiatives

**Aboriginal education**

Continued learning support has been achieved through the provision for students in Stage 4 of an In-Class Tutor (ICT) and the school Aboriginal Education Worker provided further support through monitoring of attendance, addressing welfare issues and developing Personal Learning Plans for Year 7 students.

In 2007, four Aboriginal students completed their HSC, one student achieving three Band 5 results, four completed their Preliminary studies and a further 8 students completed their School Certificate.

Three students attended an Aboriginal Student Leadership camp with one student selected to be a representative for Upper Hunter Schools in Hunter network meetings.

Student results, attendance and retention for Aboriginal students are summarised below:

Aboriginal student literacy continues to improve in Stage 4. 68% of Year 8 students were in the top two bands for literacy compared to 53% in Year 7, 2006, after doing the ELLA tests.

Numeracy of Aboriginal students in Stage 4, has regressed with year 8 students in 2007, achieving below the expected benchmarks.

**Student Attendance**

Attendance rate by Aboriginal students improved from 81% in 2006 to 88.3% in 2007

**Student Retention**

Retention of Aboriginal students from 2006 to 2007 from Year 8 to Year 12 was 89%.

**Multicultural education**

Muswellbrook High School hosts exchange students through the Rotary Exchange Program each year. In 2007 there was a student studying in Year 11.

Mrs Wendy Wales was the Anti Racism Officer in 2007. She was responsible for the implementation of the Anti Racism Policy and for advising on racism issues within the school.

The awareness of multicultural issues was enhanced by the annual cultural exchange visit by our Japanese sister school, Sayama Seiryo Senior High. Students from Sayama were hosted by staff and students from Muswellbrook High School.

**Respect and responsibility**

The success of “Enviro Day” highlighted the need for respect and responsibility in our student body. Events held throughout the day emphasized the issues associated with the environment and what the school can do to assist.

Our students supported the activities of local service clubs. Participating in the Lion's Youth of the Year exposes students to the good work done by these clubs, including the Rotary Exchange Program.

An ANZAC Commemoration Observance was held at the school with visiting returned servicemen attending.

Our students participated in the town’s ANZAC Day Ceremony by marching, assisting with the service, laying a wreath on behalf of the school community and contributing by singing of the hymns.

SRC fundraising activities featured support for the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Appeal, with our school raising a record amount.

The success of the Benefactor’s Morning Tea during Education Week and the Back to School for a Day further endorsed the respect for the school community held by our student body. Joe and Margaret Mathews were the school's guests for Back to School Day.

In the Muswellbrook Shire Annual Community Awards our students were again successful, with the Young Person of the Year being awarded to Murray O'Keefe a Year 12 student at the school in 2006.

**Other programs**

**Student welfare**

Welfare lessons are timetabled as part of the curriculum in Year 7 and Year 8. This time is used to help the Year Advisers get to know the students in their year group. Issues surrounding the wellbeing of pupils are discussed. Referral to qualified student counsellors is made as required.

The introduction of Special Religious Instruction through timetabled lessons within the curriculum commenced for Year 7 in 2007 and will expand to include Year 8 in 2008. This has been achieved through the employment of a part time SRE
teacher by the local Minister's Executive and church groups of Muswellbrook.

The annual Presentation Ceremony was moved to the evening in 2007. Student achievements in academic, sporting, cultural and citizenship endeavours were recognised and rewarded on the night. The new arrangements for the presentation ceremony were well received by the school community and the night ceremony will be permanent from 2007.

Further refinement of the Award/Commendation system was made throughout the year. Reward for high academic performance and good citizenship is made through presentation of certificates at assemblies and the presentation of the Principal’s Medallion at the Annual Presentation Ceremony.

Year 7 Development Days were a feature of the junior welfare curriculum. Over three days, both boy’s and girl’s health issues were addressed and the police from the PCYC held discussions about the law and anti-social behaviour as part of the agenda. A visit to a Japanese restaurant in Newcastle and a science excursion were other highlights of the days.

Performances by visiting professional actors had bullying and avoidance strategies as the central theme. Students were given the opportunity to identify with the plays and took part in the discussions that followed.

Implementation of the Anti-Bullying Policy is assisting in the swift identification of bullies and associated incidents being promptly addressed.

**Drug Education**

The delivery of drug education programs in the stage 4 and 5 PDHPE classes has been augmented with support by lessons from a specialist educator from Hunter Life Education Australia. This initiative has been implemented for three successive years and is funded by Mt Arthur Coal. The lessons are tailored and developed in consultation with the school PDHPE staff and address prevalent issues in the Upper Hunter community including teenage binge drinking and risk taking behaviour.

In November the school hosted a community drug forum which included key representatives from local interest areas including council, the police, health and welfare organisations.

**Environmental Education**

In 2007 the school was awarded a grant from the Hunter/Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority with funds devolved through the Natural Heritage Trust. The grant has been used to integrate environmental education across all faculty areas.

As a central focus for environmental education the school held an ‘Enviro Day’ in November. ‘Enviro Day’ involved a variety of activities including a talk given by keynote speaker from the Powerhouse Museum as well as 35 workshops being run on a diverse range of environmental and cultural themes including an Aboriginal mural, scrap metal sculpture, energy, biodiversity, waste and stormwater audits, water testing, various Aboriginal cultural activities, writing the environment and soil testing.

There were also significant opportunities for teachers to network with the presenters.

The day culminated with an SRC led concert that included an original dance performance from Support class students and staff, fully accompanied songs from Music elective students, acknowledgements and an audiovisual review of the day.

**Programs in Special Education and students with additional needs**

Muswellbrook High School is committed to providing an inclusive learning environment for all students.

MHS has 3 support classes, a regional behavioural unit and funded mainstream students including, students with vision impairments, medical conditions, behavioural difficulties and hearing impairments.

Throughout 2007, students have been encouraged to undertake a wide variety of subject choices enabling them to achieve excellence in their desired post school options. Students attend mainstream classes with curriculum accommodations and specific learning adjustments provided to ensure all students achieve.

Work Placement has been a priority for 2007 and 2008. Senior students in the Gold Support class have been participated as part of the Stage 5 and 6 Work and The Community Syllabus. Students have prepared for job interviews with prospective employers, and all students will be given work placements during their senior years. Work placement is an important component of support students transitioning into the workforce.

Students in our Junior Support Classes have engaged in a task orientated, community access program. This program aims to promote the continuity and coherence of daily living skills. Students develop the skills necessary to become productive citizens within the community such as communication skills, budgeting and personal safety.

The school also has an extensive Learning Support Team which meets regularly to discuss and develop student-centred welfare programs.

The Learning Support Team also identifies students who may benefit from additional assistance. Through collaboration with staff, parents and external agencies the Learning
Support Team coordinates relevant support to be provided to students, ensuring each student's individual educational needs are met.

The Support Teacher Learning Assistance (STLA) staff allocation for Muswellbrook High School is 1.3. In 2007 the allocation was filled by a full time teacher supporting students in years 7, 8, 9 and 10 and the Deputy Principal (DP)–Curriculum (0.3) supporting students in years 11 and 12.

At the beginning of term 3 2007, a permanent full time STLA, was appointed. This teacher continued to work with the students in years 7 to 10, using small withdrawal groups and in class support. At the same time the DP-Curriculum was promoted, to another school, and a casual teacher was employed to cover the 0.3 for the remainder of the year specifically targeting year 11 and some year 10 students. This teacher focussed on guiding and assisting with assignments leading to the School Certificate 2007 and Higher School Certificate 2008.

At the end of 2007, a review of the role of the STLA, and the way it is organised at MHS, was conducted and strategies were implemented to better support students in 2008 particularly those students who are identified as needing additional support in Literacy and Numeracy.

Vocational Education Program

Muswellbrook HS in association with Hunter Valley Youth Express, TAFE and Employers offers students alternative employment streams through the delivery of VET and TVET (TAFE) programs. Currently in Australia, there is a skills shortage in many industries and these programs provide the opportunity for students to learn skills that will greatly enhance their prospects of a career in their chosen field.

In 2007, there were 86 students enrolled in the four VET courses offered by Muswellbrook HS. These are Retail Services, Hospitality, Metals and Engineering and Primary Industries. TVET numbers were 47 enrolments in 2007. Many students also enjoy the fact that they can study at TAFE as part of their overall study program at Muswellbrook HS. Courses range from Automotive to Beauty Therapy.

The school also offers valuable interview experience for students, with employers offering their time to support students in applying for a job as well as giving students constructive feedback on their interview performances. This is a program that MHS has been hosting for 4 years, with all schools in our region participating each year.

MHS is currently looking at other VET courses that may be suitable for students to study. These programs are invaluable in allowing students to stay at school and learn real workplace skills for their chosen industry.

We have seen solid growth from year to year with the courses that are offered. This is reflective of a state wide trend due to the fact that in many industries there are skills shortages. VET programs offer students a start in their workplace learning and a high chance of employment after they have completed their schooling.

Progress on 2007 targets

Target 1

 Improvements in student attendance and truancy rates at Muswellbrook High School.

Our achievements include:

• A new computerised attendance system was implemented in 2007 has promised much, but problems with compatibility with DET attendance policy and the OASIS school record system has limited its effectiveness. It is being used to record Stage 6 attendance in 2008, while the issues with the system are evaluated

• Reporting of student absence data to parents was improved and reporting of reasons for student absences was more accurate

• A concerted effort to identify and work collaboratively with parents has seen a reduction in full day and long term truancy.

At the end of 2007, a review of the role of the STLA, and the way it is organised at MHS, was conducted and strategies were implemented to better support students in 2008 particularly those students who are identified as needing additional support in Literacy and Numeracy.

Target 2

 An effective physical learning environment for all students

• The majority of classrooms at Muswellbrook HS are now air conditioned and it is hoped that by the end of 2008 all learning spaces will be fully air conditioned

• Through funding from the Investing in Our Schools Program, $45000 was spent on improving access to the bus bay; landscaping and erosion control works on the oval and bus bay; and the sealing of a driveway entrance to the school.

• Emergency evacuation and lockdown procedures were reviewed, tested and successfully implemented.

• The School Improvement Team conducted a full audit of the school to determine the
school's maintenance priorities in 2007, for implementation in 2008.

- School OH&S priorities are to be determined by a newly constituted OH&S committee in 2008.

**Target 3**

*Quality assessment instruments for the assessment of Higher School Certificate (HSC) and School Certificate (SC) students.*

- Successful evaluation of the HSC and SC assessment processes will be outlined later in this report.
- Assessment instruments effectively assessed the performance in the HSC cohort resulting in a significantly improved performance of many students at the HSC assessment and examination in 2007.
- New teachers to the school were effectively inducted to the assessment procedures in Stage 6, through a consistent approach and documentation supported by the executive and implemented by Head Teachers, Teacher Mentor and Year 12 teachers.
- Effective HSC monitoring procedures, were set in place to ensure that all mandatory assessment procedures were adhered too.
- The Curriculum Committee and Executive have assembled and distributed a coherent and consistent assessment policy to all staff and students of Stage 5 for implementation in 2008. This policy clearly outlines to students and parents the assessment requirements for all courses in Stage 5.

**Key evaluations**

It is a requirement for all NSW public schools to conduct at least two annual evaluations – one related to educational and management practice and the other related to curriculum. The school has school carried out evaluations of the implementation of the Anti-Bullying Policy and the implementation of Assessment Policies and Practices in Stage 5 and 6.

**Educational and management practice**

Implementation of the DET’s Anti-Bullying Policy, has been a feature of the Muswellbrook High School Welfare Policy. With the policy in place for two years, it was determined to evaluate how the students felt about the success of the implementation of the policy.

**Background**

Bullying of and by students in a high school situation, is an issue that all schools need to address. The introduction of the Anti Bullying Policy, two years ago, has given the school the chance to review and strengthen its strategies for dealing with bullying and to be proactive in preventing the circumstances that allow bullying to occur.

A survey on bullying was conducted with the all students at MHS. Time constraints enabled only the Stage 4 (Years 7 and 8) survey results to be processed for the 2007 Annual Report. The students were asked seven questions and the results were tabulated as presented below.

**Findings and conclusions**

- 1. Have you been bullied at any stage at Muswellbrook HS?
- 2. Have you been bullied recently at Muswellbrook HS?
- 3. Do you feel safe on the way to or from school?
- 4. Do you feel safe in the playground at school?
- 5. Do you feel safe in the classroom at school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes %</th>
<th>No%</th>
<th>No Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question 1</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 3</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 4</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 5</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The response to Question 6, “Name a Good Citizen of our school – a person who helps out etc”, is presented below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>School Captains</th>
<th>SRC Reps</th>
<th>Friends students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 7 “What do teachers do when you report bullying?” gained the following responses which are a representative sample from the responses;

- they go and find the bully and deal with the situation.
- they talk to the bullies and call their parents.
- follow up with the bully and punish them if required.
- they should sort it out so everyone is happy.
- they do what they can to stop it.
- never been bullied, cannot comment.
- they try to direct the bully away from the situation.
- try to find out the reason behind the bullying.
- tell the Principal.
- teachers pass it onto the deputy principal.
− put the problems in a bully box.
− they are given detention.

Future directions
The survey shows that a vast majority of students are safe in the school environment and have developed good strategies to deal with bullying, if it does occur. A substantial number of students have had no experience of being bullied and it seems it is not common at the school in Stage 4.

The school will continue to develop its policies and procedures to ensure that the processes to address and prevent student bullying, are understood by all students, staff and the school community.

The student survey reaffirms the importance of consistency in dealing with student bullies and the need to ensure all issues are managed in line with the Anti-Bullying Policy guidelines. Students expect that all bullying should be remediated and prevented from re-occurring.

The clear focus of the implementation of the Anti-Bullying policy is to guarantee that MHS continues to be a safe school for all students. Future evaluations will ensure that the policy is working effectively to limit bullying and the environmental issues that may exacerbate it.

Curriculum
The implementation of Assessment policies and practices in Stage 5 and 6 were evaluated in 2007/2008, with a view to determining what constituted best practice in Stage 6 and to choose strategies that would further improve curriculum delivery and assessment in Stage 6 and assist in developing best practice procedures in Stage 5 in 2008.

Background
The staff at Muswellbrook High School, have been reviewing and evaluating the methods used to teach, support and assess students who are undertaking the HSC in Year 12. Many strategies were undertaken to support the students doing the HSC and the assessment process was changed and fine tuned to ensure that it most accurately assessed the students against the course outcomes.

The Hunter Central Coast Regional guidelines for conducting and monitoring senior assessment practice and process were implemented into Year 12 assessment practice.

Teaching practice and revision techniques were monitored and evaluated to identify areas where best practice was resulting in high achievement of course outcomes by students.

Best practice in teaching, assessing and supporting students in Stage 6, will then be used to guide the introduction of these methods of assessment etc in Stage 5.

Findings and conclusions
Changes that were implemented as a result of this review include the:
− Rewriting of the school's Assessment Policy providing more detailed information for students, parents and teachers.
− Implementation of a new appeals process for students in the areas of Illness and Misadventure and Student Appeals for examinations and assessment tasks.
− Extensive development and monitoring of HSC compliance folders to ensure adherence to school and departmental policies on assessment process.
− Introduction of a new method of student subject changes and the tracking of changes over stage 5 and 6 including the creation of a tracking database.
− Development of a new school proforma for assessment tasks to ensure consistency of assessment practice across all courses.
− Writing of a new support booklet for Stage 5 including all dates for assessment tasks, nature of the tasks, outcomes assessed and School Certificate information.

Future directions
Positive outcomes of this review include:
− Greater dissemination of information to teachers, students and parents through formalised processes and support materials.
− Consistency across all faculty areas in regards to assessment standards, assessment tasks, requirements and information provided.
− Development of a support network for students through the appeals process.
− Involvement of staff and school community in reviewing the Stage 6 course selection process in Year 10, and the guidelines for changing courses during Stage 6.
− Regular reviews of processes and program delivery allowing the Principal closer monitoring of HSC and SC compliance.
− Increased communication of information to students, teachers and parents providing support in the assessment and monitoring process.

Other evaluations
Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction
In 2007/08 the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school and the processes implemented to support the 2007 Year 12 throughout their HSC year.
Their responses to these surveys are as follows.

**Students** were interviewed via a focus group after they had completed their HSC. In studying for their HSC in 2006 and 2007 they sighted the following things as being important in being successful;

- Students being encouraged by teachers and parents about their ability to do well in their studies.
- Having good teachers who were passionate about their courses and articulated high standards in their course work.
- Help and advice from staff and teachers about planning and techniques important for doing the HSC, as well as preparing for the future after the HSC.
- The provision of extension work was essential for doing well at the HSC.
- The provision of the library after school for HSC students was highly valued by some HSC students.

Some areas that could need evaluation are;

- The need to adopt a consistent approach to essay techniques between faculties and courses.
- Emphasising the importance of literacy in achieving at a high level at the HSC and the need to ensure a solid literacy base is obtained at an early stage of the student’s education.
- The importance of being able to demonstrate to students what the standards of achievement are in each of the courses. Many students found the Board of Studies standard packages, not very helpful.

**Teachers** provided feedback through their Head Teachers at an Executive review of the 2007 HSC process early in Term 1, 2008. Many of the observations that were made by the students were recognised as being important in supporting the students through their HSC process. Head Teachers recognised that many of the processes used to support students resulted in some of the school’s best HSC results in recent times.

The importance of teaching staff, articulating and expecting high standards of students was identified as being essential in ensuring that students achieve to the best of their ability.

The school’s formal and informal student advisory network was used extensively by the students and helped give students the best opportunity to achieve highly.

The school’s careers advisory network was essential in helping students to focus on their post school options and to ensure that all students were adequately prepared to pursue their tertiary or further education options when they had finished their HSC.

Many of the 2007 teachers evaluated the reasons for their course success in the 2007 HSC so that they could embed these practices into teaching future senior and junior courses.

Parents were surveyed after the completion of the 2007 HSC process. Following are the five questions that were asked of a sample group of parents and the percentage responses are set out below.

- 1. Did you understand the HSC assessment process that your child undertook in 2007?
- 2. Were you able to support your child as much as you would have liked during their HSC year?
- 3. Would you have benefited with more information from the school on how to support your child through their HSC year?
- 4. Did you have ample opportunity to discuss your child’s Year 12 education with their teachers and other staff at the school?
- 5. From your experience as a HSC parent do you have any suggestions that would help assist future Year 12 parents in supporting their children through their HSC studies?

The responses to these questions are as follows;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Yes %</th>
<th>No %</th>
<th>Unsure %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question 1.</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 2.</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 3.</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 4.</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 5.</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A sample of responses from the parents to question 5, were as follows;

Need to get the study habits organised early in life.

Encourage group studying to avoid stress and encourage kids to be relaxed.

School communication needs to start early in year 11 and with small groups.

More frequent parent/teacher interviews with senior students and parents at a variety of times.

Maybe some study groups for the parents to help their kids through the HSC.

Need more preparation in year 11 for both parents and students to prepare for the huge year of the HSC.

Do not leave things too late to start –organisation.

Parents need to help, encourage and evaluate time spent on certain subjects.

Reassure students that if they do not get the UAI they would like, it is not the end of the world and only expect them to do their best.
Talk more to students about different subjects before they decide their subjects for the HSC. Students are picking subjects that are not helpful for UAI marks for future careers. Be there for your child and put up with their moods and keep the communication open with your children, ask questions to support them. Re-evaluate early morning classes.

Professional learning

A greater proportion of professional learning funds were aligned to address the areas of HSC Compliance, Vocational Education and Training and Beginning Teachers. Staff were involved in professional learning activities including beginning teachers inductions, KLA conferences, teacher network days and coordinators workshops, programming and syllabus implementation workshops for Stage 6, implementation of Information and Communication Technology, and welfare and equity activities.

With a significant number of teachers at the school within their first three years of service, resources were directed towards allowing extensive support through mentoring and observation, school-based new teachers support meetings and workshops and development of class management techniques as well as accessing local and regional induction and support programs.

Staff Development Day activities had as primary focus:
Term 1 – Building a quality learning environment
Term 2 – Assessment and teaching strategies
Term 3 – Development of quality assessment tasks

School development 2006 – 2008

School Development outcomes for 2008 are outlined below and reflect outcomes that are part of the school’s Development Plan for 2006 to 2008.

1. Improved outcomes for students through quality teaching and learning practices in Stage 5 and 6.
2. Improved Literacy and Numeracy outcomes for all students.
3. Improved retention and attendance of students through strategies to improve attendance and engagement of students to further learning.
4. Improvements and augmentation of technology hardware and software will ensure improved teaching and learning outcomes.
5. Improvements in the school’s OH&S processes.

Targets for 2008

- Improved retention of students through strategies to improve engagement of students to further learning.
- Improved literacy and numeracy outcomes for all students.
- Improved teaching and learning outcomes for students and teachers through the development of access to, and use of hardware and software within the school.

Target 1

**Improved retention of students through strategies to improve engagement of students to further learning.**

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Using the Hunter Regions tracking tool to profile the characteristics of a student leaver.
- The use of student profiling to enable the development of strategies to improve student engagement.
- Recognition of alternative legitimate pathways for students to further education e.g., Apprenticeships, TAFE Certificate courses and traineeships, before and after the HSC.
- The development of an appropriate Stage 5 and 6 curriculum by the curriculum committee.
- Middle schools strategies to develop skills that ensure improved students engagement and attendance.

Our success will be measured by:

- Using profiles of student leavers to develop improved strategies in student welfare and curriculum to improve retention and attendance.
- Improved student retention from year 7 to 12 to Higher School Certificate or equivalent further education.
- A revised stage 4 and 5 curriculum that better meets the needs of a wide range of abilities and social and career aspirations.
- Improved student attendance and reduction in long term and fractional truancy.
- Improved student engagement in stage 3 to 4, through co-ordinated transition strategies from stage 3 to 4, and more co-ordination through a community of schools concept with our partner schools.

Target 2

**Improved literacy and numeracy outcomes for all students.**

Strategies to achieve this target include:
• Focused programs and strategies of literacy education from years 7 to 12, using the schools STLA staff.

• All faculties to demonstrate the integration of “literacy across the curriculum” strategies in their programs and classroom teaching.

• Use of ELLA and SNAP data from 2007 and the National Assessment Program (NAP) 2008, to target areas of identified need in literacy and numeracy for students of all abilities.

• The school executive to examine SNAP 2007 and NAP 2008 data to formulate strategies to improve student performance in numeracy across the curriculum.

• Preparation of the students and school community for the new National Assessment Program testing process, for literacy and numeracy in Year 7 and 9 in 2008.

Our success will be measured by:

• STLA program improving student literacy, engagement and achievement for students experiencing difficulty with literacy.

• Literacy and numeracy across the curriculum improves student engagement and skill levels to support student learning.

• Focused programs on literacy and numeracy developed by faculties which integrate literacy and numeracy perspectives into classroom practice.

• High level of performance by students in the National Assessment Program.

**Target 3**

*Improved teaching and learning outcomes for students and teachers through the development of access to, and use of computer hardware and software within the school.*

Strategies to achieve this target include:

• Improved access to technology, due to increased numbers of computer units, through Federal and State Government programs.

• Development of cabling/server infrastructure will support improved access to technology in more areas within the school.

• Increased availability of desk tops and laptops to teaching staff, to build technology skills base of staff.

• Greater provision of software, web pages and accessibility of resources for teaching and learning through the DET intranet and web faculties.

Our success will be measured by:

• Increased usage of computer technology by students for learning.

• Increased availability of computer technology in a greater number of learning spaces in the school.

• Increased integration of technology in normal curriculum resulting in students being more proficient in their use of technology for learning.

• Greater use of technology opens new dimensions and resources for teaching and learning. Improving outcomes for all 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.

Members of the Self Evaluation Committee included:

- Peter Crick  Principal
- Gareth Erskine  Deputy Principal
- Keith Armstrong  Deputy Principal
- Ben Wheatley  Head Teacher Admin
- Peter Harris  Head Teacher PDHPE
- Bryce O’Connor  Head Teacher TAS
- Quinn Robertson  Head Teacher Support-R
- Kay Sokulsky  Teacher
- Gail Darcy-Brown  Teacher
- Tony Borg  Careers Advisor
- Beth Halsted  School Admin Manager
- Noelle Duncan  P&C President
- Graeme Whitehead  P&C
- Vanessa Smith  P&C
- Jenny Bullivant  P&C
- Hanna Baum  School Captain
- Sharon Freeman  SRC Coordinator

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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: