Principal’s message

Ambarvale High School (AHS) is a dynamic comprehensive local high school with a focus on personalised learning, quality teaching, learning and student achievement; academic, cultural, sporting and leadership. We continue to enjoy strong partnerships with Appin, Rosemeadow, St Helens Park and Woodlands Road Public Schools that serve our shared drawing communities.

It has been a year of innovation and change. We are developing new ways of working as the various Department of Education and Communities (DEC) reforms are unfolding. Most notable this year was the changes to school funding and the introduction of the Resource Allocation Model (RAM). This change saw increased flexibility in our expenditure and hence the ability to tailor our budget to meet our specific contextual needs.

This year we created a 21st Century learning space in our library and staff were given the opportunity to both engage in training and implementation of new ways of teaching that better prepares our students for the future world.

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.

Ms L Barnott-Clement

Student representative’s message

The AHS Student Representative Council (SRC) has been a valuable resource and voice for students within the school since its re-establishment in 2011. In 2014 we saw a great number of students applying to represent their year group within the SRC. This encouraging demonstration has led to an increased number of students being elected to serve among their peers. These students continue to communicate with senior leaders and members of the executive team to meet the needs of the student body and create strong ties with the local community.

Throughout the year SRC members have had the pleasure of attending many leadership events including the Generosity, Responsibility, Integrity, People (GRIP) Conference and Halogen Young Leaders Conference. In 2014 the SRC continued to fundraise through initiatives such as big breakfasts and a Bunnings BBQ to sustain the Toasties breakfast program. Toasties provides a free healthy breakfast to students and is run by the students within the SRC with the assistance of supervising teachers. Ambarvale High School also participated in Jeans for Genes Day, facilitated by the SRC, for the first time and raised much needed funds for research into genetic diseases. To finish the year the SRC repainted and began the process of refurbishing the senior seating area with the help of Bunnings Campbelltown. This refurbishment is a gift from the 2014 Year 12 cohort and it will be the ongoing responsibility of the SRC to maintain.

In 2015 the SRC aims to have even greater numbers of students contributing to their school community through active service within the SRC. The SRC will also aim to maintain our strong relationship with local businesses including Bunnings to create greater ties with the local community. The SRC will continue to provide free breakfast to students and will aim to create a better school environment through fulfilling the needs of the student body.

Miss A Nicoll

School context statement

Our school’s strategic directions and RAM funding target reflect our core practice of developing young people into confident real life learners and citizens with high aspirations for their collective future. We are committed to delivering current best practice teaching and learning through innovative pedagogy which focuses on student-centred learning and the creation of 21st Century learning spaces.

The ethos which underpins the teaching and learning of the school community is ‘individualised education for all’. This is reflected in our staff professional development and learning which focuses on differentiation at all levels of the learning spectrum including gifted and talented initiatives to students requiring intensive learning support.

Our core values of Trust, Responsibility, Respect, Excellence and Cooperation (TRREC) are inculcated throughout Positive Behaviour and Intervention Supports (PBIS) initiatives. We are a second tier PBIS school. We systematically review our wellbeing policies and procedures to ensure
that students are rewarded for consistently demonstrating behavioural expectations. To this end our school has developed a model where students’ positive behaviour and leadership qualities are recorded through a centralised monitoring system which is then used to identify and reward our TRREC students. Our core values are also evidenced through the leadership programs which continue to strengthen with each passing year. The Ambarvale Ambassadors, Social Justice team, SRC, Environment Group, Peer Support and The Leo Club allow students to engage in their community and develop civic responsibilities.

A number of programs have been tailored to support our Aboriginal students and strong links have been created with our Aboriginal community through community gatherings held at the school, consultation with local community members including Elders and regional Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers. Initiatives include community outreach programs, in partnership with the police and Aboriginal employment agencies. Two programs which target Aboriginal students are ‘SistaSpeak’ and ‘BroSpea’k’. An upcoming newsletter on the school website will inform our Aboriginal community of activities and initiatives that are occurring at the school, as well as alerting them to opportunities for scholarships and cultural programs. Pathways to Dreaming is a tertiary initiative with the University of Western Sydney (UWS), targeting Indigenous students requiring mentoring and support to maximise their tertiary education options.

Student information

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

Student enrolment profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>438</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Management of non-attendance

Background

In general AHS students have excellent attendance. Most attend at well above the required 85% of school days.

The students with attendance below 85% are identified by frequent examination of attendance records and those whose absences are unjustified are rigorously followed up.

The Year Advisers attend their own year’s roll calls every morning so that they are aware of any continuing and unexplained absences. They follow up any of those absences immediately.
Fortnightly the Head Teacher Wellbeing issues the Year Advisers with a list of students who require explanation for absence and those Year Advisers are responsible for interviewing students and ringing parents.

Head Teacher Administration writes letters to parents regarding unexplained absences and interviews students.

Follow-up by Deputy Principals is used as required and involves student and parent interview.

For those students whose attendance fails to improve the Home School Liaison Officer (HSLO) is involved. Early HSLO intervention is pivotal to improving attendance as she can visit homes, interview carers, note contexts and involve other agencies. At AHS we involve the HSLO early in the process so that our most effective intervention can occur before a problem attender becomes a school refuser.

The school supports the HSLO intervention by rigorously following up Attendance Improvement Plans (AIPs), supporting court proceedings and attending at court ordered multiple agency meetings.

Findings and conclusions

Despite rigorously following up our absences, attendance dropped slightly over the last year, moving from 87.2% to 85.9% attendance.

The junior school has dropped marginally from 88.5% to 86.6%, whilst in the senior years we achieved 83.1% down from 85.9% in the previous year.

Future directions

The year 2015 will see the Wellbeing team continuing their direct and immediate role in improving attendance. They will continue to be the first point of intervention as they will examine the rolls on a daily basis and call parents as soon as a child fails to explain their absences.

As a new initiative going forward, the school administrative staff will also be intervening in 2015. They will send out weekly letters to parents requiring explanation for unexplained absences, with a return slip so that the process is very easy for parents to engage with.

The Head Teacher Administration and the HSLO will continue to intervene as early as possible.

### Post-school destinations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post-school destinations</th>
<th>Year 10 %</th>
<th>Year 11 %</th>
<th>Year 12 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>seeking employment</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>employment</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAFE entry</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>university entry</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (apprenticeship/traineeship and defence)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Background

Ambarvale High School post-school destination surveys are conducted every February. Surveys have been successfully completed largely via the school careers website with only a few students needing to be contacted via text or telephone call. Past surveys have determined the increasing interest in technology, science and engineering and the importance of Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses for students successfully gaining employment, apprenticeships and traineeships.

### Findings and conclusions

Post destination survey results were again pleasing. Eighty three per cent of Year 12 students have continued into tertiary education and 14% have joined the workforce. This impressively left just 3% (two students) actively looking for employment.

Out of the 83% of students successfully gaining entry to tertiary education, 46% accepted university offers to bachelor degrees of their choice. Forty three per cent of these students gained entry through a University Admissions Centre (UAC) offer and 3% gaining entry to a bachelor degree studied at a private institution such as the University of Notre Dame (Sydney). Popular degrees continue to be engineering and science with others including social science, medical radiation physics, medical and health science, education, creative writing, journalism, graphic design, commerce information and technology, policing, international studies, arts, combined law and nursing. Students undertaking double degrees continues to rise with seven students gaining entry. This is again a result of the changing world of work and its competitive nature. Students successfully offered early entry dramatically grew to a pleasing 19 students with 17 accepting the offers from the University of
Wollongong (UOW), the University of Technology Sydney (UTS), the UWS and the University of Notre Dame Sydney.

A slight decrease of students gaining entry to Technical and Further Education (TAFE) is evident perhaps a result of pleasing university offers and TAFE reforms but also growing popularity of private providers. Approximately 10% of students will attend TAFE in 2015 in a course of their choosing. Students are undertaking Certificate III, Certificate IV and Diploma qualifications in the areas of information technology and digital media, nursing, music, disability care, leisure and lifestyle, beauty, aged care, business and accounting.

A rise to 9% of students have chosen to complete Certificate III, Certificate IV and Diploma qualifications at private colleges such as the New York Film Academy, Evocca College, the Australian Careers Business College, JMC Academy and Macleay College in areas such as dramatic arts, counselling, business, hospitality, music and journalism.

Students that successfully gained an apprenticeship or traineeship doubled to 12% with most of those students continuing their VET studies from school into their apprenticeship/traineeships in the areas of beauty, childcare, construction, real estate, carpentry, retail management and heavy vehicle mechanics. Additionally one student gained entry to a heavy vehicle apprenticeship within the Australian Defence Force.

Again, as a result of the pleasing amount of students gaining entry to a form of tertiary education, a decrease is evident in students that are working full-time (6%), part-time or casual (8%) and actively looking for work (3%). The majority of these students are planning to continue their studies by applying for mid-year entry to TAFE or university in 2016.

Future directions

Ambarvale High School staff will continue to expand our knowledge and skills with tertiary education application and processes so continued support can be given to students. It is evident that individualised career action plans are successful and therefore will continue. Students have expressed appreciation of the support and monitoring when planning the next step in their education and the beginning of their careers.

Communication and support for students with this transition is successful and will continue to strengthen and adjust to the future cohorts.

Year 12 students undertaking vocational or trade training

Fifty one per cent of Year 12 students participated in a vocational education course in 2014 with 17% undertaking two or more courses. Twenty per cent of students continued their studies in this area of tertiary education. Technical and Further Education delivered vocational education courses are becoming more popular as students begin specialisation courses and Skills Pathways for Youth (SPY) courses to improve their employability and also decrease the cost of tertiary education post-school.

Year 12 students attaining HSC or equivalent Vocational educational qualification

A pleasing 98% of students undertaking a vocational education course successfully obtained their qualification. Two per cent did not due to not completing the mandatory 70 hours of work placement.

Workforce information

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

In 2014 we had 66.4 teaching staff, and this included an additional two teachers as a result of our RAM. We have continued to employ the two Student Learning Advisers who were charged with the responsibility of supporting curriculum teachers to increase the level of personalised learning occurring in classrooms.

This included co-planning, team teaching, the collection of learning evidence and the analysis of data to inform future planning and delivery. They were also responsible for overseeing the refinement of Student Learning Conferences.

Mr David Macpherson joined our senior executive team as Deputy Principal.

Ms Beth Bridle was successful in gaining the new position of Head Teacher Teaching and Learning. This is a non substantive position created through the allocation of RAM funding.

A large number of outstanding temporary teachers were on staff throughout the year; filling both short term vacancies and as the human
resource component of our Improving Numeracy and Literacy National Partnership funding.

**Workforce composition**

<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>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teacher(s)</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning and Support Teacher(s)</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Librarian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of ESL</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Counsellor</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Administrative &amp; Support Staff</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>86.1</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Australian Education Regulation, 2014 requires schools to report on Aboriginal composition of their workforce.

During 2014 we did not have any staff located at our school that identified as Aboriginal however, a number of Aboriginal DEC staff spend time in our school working with staff, students and parents.

**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>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Professional learning and teacher accreditation**

In 2014 Professional Learning (PL) involved all staff both teaching and school administrative and support staff in a variety of initiatives from in-school programs to statewide DEC events. These activities were diverse and designed to reflect the priorities of the 2012-2014 School Management Plan and the mandatory training associated with duty of care obligations.

Professional Learning is conducted at school by using the expertise of existing teachers and by engaging educational experts to present at staff meetings, faculty meetings and to staff focus groups. Staff also engaged in PL at a variety of external locations with participation in workshops, conferences and meetings that were regularly held off site during school hours and after school or on weekends. Increasingly PL is also available to staff via online training courses and this provides staff with the versatility to manage PL in their busy and demanding timetable.

An important area of PL continued to be student wellbeing initiatives. The school has a very strong and enthusiastic Wellbeing team who meet regularly outside school hours and also participate in external PL. Members of the Wellbeing team also facilitate and lead in-school opportunities for the whole staff. In 2014 our staff participated in PL around cyber bullying, road safety initiatives, managing students with Autism and Asperger’s, and developing strategies for students with mental health and anxiety issues, to name just a few.

Professional Learning is an integral part of the development of our new scheme teachers. Approximately 30 of our current teaching staff are new scheme teachers who work extensively with the Head Teacher Teaching and Learning. Professional Learning is a requirement of the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards NSW (BOSTES) for teachers to become eligible for Teacher Accreditation at Proficient level. There are also funds allocated to each newly appointed teacher for PL activities.

The types of PL activities available to these staff members includes lesson observation of colleagues, development of best practice in regard to teaching strategies, classroom management techniques, understanding of DEC policies and procedures, curriculum based activities as well as training in DEC mandatory requirements. Staff also took up many PL opportunities to enhance their leadership skills and through such programs as Operation Satchel developed a better understanding of the processes and procedures essential for staff and student safety in emergency situations.

In 2014 we also continued with Teacher Professional Learning (TPL) Monday which is a program where all teaching staff are allocated one period each fortnight to participate in PL led either by a member of the school executive or external presenters. Topics covered during TPL Monday in 2014 included differentiating the curriculum, formative assessment, Project Based Learning (PBL), the Self Organised Learning Environment (SOLE) and teacher preparation for Student Learning Conferences (SLC).
A new PL initiative was our twilight sessions which were three hour PL sessions after school and in 2014 our staff completed mandatory training in child protection, differentiation of the curriculum and E-safety training online.

**Beginning Teachers**

The funding provided for newly appointed, that is first or second year, substantive teachers has been used to release those teachers for the required time as outlined in the Great Teaching Inspired Learning document. Teachers were given options as to how they would like to spend those funds and the majority chose to have a regularly reduced load.

These teachers were also matched to experienced mentors, commonly from outside of their faculty areas. Mentors and their mentees met once per week to discuss and reflect on teaching practice and experiences within the school. Mentors were also providing information and professional development around the role of the mentor and how to hold effective discussions with their mentee.

Regular meetings were facilitated by the Head Teacher Teaching and Learning to provide information and support for all teachers seeking accreditation. This also provided a professional platform for reflection and collaboration between early career teachers and helped to establish cross faculty relationships within our school.

**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>Date of financial summary</th>
<th>30/11/2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward</td>
<td>392673.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
<td>558614.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>912723.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
<td>154061.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>17668.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust receipts</td>
<td>19181.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canteen</td>
<td>144338.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total income</strong></td>
<td>2199261.31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Expenditure**           |            |
| Teaching & learning       |            |
| Key learning areas        | 134968.73  |
| Excursions                | 50197.03   |
| Extracurricular dissections| 36118.64  |
| Library                   | 19000.00   |
| Training & development    | 15750.58   |
| Tied funds                | 870619.89  |
| Casual relief teachers    | 150740.49  |
| Administration & office   | 142042.61  |
| School-operated canteen   | 143483.90  |
| Utilities                 | 117996.20  |
| Maintenance               | 28035.23   |
| Trust accounts            | 33120.73   |
| Capital programs          | 0.00       |
| **Total expenditure**     | 1742074.03 |

| **Balance carried forward** | 457187.28 |

Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

**School performance 2014**

**Arts**

**Background**

The Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA) faculty consists of two Music teachers and 3.5 Visual Arts teachers. Two Stage 4 Visual Arts classes (12 periods) were taught by teachers from outside the faculty with Visual Arts qualifications. The mandatory Music and Visual Arts course are taught in a semesterised fashion in Years 7 and 8. Support Unit students participate in Visual Arts and Music for six periods per fortnight in all years.

In 2014 the following courses were studied:

Stage 4: Music and Visual Arts
Stage 5: Music, Visual Arts and Photography
Stage 6: Music, Visual Arts, Visual Design and Photography
Support: Music and Visual Arts

Findings and conclusions

The annual CAPA exhibition was staged in late November and was a resounding success with artworks and musical performances by students. The exhibition included woodwork projects completed by the Technological and Applied Studies (TAS) faculty.

A short film was produced by a Support Unit class which was entered in the Film by the Sea film festival. It was included in the high school screening at the Sutherland Entertainment Centre. More films will be entered in this year’s festival.

The new keyboard lab operated successfully for all stages. The lab allows students to work in pairs to learn duets with some students providing peer tutoring to classmates.

The new performance ensembles performed at the Year 7 Meet and Greet, Multicultural Day, presentation assemblies and were the musical highlight of the annual exhibition. Mr Olsen’s Year 10 elective Music class worked hard to perform for the first time at the Multicultural Day concert in collaboration with dancers from the Support Unit.

Future directions

An instrumental tuition program will be introduced to provide students with individual and group tuition. The program will be subsided by the school.

An art club known as ‘REX’ will meet each Tuesday to give students the opportunity to produce artworks. We plan to enter more films in the 2015 Film by the Sea film festival and work with our community of schools to produce films for the primary festival films.

Sport

Background

Ambarvale High School students continued their achievement and participation through 2014. All three of our sporting carnivals ran with great success. The students that excelled at our school carnivals were then able to represent our school further at the Fisher Zone and Sydney South West (SSW) carnivals. At these carnivals we had many students display their talents and competed with excellent sportsmanship. We had a wide range of students who achieved excellent results with five students representing our region at the state athletics carnival and one student representing our region at the state cross country carnival.

During the 2014 year our school participated in numerous knockout carnivals. All students should be congratulated on their efforts and participation; they displayed good teamwork skills and represented the school with pride at all times. All knockout and sport coaches should be commended on their efforts for both coaching the teams in their own time and the ongoing organisation that is involved. Without them this knockout sport competition would not be possible.

We had several students selected to represent the zone in various sports, with one student being a state representative in Rugby Union.

This year, our sports organisers were in charge of running the Year 7 and 8 Zone Gala Day. The Year 8 Gala Day was a huge success with numerous teams winning the competition for the day. Unfortunately, the Year 7 Gala Day had to be cancelled due to wet weather.

The ‘Ambarcup’ continued into its third year at AHS. This is an initiative to meet the enthusiasm of competition between staff and students in a variety of sporting activities. This is an eagerly anticipated event by all. Students are given the opportunity to take on their teachers in the best of seven sporting contests. The winning team (staff or student body) of the ‘Ambarcup’ is announced at a presentation assembly at the end of the year.

In 2014 the Premier’s Sporting Challenge Leadership (PSCL) program enabled school students to work with our community of schools to coordinate a sports day. This gave our Year 9 and 10 students the opportunity to harness their leadership abilities in a sporting context. This program was very successful and students enjoyed the opportunity. There are now three stages of the PSCL program which involves Years 5 to 8 students in the ‘learning to lead’ stage, Years 8 to 9 in the ‘leading with action’ stage and Years 11 to 12 in ‘leading through change’.
Findings and conclusions
At AHS we had a total of 172 students represent our school at our major carnivals. This was a decrease of 32 from the 2013 year. From the 172 students who represented our school at the Fisher Zone carnivals, we had 47 who were successful and qualified to represent the Fisher Zone at the regional carnival. This was a similar number to the 2013 school year. From the 47 students who represented our region we had six students progress to compete for the SSW team at the state carnival which was an increase of five from the 2013 year. This was an outstanding effort and all students from AHS should be commended.

We had eight sports teams participate in the SSW knockout competitions at which we had a couple of teams progress to the second and third rounds. There were six teams who participated in a variety of round robin gala days. All students who represented our school in sports demonstrated excellent sportsmanship and respect to others which is great to see. A particular highlight was the deserving success of the Under-14 Girls’ Futsal Team who were regional champions. The team trained hard for this competition, consistently displayed good sportsmanship and were very deserving of their success.

Due to rapid development of our Premier’s Sporting Challenge (PSC) within our school, we are now active participants as officials and referees in many primary school sports gala days and sports carnivals. At these events we provide our PSC students to help out and lead the days in order to develop themselves.

Through the PSCL students in Years 8 to 12 organised, led and implemented a variety of sporting activities at Rosemeadow Public School (RPS) during their Primary School Sports Association (PSSA) Gala Day. This was a very successful program that enabled students to utilise their leadership skills, interact with primary students and promote AHS. Positive feedback was given from both students and staff about the performance of the PSCL AHS students.

This year the ‘Ambarcup’ broke into its third year and was hotly contested between staff and students across all seven events. The events ran were athletics, cross country, soccer, handball, snap, limbo and history battle. In 2014 the students accumulated the most wins in the fierce competition; this event continues to grow in popularity among staff and students.

At the conclusion of the year we held our annual school sports presentation where we recognised the effort, participation and skill of our students. Participants received trophies and certificates in recognition of their performance. This presentation assembly was well attended by parents, participants and their peers who were also there to congratulate our sporting stars.

Future directions
Next year we plan on increasing our staff’s skill set and ability to effectively coach and produce highly skilled sports stars in a range of sports.

For the 2015 school year we aim to continually increase the amount of students participating in sports to increase their skill set, teamwork, communication skills, confidence, relationships and their overall health.

We are planning to participate in many more gala days for our junior years and have our sporting teams partake in gala days, special events and round robin competitions.

For 2015 we hope to see the enthusiasm for competition between staff and students increase. Due to the popularity of the ‘Ambarcup’ competition it will be continued in 2015 as a means of attracting the students during carnivals. It is also predicted we continue to see the presence of the leadership team partaking in the events which will further their leadership capabilities in organising the teams from the student body.

We look forward to the 2015 year and intend to continue to improve in all sporting areas. We hope to continue to be amazed by the talented students at AHS and the generosity and willingness of our student volunteers.

Careers/School to Work (STW)
Background
School to Work, careers and transition programs at AHS are ever broadening, changing and adapting to meet the needs of each student, each cohort, the community, tertiary education and worldly influences. Students in Years 10 to 12 continue to develop individual career action plans that are closely monitored and adjusted to suit the needs of the students and external influences. This is conducted in individual
counselling sessions and classes with Mrs Ellem. This continues to be crucial in allowing students to clearly define areas of improvement and plan ways to achieve their goals. Students feel more at ease with their career planning and achieve success by reaching their short term goals and building confidence in their skills.

Careers lessons continued to be held for students in Years 9, 10 and 11 with regular meetings and counselling sessions for Year 12. Embedded in the careers program is the delivery of: ‘All My Own Work’ to Year 10; School to Work Program to Years 9 to 12; Work Readiness Training to Years 9 and 10; interview training, mock interviews and a variety of STW events utilising the community and local businesses for informative and mentoring roles. The opportunity for block work experience for Year 10 was again available for students in May and other work experience programs and opportunities were available throughout the year when requested or needed. These embedded programs follow the Australian Blueprint for Career Development and are revised and edited each year to adapt to each cohort’s needs.

Outside of these embedded programs students continue to be invited to attend individual careers counselling. This extra time and assistance allows the student to delve deeper into their individual short and long term goals in regards to future career pathways, tertiary education applications and allows for the revising of students’ individual career action plans. The result is a smoother transition to tertiary education and/or the workforce.

In 2011 many changes were made to counteract the challenges of the New School Leaving Age (NSLA). These changes have continued to be developed for each cohort and their individual needs.

**Findings and conclusions**

Implemented careers/STW events continue to be redeveloped with the focus maintained on increasing employer and business partnerships. This interaction with our students broadens students’ exposure to the ‘world of work’ and increasing their awareness of the many opportunities that are available. These events have proven to build students’ confidence when discussing their aspirations and interacting with ‘employers’. Consequently students are more able to communicate their employment skills in an interview, are more focused on their individual career action plans and what they need to do to reach their goals.

The importance of individualising a student’s career counselling is becoming more evident as the ‘world of work’ and the labour market is dramatically changing. Changes in tertiary education, TAFE reforms and budgeting is greatly changing students’ education access and ambition. Students are becoming more aware and open to the possibilities of private providers. Early entry, university, colleges and alternate entry courses are becoming more popular and successful with our students.

Once again the business breakfast introduced new faces of many businesses and past work experience employers that were keen to participate in our STW events, acting as mentors and interacting with the students. Maintaining these partnerships is becoming easier and employer participation is growing. Once again the decision to combine the business breakfast with the speed careering event was a success, saving much needed funds and introducing new speakers to the event. An interactive station was added this year proving very successful. This gave students the opportunity to choose a career for one session and enjoy a practical element to the morning.

Year 10 interview day and work experience week was a great success with many students offered casual and full-time positions. Other successful noteworthy events included subject selection career classes and panel interviews, university discovery days, Macarthur Careers Expo, lunchtime apprenticeship group, ‘Get That Job’ day and etiquette day. The decision to run etiquette day every two years will save funds for 2015.

Early entry for universities was a great success this year and many of our students participated in university holiday programs at the University of Sydney (UOS), University of New South Wales (UNSW) and UOW.

**Future directions**

School to Work events will continue to be adapted for each new cohort as an individualised approach to careers counselling is extremely successful. Feedback will be gathered from students and will provide information specific to each cohort therefore determining future events
and opportunities. As a result of student feedback three additional Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) subjects, Childhood Studies, Horticulture and Information and Digital Technology, were added to accommodate senior students in 2015.

Individual career action plans will continue to be developed and monitored for all students from Years 10 to 12. These plans give students a visual representation of their short and long term goals to keep them focused and engaged in their studies.

There is a growing need to introduce more private providers (Sydney based), university days, mentoring days and TAFE days for Years 10 and 11 students. This would encourage and inspire earlier career decisions and introduce students to the many possibilities in tertiary education. Excursions to include these are planned for 2015.

Academic achievements

NAPLAN

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.

Year 7: from Band 4 (lowest) to Band 9 (highest for Year 7)

Year 9: from Band 5 (lowest) to Band 10 (highest for Year 9)

The My School website provides detailed information and data for national literacy and numeracy testing (NAPLAN).

Click on the link http://www.myschool.edu.au and enter the school name in the Find a school and select GO to access the school data.

NAPLAN Year 7 - Literacy (including Reading, Writing, Spelling and Grammar and Punctuation)

In 2014 our Year 7 Literacy results show growth in Grammar, Punctuation and Writing in the top three bands.

Reading shows an increase in the number of students obtaining the top band.
NAPLAN Year 7 – Numeracy

In 2014 we have maintained averages in Bands 8 and 9. We have increased the number of students achieving Bands 6 and 7 and reduced the number of students in Band 4.

NAPLAN Year 9 - Literacy (including Reading, Writing, Spelling and Grammar and Punctuation)

In 2014 the school was higher than average in the Similar School Groups (SSG) in Writing and Spelling. In 2014, 48% of students achieved the top three bands in Spelling.
Student growth was reflected in student movement from the bottom two bands into Bands 7 and 8 with 70% of students achieving in the top four bands.
Higher School Certificate (HSC)

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).

Ambarvale High School students performed exceptionally well in the subjects studied, demonstrated by the fact that 70% of Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) students gained first round offers to their first preference university course. Also 11 students successfully gained early entry into university. Three Indigenous students gained scholarships into the police force and teaching.

Outstanding results were obtained in Advanced English, Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE), Ancient History, English Extension 1 and History Extension.

We outperformed schools in our SSG in Advanced English, Standard English, Ancient History and History Extension.

Advanced English, Standard English and Ancient History were above state averages for 2014.

We continued to increase our growth in Standard English and recorded our highest level of improvement in Advanced English and Ancient History.

Our highest ATAR was 96.7 which is similar to the trend over the past few years.
Significant programs and initiatives – policy

A range of across school programs have been implemented to address our school priorities as set out in AHS School Plan 2012–2014. A number of programs were a continuation of the success we had achieved in 2013 which catered for personalised learning and targeted growth.

Student Learning Conferences (SLC)

Background

The SLC began in 2013 as an equity initiative to replace traditional parent teacher evenings. With a focus on deep and meaningful individual feedback, the SLC allows all students from Years 7 to 11 to engage in a 20 minute conversation with two teachers around their learning regardless of whether or not parents are available to attend, although we found more parents are able to attend at a specific time during the day. As a school, in consultation with the community, we found the SLC method to be preferable for most parents and caregivers and decided to carry the initiative forward into 2014.

The structure of the conferences was kept mostly the same for 2014. Meetings were held over 20 minutes to enable student and teacher, with support from parents when available, to discuss the student’s learning in a holistic way. This again included setting three learning goals for the student and a review of the half-yearly report. Students were encouraged to reflect on their behaviour and attitudes and how this may impact future learning and this was taken into account when setting goals.

The SLC were completed over three school weeks, again with each grade engaged over two consecutive days. Any parents who did not return the booking information was contacted by phone to make an appointment. To allow for more parents to engage with the process, we held evening sessions on the same night as the Year 8 and Year 10 Subject Selection Evening. This proved to be a worthwhile adjustment with 26 families attending on the evening, as day time was not an option for those parents. We also held Family Conferences which allowed parents with more than one child at our school to nominate one time to meet with both students. This meant the family would be booked in for 40 minutes and students interviewed one at a time. This was far more convenient for working parents who could attend one day for the conferences. These adjustments were made as a result of community feedback from 2013.

Another change was the inclusion of our Support Unit in the timing of the SLC. Our Support Unit has always held similar individual student meetings to discuss learning plans and progress with parents. In the interest of inclusion, we decided to hold these meetings at the same time as the SLC. This was also more convenient for parents who have multiple children in the school.

Findings and conclusions

The SLC were once again successful in addressing the two main equity issues: poor parent attendance at parent teacher nights and access for all students to lengthy, meaningful conversations around their learning. Attendance at the first SLC in 2013 was at 50%. In 2014 we increased this to 57%. The largest representative of parents was from Year 8 with 70% and Year 11 with 60% of parents attending conferences with their children respectively. As we continue to act on feedback from the community, and as parents continue to see value in this method of feedback, we hope to see this number increase further.

Feedback from students and parents was overwhelmingly positive. Parents particularly noted the individual setting of goals for students was a valuable and effective practice and felt this allowed them to be more involved with their child’s learning. Parents felt the process was once again supportive and helpful for opening conversations around school at home. They enjoyed the discussion involving the student and
that students were encouraged to take ownership of their learning in a positive way.

Staff members were also surveyed and the feedback was once again largely positive. As the process is no longer foreign to most staff members, teachers were able to involve themselves in deeper preparation for each student and felt more confident in the overall process. Many continue to see the value in this new structure and are supportive of the continuation of the initiative.

The Student Learning Adviser team reinterviewed all students at the beginning of Term 4 to determine progress with their learning goals. Goals were reviewed and adjusted accordingly. Students were able to reflect on their progress and give themselves a score out of ten for focus on an accomplishment of learning goals. We found students were largely honest in this process, taking the opportunity to fully reflect on their learning over the whole year. The follow-up interviews took place just prior to yearly exams, and were a timely reminder for students to refocus and continue to act on their goals.

Future directions

Student Learning Conferences will continue into 2015 as an effective and worthwhile initiative for the use of equity funding at AHS. The largest cost will continue to be the release of staff members to conduct the conferences, but this has been deemed a worthy investment, as it is vital all teachers have the opportunity to participate.

We will continue to hold Family Conferences and evening sessions to allow for greater flexibility for parents. In 2015 we will host a variety of outside agencies that can support families in many different ways. We hope these services will be available to work with families and provide important information as needed. This is part of ensuring the conferences are a holistic experience as there are often many outside factors that can impact upon the learning of students.

Feedback from teachers indicates they would appreciate more time dedicated to the preparation for conferences. This will be acted upon as it will largely allow teachers to assist students in developing specific learning goals, rather than generic goals. There will be additional time to read over and prepare notes from the reports, Sentral, and to gather information from other classroom teachers as well as Year Advisers.

Clearly the conferences continue to be a successful initiative and they will continue to be a valuable tool for teachers and students in achieving learning goals and outcomes.

Aboriginal education

Background

The focus on Aboriginal education at AHS was to continue to strengthen relationships with external agencies that provide engaging programs for our Aboriginal students. Our Aboriginal students were provided with opportunities and encouragement to explore and embrace their identity. On a whole school level each faculty continued to implement cultural and historical perspectives into their lessons to enrich the cultural understandings of all students.

Resource Allocation Model funding was utilised to employ a teacher two days per week to coordinate our programs and liaise with community members and outside agencies.

Findings and conclusions

The highlights of our year included:

Community events where students, their families and members of the Indigenous community were invited into the school to discuss the programs running within the school. It was found that events held in the evening were most successful. This will be considered in future planning.

We continued our partnership with the UWS. Students participated in the Pathways to Dreaming Program again this year. A total of 18 students in Years 8 to 11 attended the various campus visits and in-school mentoring sessions. For the end of year project, students selected to design a hoodie that represented their cultural background. Students attend an end of year celebration where they were presented with awards and a gift for their dedication to the program.

Heartbeat was another UWS initiative, focusing on the health of young Aboriginal people. The program invited our Year 7 and 8 students to the Campbelltown campus to participate in workshops aimed to increase students’ awareness of careers in the health sector.

Pathways to Success is an after school tutoring program run at the UWS Campbelltown campus.
Students had to apply for the program, and were selected based on the criteria of attendance, academic ability, future goals and teacher recommendation. Charlotte Clark was our only successful applicant in 2014.

From the 2013 application process for the KARI Indigenous School Scholarship Program we had four successful applicants. This year KARI not only offered financial support for students, they also offered mentoring once a fortnight to our successful students.

This year we formed a new partnership with the Marrickville Training Centre (MTC) Opportunity Hub that supplies career oriented services for students in Years 9 to 12. There is also an opportunity for the Opportunity Hub to run workshops for junior students in the future.

To end the year, a group comprised of Year 7 and 8 students were invited to go on a surfing excursion with the Campbelltown Police and Surfing NSW. The group travelled to Cronulla Beach for a surfing lesson and lunch. The excursion allowed the students to try something new and break down the barriers between the police and Aboriginal youth.

This year for Multicultural Day we invited the Aboriginal dance group from Rosemeadow Public School to perform. There was also an Aboriginal artifact display of traditional tools, paintings and materials.

Norta Norta ran this year for Years 8, 10, 11 and 12. Students were able to access tutors through class assistance, small group withdrawal or individual tutoring for English and Mathematics.

In preparation for the ‘SistaSpeak’ program in 2015, our school Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers (ACLOs) trained several female staff members, parents and external service members in the planning and implementation of the program. ‘SistaSpeak’ is a program for young Aboriginal women, aimed to inspire and motivate them to be an active participant in their education.

Learning Conferences were held in order to develop individualised education plans for our Aboriginal students. These are distributed to teachers to better assist students’ learning outcomes.

Future directions
We will maintain our participation in current programs and encourage student participation in all of the educational, cultural and training/development opportunities offered through each of the programs. We look to strengthen our relationship with our partner primary schools through a new mentoring program and build upon our whole school involvement in Aboriginal education. Also renew our focus on engagement of our Aboriginal parents and community members.

Multicultural education and anti-racism
Multicultural education
Background
Ambarvale High School prides itself on being a harmonious multicultural environment where students from 30 different language backgrounds come to school to learn together. Teaching and learning programs across all Key Learning Areas (KLAs) include multicultural perspectives, are culturally rich, inclusive and sensitively address issues such as racism and discrimination. We have 17% of our students from a background other than English. Our students draw from Arabic, South Pacific, Hindi and European cultures.

Our school continues to have a very active multicultural team led by a talented member of the school executive. Classroom teachers are supported by an English as an Alternative Language or Dialect (EAL/D) teacher one day per week to help meet the needs of Language Background Other Than English (LBOTE) and EAL/D students. A trained Anti-Racism Contact Officer (ARCO) and peer mediation is used to resolve student issues arising from prejudice or discrimination.

Findings and conclusions
Ambarvale High School values respect, cooperation and integrity. In 2014 this was demonstrated, not only in the implementation of multicultural perspectives across the curriculum, but through a number of special activities and events to promote tolerance and understanding between cultures.

In March 2014 the whole school celebrated Australia’s diversity on Harmony Day. Students participated in a number of cultural activities and enjoyed culturally influenced dance arts.
A highly successful Multicultural Day was held in November to promote tolerance and understanding of not just cultures from around the world, but also those represented among our student population. Food stalls representing cultures from the four corners of the globe delighted the senses and many a taste bud. Our Multicultural Day concert delighted and enlightened the audience. Performances drew from a rich pool of talent from our students, teachers and local community.

Funding from the 2013 Multicultural Grant allowed students from the Support Unit to engage in a rich unit of work on Laos. Lessons incorporated deep knowledge and understanding of Laotian culture, refugees in Australia, and culminated in an excursion to Nan Tien Temple, Wollongong.

Quality multicultural lesson ideas and websites were shared and promoted to teachers to help enhance the programming and implementation of multicultural perspectives in the classroom.

In 2014 we continued fundraising for the Helping Hands Charity. Our outstanding efforts raised enough money to significantly contribute to the building of boarding facilities at a Laotian school. This prized assistance will enable a number of disadvantaged students from Laos to now continue to secondary education.

Future directions
The multicultural portfolio will continue to embrace, celebrate and promote diversity in our school and community through the development of initiatives such as sharing knowledge and resources.

Anti-racism
Background
Ambarvale High School’s current ARCO, Ms Alexandra LoSurdo, was appointed in December 2013. Ambarvale High School has a diverse and multicultural student demographic, with a range of nationalities represented. The ARCO works to ensure students understand the nature and severity of racism, and enforces a zero-tolerance approach to racism within the school.

Findings and conclusion
Whilst AHS largely enjoys positive and harmonious relations between students of different backgrounds, there were 11 requests for ARCO interventions in 2014. All reported incidents related to racism took the form of verbal insults, in the form of name-calling or insensitive comments. There were no physical altercations related to racism in 2014. In those incidents where a student was identified as having made a racist comment to or about another student, the offending student was counselled about more appropriate behaviours and the necessity of maintaining a racism-free environment at school.

Future directions
In 2015, Year 8 will be receiving short anti-racism workshops in their roll call period. Students will learn about racism and the impact it has through a range of media and discussions.

Positive Behaviour and Intervention Supports (PBIS)
Background
The TRREC team has operated at AHS since 2008. The team is comprised of staff employed at a senior executive, executive and classroom teacher level. The majority of the team are Year Advisers or Assistant Year Advisers for various grades. Student Learning Advisers are now an important part of the team.

Led by the same coordinator as in 2013, the TRREC team has developed a strong, consistent membership with a group of six regular members helping secure improvement of the PBIS profile throughout the school.

The focus of the team this year was to reinvigorate the message of TRREC through emphasising the importance of our school values and also rewarding students who consistently demonstrate TRREC values.

Findings and conclusions
TRREC Reward Excursions and the TRREC Student
A key focus of the TRREC team in 2014 was to target students who consistently demonstrate TRREC values. The development of a new ‘level’ known as the TRREC student was established to recognise and reward these students for their positive contribution to the AHS environment. It was determined that two reward excursions would be held – one at the end of each semester, to raise the profile of the TRREC student before its formal introduction in 2015.
Highlights of 2014:

TRREC excursions

- Dumaresq Street Cinema Reward Excursion
  On 26 June 2014, 65 students from Years 7 to 11 attended a half-day reward excursion to view ‘How To Train Your Dragon 2’ at Dumaresq Street Cinema. Students were invited to attend the excursion by their Year Adviser or were individually nominated by a specific teacher. These students were then cross-referenced against their Sentral profile.
  The excursion was enormously popular, reaching capacity less than two days after payment opened.
  Students greatly enjoyed the film and self-monitored their behavior throughout the excursion, behaving in a manner befitting TRREC students.

- Darling Harbour – Madame Tussauds and Sydney Sea Life Reward Excursion
  On 4 December 2014, 95 students from a range of Years 7 to 12 attended a full day excursion to Darling Harbour, Sydney where they visited Madame Tussauds and Sydney Sea Life World. Again, students were invited to attend the excursion by their Year Adviser or were individually nominated by a specific teacher. These students were cross-reference against their Sentral profile.

Bin It Program

As part of a focus on developing student respect for their school environment, the ‘Bin It’ program was introduced.

The program consists of students being awarded a ‘Bin It’ slip in the playground by a member of staff for modelling TRREC values and thoughtfully disposing of rubbish. Students complete their details on the slip and deposit it in a collection box, and consequently go into the draw to win a five dollar canteen voucher.

It is a key priority of the TRREC team to reinvigorate and adjust this program in 2015.

TRREC Orientation Workshops

The transition Year 6 Advisers, with the assistance of additional members of staff, facilitated a series of workshops with Year 6 students from primary feeder schools that focused explicitly on TRREC. These workshops introduced our school’s PBIS program to the students and made links between the PBIS programs currently in place at those primary schools and our TRREC program. Ensuring that students coming into our school have a sense of familiarity with our values is of great importance.

Merit System

The merit system has continued at AHS in 2014. A key focus is to ensure that staff are regularly awarding students with blue merits and that this remains a priority of the TRREC team. In 2014 the first ‘Ambarvale Medallion’ – which marks the pinnacle of the merit system – was awarded to a Year 12 student, Maria Sawiris.

Future directions

Trust, Respect, Responsibility, Excellence and Cooperation is an ongoing program which continues to grow on a yearly basis as AHS. In 2015, TRREC will prioritise the further development and implementation of a new ‘level system’ using Sentral ‘negatives’ data to categorise students into the below categories:

- TRREC Student
- Causing Concern
- Warning
- Alarm.

This will require a re-adjustment of the monitoring card system and student education around the implementation of the new system.

In 2015 the TRREC team will continue to:

- Improve data collection from our Sentral system with a focus to maximise its value as a school-wide resource and all members of staff will be encouraged to use the system appropriately and consistently.
- Continue to embed TRREC in lesson planning and execution.
- Maintain and improve TRREC signage within the school to ensure its continued visible presence for students and staff.
- Renew focus on staff shirts which include the TRREC logo and values will be necessary.
- Refine and enhance our reward programs to engage more of our students in these positive initiatives.
Significant programs and initiatives – equity funding

In 2014 AHS received equity funding through the RAM. This is targeted funding based on the Family Occupation and Education Index (FOEI). We received RAM equity loading for socio-economic background, an additional two teachers through RAM equity staffing and RAM loading for Aboriginal background.

Aboriginal background

The $39,000 received for Aboriginal background was expended through the employment of an Aboriginal Teacher/Facilitator (AT/F), Ms Rebecca Knowles. The AT/F’s role was to coordinate and implement a wide range of learning initiatives for our students who identify as Aboriginal. As part of that role, the AT/F also developed links with the wider community with a focus on creating community access opportunities including employment, cultural links, leadership opportunities and referral services, for our students and families.

As a result of the AT/F’s position in our school, our partnership with external agencies and our Aboriginal community has been strengthened.

Community events have been well attended and have become pivotal in sharing information with parents and the wider community about programs which are running as well as raising awareness of external agencies which support Aboriginal students and families.

Links between the school and the UWS have been strengthened due to the AT/F being able to liaise with the university and target students who then access the various courses. Due to this a record number of students have accessed Pathways to Dreaming and Pathways to Success.

A partnership has been formed between our school and MTC Opportunity Hub. This partnership will see an Aboriginal caseworker operate out of the school once a week and staff and Aboriginal community members as well as staff from the Hub have undergone training for ‘SistaSpeak’ which will be delivered in 2015.

The AT/F has coordinated the completion and updating of Personalised Learning Plans which has resulted in 100% of Aboriginal students having Personalised Learning Plans.

The AT/F has ensured that students access KARI scholarships which has resulted in four of our eligible Aboriginal students successfully gaining KARI scholarships. The scholarship also contained a mentoring component this year which is extremely beneficial for our students.

Socio-economic background

Resource Allocation Model equity loading for socio-economic background was a significant funding resource for our school in 2014. We used our funding of $406,000 to support and develop student focused initiatives in a range of areas including establishment of a behavior support room, enhanced careers and senior transition programs and extensive personalised transition programs.

Significant funds were expended on a myriad of wellbeing programs and initiatives including our innovative Equine Psychotherapy program.

Funds were utilised to ‘purchase’ additional staff and personnel to support identified areas of student need. This included the employment of a Speech Therapist one day per week, an additional Learning Support Teacher three days per week, an additional School Administrative Officer and a contracted computer consultant in the last term of the year. Another significant investment for enhanced personnel was the appointment of a Head Teacher Teaching and Learning to support various pedagogical initiatives across our school.

Our highly successful and much publicised Student Learning Conferences were expanded and enhanced to maximise feedback to students and parents.

In addition to flexible funding our school also received two additional staff positions through the RAM equity funding. These positions allowed us to employ two teachers in unique positions of Student Learning Advisers. These teachers serve to support and personalise learning for all students and provide additional professional support for teachers both within the classroom and with planning and resourcing.

Funding was also used to provide student assistance to needy families, to subsidise student sporting events and to fund a wide range of student focused celebrations, awards, presentations and assemblies. In addition, funds were used for some much needed landscaping to improve our external facilities.
Learning and Support

At AHS we have 2.4 Learning and Support teacher positions as well as two Learning Support Officers who are a part of our Learning Support faculty. In their roles, they offer support to students with additional needs in a variety of ways. Our Learning Support team meet regularly with parents and caregivers in regards to support that is offered to students. In their role, our Learning and Support teachers work close with students in out of home care, as well as students with diagnosed disabilities in the mainstream setting who would benefit from assistance from outside agencies through programs such as transition to work avenues. They work closely with parents to ensure the very best outcome is met for each individual child.

The Learning Support faculty has increased engagement and learning outcomes by working with students who are either diagnosed with a disability or are recognised as needing additional support. Students may receive one on one support in class or receive help through small group withdrawal with targeted, adjusted work to suit their needs. This supports students in their ability to achieve learning outcomes. The learning support team is present across all subject areas to ensure students receive support in a range of curriculum areas.

The expertise of our Learning Support faculty is shared with the wider school community through collegial conversations with staff and presentations at TPL Monday around differentiation in the classroom. Staff members frequently seek support in making necessary adjustments for both the classroom and assessment tasks. The Learning Support faculty are also a wealth of knowledge around our students with additional learning needs and this knowledge is shared freely and regularly with staff.

Other significant programs and initiatives

Gifted and Talented (GAT)

Background

In 2014 a myriad of GAT programs were conducted across the KLAs. Due to the teacher professional training that was carried out in 2013, teachers programs and faculty plans demonstrated strengthened differentiation and extension activities.

Findings and conclusions

The school offers a range of extracurricular activities and clubs. The Science Club runs weekly as does the Tree Shepherds group. The Leo Club develops and promotes community volunteering, responsible citizenship and leadership.

Senior students are able to access In2uni and 2014 saw eight more students successfully complete the program. The In2uni program was critical in a record number of Year 12 students gaining early entry to Wollongong University.

Students in Years 7 and 10 continue to access the vacation programs at the UOW. The school uses allocated funds to support students financially so that they can access the workshops.

The Fast Forward Program targets Year 9 students who are identified as having the potential to complete university but due to significant barriers may not reach this potential.

In June 2014, we took 50 students from Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 on a cross curricular enrichment camp into the city. On the first day we had a tour of the Quarantine Station at Manly with a focus on stories of the past. We then continued on to our accommodation based in Mosman. After a bushwalk around the headland overlooking the harbour, students engaged in a creative writing session centred around the major overarching inquiry question for the camp “What does the future hold for story telling?”.

On the second day we caught a bus into The Rocks, Sydney and started our day with a tour of the Museum of Contemporary Art. This tour was conducted with a focus on creative writing based on the art works. Following lunch at The Rocks, we walked to the Sydney Observatory to learn about the wider world. We then enjoyed the afternoon sunset overlooking the harbour. In the early evening we went on a ghost tour of The Rocks area, again engaging in the rich culture and history of Sydney through stories that were both intriguing and thrilling.

This camp was intended to expose our students to a range of experiences that they may not have had the opportunity to participate in previously. For many of our students it was a definite highlight, full of enriching and engaging activities that were connected to the overarching question. When we returned to school, students continued to work on answering that question as a group project.
Future directions

In 2015 faculties will actively seek out opportunities to allow students to be involved in rich activities and extracurricular events. In order to support these initiatives the school has allocated a substantial sum from the school budget which will be utilised by faculties and teachers to engage students and allow equity of access.

Student wellbeing

Background

Wellbeing initiatives and programs at AHS are vast and dynamic to ensure they meet the needs of our students and community.

Throughout 2014, we targeted students for specific and individualised programs such as Stewart House, Links to Learning and Burnside programs. We also ran many whole school based programs such as Motivational Media as well as programs targeting specific year groups such as Brainstorm Anti-bullying Productions. In 2014 we were also pleased to provide the opportunity for students to engage in an innovative 21st Century program around goal setting, social skills and behavior modification. The Horse Assisted Learning Program was introduced as a trial and was so successful in its implementation that it will run again in 2015 with AHS students but will also be offered to our wider community of schools.

Our TRREC values moulded a variety of wellbeing initiatives that focused on areas such as language and working cooperatively in society. In conjunction with our TRREC values we provided a range of reward opportunities including visiting the Sydney Aquarium.

Our school engaged in many community based programs around current issues in society. The Police School Liaison Officer worked with students around crime awareness and prevention, and our school supported the Wear It Purple Day initiative which promotes acceptance and diversity within the community. We also ran weekly groups targeting student resilience, bullying, self-esteem and developing social skills.

Ambarvale High School has an exceptionally strong transition program to ease students from primary to high school. The transition program includes taster lessons, transition days, as well as specialised social skills lessons and gifted and talented programs. We also incorporate peer support into the transition process where we train Year 10 students to run weekly sessions around values and cooperation.

Student leadership has continued to grow within our school and we continuously aim to give students many opportunities to experience and develop their leadership potential. In 2014 we provided our leadership team the chance to further develop their skills while engaging with their peers on wider society issues by providing the opportunity to attend the National Young Leaders Conference. We also had a large jump in the number of students engaging in The Leo Club and donating many hours to volunteer agencies.

In 2014 we also took steps to collect more detailed and current medical data for all students. This includes doctor developed plans and current medications. This will allow our school to ensure that all students’ needs are met and to ensure a safe and successful learning environment.

Findings and conclusions

Many of our programs are embedded in our school calendar and therefore accepted as a part of the school program. Our wide variety of programs cater for our diverse student body and we continue to source programs from outside agencies that increase students’ engagement under the umbrella of wellbeing.

Future directions

We consistently strive to develop new and engaging programs as well as re-implementing successful past programs. In 2015 we will redevelop the Ambarvale Ambassadors Program to target leadership opportunities for all students from Years 7 to 12. This program will strive to provide higher level of community engagement while developing the students’ ability to work cooperatively and develop a wide variety of skills that are essential for their future success.

We will also see the launch of the revised wellbeing program. The new direction of this program allows for increased recognition of students demonstrating the school values. We will be looking at providing these students with more frequent rewards and benefits.
Improving Literacy and Numeracy National Partnerships (ILNNP)

Background

The objective of the ILNNP is to improve the performance of students who are falling behind in literacy and/or numeracy, including targeted groups such as students from disadvantaged backgrounds and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in participating schools. The aim of the ILNNP is to contribute to the effective use of evidence-based approaches in participating schools to lift the performance of these students.

Our focus for the ILNNP was numeracy. In 2013 the school used resources to implement the numeracy continuum in an effort to lift numeracy performance of the bottom 24% of all students in Years 7 and 8. This was continued through 2014 in Years 8 and 9. The numeracy continuum was a focus for intense professional development to improve teacher capacity and to develop meaningful assessments and programs.

Findings and conclusions

Mapping all Year 7 students on the numeracy continuum provided powerful base line data. It outlined the gaps that made it harder for students to access higher content. Data collected throughout the process showed a huge trend in student learning regressing from Years 7 to 8 when these gaps and weaknesses are not identified and responded to. We used this base line to form structured lesson units combining explanations, guided instruction, independent practice, step-by-step instructions and formative assessment. This enabled teachers to check for understanding along the way and guided teacher decision making about future instruction.

These units provided ongoing feedback that was used by teachers to improve their teaching and by students to improve their learning. They helped students identify their strengths and weaknesses and to target areas that needed assistance. Specific trained Mathematics teachers were able to recognise crucial areas of intervention and provide appropriate assistance. The targeted homework booklets were used to measure parent support and student engagement beyond the classroom and to track organisational and time management skills.

Team teaching also provided an opportunity to develop and implement innovative pedagogical approaches to improve student engagement and achievement. Structured lessons provided an opportunity to identify students ready to move through the levels on the continuum and a summative assessment was provided at the end of the lesson sequences with the results used to measure growth from earlier tasks.

Our Year 9 NAPLAN results for 2014 are testament of the hard work and dedication of the Numeracy team with every student in the target group achieving expected growth, 86% of those students achieving above the calculated expectation for growth.

Year 9 2014 NAPLAN results summary of growth

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<td>48.8</td>
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Future directions

We will continue to map students against the numeracy continuum as they enter Year 7. We will also continue to implement ‘cross-over’ lessons where the numeracy demands of other subjects are reinforced in follow-up Maths lessons. We also have teachers of Mathematics available to assist delivery of lessons across faculties where high numeracy demands have been identified.

Numeracy enrichment days and incursions will remain on our agenda as a regular occurrence along with targeted numeracy professional learning workshops for all teachers. We will work closely with our local feeder primary schools to provide context and content specific professional development and early intervention strategies.

Students learning surveys will be used to understand how individual students learn, what engages them, what they would like to achieve, where they lack skills and/or confidence and what support services they are able to access
inside and outside of school. Parents and carers and school community members will be provided with information and presentations to develop their understanding of the importance of monitoring student progress on the numeracy continuum.

**School planning and evaluation 2012—2014**

**School evaluation processes**

NSW public schools conduct evaluations to support the effective implementation of the school plan.

It is essential for schools to engage in a cyclic process of evaluation. Various models of evaluation are built into initiatives, activities, committees and meetings. Data is harvested to inform practice, measure success and drive programs.

Detailed reports on each of these are contained in this document.

- **Student Learning Conference Evaluation**
  
  Parents, students and staff were surveyed by the Student Learning Advisers in 2013 and 2014. Feedback was acted on which led to the implementation of the Family Conference model which helped working families by allowing them to address all of their children’s learnings in one time slot.

- **Tell Them From Me Survey**
  
  The information gleaned from 2014 data highlighted the need to address girls’ learning and engagement. Strategies are being developed to address the need to build girls’ confidence and participation.

- **National Data Collection Survey**
  
  In 2013 our school was a pilot and in 2014 we continued to train teachers in data collection.

  The National Data Collection Survey allows teachers to look closely at our school population to determine the exact learning and support needs of our students. By accurately identifying whether the students are low, moderate or high support needs we hope that this data collection will better allow governments to target funds accurately and efficiently.

Future directions will be aided by the added data gained from surveying the needs of new enrolments.

- **Student Focus Groups**
  
  A number of student focus groups were formed to gather information and hear student voices in regards to teaching and learning which caters for GAT students. The focus groups were videoed and presented to staff as a means of generating discussion and implementing strategies to address issues raised by the students.

- **Year 7 Transition Survey**
  
  Year 7 completed an online survey to gauge the impact and effectiveness of our school’s transition program.

- **Other less formal surveys were conducted including:**
  
  - Staff surveys relating to priorities addressed in the school plan to be implemented in 2015.
  - Aboriginal parent and student feedback
  - Post School Destination Survey
  - Project Friday Survey
  - Teacher Professional Learning Surveys
  - Tell Them From Me Survey

  The Tell Them From Me survey is an initiative put forward by The Learning Bar Inc. whereby schools are offered the opportunity to participate in various surveys across the school and community. Ambarvale High School chose to participate in the Tell Them From Me survey for the second time 2014. It is aimed at gathering detailed feedback from students to create a holistic picture of our student body. We also chose to participate in the Focus on Learning survey which was aimed at obtaining staff feedback.

  Upon completing the Tell Them From Me survey we analysed the data. The data revealed 76% of our students value school outcomes, however, 50% of students have said they currently feel engaged with their learning. We had 57% of our students indicate they plan to finish the HSC and 26% of students have indicated they will be seeking an alternate path to university by
going through TAFE or apprenticeships. However, the data also indicated girls at AHS feel less engaged and supported than boys at our school. This has led to the development of more programs designed for girls with a focus on building self-esteem and confidence and a refocus on our equality team. While it seems student motivation drops in Year 9 and onwards, students noted that the biggest influence on their motivation is high expectations from teachers, an important reminder for all teachers.

Overall, this survey provides a holistic snapshot of our school in terms of student backgrounds, motivation and general wellbeing which is why we have chosen to continue to run the survey in 2015. The levels of engagement have led to several projects across the school including Millennium Madness – the Year 7 Project Day, and ongoing investigation and professional development around new and exciting pedagogical strategies. We hope to see an increase in student engagement as a result of these initiatives.

- The Focus on Learning Survey

The Focus on Learning survey gathers data from teaching staff on all areas of school life which impact on their teaching, from levels of support from senior executive members, to classroom practice. This survey provided comprehensive data from the 26 staff members who completed it.

From the teachers who completed the survey, the majority indicated that inclusivity is the biggest driver of student learning within our school. This was closely followed by an even combination of teaching strategies, collaboration, the use of data to inform practice and learning culture. It is encouraging to see teachers reflect on their practice and the school culture as a whole. This data has been used to assist with planning of professional development and TPL Mondays.

If the opportunity arises again, we plan to complete the Focus on Learning survey in 2015.

School planning 2012-2014:

School priority 1 – Literacy and numeracy

Outcomes from 2012–2014

Increased levels of literacy and numeracy achievement for every student.

Evidence of achievement of outcomes in 2014:

- National Partnerships targeted Year 8 students in 2013, who exceeded above expected growth in numeracy in 2014.
- In Year 9, 71% of the cohort in numeracy experienced greater than expected growth.
- In Year 9 spelling we achieved a scaled score above state.
- Year 9 female students in reading achieved above the state scaled score.

Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2014:

- Employment of Head Teacher Teaching and Learning.
- Student Learning Advisers continued to create individualised Literacy and Numeracy Growth Plans targeting Year 8 students’ areas of development from their Year 7 NAPLAN results.
- Staff focus was on developing student numeracy through KLAS. To this end all staff were trained in the numeracy continuum and provided with resource packages.
- In 2014 ILNNP continued through Semester 1.
- Staff were exposed to and PL was targeted at 21st Century teaching, including Student Organised Learning, PBL and the creation of 21st Century learning spaces.

School priority 2 – Leadership and management

Outcomes from 2012–2014

Strengthen leadership and management capacity of school staff to drive school improvement.

Evidence of achievement of outcomes in 2014:

- Creation of senior executive role statement to clarify leadership within the school context.
- The executive leadership guide was produced and distributed. This document articulates the actions, skills and values of successful
educational leaders in our school and follows the leadership capabilities framework.

- Teacher Professional Learning is conducted every second Monday where staff engage in a range of learning activities, focusing on National Standards, maintaining accreditation and DEC focus such as Great Teaching, Inspired Learning and Every Student Every Child.

Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2014:
- All teachers are aware of the school plan and the priorities set out within the plan.
- Twilight sessions were held to enhance teacher learning.

School priority 3 – Engagement and Obtainment

Outcomes from 2012–2014
Students experience challenging flexible personalised and safe learning environments that recognise achievement.

Evidence of achievement of outcomes in 2014:
- Student Learning Advisers provide targeted support, team teaching, resource development and upskilling new scheme teachers on classroom management and differentiation.
- Increasing number of students accessing GAT opportunities including In2uni, Learning Labs, The Leo Club and applying for scholarships.
- Continued and expanded involvement in UWS Fast Forward program.
- Faculties offering enrichment activities including enrichment camps, extension classes and creating opportunities for students to access competitions, talent programs and excursions.

Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2014:
- Staff undertook SOLE and PBL training.
- 21st Century learning spaces were created through funding.
- Project Friday continued as a highly effective strategy to allow students individualised assistance with major HSC projects.

- Equine Project addressed students with a diverse range of obstacles impacting on their learning.
- Employment of a Speech Therapist was continued.
- Head Teacher Teaching and Learning was employed.

School priority 4 – Engagement and Obtainment

Outcomes from 2012–2014
The new National Curriculum to be delivered in a timely manner through innovative, inclusive and relevant programs underpinned by quality teaching.

Evidence of achievement of outcomes in 2014:
- Consolidation of VET programs to align with changing national requirements.
- An enhanced Stage 4 curriculum by widening choices to engage students’ interest and learning styles. New subjects offered included Dance, Drama and Agriculture.
- Stage 6 subject choices align with student needs based on surveys. Work Studies is being offered on the same line as Maths.
- Three TAFE courses will be offered at AHS in 2015 after canvassing student needs. The TVET courses which will be delivered on the school site are Information and Digital Technology, Childhood Studies and Horticulture.
- Engagement with TAFE to deliver courses which will engage Stage 6 students.

Parent/caregiver, student, and teacher satisfaction

In 2014, the school sought feedback from parents and the community in a variety of ways and for a mix of purposes. We continued to gather data around the Student Learning Conferences through surveys at the time of the learning conferences as well as survey monkey. This data is used to gather feedback around the process of Student Learning Conferences and inform future preparations. The data is largely positive regarding the values of Student Learning Conferences but also allows us to draw
conclusions regarding community and parent participation in the initiative.

**Future Directions**

**2015-2017 School Plan**

NSW DEC is implementing a new school planning process for 2015-17. The new plan will be published on the school's website from the beginning of Term 2 2015.

**About this report**

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

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