

Hopetown SSP Annual Report



2015



HOPETOWN

5755

Introduction

The Annual Report for 2015 is provided to the community of Hopetown School as an account of the school's operations and achievements throughout the year.

It provides a detailed account of the progress the school has made to provide high quality educational opportunities for all students, as set out in the school plan. It outlines the findings from self-assessment that reflect the impact of key school strategies for improved learning and the benefit to all students from the expenditure of resources, including equity funding.

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School background

School vision statement

The collective purpose of the Hopetown School community is to ensure that every student becomes **a successful learner, a confident and creative individual and an active, informed citizen.***

Hopetown endeavours to provide every student the opportunity to experience success and to optimise their development of social, emotional, academic and vocational competencies.

**The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians.*

School context

Hopetown is a School for Specific Purposes, supporting the needs of students (K-12) with Emotional Disturbance. Established in 1986, Hopetown has expansive grounds in a quiet, semi-rural environment bordered by bushland.

All students have diagnoses of mental health disabilities, and are enrolled at Hopetown because of their difficulties in coping in a mainstream school setting.

Most students have multiple diagnoses, present with challenging behaviours and are considered at risk of disengagement from learning. Accommodations and adjustments are made and reviewed as required.

The maximum student population is 56 students. Twenty- one students are in the primary unit and 35 in the secondary unit. Classes are comprised of 7 students with a teacher and School Learning Support Officer.

Approximately one third of the students are in out-of-home care and 20% of the school's students are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

The primary purpose of a student's enrolment at Hopetown is to address the student's social and emotional difficulties. The focus of the school's Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) program is to develop Emotional Literacy dimensions of self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, social skills and motivation. Within Hopetown's SEL framework is the promotion of positive habits of mind and foundations of organisation, persistence, getting along, confidence and resilience. (cf. *You Can Do It!*)

The ethos of the school is for all stakeholders to be *Safe, Responsible* and *Respectful* members of the school community.

The school's Family Occupation and Education Index (FOEI = 166) indicates significant socio-economic disadvantage within our school community.

School attendance is encouraged and school suspensions are minimised in frequency and duration. Staff experience a high incidence of challenging student behaviours and the maintenance of positive staff morale is an ongoing concern.

Significant staff training in behaviour support, crisis management and student and staff welfare are regular occurrences.

Hopetown's staff are collaborative, experienced, student-focused, empathic and committed to ongoing improvement in their practice.

Hopetown's programing documentation and delivery is school strength as are the Individual Education Plans and Personalised Learning Plans prepared for each student.

Innovative programs have been a feature of Hopetown for many years. These include experiential programs for disengaged students, outdoor challenge programs, service learning, community access, the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and an array of school camps.

Self-assessment and school achievements

Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

This section of the Annual Report outlines the findings from self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework, our school achievements and the next steps to be pursued. The Framework supports public schools throughout NSW in the pursuit of excellence by providing a clear description of high quality practice across the three domains of Learning, Teaching and Leading.

This year, our school undertook self-assessment using the elements of the School Excellence Framework. All staff were able to reflect on Hopetown's progress and current status using the criteria and descriptors of the Framework.

The school also carried out an informal review of policies, procedures and practices related to student and staff wellbeing, the feasibility of creating a truly therapeutic learning environment for students with Emotional Disturbance and the best use of available resources. Hopetown staff were kindly and effectively assisted by colleagues from the local office of the Department.

The process of self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework determined the following findings.

In the domain of Learning, the school priorities were embedding Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) across the curriculum and creating a culture of positive, respectful relationships among students and staff, promoting student wellbeing and ensuring good conditions for student learning. Individual student's needs, learning styles and goals were determined by data and negotiation with the student and parents/carers and incorporated in each student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Personalised Learning Pathway (PLP). Students were taught to accept responsibility for their own behaviours and learning as appropriate to their level of ability and were encouraged to learn new skills to improve both their social/emotional and academic development. As the students are at risk of disengagement from learning, extra-curricular learning opportunities were significant motivators and were strongly aligned with the school's vision, values and priorities.

In the domain of Teaching, the school leadership team demonstrated instructional leadership, promoting and modelling effective, evidence-based practice. School analysis of student performance data was provided to the community on a regular basis and feedback was encouraged and sought from the parents/carers. The school identified and utilised expertise within its staff developed the professional resources within its staff. All teachers were actively engaged in planning their own professional development to improve their performance and demonstrated responsibility, adaptability and ethical practice in working towards the school's goals.

In the domain of Leading, staff have been assigned purposeful leadership roles based on their professional expertise. Links were sought and maintained with other schools, educational providers and organisations to support Hopetown's programs. The school solicited and addressed feedback on its performance and will continue this process in 2016. The school maintained productive relationships with external agencies such as universities, community organisations and professional clinicians to improve social, emotional and educational opportunities for Hopetown students. Staff, students, parents/carers and the broader school community were welcomed and engaged, when possible, in the development of the vision, values and purpose for the school. Conversely, the school led information and support programs to benefit parents/carers and colleagues in other schools. Evidence-based analyses were the basis of the annual review of school performance. The school used collaboration and reflection to promote and generate learning and innovation and support the development of the school vision, strategic directions and annual plans. The school leadership team communicated clearly about school priorities and practices and promoted relevant professional development for all staff. There were opportunities for students and the community to provide constructive feedback on school practices and procedures and the school was responsive to such information.

The new procedure of school planning which is supported by a new model of funding has enabled Hopetown to further some key initiatives as outlined in the following tables.

Our self-assessment process will further assist the school to refine the strategic priorities in our School plan leading to further improvements in the delivery of education to our students.

Strategic Direction 1

Empathic, resilient and motivated individuals.

Purpose

To nurture students as motivated individuals valuing self and demonstrating self-efficacy, resilience and internal control.

Overall summary of progress

Hopetown's school-wide adaptation of evidence-based mindfulness practices has continued to skill students and staff in their capacities for self-awareness, self-reflection, self-regulation, resilience and empathy.

The training of staff in Trauma-Informed Practice in Schools has progressed with anticipated benefits for individual students and the culture of the whole school. Elements of trust, rapport, positive relationships, safety, security, confidence, self-worth and restorative practices have been determined to be essential for student motivation and engagement at Hopetown.

Progress has been made with much more to be achieved in the next two years.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures		Resources (annual)
Improvement measure (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended
		Socio-economic \$25,000 (RAM)
Decrease in negative referrals on SENTRAL	Number of negative referrals: Year 2014 2015 Term 1 535 371 Term 2 579 327 Term 3 575 328 Term 4 364 350 TOTAL 2053 1376	Aboriginal Background (RAM) \$3,200
Students will reflect ongoing development of Emotional Literacy Dimensions	Teacher and parent/carer survey data evidenced student improvement in the five dimensions of Emotional Literacy as follows: Teachers – 69% of students improved during 2015 Parents/carers – 55% of students improved during 2015	Every Student Every School (ESES) funding \$15,000

Next steps

- In 2016 all staff will be trained in mindfulness for teacher wellbeing (Mindfulness in Schools Project, UK)
- The school will seek and use an evidence-based assessment tool to monitor student capacities for sustained, focused attention, self-awareness and self-regulation.
- Nominated school executive and staff will continue professional development in Trauma-Informed Practice in Schools e.g. Australian Childhood Foundation Conference, NCI Trauma-informed training
- 0.4 FTE Mindfulness teacher to collaborate with school counsellors to consolidate students' progression from mindfulness skill acquisition to Acceptance and Commitment Therapy practices.
- The school's Learning Support Team will drive the above initiatives.

Strategic Direction 2

Students and staff are leaders of their learning.

Purpose

To develop a dynamic learning environment that empowers individuals to be flexible, adaptive, discerning learners and leaders.

Overall summary of progress

Hopetown's Individual Learning Plans (ITP) and Personalised Learning Pathways (PLP) formats were reviewed as a school-wide process and parent/carer participation was actively sought.

Norta Norta funds were focused on selected primary students resulting in student work portfolios of quality and evidence of increased engagement in learning and cultural awareness.

An informal review of Hopetown's procedures, culture and issues of staff and student wellbeing was conducted to determine how to best promote learning in a highly specialized and demanding setting.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures		Resources (annual)
Improvement measure (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended Socio –economic \$25,000 (RAM)
Staff are actively engaged in their Performance and Development Framework	100% of teaching staff have completed and are familiar with the new Performance and Development Framework process.	Aboriginal Background (RAM) \$3,200
Increasing involvement of parent/carer sign-off on IEP, PLP and ITP planning meeting records.	89% of student IEPs, PLPs evidenced significant parent/carer input and sign-off. 78% of secondary students had Individual Transition Planning meetings attended by parents/carers. The 2015 'Focus on Learning' teacher survey scored highest in the category of 'Inclusive School' (8.7) and very high in 'Parent Involvement' (7.4). The survey also showed Hopetown's highest scoring dimension of Classroom and School Practices was that of 'Overcoming Obstacles to Learning' (8.1) followed by 'Planned Learning Opportunities' (7.2) and then 'Challenging and Visible Goals' (7.1). (On a scale of 0 to 10, lowest to highest.)	Staff release for ITP meetings. \$3,800 Staff release for IEP and PLP parent interviews. \$ 2,400 Computer Co-ordinator Fund \$4,600

Next steps

- Training in supervisor observation practices for Performance and Development will be a focus for 2016.
- In 2016 all homeroom staff will commence plotting student literacy and numeracy progress on PLAN.
- Increased school-to-home communication regarding transition planning will be evidenced by parent/carer attendance at ITP meetings reaching a level of at least 90%.
- New specialist staff will enhance ATSI student engagement in learning and cultural awareness under *Norta Norta* funding. Personalised Learning Pathways documentation will be reviewed.

Strategic Direction 3

A community of social responsible citizens.

Purpose

To encourage awareness of the individual as part of a wider society and create a culture of reciprocal and active concern for the wellbeing of others.

Overall summary of progress

Following the informal review mentioned above, productive, inclusive and equitable adjustments to Hopetown's policies and practices are still being determined and established and will continue in 2016.

The Quality Teaching dimension of quality learning environment includes elements such as engagement, social support, students' self-regulation and student direction. The students' diagnosed social and emotional difficulties present a significant but highly relevant challenge when responsible citizenship is the strategic direction.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures		Resources (annual)
Improvement measure (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended Socio-economic \$25,000 (RAM)
Survey data will show an increase in the number of parents/carers responding to Hopetown's annual school culture, parent/carer satisfaction survey.	In 2014: 75% of primary students' parents/carers responded. 50% of secondary students' parents/carers responded. In 2015: 84% of primary students' parents/carers responded. 66% of secondary students' parents/carers responded.	SAP Fund for student transition \$4,800 Link Support \$1,600
Survey responses will be 'always' or 'usually' indicating strong community satisfaction.	In 2015: 91.3% of survey responses were 'always' or 'usually' The survey details are found later in this report.	Aboriginal Background (RAM) \$3,200

Next steps

- In 2016 service learning will be a key component of Stage 5 and 6 programs.
- Identity, belonging and participation in the community will be themes to be explored by newly appointed specialist ATSI program staff. Parent/carer support and engagement will also be promoted.
- Staff forums on school-wide discipline and wellbeing will be conducted as a continuation of recommendations in the 2015 informal review. The focus will be on creating a safe, productive and therapeutic school environment.
- New opportunities for positive student contributions to the school community will be developed.
- Senior student programs will focus on motivation, resilience, citizenship and productive transitions into the broader community.

Key initiatives and other school focus areas

Key initiatives (annual)	Impact achieved this year	Resources (annual)
<p>Aboriginal background funding</p> <p>To increase the engagement and participation of ATSI students and to develop cultural awareness school-wide.</p>	<p>Staff trained in <i>8 Ways Pedagogy</i> and <i>Bro Speak</i></p> <p>Reading and Audio-visual resources were purchased to enrich program content for the Term Three school-wide, term-long ATSI theme</p> <p>A <i>Norta Norta</i> tutor provided support and cultural extension activities to targeted students in Terms 2 and 3.</p> <p>An Aboriginal art installation was created as part of the Wyong Learning Community and AECG initiative.</p>	<p>Norta Norta \$4,792</p> <p>RAM \$9,692</p>
<p>Socio-economic funding</p> <p>To enhance access to educational resources, enrichment of the curriculum and the development of student engagement and participation.</p>	<p>Financial support was provided so all students could participate in all school activities (e.g. school fees, uniform, excursions, camps, transport, resources)</p> <p>A music teacher specialising in music therapy was contracted to teach every class on a weekly basis.</p> <p>A specialist mindfulness teacher was contracted to conduct group and individual sessions to all students two days per week. This was done in close consultation with the school counsellors.</p> <p>A shuttle transport service between Hopetown School and the Wyong bus/rail station was maintained to enhance student attendance.</p> <p>Specialist trainers in computer-based 3D printing were contracted to provide all students with enriched experiential IT lessons.</p> <p>The school boat was an integral part of Hopetown's alternative programs (e.g. boat licence), experiential learning, incentives and student engagement strategies.</p> <p>School camps were subsidised to ensure no eligible student would miss out on these valuable opportunities. This included a week at the Smiggin Holes snowfields for selected secondary students. Staff/student rapport, communal living skills, experiential learning and the capacities for students to overcome unfamiliar challenges were all enhanced by these opportunities.</p>	<p>RAM \$76,525</p> <p>Global \$20,000</p> <p>Financial support \$1,000</p> <p>Specialist teachers \$64,600</p> <p>Information Technology \$5,000</p> <p>Camps \$3,000</p> <p>Transport \$21,000</p>

Other school focus areas	Impact achieved this year	Resources (annual)
<p>Every Student Every School (ESES)</p> <p>Trauma Informed Practice (TIP) and Mindfulness – a resource for schools.</p>	<p>All staff have completed the Australian Childhood Foundation SMART online training in Trauma informed practice. Some staff have attended workshops in TIP e.g. Bruce Perry’s ‘Transforming Childhood Trauma’, ‘Mad, Bad or Sad’- A Framework for Healing from Trauma and Fractured Attachments.</p> <p>One specialist teacher trained in Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), .b and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy.</p> <p>Hopetown has compiled a significant resource library on TIP and mindfulness. These resources have been shared with staff from other schools.</p> <p>Presentation modules (1 hour to 2 days) have been created. In 2015 over 20 presentations were given to various schools and associated agencies e.g. early childhood education providers, out-of-home care providers.</p> <p>Evaluations of the presentations have been highly positive. Extensions to the presentations have been requested and provided.</p> <p>Modules in Behaviour and Learning, Crisis Management and Trauma Informed Practice have also been developed for and delivered to Early Career Teachers from several schools.</p> <p>The school’s Non-violent Crisis Intervention instructor has completed an NCI instructor training in Trauma Informed Practice and intends to make this training available as an alternative NCI refresher course for staff in other schools.</p>	<p>\$29,000</p> <p>(with \$5,000 held over for all-staff training in mindfulness for staff wellbeing (Mindfulness in Schools Project, UK) in early 2016)</p>

Student information

Student enrolment profile

Hopetown has always been proud of its student attendance record. Prior to enrolling at Hopetown, many students had histories of truancy, school avoidance, multiple suspensions, partial attendance or school-phobic behaviours.

Student attendance profile

The average attendance rate for all students enrolled in 2015 was 83% (secondary students 80%, primary students 85%). The attendance rate for the previous year (2014) was 89%. As the year progressed, a number of older secondary students were at a significant risk of disengagement from learning and found it difficult to maintain regular attendance.

School non-attendance is managed initially by close and timely communication between the school and parents/carers. Negotiated partial attendance programs and a range of alternative experiential programs are used to increase the attendance and engagement of specific students. The Assisted School Travel Unit also supports families who have logistical difficulties in getting students to and from school. Assistance from Home School Liaison Officers is requested and given when required.

Year 12 students undertaking vocational or trade training

Eighty percent of Hopetown's Year 12 students undertook vocational training.

Year 12 students attaining HSC or equivalent vocational educational qualification

Sixty percent of Hopetown's Year 12 students attained a Higher School Certificate.

Workforce information

Workforce composition

Position	Number
Principal	1
Assistant Principal(s)	3
Classroom Teacher(s)	6
Teacher Librarian	0.2
School Counsellor	0.5
School Administrative & Support Staff	9.9
Total	20.6

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

No staff identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Teacher qualifications

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

Qualifications	% of staff
Undergraduate degree or diploma	100
Postgraduate degree	40

Professional learning and teacher accreditation Some of the professional learning completed by Hopetown School staff in 2015:

- Non-violent Crisis Intervention
- Non-violent Crisis Intervention instructors' course – Trauma Informed Practice
- SLSA Bronze Medallion requalification
- Positive Partnerships
- Numeracy and Literacy Continuums
- Differentiation
- Mental Health in schools
- *Mad, Bad or Sad* – A framework for Healing from Trauma and Fractured Attachments
- Strategies for Managing Trauma
- Managing Challenging Behaviours – Dr Ross Greene
- *Bro Speak*
- Learning to Code and 3D Printing
- National Disability Insurance Scheme
- Accreditation Counts
- *Living Things* – An Aboriginal Perspective
- Bill Rogers – Managing the Tough Class
- Redbank Behaviour Conference
- Bruce Perry – Transforming Childhood Trauma
- 8 Ways Pedagogy
- Excel Foundation
- Establishing a Whole-School Induction Program
- Positive Behaviour Management
- Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)
- .b Mindfulness teacher training (Mindfulness in Schools Project, UK)

- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy
- Performance and Development Framework
- Trauma-Informed Care and Practice
- Various professional network meetings
- Australian Childhood Foundation – *Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma* (SMART)

Date of financial summary	30/11/2015
Income	\$
Balance brought forward	385 772.47
Global funds	133 676.37
Tied funds	159 232.98
School & community sources	54 124.16
Interest	9 526.42
Trust receipts	2 777.00
Canteen	0.00
Total income	<u>745 109.40</u>
Expenditure	
Teaching & learning	
Key learning areas	10 645.50
Excursions	6 952.38
Extracurricular dissections	12 455.51
Library	1 718.67
Training & development	1 216.75
Tied funds	185 035.94
Casual relief teachers	24 478.05
Administration & office	52 975.62
School-operated canteen	0.00
Utilities	34 861.83
Maintenance	36 770.50
Trust accounts	2 144.00
Capital programs	0.00
Total expenditure	<u>369 254.75</u>
Balance carried forward	<u>375 854.65</u>

Financial information

Financial summary

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

A full copy of the school's 2015 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the parent and/or community groups. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

School performance

Academic

We are committed to the belief that all children can learn within a supportive environment. We implemented school-wide approaches to teaching and learning literacy and numeracy and expected that these approaches would significantly improve student literacy and numeracy outcomes.

Both individual literacy programs and classroom programs are designed and delivered to encourage students to achieve improvements in their literacy and numeracy outcomes. Students have been given opportunities to access formal national testing (NAPLAN) in literacy and numeracy for students in years 3,5,7 and 9. These results help the school to identify and program for further improvements in 2015.

Many students need high-level interventions if they are to succeed as readers and writers, to be numerate or to succeed in school. Regular assessment has been integrated into school activities to determine student teaching and learning requirements.

Students identified as 'at risk' of under-achieving now access a range of additional literacy and numeracy resources. There is continuity in the development of each student's literacy skills through a planned, whole-school approach and the teaching of literacy in an explicit and systematic way.

The *Norta Norta* program has also provided funding for a tutor to support Aboriginal students who have been identified in NAPLAN testing as requiring assistance in improving their literacy and or numeracy skills.

Literacy

The following resources, including computer-based literacy programs, have been utilised.

- *Future Schools* – personalised online assessments, tutorials and exercises accessible from school and home
- *Fast Forward* - multi-media reading programs
- *Lexia Learning* – Reading Strategies for Older Students (SOS) and *Cross Trainer* (Visual / Spatial, Logical reasoning suite). The *Lexia Comprehensive Reading Test* is

used to identify a baseline for the SOS program

- *Nelson Focus Reading*
- *Storybook Weaver*
- *Teachers4Teachers* reading boxes
- *Aussie Spellforce* – spelling tutor
- *Reading for Literacy* - a fully interactive learning program designed to develop children's key reading skills
- *ABC Reading Eggs* – Literacy e-learning
- *Studyladder* – Smart-board e-learning
- *Reading Mastery* – Phonics program
- specially designed units of work using subject matter of specific interest to individual students and sourced from newspapers, magazines, brochures, catalogues, libraries, manuals, audio-visual materials and reading in the community
- a class set of cameras enabling students to take photographs of items of personal interest as stimuli for writing
- survival reading and pre-reading exercises.

Hopetown's school-wide assessment schedule has enabled staff to plan and consistently apply testing in literacy to ensure:

- diagnostic data collection identifying areas of student strength and areas requiring remediation or compensation,
- literacy gains are measured and evaluated in terms of the effectiveness of the programs offered at the school and
- targeting of specific staff professional development in literacy based on data collected.

The assessment schedule included the following testing and re-testing each semester:

- *Neale Analysis of Reading Ability* (3rd edition)
- *Schonell Graded Word Reading Test*
- *Waddington Diagnostic Reading Tests*

- *Wide Range Achievement Test 4 (WRAT 4)*
- *Waddington Spelling Test*
- Copying tasks and placement tests for reading comprehension.

Literacy assessment results for students enrolled at Hopetown Special School during 2014 were:

Secondary results

Reading age equivalent	% of students	
Year comparison	2014	2015
Unable to be tested	0	8
Maintained initial level	37	47
1 – 11 month gain	35	33
12 months+ gain	28	12

Primary results

Reading age equivalent	% of students	
Year comparison	2014	2015
Unable to be tested	0	0
Maintained initial level	33	18
1 – 11 month gain	26	41
12 months+ gain	41	41

Numeracy

Numeracy is the ability to use mathematical ideas efficiently to make sense of the world.

A high percentage of students commence enrolment at Hopetown with significant deficits in numeracy. Erratic attendance patterns in previous schools have often resulted in students having considerable gaps in concept development. Many students are reluctant or resistant learners who require significant structure, encouragement and support to develop their skills in numeracy.

Students on a Life Skills program of study had Individual Education Plans to consolidate basic numeracy skills and focus on practical applications of those skills.

Distance Education learning packages for secondary students accessing a regular pattern of study in mathematics have been both exciting and challenging.

WRAT4 and Schonell Numeracy Screening Test assessment results showed students' progress in numeracy age levels as follows:

Secondary results

Numeracy age equivalent	%of students	
	2014	2015
Unable to be tested	0	8
Maintained initial level	72	42
1 – 11 month gain	14	50
12 months+ gain	14	0

Primary results

Numeracy age equivalent	%of students	
	2014	2015
Unable to be tested	0	12
Maintained initial level	40	37
1 – 11 month gain	15	43
12 months+ gain	45	8

We expect to achieve improvements in numeracy results with all students able to access the following computer-based numeracy programs in classrooms:

- *Future Schools* – personal online assessments, tutorials and exercises accessible from school and home
- *Mathletics* – a stimulating program enabling student in different schools and countries to contest their numeracy skills in real-time competitions.
- *Maths Made Easy* - lessons contained in the program have been developed from the Mathematics curriculum
- *Studyladder, Daisy Maths, Cool Maths, Maths Tracks* and similar software
- *Maths Plus* - assessment tools and workbooks.
- Interactive whiteboards in most classrooms are proving to be engaging and motivating teaching and learning resources.

Parent/caregiver, student, teacher

Parents and carers have been able to enjoy regular reciprocal communication with the school, to participate in decision making and to discuss reports and assessments related to respective students.

In 2015 the school sought the opinions of parents/carers, students and teachers about the school.

This parent/carer survey was conducted in Term Four of 2015. The questions were based on *School Map* questions about learning, teaching and culture.

Parent/carer responses are presented in the following table.

Responses parents/carers were asked to choose from for each question were: 'Always' (A), 'Usually' (U), 'Sometimes', 'Rarely'. It is encouraging that no respondents indicated 'Never' in the 2015 survey.

Numbers in the table indicate the percentage of respondents.

	% A	% U
I feel Hopetown is the appropriate school for my child at this stage.	90	
Hopetown ensures that everyone at the school is treated fairly.	90	7
I feel that my opinions are listened to and valued.	87	7
Teachers provide activities that are interesting and appropriate to a student's individual needs and learning abilities.	87	13
The way teachers manage the class helps my child to learn	83	10
Hopetown provides clear information about student achievement.	83	17
I believe that Hopetown has a positive school culture	93	7
I feel that Hopetown staff accept and support my child.	83	7
Hopetown encourages students to achieve their best.	90	

Student achievements are recognised and rewarded at Hopetown.	93	7
Hopetown's discipline of students is fair.	90	5
I think Hopetown communicates effectively with parents/carers	86	7
Hopetown communicates effectively with students.	83	7
My child's classroom is an interesting place in which to learn.	83	10
Hopetown's staff understand my child's social and emotional needs.	87	6
Hopetown provides a variety of activities to improve my child's engagement in school and learning.	97	3
Hopetown is always looking for ways to improve what it does.	93	7

Apart from the survey above, other opportunities for parent and carer involvement in 2015 included the following.

- Parent/carer participation in student emotional literacy surveys (*Emotional Literacy – Assessment and Intervention*, Southampton Psychology Service, 2003; primary and secondary editions).
- Personal and active participation in Individual Transition Planning (ITP) meetings.
- Parents/carers of ATSI students being consulted about and signing off on Personalised Learning Plans
- Daily or weekly communication books, emails, text or telephone calls home by the homeroom teachers,
- Parent/carer attendance at Presentation Day and sporting events, during which parent/carers interact with and provide feedback to staff
- Parent/carer consultation with school administrators and staff regarding assistance with counselling, visits to clinicians, external support agencies, student special transport,

reintegration to mainstream schooling, vocational training and transition,

- Parent/carer participation in school counsellor led 'parent group' sessions including mindfulness practice, social events and information sharing.

Policy requirements

Aboriginal education

Hopetown received specific funding to support Aboriginal students under the Resource Allocation Model (RAM). The funds enabled the implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010 -2014, a Partnership Agreement between the Department of Education and Communities and the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Incorporated (AECG).

All Aboriginal students at Hopetown SSP have Personalised Learning Plans which have been negotiated with each student, their parents/carers and teaching staff. PLPs are an integral part of the students' Individualised Education Plans.

Hopetown is an active participant in the Wyong Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (Ngara AECG) with staff attending all meetings in 2015. Staff also attended the AECG *Water and the Aboriginal Perspective* training, training in *Bro Speak* and *8 Ways Pedagogy*.

All of Term Three was dedicated to school-wide Aboriginal studies across the curriculum and all school activities. This concentrated immersion in Aboriginal culture involved excursions, formal lessons, the acquisition and use of a range of audio/visual resources, experiential learning and opportunities for artistic expression.

At different times in the year, programs in Key Learning Areas allowed students to explore and learn about Aboriginal history and culture.

Languages other than English (LOTE) – Aboriginal languages. Students were required to respond to words, phrases and simple sentences used in aboriginal languages. Students explored links between culture and a sense of identity specifically related to traditional connections and historical events linked to land and language.

Music/drama/ visual arts – Aboriginal performance, film and television. The study of both traditional and contemporary Aboriginal artists in a range of media (theatre, music, visual art) allowed students to gain an understanding of the link between culture and history

Aboriginal cultural excursions included the National Maritime Museum Indigenous Education exhibition, Jake Cassar's Aboriginal culture and bush-craft program, Walkabout Park and Wyong High School's Aboriginal rubbing rock and canoe tree.

The school's bush tucker garden was maintained and further developed as part of the school's work experience program.

Human Society and Its Environment (HSIE) focused on the identity of Australia as a nation. This involved an examination of the process of government and law including Aboriginal law and its relevance to past and present Australian society.

Norta Norta funding also provided a tutor to assist Aboriginal students identified in NAPLAN results to be requiring additional support.

Multicultural Education and Anti-racism

Programs in the following Key Learning Areas allowed students to explore and learn about multicultural issues.

Languages Other Than English (LOTE) – Anti-Racism, Cultural Diversity. Through the study of languages from other cultures, students made linguistic connections between diverse groups of people in Australian society and the languages they use. Languages studied included French and Aboriginal dialects. Studies included cultural issues such as diversity in culture, religion and lifestyle in Australian society. Concepts and contemporary examples of racism, anti-racism and discrimination were explored in this unit.

Human Society and Its Environment – Citizenship and Society. Anti-racism, discrimination and Australia's multicultural society were explored when studying the development of Australia as a nation and issues of immigration in Australia's past and present.

Work Education studies included a unit on 'discrimination'.

Food Technology programs guided students in the exploration and celebration of cultural and culinary diversity.

Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) lessons included a focus on issues of intolerance and discrimination.

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is timetabled and taught in every class. They are based on Emotional Literacy domains of self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, social skills and motivation. Values, multiculturalism and anti-racism were

integrated in discrete units Social and Emotional Literacy. Activities included students examining themselves, their values and beliefs and the impact they have on those around them. Students were provided skills to create an awareness of multicultural issues.

Core values of respect and responsibility were promoted by:

- Hopetown's Social and Emotional Learning program which is delivered across the curriculum and also in discrete timetabled lessons as mentioned above.
- explicit teaching of Hopetown's three expectations, namely; *Be Safe, Be Respectful, Be Responsible*,
- community involvement projects as listed earlier in this report,
- Work Education looking at vocational rights and responsibilities ,
- promoting the *Getting Along* component of the *You Can Do It!* Program,
- The introduction of *Yarn Up* which is a time set aside at the end of each day for secondary students to review and discuss issues such as gratitude, empathy, tolerance and other socially vital attitudes

Other school programs

Hopetown's mindfulness program continued in 2015 with a trained mindfulness teacher (Mindfulness in Schools Project UK, Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy) delivering both group and individual sessions in mindfulness practice.

Sessions included:

- Attributes of mindfulness
- Mental stillness
- Advanced meditation
- Mindfulness for everyday living
- Mindfulness for stress reduction

Regular voluntary lunchtime mindfulness sessions were made available and were very well attended by students.

A growing library of resources has been compiled and information has been given to interested schools and staff. Presentations on an introduction

to mindfulness in school have been given to several schools on request.

Hopetown's mindfulness program is evidence-based and aims to develop skills in students including:

- Self-awareness
- Controlling attention
- Improved concentration
- Self-regulation
- Empathy
- Self-calming
- Compassion
- Resilience
- Gratitude
- Cultivating wellbeing

The active participation of Hopetown School staff in this program has been vital and welcome.