

2019 Report to Donors



THE IMPACT OF YOUR DONATION TO GAWURA



With our heartfelt thanks to you ...

- Gawura is changing lives.
- Our students are engaged learners.
- We have the resources and knowledge to incorporate culture and language into our learning every day.
- Our classes are small. No one sits at the back of the classroom unnoticed.
- Students who need additional support receive it through available SACS resources, our Aboriginal Education Assistant, Aboriginal Education Mentor and speech and occupational therapy which is very kindly paid for by donors.
- Our students have role models at school and aspire to continue their education.
- Families are engaged through our Gawura Parent Advisory Committee and have the support of our Indigenous Community Liaison Officer.
- We took students from kindergarten to year 12 on four cultural excursions this year.
- Students from years 5 to year 12 went on an On Country trip for three days to Wandjina (Yuin) Nation on the NSW south coast.
- In addition to their tuition, we provide a homework club, pastoral care, extra curricular activities and additional support through tutors to Gawura students on secondary scholarships.

2019 what a year!

- Five students started kindergarten.
- We educated 32 primary students.
- Eight secondary students finish the year on scholarships.
- Izak became our first student to start in Gawura in kindergarten & complete the HSC.



- Our NAPLAN results for years 3 and 5 were outstanding. Year 5 achieved above state average in every subject except spelling (where we were just below state average).
- Gawura employed its 10th Indigenous staff member.
- 20 Gawura students had music tuition.
- Boosting their confidence and our profile, students appeared on the ABC, ABC Kids, SBS, in The Sydney Morning Herald, The Australian and many education-specific publications.
- We had visits from the NZ Minister for Maori Development, the NSW Education Minister & the NSW Aboriginal Affairs Minister.
- 184 people volunteered in our morning reading program.
- Lendlease, KPMG & PwC ran volunteering days for Gawura.

2020 & beyond

We will have 44 students on Gawura scholarships from K-12, with increasing numbers in secondary school.

Students will travel to Kuku Yalanji Nation in Far North QLD for their On Country tour in July for seven days.

We will do a feasibility study to investigate single stream classrooms.



Our Outstanding Gawura Graduates



Georgia, who finished in 2015 commenced a PhD in Aboriginal Education and Positive Psychology.

Rachel, who also finished in 2015 has just completed her combined Bachelor of Law/ Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Sydney.

Kas who left in 2012 commenced a Masters of Science at Oxford University.

Sonny, who also finished in 2012 came back to Gawura to run Indigenous art workshops.



Dr Collier's Report



Gawura has had a very busy year! It has continued at capacity with 32 students, with others wishing to be accommodated, should we find possible ways of expansion. It has been a milestone year in that our first ever Kindergarten to Year 12 Gawura program graduate, Izak Rigney-Sebastian, has just completed Year 12. This achievement was honoured in a special ceremony for Izak, attended by many of our donors, and with several of his family flying from Adelaide for the occasion. Izak is now considering tertiary study, perhaps in the sciences or medicine.

Another milestone has been found in the access of our graduates to Higher Education. Georgia Durmish has commenced a PhD, as the first Gawura student to undertake a doctorate, and Kas Mann has relocated to Oxford University to pursue a Master's degree in Health Sciences. These opportunities have extended the visible reach of a Gawura education beyond our initial wildest dreams and indicate the transformative role of donors who have made such an educational foundation possible.

Gawura has seen some developments in staff during 2019. We have been fortunate to engage the services of Ms Leanna Carr-Smith as a specialist Wiradjuri teacher, who works part time for us and part time for Charles Sturt University in Bathurst. With the departure of our Aboriginal Mentor, Ms Natalie Foster, we have been able to employ a Gawura parent and Aboriginal man, Mr Matthew Hammond, who is experienced in youth work. Mr Hammond has been able to undertake a helpful case management approach, particularly towards our high school Aboriginal students, in an effort to individualise assistance as most appropriate to each student. Mr Michael Kirk, an Aboriginal man who has taught in northern NSW, also joined our Gawura teaching staff during the year. Recently we said farewell to our Aboriginal Aide Ms Tace Stevens, who has departed to pursue her growing interest and expertise in photography.

Late last year we said farewell to our Gawura fundraiser Ms Lucy Crook as she relocated to Canberra to assist with ageing parents. Our new fundraiser, Mrs Catherine Gunning, a SACS parent, has continued the passion, structuring some major fundraising events hosted by Lend Lease and by Macquarie Bank. Demand for placement in Gawura remains very strong and our funders continue to be very supportive of the school. This year we have been pleased to welcome the GO Foundation (former AFL footballers Adam Goodes and Michael O'Loughlin) who are funding the high school trajectory of a Year 7 student.

In this semester we have released our Gawura 10 year anniversary book, a marvellous collaboration between Lucy Crook and Catherine Gunning, to document and publish our short history. It certainly chronicles the journey of Gawura from inception to being on the cusp of becoming a teenager (!) as in 2020 it enters its 13th year of existence.

In the last two months, we have been able to host the NSW Minister of Education, Ms Sarah Mitchell and the NSW Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Mr Don Harwin. Both expressed themselves as very impressed with Gawura. One always hopes that may lead to some tangible benefits.

In his third year of leadership of Gawura, Mr John Ralph has established excellent rapport and communication with our Gawura parents. He is ably assisted by our Director of Primary Education / Deputy Head of School K-6, Mrs Rhonda Robson. Our school Foundation, under the inspirational leadership of Mr Peter Warne, continues to manage a small investment portfolio, the proceeds of which are directed to help fund Gawura. Nonetheless, despite some government funding and these proceeds, the generosity of donors remains critical to the sustainability of Gawura and to the education we are providing for our local community of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

Thank you very much for your ongoing financial support of Gawura. It is making a real difference, and we are very grateful.

Dr John Collier

A Report from Mr John Ralph, Head of Gawura



What another wonderful year it has been in our Gawura School for 2019. There was a record 32 students enrolled across our K-6 primary school and a total of 51 students who identified as Indigenous across all years K-12. We are not done yet with plans to grow even further in the next few years. It is nice to know that our reputation is one of authenticity and not tokenistic.

We welcomed an additional Indigenous Gawura staff member this year. Mrs Leanna Carr-Smith joined us from term 1 this year teaching Wiradjuri language to our Gawura students in K-6 and over 300 students in the Junior School from Yrs 3-6. It is wonderful to see this language being taught to both our Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. Mr Michael Kirk from Kamilaroi Nation (Moree) joined our staff at the beginning of Term 3 teaching our Stage 2 students. Michael also takes us now to 10 which is the number of indigenous employees that now work at St Andrew's Cathedral Gawura School.

Our students have worked beautifully throughout the year and have shown wonderful gains across the various key learning areas of the school curriculum. Year 3 and Year 5 students completed all NAPLAN Assessments in Term 2 and the results showed some wonderful gains that were made over the previous two years. This year's NAPLAN results for Year 5 showed that our students achieved above state average in everything except spelling where we were just below the state average mark. This is a wonderful result as it includes areas such as Reading, Writing, Numeracy and Punctuation and Grammar. We are very proud that our students are achieving academic outcomes.

Gawura staff along with their Junior School colleagues have continued with their 'Learning Sprints' again this year and also partaken in another form of professional development called 'Learning Walks'. This is where teachers were given the opportunity to observe another teacher's class and then discuss at the end of the observation what points were explicitly taught to the students and how it can be integrated into other areas of the curriculum.

The community that engages with Gawura is simply stunning. Our own Gawura families offer their time in serving our school community by helping drive the Gawura bus when our regular drivers are rarely unavailable. Several families are very engaged in sharing their cultural knowledge with not only our Gawura students but across all year levels. St Andrew's Cathedral School staff have asked for input from our Indigenous families and people like Derek (Mizpah and Bryden's dad) has presented both at school and off site at a school camp.

Our program of cultural excursions has also increased this year, thanks to the generosity of donors. Our students have visited a number of places including the State Library of NSW to see the amazing Living Language Exhibition which features Auntie Esme Timberey from La Perouse (who is the mother of our own Uncle Bill who drives the Gawura bus). We also visited International Towers at Barrangaroo and watched the wonderful Bangarra Dance Company perform a rehearsal of their acclaimed show called Unaipon which is about David Unaipon who features on our Australian \$50 note. We also had the pleasure of experiencing the Tribal Warrior Cruise around Sydney Harbour and were treated to elder talks on Clarke Island and traditional Aboriginal Dancing.

This year's On Country Tour to the Wandjina (Yuin) Nation occurred in September. The excursion for students in Years 5-12 saw them spend two nights in Nowra visiting the Jerringa Aboriginal Community near Orient Point. Special thanks must go to Wolmorry Wellington's family and mum Charmaine who engaged us with a traditional Welcome to Country and hosted us for several Indigenous cultural activities which our students thoroughly enjoyed. Raymond Timberey (nephew of Uncle Bill again) took us on a bush food walk around Huskisson and we were delighted to have Indigenous guides with us as we travelled on a boat around Jervis Bay for the afternoon.

I would like to thank all of the Gawura staff for their hard work and dedication throughout the year. I would also like to thank Ms Tace Stevens for her dedication over the past four years who now leaves us to focus on her university studies in photography. We wish our amazing Year 6 students Aliyah, Mariah, Stanley and Toni all the very best as they enter Year 7 next year and hope they will come back to visit us as much as they like. Congratulations to our three Indigenous students who graduate from Year 12 this year Izak, Milla and Sarah. Special mention to Izak who is our first Gawura student to have completed all schooling from K-12 at our school. We are very proud of the contribution you have all made and the way you engaged with our younger students during our On Country Tours to regional NSW and cultural excursions around Sydney.

I hope you all have a restful and peaceful break over January and look forward to seeing everyone again in 2020.
Mr John Ralph

Thank you!



Some key dates for 2020

School returns on 28 January with our new Kindergarten students starting.

The Gawura cocktail evening will be held on 13 March 2020. Please come along and bring your friends and colleagues.

NAIDOC Week celebrations at Gawura will be held on Thursday, 25 June 2020.

