

The background of the top half of the cover is a photograph of a modern, two-story building with a glass facade and a flat roof. The building's exterior is decorated with large, colorful panels in shades of blue, yellow, and grey. A black metal fence runs across the foreground, with a concrete path leading to the building's entrance. The sky is clear and blue.

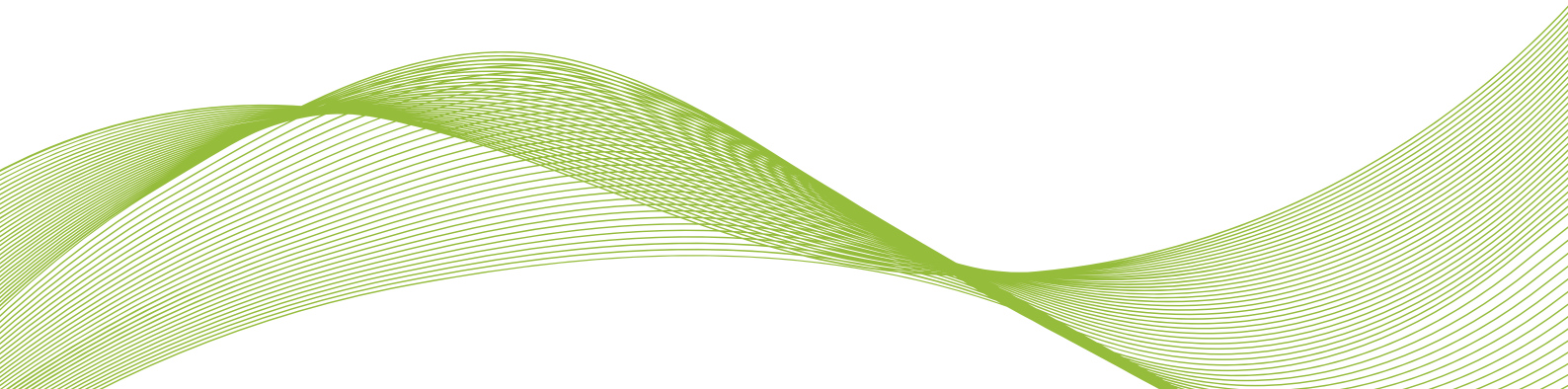
# **ANNUAL REPORT 2023**



**Warakirri  
College**

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# 1. MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE BOARD

I would like to thank Board members, the Management team and Warakirri staff for their contribution to a year of significant milestones. A college of our nature requires the combined effort of many skilled people and our work is much enhanced by their collective contribution. All of this is done to ensure the young people we support have the same of opportunities of a great education as anyone else.

A key milestone this year was the successful transition from MTC Australia. MTC pioneered the work of Warakirri College and invested considerably in our ongoing development. We maintain a positive ongoing relationship with MTC and continue to work together to achieve great outcomes for the young people in our College. Our thanks to Rob Campbell and the MTC Board for their decision to proceed with the separation process and their ongoing support. The Board and Management team played a major role in making the transition a success, maintaining the ongoing work of the College and continuing the important initiative of MTC Australia.

Another significant event this year has been the completion of our new campus in Campbelltown. This has been a challenging undertaking for the College, but it has been an important investment in the learning for our students. Being able to design a campus to suit the needs of today's students has been a worthwhile undertaking.

Another aspect of contemporising the College's educational practice has been the continued growth of our Distance Education program, which is an important dimension of our commitment to ensuring all young people have the opportunity to learn in ways that are most appropriate to them. Our innovative Distance Education program, the Creche initiative and our new partnership with Katherine High School through the Yadha Muru Foundation ensure our College is well placed for the future.

In reporting for the year, I note the continued educational outcomes for the 400 students we supported and the continued financial health of the College. All of this is in service of our mission and continued commitment to the students we have the privilege of educating and the families we support.

My thanks to the school community for their contribution over the last year, and we look forward to another year of strong growth and continued support. A special thanks to our senior leadership team, Carolyn Blanden, College Principal, Kirsty Rose & Glenn Langford Deputy Principals, Stuart Ryan, IT Director and Patrick McHugh, our Business Manager, for their valued leadership in our school and unwavering commitment to our mission.

**Doug Taylor**

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## 2. MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

2023 has been a benchmark year for Warakirri College with the opening of our first purpose-built campus at 6A Watsford Road in Campbelltown. This project commenced in March 2018 when we first saw the land adjacent to Campbelltown Station and continued with an extended development approval process followed by all the challenges of construction during the pandemic and four La Nina events. So it was with great delight that we welcomed Year 10 students and staff to our beautiful new campus in Term 4.

As our student numbers have grown with the new campus and the expansion of our Distance Education Program to include Year 11 students, our staff numbers have also increased. The College has been fortunate in attracting very high calibre staff who have excellent qualifications and extensive experience.

Student academic achievement has been strong this year. In response to student requests, the College offered Advanced English and Extension 1 English and Advanced Mathematics. While we were delighted that some students achieved Bands 5 and 6 results, it was wonderful to see many students being the first in their families to complete their HSC or Year 10 RoSA. Around 30% of Year 12 graduates received university offers, 50% progressed from school to TAFE and 10% transitioned directly into employment.

As our HSC students commenced their compressed curriculum in November, the free on-site Creche at Campbelltown South campus opened to care for students' children so young parents could continue their studies and receive parenting support.

Staff professional development has always been a high priority and many staff undertook courses relevant to their teaching area. Additionally, all staff members received training in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention for Schools (TCIS), which enables us to respond in an informed and appropriate manner to the needs of students who have been affected by trauma. In order to ensure that staff maintain their skill level and that new staff receive training, two people from each campus gained accreditation as TCI trainers.

As part of the Closing the Gap Program, Warakirri College was successful in obtaining a Yahda Muru School Partnerships grant to work with Katherine High School in the Northern Territory. The program will involve a 3-year partnership which will include students and staff exchange visits and sharing of resources and experience.

In September, Warakirri College hosted the fourth NSW Alternative Schools Conference at the Campbelltown Catholic Club. The conference attracted over 250 delegates for the two days, with participants from all over NSW and some schools in Victoria and Queensland sending representatives. This annual conference is the initiative of Warakirri College and it has been affirming to see numbers rise from the 120 delegates who attended our first conference in Blacktown back in 2018. We are pleased to partner with Youth off the Streets schools and Skillset Senior College in Bathurst to host conferences each year on a rota system, to build the Alternative Schools Sector through networking and mutual support.

Further evidence of Warakirri's sector leadership was the invitation I received from Melbourne University to give the feature presentation at the symposium "Reimagining Australian Education", attended by senior representatives of Education Departments from NSW, Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania and South Australia.



The staff at Warakirri College are an extraordinary group of people who give generously of their time and effort to care for our students through their very significant life challenges and to support them to achieve their educational goals. I feel very fortunate to work with such a dedicated and professional team.

My thanks go to our Chair, Doug Taylor, and the Warakirri Board for their advice and guidance as they steered our school through the year. We experienced a particularly challenging time when our builder went into liquidation and members of the Property Committee stepped in to support management to complete the construction of our new campus. Their expertise and hard work helped bring the project to completion in a remarkably short time frame.

I am very appreciative of the Board for granting me time to travel to the USA and UK as part of my Menzies Foundation School Leader Fellowship. The opportunity to attend the ASCD conference in Denver, visit schools in the UK and participate in the Graduate Education program at Harvard has brought new contacts and resources to our school and enabled me to gain new perspectives so Warakirri can provide the very best education and personal growth opportunities for our students.

Carolyn Blanden

Principal



### **3. Contextual Information and Characteristics of the Student Body**

Established in 2007, Warakirri College Ltd is an independent secondary college providing education for students in Years 10 to 12 across Western and South-Western Sydney. The college's inception was under the auspices of MTC Australia, a public benevolent entity dedicated to reinvesting its financial surplus into community initiatives. As of January 2023, Warakirri College was fully divested from MTC Australia and operates as a registered charity, sustained by funding from both State and Commonwealth Governments.

Warakirri College assists students aged 15 to 22 to complete their secondary education. With campuses in Fairfield, Blacktown, and Campbelltown, the expansion of the College included the opening of the Campbelltown North campus in September 2023, complementing the existing Campbelltown South campus. The College's Distance Education Program is also administered from the Campbelltown North Campus, providing remote education for students who cannot attend face-to-face schooling.

The student body of Warakirri College comprises young people facing diverse challenges, including social, economic, or cultural disadvantages and physical, cognitive, or social-emotional disabilities.

The College delivers the New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA) curriculum for Stages 5 and 6, equipping students for the attainment of the Record of School Achievement (RoSA) in Year 10 and the Higher School Certificate (HSC). The HSC program is structured as a compressed model, and the College maintains registration and accreditation with NESA until 31 December 2027.

Warakirri College does not impose tuition fees in alignment with its philanthropic ethos. The institution provides comprehensive support covering tuition, stationery, textbooks, and excursions. Adhering to a policy of inclusivity, the College has no uniform requirement. It ensures the provision of breakfast and lunch for students daily, addressing nutritional needs and alleviating any financial burdens.



# 4. Senior Secondary Outcomes

## Results of Year 10, 2023

In 2023, 183 students completed the Year 10 Record of School Achievement (RoSA)

Subject	Number of Students	Grades ABC%	Grades DE%
English	183	61	39
Geography	183	58	42
History	183	57	43
Mathematics	183	46	54
PDHPE	183	84	16
Science	183	55	45

Student outcomes in standardised national literacy and numeracy testing

Warakirri College only offers Year 10 and HSC courses.

Students do not participate in the NAPLAN program.

HSC Subjects (ATAR)	Number of Students	Bands 1-3 (%)	Bands 4-6 (%)	School Moderated Mean	State Moderated Mean
Biology	42	79	21	56.20	73.30
Business Studies	23	100	0	56.90	73.77
English Advanced	17	41	59	70.19	81.73
English Extension 2	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	40.07
English Standard	27	93	7	56.57	70.12
English Studies Examination	25	96	4	47.01	55.95
Food Technology	57	79	21	61.86	72.90
Legal Studies	6	100	0	55.17	75.27
Mathematics Advanced	3	67	33	71.53	78.04
Mathematics Standard 2	37	89	11	51.32	71.76
Modern History	51	94	6	48.82	72.78

HSC Subjects (Non-ATAR and VET)	Number of Students	Grades ABC (%)	Grades DE (%)
English Studies	35	51	49
Numeracy	38	34	66
Work Studies	41	N/A	N/A
Human Services 2 Unit	1	N/A	N/A
Supply Chain Operations 2 Unit	1	N/A	N/A

# 5. Teacher Qualifications and Accreditation



**45** teachers hold a Bachelor's degree or AEI-NOOSR equivalent. **42** teachers are accredited at the Proficient level and **3** at the Provisional/Conditional level

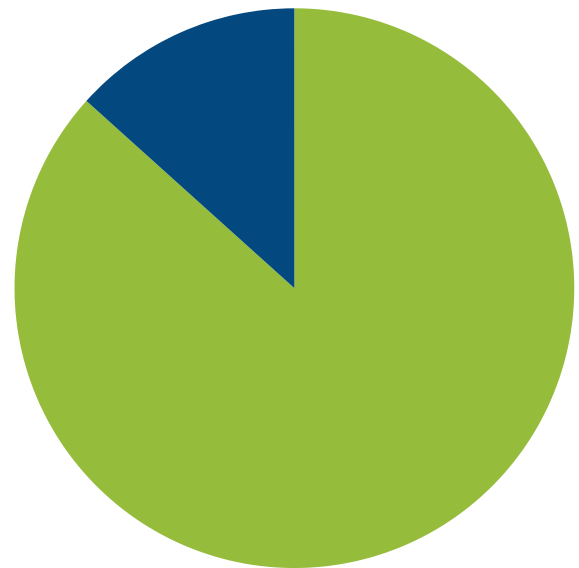
## Workforce Composition

### Teaching Workforce Composition

In 2023, Warakirri College had a total of 45 teaching staff which includes teachers who hold leadership positions, for example, Deputy Principal, and do not teach NES Curriculum.

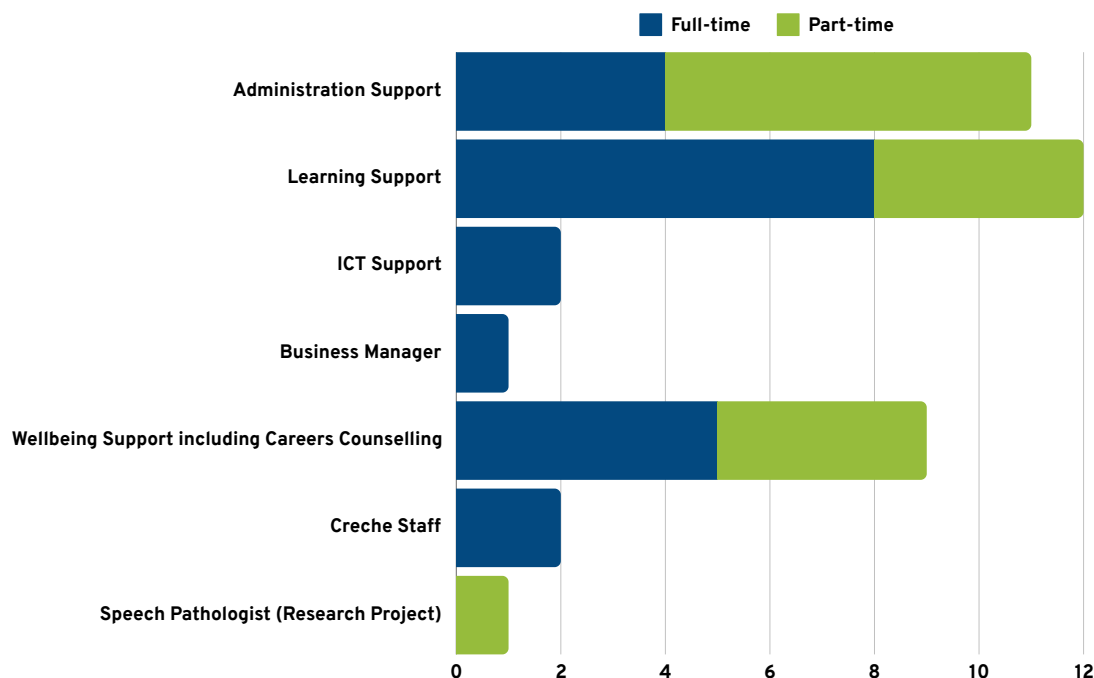
**39** teachers were in full-time positions, whilst **6** were in part-time positions.

Part-time permanent teachers  
13.3%



Full-time permanent teachers  
86.7%

### Non-Teaching Workforce Composition



# Student Attendance, Retention and Post School Destinations

## Student Attendance 2023

Year Group	Semester 1	Semester 2
Year 10	45%	60%
Years 11 and 12	52%	69%
Whole School	56%	63%

Students commonly enrol at Warakirri College after a prolonged absence from their previous school or a pattern of intermittent attendance over many years. This is often due to struggles with mental health, the impact of complex trauma and other factors that have impacted consistent attendance.

The risk of these students disengaging from school is very high, particularly for students with an entrenched history of school avoidance before enrolling at Warakirri College.

## Student Retention from Year 10 to Year 11

Campus	2023 Year 10 Students	2023 Year 10 leavers	Retained in school 2024	Entered Year 11 2024	Repeat Year 10 2024
Fairfield	35	9	74%	19	7
Blacktown	43	20	56%	20	3
Campbelltown North	40	13	68%	20	7
Campbelltown South	57	19	67%	31	7
Distance Education	32	14	56%	16	2

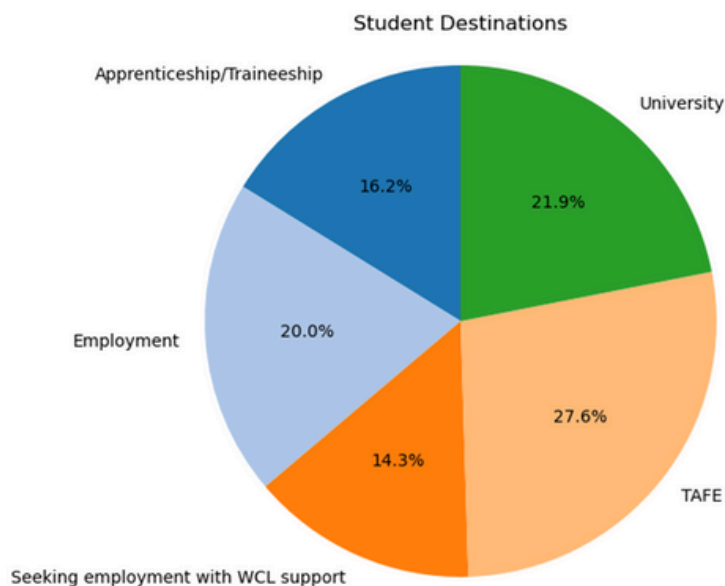
Some students have their enrolment withdrawn each year due to a lack of attendance. These students are referred to the DET Home School Liaison Officers if they are under 17.

The College continues to review its policies and practices, including building strategies to address student non-attendance. A range of measures to reduce non-attendance have been implemented, including changes to teaching methods, systematic follow-up for non-attendees, daily SMS messages to carers and parents of any student who does not attend by 10 am, phone calls from College staff, letters to parents, caseworkers and caregivers together with revised documentation collection procedures for recording the reasons for non-attendance and school follow-up.

**Student retention rates** are always higher than we anticipate from enrolment data. Many students proceeded to Year 11, having indicated on enrolment that they would leave at the end of Year 10. When questioned about this they replied that school was a very safe and pleasant place, so they had decided to stay.

# Post School Destinations

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Students' post-school destinations include tertiary study at University and TAFE, particularly in Education, Medical Science, Communication and Public Relations, Beauty, Community Services, Animal Care and Construction.

Those students who moved into employment, including apprenticeships and traineeships, worked the following industries: Hospitality, Retail, Mechanics, Warehousing and Childcare.

# Policies

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Warakirri College's policies are regularly reviewed and updated by the Policy Committee. The *Enrolment*, *Discipline*, *Student Anti-Bullying*, *Child Protection* and *Compliments, Complaints and Suggestions* policies are accessible on the College's website via this link: [Policies](#)

# Student, Parent and Teacher Satisfaction

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The School is very proud of its community reputation as a place where young people can be given a chance to complete their education. We receive repeat referrals from local high schools, community organisations, and the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ).

## Students

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**“The supportive treatment and care provided by the staff has helped me to continue and not give up on achieving my HSC.”**  
(Maria, Year 12)

**“The teachers are engaged with helping their students and caring for their needs and situations.”**  
(Jessica, Year 12)

**“Warakirri College has helped me be a better person through meeting new people and improving my mental health.”**  
(Felix, Year 12)

## Parents & Carers

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**“Kathryn has absolutely flourished at Warakirri and has settled in extremely well, more than I could have ever imagined. She has connected with her peers and developed several close friendships. All of this could not make me happier, and having her animated and keen to tell me about her day each afternoon on our trip home proves how well it is going.”**  
(Annie, Kathryn’s mother)

# Staff Feedback

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“Staff go to great lengths to improve student wellbeing through a holistic, integrated approach. Since I started working at Warakirri, the environment I have observed is like a home environment to all of us.”

“The staff are genuine and caring and know their students really well. We all treat the students like family.”

“Everyone at my campus works well together. We have an excellent relationship and support each other.”

The primary sources of data about stakeholder satisfaction are:

**Student exit surveys:** Whenever students leave, they complete a survey about the school premises, resources, pastoral care, teaching, and teacher/student relationships. These surveys have been very positive.

**Social Media:** Parents' comments about the school on Facebook have been very positive.

**Student referrals:** many students come to enrol in the college due to referral from peers or parents. We have a positive reputation as an inclusive school and therefore have a significant number of students who are LGBTQIA+. This group is a source of mutual support for each other and they find an atmosphere of acceptance which improves their sense of belonging.

**Staff Satisfaction Survey:** staff are surveyed each year to guide the College's Executive team in prioritising further support and implementing improvements to the College.

# 2023 Summary of Financial Data

