

Barrett Adolescent Centre Commission of Inquiry

BARRETT ADOLESCENT CENTRE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

*Commissions of Inquiry Act 1950
Section 5(1)(d)*

STATEMENT OF ANNE REDDIE

Name of Witness:	Anne Reddie
Date of birth:	[REDACTED]
Current address:	Rivendell School, Thomas Walker Estate, Hospital Road, Concord West NSW 2138
Occupation:	Principal, Rivendell School
Contact details (phone/email):	[REDACTED]
Date and place of statement:	15/12/2015 at Reddie, NSW 2039
Statement taken by:	Rachel Cornes

I **Annie Reddie** make oath and state as follows:

1. On 17 November 2015, I received correspondence from the Barrett Adolescent Centre Commission of Inquiry (**the Commission**), which attached a copy of the Commission's Terms of Reference and a Notice to Attend an interview with Commission staff on 23 November 2013.
2. Prior to receiving contact from the Commission, I was unaware of the Barrett Adolescent Centre or the Commission.
3. Since 20 April 2015, I have held the position of Director, 'Every Student, Every School' (**ESES**) with the New South Wales (**NSW**) Department of Education (**Department of Education**). The ESES initiative is aimed at providing better learning and support for students in NSW who have a disability, learning difficulty or who require behavioural support.
4. My substantive position, however, is Principal of Rivendell School, NSW Department of Education. I have held this position since January 2010.

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5. As Principal of Rivendell School, my responsibilities include:
 - a. the provision of high level educational leadership to lead and manage a complex public school focused on the delivery of high quality education;
 - b. leading and managing rigorous and inclusive whole school teaching and learning programs;
 - c. the provision of high level communication and interpersonal skills to build positive relationships and engaging all levels of the school and educational community;
 - d. leading and managing the development and performance of staff to improve teaching and learning;
 - e. planning systems and managing resources effectively and equitably to enhance teaching and learning;
 - f. working collaboratively with Health staff at Rivendell, The Walker Unit and the Gna Ka Lun Acute Unit; and
 - g. leading staff in implementing the Department's Aboriginal education policies and ensuring quality outcomes for Aboriginal people.
6. Prior to my commencement at Rivendell School, I held the position of Principal of Ajuga School (also in NSW). Ajuga School provides an integration program for students from Kindergarten to Year 12 who have a severe emotional disturbance. I held this position for approximately 10 years. The main focus of the Ajuga program is to provide intensive support to successfully return students to school or to facilitate their participation in further education or employment.
7. Prior to my position at Ajuga School, I worked as a School Counsellor and District Guidance Officer (from 1990 until 2000) and, before that, as a Teacher (from around 1976 until 1989).

Formal qualifications and experience

8. My formal qualifications include a Diploma of Teaching, Bachelor of Arts (majoring in psychology) and Master of Arts (majoring in psychology).
9. I am also a Psychologist (registered with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency) and a Member of the Secondary Principals Council and the Primary School Principals Association.

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Barrett Adolescent Centre Commission of Inquiry**The Rivendell School**

10. The Rivendell School opened in 1979 and is funded by the Department of Education in line with other public schools.
11. In an operational sense, the Rivendell School is part of a joint NSW Ministry of Health and Department of Education facility, offering schooling to 'Health' and 'non-Health' students. Adolescents come to be students of the Rivendell School either:
 - a. through their admission, by the Ministry of Health:
 - (i) as a patient of the Rivendell Child, Adolescent and Family Mental Health Service (**Rivendell (Health) unit**) (located within the historical Thomas Walker Estate at Concord West);
 - (ii) as a patient of the Walker unit (located within the Concord Centre for Mental Health at Concord West); or
 - (iii) following an emergency admission into the Gna Ka Lun Acute Adolescent Mental Health Unit at Campbelltown Hospital; or
 - b. via an Access Request submitted by the student's mainstream/home school to Rivendell School, requesting placement. Access Requests are predominantly received in respect of students having difficulties in the mainstream school setting, such as emotional problems, poor school attendance or anxiety.
12. For some students, their mainstream school will provide Rivendell School with an academic program. When this happens it is great because it means that the student is not 'missing out' on what their peers are learning and they are better able to slip back into the mainstream school upon discharge.
13. In instances where a patient is attending the Rivendell School as a consequence of their admission to the Rivendell (Health) unit or the Walker unit, a representative of Rivendell School will attend the student's Health admission meeting and assist the patient's parents to complete an enrolment form for the Rivendell School.
14. The student's educational goals and education plan are discussed with the student's parents. Topics covered include whether the student wishes to return to their mainstream school following their discharge from the Rivendell (Health) unit or Walker unit, or if they want to have a fresh start at a different school (public or private) / TAFE etc. This discussion allows staff to gain an understanding of what the student's educational program needs are, and to set an academic program to meet their educational goals.
15. For non-Health enrolments, each Access Request is reviewed by the Principal of Rivendell School and the Rivendell School Counsellor. All Access Requests for special school placements are tabled at an Ultimo Directorate Placement Panel Meeting which has

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principal representatives from mainstream high schools, mainstream primary schools and special schools.

16. If the panel agree that Rivendell School is the most appropriate placement for the student, then an offer of placement is made. Rivendell School decide if the student will be placed in either the Paterson (Years 9 & 10) or Sulman (Years 11 & 12) program (which I discuss below).
17. The Rivendell School is well staffed, with the following staff cohort:
 - a. 1 x Principal;
 - b. 3 x Assistant Principals;
 - c. 8 x Classroom Teachers;
 - d. 2 x Outreach Teachers (for the Gna Ka Lun program discussed below);
 - e. 1 x School Counsellor; and
 - f. 13 x Administration and Support Staff.
18. There are no extra qualifications or educational requirements for staff of Rivendell School, as compared in a mainstream school. That said, a number of staff of Rivendell School do have a Masters in Psychology or Special Education. Those qualifications are desirable, although not necessary.
19. To complete their duties to the required standard, teaching staff at Rivendell School require good pedagogy in terms of how they engage students in learning and an awareness of essential elements of wellbeing. Staff must also be able to self-regulate, reflect in a calm manner, work collaboratively and have good oral and written communication.
20. When I commenced working at Rivendell School I observed it to have a 'mature staff', in the sense that staff had been long-term employees of Rivendell School. Over more recent years, I have observed a shift as these staff retire and are replaced. The result is an appropriate blend of experience and youthfulness.
21. Approximately two times each semester, staff of Rivendell School are asked by a mainstream NSW school to provide some professional learning with regards to the management of challenging behaviours and risk management in their classrooms.

The various Learning Centres (programs) offered at Rivendell School

22. Rivendell School offers 13 classes (sometimes referred to as Learning Centres) which are located across three sites (Walker Estate, Concord Centre for Mental Health and Campbelltown Hospital) and allow for the enrolment of up to 77 students:

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	Location	Health or Non-Health (Education) admission	Program	Details of Program
1.	Walker Estate	Health	Lawson (3 classes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caters to students with severe Anxiety & Depressive disorders • Up to 18 students • 1 teacher and 1 SLSO per 7 students • Years 11-12 in one class; years 7-10 in the other two classes preferred • Length of stay usually 20-30 weeks • In 2014, the Lawson Program had 32 students enrolled (25 transitioned out during the year – two to TAFE, 16 to mainstream schooling, 7 to another supported setting) • Nursing staff employed by Health, available to attend classroom (for example, if a student is anxious and requires assistance to settle in)
2.	Walker Estate	Health	Yaralla (2 classes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caters to students with a Psychotic illness (Psychosis) and/or pervasive development disorder (including Autism Spectrum Disorder) • Up to 12 students per class • Length of stay usually 20-30 weeks • In 2014, had 20 students enrolled in program. 13 transitioned out (one to TAFE, 6 to mainstream schooling, 6 to another special setting). • Nursing staff employed by Health, attend classroom
3.	Walker Estate	Education	Paterson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrating program for years 9-10 students with an emotional disturbance, social skills difficulties and poor self-esteem • In 2014, 7 students enrolled in program (3 transitioned out – 2 to employment, 1 to TAFE)
4.	Walker Estate	Education	Sulman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Emotional Disturbance and Social Disorders • A flexible, alternative educational program for years 11-12 who for emotional and/or social reasons are not attending a school despite a history of various interventions • In 2014, had 28 students enrolled in program (13 transitioned – 1 to

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				TAFE, 6 to mainstream schooling, 6 to another special setting)
5.	Concord Centre (Across the road from the Walker Estate)	Health	Walker (2 classes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For students admitted to the Walker Adolescent High Severity Mental Health Unit (required to attend if they are well enough) In 2014, 20 students admitted (14 transitioned – 1 to TAFE, 3 to mainstream schooling and two to another special setting) Length of enrolment usually 12-18 months Nursing staff employed by Health, attend classroom
6.	Campbelltown Hospital (Approx. 55 minute drive from the Walker Estate)	Health	Gna Ka Lun (2 classes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For students admitted to the Gna Ka Lun Acute Adolescent Mental Health unit (i.e. through emergency). In 2014 were 97 admissions – year 10 (39%), years 11 and 12 (30%) Students are generally in Gna Ka Lun Acute unit for only a short-term, and so students remain enrolled in their home school and are not formally enrolled in Rivendell School. Length of enrolment varies greatly The unit is a 10 bed unit and students are placed in one of the two learning centres according to their need.

23. As is apparent from the above table, the educational programs of the Rivendell School are, to the extent this is possible, divided broadly up into categories of mental illness, with each cohort having different nursing, psychological and allied health teams. For example, students in the Yaralla program are generally more unwell than those in the Lawson program and consequently require a different type of therapy.
24. Based on my experience, I consider that the division of classes into groups with different mental illness to be good practice from an educational perspective. This is because if you have a really overtly unwell student in the classroom, that will have an adverse consequence for another student who has, for instance, anxiety. Students still get many opportunities during the day to mix with each other, including attendance at lessons, workshops, assembly, recess and lunch times.
25. A number of accommodations are made for students of Rivendell School (the majority of which can also made, in appropriate circumstances, for students at a mainstream school). Some of these accommodations include:

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- a. scaffolding tasks – that is, breaking down tasks in order to allow a student a greater sense of achievement;
 - b. extra time for submission of work/assignments; and
 - c. special provisions (time extensions and breaks) for exams.
26. With the exception of the Walker Program, the Rivendell School day runs from 9.00am until 2.30pm, Monday to Friday. The school day finishes at 2.30pm (rather than the 3.00pm finish of a mainstream school) in order to accommodate the students requiring assisted transport home. This is particularly the case for day-patients in the Lawson and Yaralla programs and for ‘non-Health’ students who are not admitted into an onsite Health facility.
 27. Students of the Walker Program have a shorter school day (9.30am until 12.30pm). This is due to their heightened health needs.
 28. A ‘typical day’ for any student of Rivendell School who is enrolled in a ‘Health’ program, would involve the student checking in with nursing staff and coming over to a Learning Support Room for 9.00am and students moving together to a teaching area.
 29. Students of the Walker Program have a smaller class size as compared other programs, and have home room time.
 30. Due to its size, the Rivendell School is unable to offer students the full array of electives and, consequently, some students are taught electives via work provided by distance education, or through resources supplied by their home school.
 31. In addition, for some subjects, students of different programs are blended. This is important from a resourcing perspective, but is also important in the sense that it mirrors mainstream schooling (the need to ‘tolerate other people’) and builds the resilience that is necessary in order to try and get students back out into the mainstream world.
 32. A summer school program runs during school term breaks and facilitates programs including literacy and art. This program commenced approximately three years ago and was initiated by the Health staff at the Walker unit. The summer school program is funded by the Health Department and staffed with casual teachers (employed by the Health Department).
 33. When I commenced work at the Rivendell School in 2010, I observed that students were seated at individual tables facing the wall, with a table in the middle for group work. To assist in the transition of students back into mainstream schooling, I made a number of changes to the classrooms at Rivendell School over the past three years, so as to make it better reflect that of a mainstream classroom. These changes have included changes to the

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seating (to have students seated in rows) and the introduction of equipment, such as interactive whiteboards.

Communication from Rivendell School

34. In 2014, the Rivendell School issued a survey to parents of its students, asking for feedback on how involved they wished to be in respect of their child's education.
35. Approximately 60% of parents returned the survey and almost all parents indicated that they wished to be involved in discussions concerning their child's education.
36. Partly in response to this survey, it is a requirement of teachers of the Rivendell School that each Friday afternoon they provide an update (by email) about each student's progress. This update is provided to the student's mainstream school and also the student's parents. The purpose of this contact is to retain the connection between Rivendell School, the mainstream school and the parents. The maintenance of these connections is important for when it comes time for the student to leave Rivendell School.
37. In my experience, a lot of parents of students at Rivendell School seem unaware of the number and type of supports available to them in mainstream schools for their children. Staff of Rivendell School are able to assist parents with identifying these supports.

Discharge from the Rivendell School

38. 'Health' students remain attending the Rivendell School until such time as they are discharged from the Walker or Rivendell (Health) units or the Gna Ka Lun Acute Adolescent Mental Health unit (unless they move across into a 'Non-Health' program.)
39. 'Non-Health' students remain attending the Rivendell School until such time as they are transitioned to another setting, gain employment or undertake tertiary study.
40. The question of whether Rivendell School should 'track' the outcomes of students upon their discharge from Rivendell School has been a topic of some discussion in the past. I recall that on one occasion when it was discussed, it was mentioned that we would need to be careful about education staff undertaking follow-ups. The reason given was that a staff member could potentially make a phone call and, in doing so, discover unexpectedly that the student had taken their life.
41. The other concern was the utility of the data being collected and, in particular, the concern that a lot of factors may intervene between the student's discharge and the date when the data is collected.

Evaluation of Rivendell School

42. Rivendell School reports annually through the Annual School Reports (ASR). The ASR is a record of a school's self-evaluation process and is conducted annually as part of the

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ongoing cycle of school planning and evaluation. Attached and marked "AR-1" is a copy of the 2014 Rivendell ASR, which I had input into.

Opinion


- 43. In some instances, students of the Walker and Rivendell units have not attended school for 12 months or so, prior to their enrolment at the Rivendell School. An on-site school is an essential component of the care provided to 'Health' patients of the Walker and Rivendell units. I say this because:
 - a. participation in the on-site school allows a student to better prepare for discharge by ensuring that they are up to date with curriculum and, consequently, have better attendance rates upon their return to mainstream schooling;
 - b. the on-site school necessitates the encouragement of students (particularly of the Walker unit, which is a locked ward) to get out of the mindset of 'being sick' (medical sickness deficit) and to recover. For instance, teachers at Rivendell School encourage 'Health' students to get up and attend school. The students often stay once they are at school because the teachers make it engaging; and
 - c. attendance at school allows students to keep in contact with 'normality'.

OATHS ACT 1867 (DECLARATION)


I ANNE REDDIE do solemnly and sincerely declare that:

- (1) This written statement by me dated 15/12/2015 is true to the best of my knowledge and belief: and
- (2) I make this statement knowing that if it were admitted as evidence, I may be liable to prosecution for stating in it anything I know to be false.

And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true and by virtue of the provisions of the *Oaths Act 1867*.

.....  .Signature


Taken and declared before me at ROZELLE NSW this 15 day of DECEMBER 2015.

Taken By 

Justice of the Peace / Commissioner for Declarations / Lawyer

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Witness Signature:

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Commissions of Inquiry Act 1950
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ATTACHMENT LISTING

Bound and marked "AR-1" is the attachment to the Statutory Declaration of ANNE REDDIE
declared15/12/..... 2015

Attachment	Document	Date	Page
AR-1	Rivendell School annual School Report 2014	2014	11-22

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Education &
Communities

Rivendell School Annual School Report 2014



School context statement

Rivendell School is part of a joint NSW Ministry of Health (Health) and Department of Education and Communities (DEC) facility. It is located within the historical Thomas Walker Estate at Concord West and shares the site with the Rivendell Child, Adolescent and Family Mental Health Service.

Rivendell School has 13 classes (sometimes referred to as Learning Centres) across three sites.

On the Walker Estate we have five classes across the two Health programs, Lawson and Yaralla, and four classes for the DEC programs, Paterson and Sulman.

In the Concord Centre for Mental Health site we have two classes (which make up the Learning Centre) in the Walker Adolescent High Severity Mental Health Unit.

At Campbelltown Hospital we have two classes (which make up the Learning Centre) in the Gna Ka Lun Acute Adolescent Mental Health Unit.

Rivendell School provides a broad academic curriculum, targeted vocational programs, and the opportunity for students to participate in a range of extra curricula activities.

The school has a committed staff with a strong ethos of communication and collaboration with the wider school community.

Principal's message

This Annual School Report for 2014 provides our community with information regarding our achievements, programs, initiatives and evaluations.

The Rivendell School community prides itself on promoting shared and individual responsibility for:

- positive and respectful relationships;
- safe behaviour; and
- cooperation and participation in quality learning.

This year we have maintained a focus on developing an inclusive school culture. While we have a diverse student population enrolled at Rivendell across different programs, our aim is for all students to have a sense of belonging to the

Rivendell School community. We have changed a number of school structures to foster this sense of belonging and community, including a review of our student welfare system. In consultation with the school community our Student Support System was developed. (Details page 7)

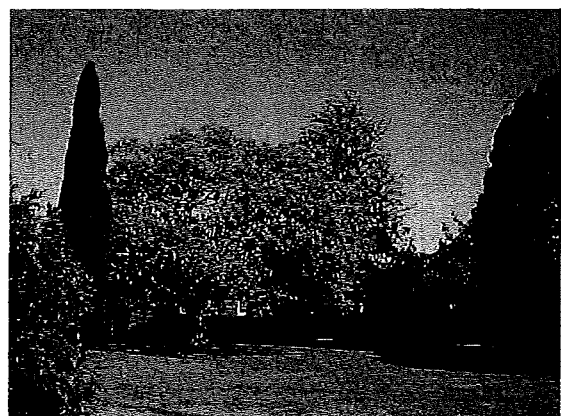
Our positive student outcomes are supported by the strong supportive and collaborative relationship between teachers and School Learning Support Officers (SLSOs), with the Health staff, mainstream schools, Sydney Distance Education High School (SDEHS), Open Training and Education Network (OTEN), TAFE NSW, the Rotary Club of Concord, community agencies and local business personnel, especially the Kokoda Cafe.

As always, the ongoing support of our parents and caregivers is greatly appreciated.

My thanks go to the dedicated and enthusiastic staff at Rivendell for providing a quality educational experience for our students. Thank you also to all the students who took the opportunities on offer and made the most of them.

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.

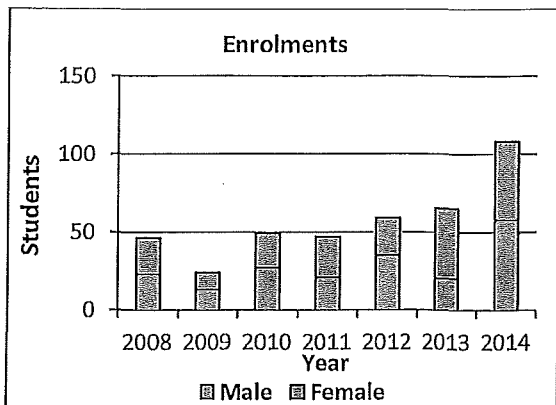
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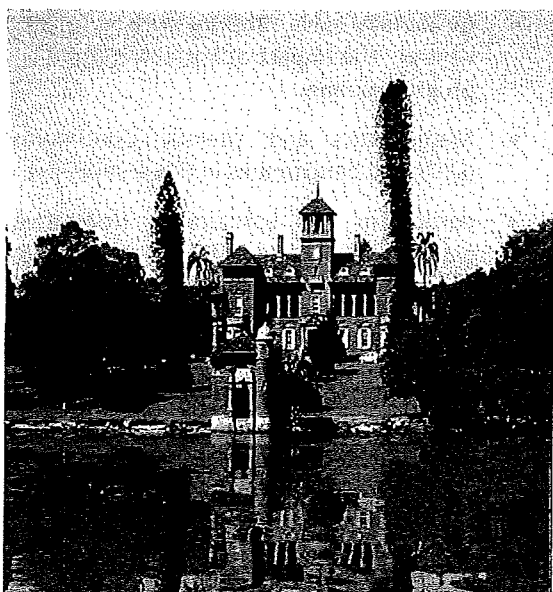
Student information

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

Student enrolment profile



Student numbers increased in 2014 with the addition of a second class for the Walker Unit. While Rivendell can enroll up to 72 students at any one time (not including the GKL students), the enrolment profile for 2014 indicates the number of students who were enrolled throughout the year.



Student Representative’s Message

In 2014 a School Representative Council (SRC) was established to assist students to successfully and respectfully voice their opinion. Each program elected two representatives to the council to express the views of the students in the programs they represented. The SRC consulted their peers and for the first meeting brought an agenda to discuss aspects of the school uniform and mobile phones policies and the new school rules.

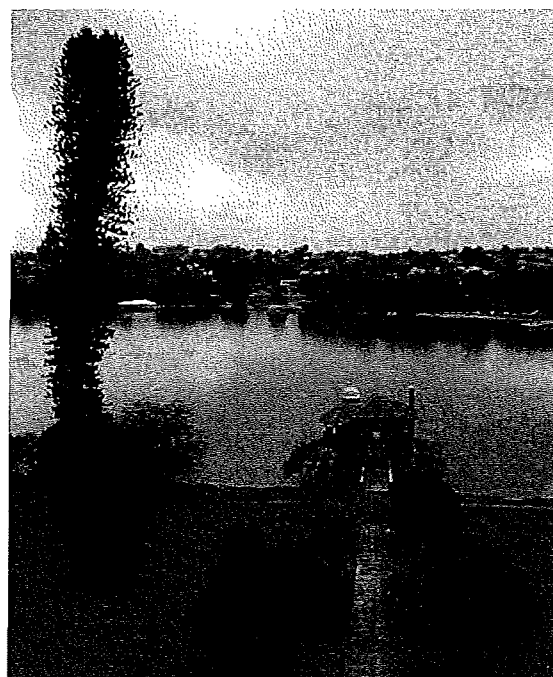
The SRC met with the Rivendell executive and changes reflecting student input were agreed and

implemented. Further to this, the SRC ran a poster competition to help students understand the new dress code and held a school assembly to introduce themselves and the changes negotiated with executive staff. Students report that the establishment of an SRC has been a positive development in terms of student engagement, dialogue between the greater student population and between students and staff. The aim of the SRC is to consolidate these positive first steps and to consistently act as the voice for, and in the interests of, Rivendell School students.

Post-Rivendell destinations

During 2014 68 students transitioned from Rivendell School. Their destinations are shown in the table below.

Post-Rivendell destinations	Employment	TAFE entry	Tertiary study	Mainstream school	Support unit/SSP	Other
Lawson		2		16	7	
Paterson	2	1				
Sulman	1	4		1	1	6
Walker		1		3	8	2
Yaralla		1		6	6	



Workforce information

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

Rivendell's allocation of staffing includes a teacher and an SLSO for each class except for GKL which is staffed only by two outreach teachers.



Workforce composition

Position	Number
Principal	1
Assistant Principals	3
Classroom Teachers	8
Outreach Teachers	2
Teacher Librarian/RFF	1.32
School Administrative & Support Staff	12.82
School Counsellor	1
District Guidance Officer	1
Assistant Principals/Learning & Support	2
Assistant Principal Student Wellbeing	1
Learning & Support/Regional	4.02
Vocational Transition Teacher	1
Student Wellbeing Teacher	0.3
Total	38.46

The Australian Education Regulation, 2014 requires schools to report on Aboriginal composition of their workforce. In 2014 Rivendell School staff did not include anyone who identified as being of indigenous background.

All staff indicated in the shaded area are those whose base school is Rivendell but whose direct service is across the Region.

The District Guidance Officer, Assistant Principals Learning and Support and the Vocational Transition teacher join with Rivendell School staff for professional development and attend the school development days.

Teacher qualifications

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

Qualifications	% of staff
Degree or Diploma	60
Postgraduate	40

Professional learning and teacher accreditation

All school staff had the opportunity to participate in professional learning that aligned with their professional learning plans, 2014 roles and responsibilities and the school plan. Professional learning undertaken in 2014 contributed to professional and collegial discussion and enhanced learning opportunities for students.

Professional learning areas included mandatory training and also:

- technology skills (Brekkie with a Tekkie, Sentral, the Impact of Social Networking, program builder)
- Mathematics and Literacy Continuum (skills and benchmarks in these subjects)
- curriculum and assessment (formative assessment, implementation of the new syllabus, adjustments and accommodations)
- Memoodgetactive (physical and mental health website focusing on sporting activities, teenage issues and support sites)
- student support (strategies and school framework)
- adolescent mental health
- cultural awareness
- financial management
- School Plan 2015 to 2017.

In 2014, five teachers met with a member of the school executive to review the accreditation process. This group of teachers continued to meet to support each other and discuss issues relating to the steps involved with accreditation. Most of these teachers also completed professional learning on this topic. By the end of 2014, one staff member completed the

accreditation process, with others continuing to work within their future submission timeframe.

Beginning Teachers

There were no beginning teachers permanently appointed to Rivendell in 2014.

Financial summary

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

Date of financial summary	30/11/2014
Income	\$
Balance brought forward	1011372.75
Global funds	188782.41
Tied funds	48569.45
School & community sources	0.00
Interest	26985.17
Trust receipts	404091.07
Canteen	0.00
Total income	1679800.85
Expenditure	
Teaching & learning	
Key learning areas	63588.85
Excursions	368.85
Extracurricular dissections	7469.61
Library	446.33
Training & development	1220.74
Tied funds	71926.32
Casual relief teachers	0.00
Administration & office	59708.17
School-operated canteen	0.00
Utilities	6254.16
Maintenance	13830.83
Trust accounts	399771.24
Capital programs	0.00
Total expenditure	624585.10
Balance carried forward	1055215.75

Rivendell School holds funds in trust for the Ultimo Network of Schools and State Office programs as well as the Families First organisation.

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

School performance 2014

Academic achievements

Higher School Certificate (HSC)

In 2014 there were nine students who sat HSC exams at Rivendell School. Of these nine students, four completed their studies and moved on to TAFE or tertiary education and five continued with their study pathway.



Record of School Achievement

Eleven students completed their Record of School Achievement (RoSA). This was achieved through a combination of curriculum providers including SDEHS, student's mainstream school and Rivendell School.

Other achievements

Student Wellbeing Toolkit

Rivendell School collaborated with Canterbury Vale School as part of the DEC's Every Student Every School initiative; special schools as centres of expertise. Together we successfully developed a product called the Student Wellbeing Toolkit. The toolkit is designed to:

- increase understanding of behaviour and mental health;
- support students during integration; and
- promote student wellbeing across the school.

The resource is suitable for both primary and secondary settings. It provides a series of modules that can be used at staff meetings and professional learning meetings. The modules encourage a whole school approach to

understanding and engaging young people with behavioural and/or mental health issues.

The collaboration produced a valuable tool in assisting schools to meet their obligations under the Disability Standards for Education.

Rivendell Programs

Lawson Program

The Lawson program is a DEC/Health program. It consists of three classes catering for students with anxiety and depression. This program provides an educational program for up to 18 students.

Personalised learning plans are developed collaboratively with the student, their family and Health staff.

In 2014, curriculum was developed by Rivendell classroom teachers or provided by student's mainstream school, distance education, TAFE NSW or Open High School.

Some of the many highlights of 2014 have been improved student engagement through lessons delivered by Rivendell staff incorporating new ICT, particularly the interactive whiteboards that were installed in all Lawson classrooms this year.

The program focused on addressing gaps in learning and developing the skills and strategies students need to return to a mainstream setting.

Areas for future focus in 2015 are based around continuing to improve student engagement. This will include more leadership opportunities and collaboration within the program.

In 2014, 32 students were supported through the Lawson program. Seven students will remain in the program and continue their studies in 2015.

Information on post-school destinations for the Lawson students can be found in the table on page 2.

Paterson Program

The Paterson program is a DEC program. It consists of one class catering for up to seven students in Years 9 and 10 who are experiencing emotional difficulties.

Personalised learning plans are developed collaboratively with the student, their family and their mainstream school where applicable. Academic goals focused on addressing gaps in learning, developing literacy and numeracy skills

and improving student engagement and learning habits.

Students were involved in a variety of activities designed to complement their academic program. All students participated in a 'Skills for Life' program. Students were involved in learning activities which included a healthy eating program, Mindfulness sessions, goal setting, physical fitness and integrated project work.

The program helped to promote social skills, students confidence and fostered a sense of belonging in the wider school community.

In 2014, a total of 7 students were supported in the Paterson Program. Four students will remain in the program and continue their studies in 2015.

Information on post-school destinations for the Paterson students can be found in the table on page 2.

Future directions for the Paterson program include becoming more involved in whole school activities that address leadership skills through involvement with the SRC.

Sulman Program

The Sulman program is a DEC program for students who have not engaged in a mainstream setting. It consists of three classes catering for up to 21 students at any one time in Years 11 and 12. Students are working towards attaining their Higher School Certificate or equivalent.

Students have the opportunity to follow individual academic pathways that involve study through one or more of the following educational settings: SDEHS, TAFE NSW, Open High School, Saturday School of Languages, and OTEN. Students have completed certificate and vocational courses and have attended work placements throughout the year.

The Sulman Program implemented a number of initiatives to support students. These included:

- parent and student review meetings
- student weekly reviews and daily plans
- peer teaching
- SDEHS reciprocal visits
- *Morning circle* and a *Community Awareness Group*.

In 2014, 28 students were supported through the Sulman program. Fifteen students will remain in the program and continue their studies in 2015.

Information on post-school destinations for the Sulman students can be found in the table on page 2.

Future Directions for the Sulman program include holding regular parent review meetings and providing weekly feedback on student progress. There will also be a focus on developing students' skill set to better prepare them for all the requirements of their academic courses.

Walker Program

The Walker Program Learning Centre is a DEC/Health program. It consists of two classes catering for students with severe mental health illness. This program provides an educational program for up to 12 students at any one time.

In 2014 the Learning Centre increased to two classes. This has led to improved student engagement and opportunities for team teaching and larger group lessons. This year, classes have combined for science experiments with students taking on various roles such as filming, recording data and using equipment. The students frequently participate in *Circle Time* where students engage in communication and cooperation based activities and lessons.

Each student has a personalised learning plan. Academic programs are provided by Walker teachers, distance education centres, mainstream schools and OTEN.

The learning centre continues to be a welcoming and engaging space. Students are encouraged to negotiate their daily learning goals, display their work and share their achievements.

The learning centre has two achievement award programs. One is a merit system, and the other is a task based reward system. Both systems have been popular with the students and have increased their motivation and engagement.

A number of students participated in Rivendell sport sessions, workshops and specific subject lessons.

In 2014, 20 students were supported through the Walker program. Six students will remain in the program and continue their studies in 2015.

Information on post-school destinations for the Walker students can be found in the table on page 2.

Yaralla Program

The Yaralla program is a DEC/Health program. It consists of two classes catering for students with mood disorders, psychotic illness or who are on the autism spectrum. This program provides an educational program for up to 12 students at any one time.

The Yaralla team places a strong emphasis on building an inclusive and collaborative environment in which students are encouraged to participate, take personal risks, to have a voice in their school and be respectfully challenged to achieve their individual goals.

The academic programs are provided by SDEHS, mainstream schools, Open High School, OTEN and/or Rivendell teachers. Teachers liaise regularly with our curriculum providers to develop personalised learning programs.

A cross curriculum initiative was developed focusing on making healthy lifestyle choices. This initiative increased student engagement and collaboration between the education and health staff through gardening, cooking and sharing of meals together.

Daily *Circle Time* was implemented focusing on engaging students through relationship-building, restorative practices, the development and enhancement of students' social skills and emotional literacy.

In 2014, 20 students were supported through the Yaralla program. Seven students will remain in the program and continue their studies in 2015.

Information on post-school destinations for the Yaralla students can be found in the table on page 2.



Gna Ka Lun Program

Gna Ka Lun (GKL) is an acute Adolescent Mental Health Unit based at Campbelltown Hospital. Rivendell School operates the learning centre in GKL, staffed by two outreach teachers and the Rivendell specialist school counsellor. When patients are admitted to GKL they have the opportunity to attend the learning centre which operates for two hours each day except Wednesdays.

The role of the GKL Learning Centre teacher is to provide young people with learning opportunities appropriate to their health so that they are able to maintain a connection with their educational pathway. GKL teachers liaise with each student's school to enable a continuity of education and where possible support the students return to school.

Schools are advised when a student has been admitted to GKL and educational information, including student attendance, academic functioning and behaviour and wellbeing, is requested. This information is shared with the treating clinical team.

Communication is maintained with schools during the students' admission in order to:

- update them on their student's progress in the learning centre;
- notify them of a discharge date; and
- inform them of the community agency or mental health professional whose care the student will be transferred into.

In 2014, there were 97 young people admitted into GKL. Of these, 66% were from DEC schools. The remaining 34% were from non-DEC schools, TAFE or were not enrolled in an educational setting. The majority of the young people admitted into GKL in 2014 were in Year 10 (39%) or Years 11 and 12 (30%).

Significant programs and initiatives

Student Support System

2014 has seen an evaluation and review of the Rivendell School Rules and Behaviour Management System. This five stage process was undertaken as a result of observations by staff that there were inconsistencies with the understanding of the current rules and the way

the system was being implemented. Some staff reported that they did not feel confident in using the system.

We reviewed the BMS and developed a new system which involved three simple steps. The first step is for staff to *remind* students that their behaviour needs to be in keeping with the school rules. The second step is to give students time to *think and choose* what they might do about their behaviour. The third step is to provide students an opportunity to work out a solution to the issue. We call this step *working it out*.

Stage 1 involved the review and writing of the school rules, explicitly stating the expectations and responsibilities for students. Staff and students were part of the consultation process which culminated in the production of new Rivendell School rules.

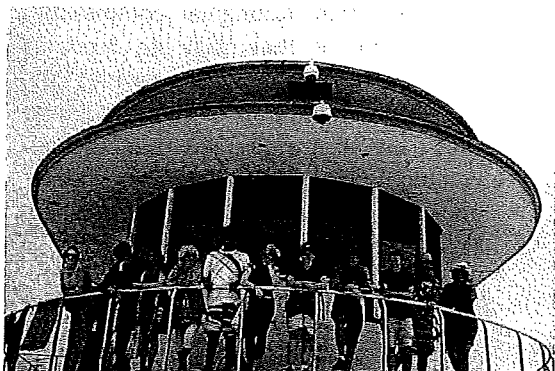
Stage 2 involved whole staff discussion about the purpose of having a 'behaviour management system'. A consensus was reached that our aim was to support students to successfully manage their own emotions and behaviour, thereby naming our new system the Student Support System. The system encourages students to take a break and get back on track if they are having difficulties and to consider some alternative choices. Staff are able to demonstrate problem solving skills and to model assertive behaviour and restorative practices. The system directly relates to the Rivendell School Rules.

Stage 3 focused on the skill development of staff with the implementation of the system. Experienced staff modelled the correct language that we would use in scenarios with students. Staff then broke into groups to practice using the steps which, when evaluated, was an invaluable exercise is increasing staff confidence in using the system.

Stage 4 involved the production of visual displays representing the school rules and the system. These were placed in all classrooms and staff explicitly taught the system to the students. Throughout the year as part of staff professional learning we reviewed the system, its effectiveness and staff confidence in its implementation. Anecdotal feedback reflected that the system was most effective when staff were confident in its implementation and students knew the steps.

Stage 5 involved surveying students and staff to evaluate the effectiveness of the system. The data showed that 83% of respondents were unclear about the *working it out* step.

In 2015 we will orientate new students and staff to the Rivendell School Rules and the system and provide ongoing professional development relating to the three steps with the focus on the *working it out* step.



Circle time

This year all programs have implemented a *circle time* component of class time as an opportunity to provide students with a voice and a forum to explore issues relevant to each program and the needs of their students. The structure, strategies and philosophy behind *circle time* is based upon forming healthy relationships and fostering a sense of belonging and connectedness.

The topics explored during *circle time* are many and varied. Some examples include issues such as inclusivity and bullying, mental health and resilience, healthy lifestyles as well as current affairs and celebrations such as NAIDOC week.

Circle time has been used as part of classroom strategy to build social skill capacity and peer group support. *Circle time* was also used for students from different programs to come together for collaborative morning sessions.

All programs report that this practice has been successful in improving student engagement and allowing staff to develop positive relations with students for learning. In the future Rivendell School aims to maintain *circle time* and continue to use it as a way of building engagement and whole school unity.

Transition

The staff coordinating transition worked with students, their families and staff from all programs to explore a variety of alternative pathways which support positive outcomes for the continuity of the student's education or future work directions.

The role is varied at Rivendell School and supports students according to their needs. The focus is to look at a student's interests and goals and focus transition around achieving these goals. Some students were looking to integrate into a mainstream high school while others were focused on a vocational or higher education pathway.

Many students this year were involved in TAFE 'taster' and TVET courses to consolidate their educational pathway as well as providing them with some vocational training. A number of students enjoyed the 'taster' courses so much they then chose to continue on with further study in that area of interest.

Students completed TVET courses in Plumbing, Laboratory Skills, Beauty and Radio and Broadcasting. Students also completed preliminary and HSC subjects studied through TAFE.

Twelve students completed a three day Café skills course run at Canterbury/Hurlstone RSL club. This was a highly motivating and engaging course where they received a Statement of Attainment in Café Skills.

Students were provided with opportunities to engage in work experience programs. A number of students were involved in interest based work experience, namely cafe work. One student was so impressive in her work ethic and willingness to learn that she secured casual employment at the completion of her work experience.



Aboriginal education and Multicultural education

Rivendell teachers routinely used mandatory elements from within the curricula as opportunities to explore indigenous and multicultural experiences in the Australian community. This learning was expanded to explore multiple viewpoints along with the positivity and strength that this affords the communities of which our young people are members.

Each Rivendell program used *circle time* as a forum for exploration of indigenous and multicultural experiences by considering issues such as reconciliation and the multicultural history of the nation. As a whole school, these issues were explored in school assemblies and related classroom activities during celebrations such as Harmony Week.

Students were also provided with outside performances and activities to enrich their understanding of the diversity within the Australian culture. The emphasis on sense of identity was the focus of many learning activities in which students were actively involved.

These performances included:

- Lewis Parter (from the central Queensland Daranbal people whose language is Birri Gubba) presented *Murri Kulcha in Education*. Lewis included demonstrations on guitar, traditional dance and didgeridoo. He also explored the history, making, playing and lore surrounding the didgeridoo.
- Tony Mason presented *Mana – The Spirit of Polynesia*. Through dance and music Tony shared with the students an awareness of the richness of other cultures, particularly the Maori culture in New Zealand. His presentation focussed on ideas about self-worth and finding ‘the Haka within you,’ whilst promoting anti-bullying through acceptance and understanding of differences.
- Ryka Ali (from the Wuthathi tribe of Shellburne Bay, Cape York and the Torres Strait Islands) presented *Kadul*. Ryka is a very proud ambassador for Australia’s Indigenous youth and Aboriginal culture. His presentation revealed the richness of

both the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islands culture. Ryka discussed the instruments pertinent to Aboriginal culture and gave a demonstration of the versatility of the didgeridoo, including the more modern sounds of DJ and beat-boxing, both popular with young people.

- Students visited the Australian Museum and participated in *Australia’s First Scientists* workshop. They investigated the ways that Aboriginal communities used science in their daily life. Students participated in hands on activities and were able to learn about cultural objects that demonstrated how Indigenous communities used the Earth’s resources and the stars to survive and prosper for thousands of years.



School planning and evaluation 2012—2014

School evaluation processes

NSW public schools conduct evaluations to support the effective implementation of the school plan. The processes used include:

- surveys to staff and students;
- reflective evaluations from supervision meetings;
- feedback from parents at our regular information evenings and family meetings;
- feedback from health and nursing staff at our weekly case review meetings; and

- feedback from mainstream schools at our regular integration meetings.

School planning 2012-2014:

School priority 1

Literacy and Numeracy

Outcomes from 2012–2014

Improved student learning outcomes for all students in literacy and numeracy.

Evidence of achievement of outcomes in 2014:

- the establishment of a collaboratively designed timetable that prioritised the delivery of discreet classes for Year 9 and 10 students was established for English, Maths and Geography/History;
- increased contact sessions were accessed from SDEHS teachers to better support students' literacy and numeracy needs; and
- positive feedback from students regarding their increased confidence in their academic skills and ability to manage their integration.

Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2014

- discreet classes that included all students in Stages 4 and 5;
- flexible teaching load for specialist subject teachers at Rivendell so they could support all students; and
- provision of more in-depth analysis of student's academic abilities reported on when preparing SDEHS applications so that appropriate literacy and numeracy adjustments could be made.

School priority 2

Student Engagement and Attainment

Outcomes from 2012–2014

Enhanced engagement in learning.

Evidence of progress towards outcomes in 2014:

- students continue to take up opportunities to complete TVET, TAFE Taster and traineeship courses.

Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2014:

- increased focus on TVET, TAFE Taster courses and traineeships so that all student's interests were catered for; and
- facilitation of regular review meetings for all students who had attendance goals.

School priority 3

Curriculum and Assessment

Outcomes from 2012–2014

Increased time in quality learning for students.

Evidence of progress towards outcomes in 2014:

- all classroom teachers achieving Professional Competence or above in Element 5 of the Professional Teaching Standards; and
- all staff achieving competency in the ICT component of their professional learning plan.

Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2014:

- professional learning that focused on best practice for achieving the Professional Competence components; and
- the inclusion of ICT components in the individual professional learning plans of all staff.

Parent/caregiver, student, and teacher satisfaction

In 2014, the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school.

Our parents, students and staff were invited to reflect on their experience of being part of the Rivendell community and to contribute to the setting of our strategic directions for 2015 - 2017.

Our parents reported a high degree of satisfaction with the school and in particular commended the team approach we adopt and the positive relationships that staff develop with students. They emphasised a need for the school to continue to focus on building students' resilience and confidence and to ensure that students are well prepared for continuation of learning post Rivendell. All parents requested more regular feedback on progress.

Our students also reported a high degree of satisfaction and requested that more formal structures be put in place for student input.

Our staff identified numerous positive aspects to the school including being a holistic, fun, innovative environment where staff go above and beyond within their roles. Positive communication was identified as taking place through parent nights, frequent staff forums such as debriefing, integration and review meetings and collaboration with health staff.

Staff expressed that a good understanding of mental health and creating supportive environments enabled them to program effective lessons, to assist students in integration to mainstream settings and to identify alternative post school opportunities.

Staff requested more ICT resources and training in this area. They also identified the need to continue to develop innovative ways to increase student engagement.



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.

The strategic directions for our new school plan have been designed in collaboration with all staff, parents, students and our Health partners.

Our focus areas will be on:

- students being successful learners and leaders who are confident and future focused;
- staff being high performing, reflective and innovative; and

- having a collaborative and connected community of learners.

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:

<http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/learning/emsad/asr/index.php>