



# Annual Report 2003

## COLO HEIGHTS PUBLIC SCHOOL

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### Principal's message

Colo Heights Public School is a small caring school which is committed to providing quality educational programs through a personalised and individualised approach. The staff are professional and experienced and work closely with a supportive parent body to maximise learning opportunities for all students.

The school is situated on the Singleton Road in an attractive bush setting. It was originally founded as a community school in 1937, and became known as Colo Heights Public School in 1947.

The school serves students from the surrounding areas of Colo Heights, Colo, Upper and Lower Colo and Putty. Most students travel to school by bus with many students travelling a considerable distance.

Colo Heights Public School is a well-resourced three-teacher school, featuring a modern two-classroom brick building, a fully resourced library and demountable classroom set in an attractive tree-studded playground with well-established gardens. The school also makes regular use of the community facilities located adjacent to the school including hall, oval and tennis/basketball court.



The students of Colo Heights Public School enjoy the benefits of a small school while being provided with a range of opportunities similar to those available in larger schools.



I certify that 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.

**Andrew Bowmer**

### Our achievements

#### The arts

The provision of opportunities for all students in the arts is recognized as being a valuable part of a balanced educational program. Colo Heights Public School has enhanced student learning through a number of special programs including:

- weekly craft lessons as part of the relief-from-face-to-face (RFF) program; and
- the rotation of classes to different teachers for specialized instruction in drama, music, dance and visual arts.

Our major school achievements include:

- being awarded 'Most Successful Exhibiting School' at the Hawkesbury Show;
- all Year 2 to 6 students entered craft in the show and fourteen students entered art work. The students were awarded nine firsts, ten seconds and six highly commended;



- all students were involved in Education Week performances featuring poetry, drama and song;
- most students were involved in the production of Mother's and Father's Day and associated crafts;
- students were provided with a variety of opportunities to perform at weekly assemblies; and
- the student representative council (SRC) organised a highly successful Talent Quest.

## Sport

A variety of opportunities in sport were provided for all students. These included:

- an eight-week gymnastic program;
- Tennis Foundation Coaching for Years 2 to 6 students for twenty weeks in Terms 2 to 4;
- a five-day swimming program in Term 4;
- school athletics carnival;
- regular weekly sport for Years 2 to 6 students;
- weekly gross motor activities for Kindergarten and Year 1 students;
- specialist coaching days in soccer and oz-tag;



- participation for the first time in the Small Schools Swimming Carnival with one student advancing to the district carnival;
- participation in the Small Schools Carnivals in athletics (track and field) and cross-country;
- participation in two Small Schools Gala Days in soccer and newcombe ball, one of these days being hosted and organised by Colo Heights Public School; and
- participation in an oz-tag competition hosted by Panthers Rugby League Club.

## General and specific school initiatives

Other school programs and achievements include:

- the provision by the Department of Education and Training of an administration demountable including a large school office and reception area, staffroom, principal's office and storage area;
- the installation of new purpose designed play equipment jointly funded by the P&C, a grant from the Department of Sport, Recreation and Tourism and the school;



- reorganisation of the majority of the school's resources in all major Key Learning Areas (KLAs);
- updating of the library's computer technology and initiating borrowing through the computer which allows for easier tracking of resources;
- establishment of a designated learning space for the support teacher learning difficulties (STLD) ensuring students experience less disruptions and greater learning outcomes;
- improvement of the school grounds as a result of two highly successful enviro-days, including the building, planting and mulching of gardens, the building of retaining walls and establishment of a safety soft fall area for the new play equipment;

- the permanent connection of the new generator to the school's electricity supply to ensure water, lighting and power in the classrooms during blackouts;
- successful Education Week activities including student performances, open classrooms and luncheon;
- SRC-run activities which involved weekly assemblies and special events including Movie Characters Dress Up Day, the SRC Talent Quest and ice-cream and cake days;



- students' participation in school-initiated fundraising events including Bandana Day, Jeans for Genes Day, Royal Hospital for Women and Stewart House;
- successful involvement in the Country Women's Association (CWA) project competition;
- successful first involvement in a chess tournament held at Bligh Park Public School;
- greater focus on writing particularly in the Stage 2 class through the employment of a specialist teacher; and
- implementation in Stage 1 of Count Me In Too, a program designed to develop number skills for students in Kindergarten, Year 1 and 2.

## Key evaluations

### Educational and management practice

#### Management

##### Background

In order to make decisions to improve the effectiveness of the school there is a need to gauge the opinions of people on aspects of educational and school practice. In 2003 the school decided to determine stakeholders' ideas and attitudes about management.

Surveys from SchoolMap were distributed to parents, staff and students. Of the 37 families in the school over 50% responded. All students from Year 2 to 6 were also surveyed.

#### Findings and conclusions

Analysis of the results revealed that people, in general, were positive about school management.

The findings showed from those responding:

- 100% of parents and 84% of students thought the school was always looking for ways to improve;
- 80% of parents and students believe the school made minor and major changes to improve programs;
- 100% of parents believe that the educational needs of all students were met, that the staff cared about student well-being and discipline and that staff were pro-active in communicating to parents about problems and concerns; and
- 100% of parents and 78% of students believe that programs and events at the school were well organised.

#### Future directions

In general, the surveys were very positive, indicating a high degree of satisfaction with the current management of the school. It must be noted that some parents and students believe that the school could be more pro-active in seeking feed back about the effectiveness of some of the implemented changes. The school intends to provide greater opportunities for parent and student feedback in 2004.

## Curriculum

### Mathematics

#### Background

In 2002 the Board of Studies issued a new Mathematics syllabus for implementation over the following years. It was recognised by staff that this new syllabus involved considerable changes in how Mathematics would be taught and content requirements for each stage.

The staff decided to implement a number of programs to familiarise themselves with the new syllabus and implement a number of changes in the teaching and learning program.

In 2003 the following steps were initiated:

- intensive introduction and training of the school's mathematics coordinator on the new syllabus by the district consultant including two

days of professional development and numerous after-school training courses;

- training of the staff at two School Development Days including at the Small Schools Conference by the district mathematics consultant and a combined training session with another small school by a teacher who had been involved in the writing of the syllabus;
- intensive training of the Kindergarten/Year 1 teacher in the program Count Me In Too and its introduction to Stage 1 students;
- in-school training of the Stage 2 teacher in the Count Me In Too program and the introduction of changes to the Stage 2 learning program; and
- the introduction of various new teaching techniques and syllabus outcomes in Stage 3.

Students and staff were then surveyed about their understanding and enjoyment of Mathematics at Colo Heights Public School.

### Findings and conclusions

The findings showed:

- enjoyment of mathematics declined in the senior years with 95% of Kindergarten and Year 1 students indicating they enjoyed Mathematics most of the time, 90% in Years 2 and 3, with only 70% in Years 4, 5 and 6 indicating the same;
- 85% of students, Kindergarten to Year 3, and 60% of students, Year 4 to 6, indicated that there was a variety of equipment and resources used in the teaching of Mathematics in their classrooms;
- students generally believed that teachers' expectations were high and that teachers were successful in explaining mathematical concepts in a variety of ways to assist with understanding;



- 80% of students in Kindergarten to Year 6 indicated that teachers make the classroom an interesting and fun place to learn; and
- staff indicated that they were generally satisfied with the changes and progress made in teaching practice and the implementation of the new syllabus.

### Future directions

The surveys were generally positive acknowledging significant improvements in teaching and learning practice. Areas for future development include:

- extension of the Count Me In Too program into Stage 2;
- further implementation of the syllabus across the school especially focusing on developing stimulating learning activities for Stage 3 students;
- provide ongoing training to all staff on the new syllabus;
- continue to purchase a range of resources to meet the requirements of the syllabus; and
- develop a whole-school scope and sequence plan to ensure all aspects of the syllabus are covered.

## Other programs

### Technology

#### Background

Computer technology has continued to be enhanced throughout 2003. The school is well resourced with computers. The school has a ratio of approximately one computer to every four students. Computers are used in all classrooms and the library, and all locations have Internet access.

Computers are used to develop students' operational skills, word processing and enhance their learning across a range of key learning areas (KLAs).

Teaching practice and student learning outcomes have been improved through:

- extension of cabling to facilitate the successful establishment of a mini-computer laboratory as part of the Year 4/5/6 classroom;
- addition of five new computers, three being purchased by the school for the computer laboratory and two through the Department of Education and Training's (DET) Computers in Schools Program;

- installation of an 8-port and 24-port switch, enabling easier and faster computer access to the Internet;
- benchmarking of Years 2 to 6 students' skills;
- regular integration of computer programs into the teaching of Literacy and Numeracy in the Kindergarten and Year 1 program;
- weekly instruction to students in Years 4, 5 and 6 to develop the students' skills in PowerPoint presentation, creating spreadsheets and graphs, Internet research, word processing and desktop publishing; and
- specialised instruction for Year 2 and 3 students in word processing and publishing skills.

### **Findings and conclusions**

In 2003 Year 6 students took part in the state-wide Computers Skills Assessment. Eleven of the twelve Year 6 students took part. The results can be summarised as:

- the average school performance was just below the state average;
- the students performed equally well in all sections of the test; and
- all students performed at a satisfactory understanding level.



### **Future directions**

The implementation of a systematic teaching program in the use of computer technology has been a feature in 2003. For 2004 the following areas need further attention:

- more consistent computer teaching and learning opportunities for the Year 2 and 3 students;

- extension of the use of the Internet as a source of information, research and learning opportunities;
- improved teacher-training to develop confidence in a greater variety of programs and functions; and
- increased opportunities for students to integrate computer technology in a meaningful way into other KLAs.

### **Learning difficulties**

#### **Background**

The school is allocated a support teacher learning difficulties (STLD) for approximately two and a half hours per week to assist students. The school is able to supplement this allocation, increasing it to approximately six hours. During this time an experienced staff member works with individuals and small groups of students to improve their literacy skills.

#### **Future directions**

The school will carefully assess the 2004 financial situation to ascertain whether this program is able to continue at the 2003 funding level.

### **Aboriginal education**

#### **Background**

Aboriginal perspectives, reflecting a positive approach in developing attitudes about reconciliation, were taught across all key learning areas in the school.

A highlight of the year was a visit from an Aboriginal educator in Term 3 as part of a special day of activities run by the team of teachers from the Brewongle Environmental Education Centre.

Students also recognised National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (NATSI) celebrations with class-based activities.

#### **Future directions**

The staff recognises the importance of Aboriginal perspectives and the need to further develop innovative ways to present and integrate this knowledge and values and attitudes into the school's teaching and learning programs.

## **Students with disabilities**

### **Background**

Colo Heights PS is presently receiving funding through the Learning Together program to support students with disabilities. This funding and funding from other sources have financed teachers' aides for one and a half days a week for the year.

The school has also accessed additional district support specialists to design programs specific to students' needs.

### **Future directions**

The school's learning support team, which includes teaching staff and school counsellor, regularly meets twice a term. It will continue to identify students experiencing difficulties, make appropriate intervention and track their progress and support needs.

## **Student Welfare**

### **Background**

Student welfare is addressed through the school's Student Welfare and Discipline Policy. Issues are regularly discussed at weekly staff meetings. Features of student welfare this year include:

- establishment of regular bus meetings and monitoring program to improve behaviour on school buses;
- recognition of student achievement at weekly assemblies and through the newsletter;
- four students attending the Student Representative Council (SRC) district leadership camp;
- student input into school decision-making and planning through the SRC;
- SRC leadership of school assemblies and special days;
- leadership opportunities and responsibilities in class and school activities;
- regular counselling support by the district counsellor;
- a visit by the Hawkesbury District Health team to promote healthy eating; and
- continued refinement and implementation of the Drug Education Program.

### **Future directions**

It is important for the school to be proactive in student welfare activities. These include:

- ongoing initiatives in student leadership;

- providing special activities and days; and
- implementation of social skill programs to meet the behavioural needs of some students.

## **Environmental education**

### **Background**

Environmental education perspectives have been addressed throughout the year and across the curriculum. The major activities for this year include:

- a successful visit by teachers of Brewongle Environmental Education Centre to coordinate a variety of environmental activities;
- organising a whole school excursion to Taronga Zoo which featured lessons in the new environmental education section, Backyard to the Bush;
- a visit by a local naturalist who displayed animals and talked about their habitat and care;
- creating and maintaining new school gardens; and
- establishing a successful composting system and improving the school's approach to recycling.



### **Future directions**

The school community recognises the importance of caring for the environment. In 2004 the following activities are planned:

- continued grounds improvements through enviro-days;
- conduct an environment audit with the assistance of the staff from Brewongle Field Study Centre and establish a long term plan for environmental education and action; and
- organise visits by local environmental specialists to assist in raising students' awareness of environmental issues.

## Student performance

### Literacy

#### Who sat the Basic Skills Test (BST) in literacy?

Four out of four Year 3 students sat for the Basic Skills Test in literacy. Three out of three Year 5 students sat for the Basic Skills Test in literacy.

#### How did the students perform in the Basic Skills Test (BST) in literacy?

- Due to the low number of Year 3 and 5 students who sat the test there is little reliable statistical data.
- The average school performance in Year 3 in literacy was well above the state average.
- All students in Year 3 were in one of the top three bands.
- In reading, the Year 3 students performed better on questions to do with narrative and recount texts and in questions asking students to locate information and interpret images.
- In language, the Year 3 students performed better on punctuation questions involving commas and question marks.
- The school average performance in Year 5 in literacy was just below the state average.
- For Year 5 students, 2001 to 2003, 90% have achieved one of the top three bands.
- In reading, the Year 5 students performed better in explanation and literary texts and in questions referring to making inference.
- In language, the Year 5 students performed better in punctuation questions relating to apostrophes and plurals.

#### How did our students perform in different sections of the test?

- Students' performance in literacy for Year 3 showed little or no difference between reading and language.
- Students' performance in literacy for Year 5 showed that they performed better in language than in reading.

#### How have Year 5 students progressed since they did the Year 3 test in 2001?

- The average growth of matched students was well above the state average.
- Growth over time indicates that the school has been more successful in increasing the

performance of students who were placed in the lower bands in Year 3.

- All matched Year 5 students improved at least one skill band.
- The growth rate in literacy was the best in the last six years.

#### Who sat the Primary Writing Assessment (PWA)?

Four out of four Year 3 students sat for the Primary Writing Assessment. Three out of three Year 5 students sat for the Primary Writing Assessment.

#### How did our students perform in the Primary Writing Assessment?

- Due to the low number of Year 3 and 5 students who sat the test there is little reliable statistical data and no school average is recorded.
- All of the students in Year 3 were placed in the top three bands (Band 5 being the highest).
- The Year 3 students performed better in writing a recount about an imagined experience and in sentence structure.
- On average the Year 5 students performed just below the state average.
- The Year 5 students performed better in writing a recount about an imagined experience and in the consistent use of tense.

#### What do these results mean for our school's literacy program?

In 2004 we will:

- continue the Follow-Up to Basic Skills program by the STLD who will target students who need support within the classroom and in small withdrawal groups;
- continue to focus on the 2003 target of improving writing skills and knowledge of text; and
- develop programs to challenge and extend the higher achieving students to improve their average growth rates.

### Numeracy

#### Who sat the Basic Skills Test (BST) in numeracy?

Four out of four Year 3 students sat for the Basic Skills Test in numeracy. Three out of three Year 5 students sat for the Basic Skills Test in numeracy.

#### How did our students perform in the BST in numeracy?

- Due to the low number of Year 3 students who sat the test there is little reliable statistical data.

- School average performance in Year 3 in numeracy was above the state average.
- Year 3 performed better in questions relating to space, in particular 3D and in questions involving the four basic operations.
- School average performance in Year 5 in numeracy was above the state average.
- Year 5 performed better in questions relating to space, in particular 2D and in questions involving estimation and fractions.

**How did our students perform in different sections of the test?**

- Students' performance in numeracy for Year 3 showed little or no difference between measurement, space and number.
- Students' performance in numeracy for Year 5 showed that they performed better in number than in measurement and space.

**How have Year 5 students progressed since they did the Year 3 test in 2001?**

- Average growth of matched students was higher than the state average.
- All Year 5 students matched improved at least one skill band.
- The growth rate was the second best in the last four years.

**What do these results mean for our school's numeracy program?**

In 2004 we will:

- Extend the implementation of the numeracy program Count Me In Too in Stage 2; and
- target numeracy and the teaching of number as a major focus.

## Our targets

### Progress on 2003 targets

**Target 1. To improve student literacy outcomes in writing**

Our achievements include:

- provision of a specialist teacher in writing for Stage 2 which both greatly improved quantity and quality of the writing;
- support for students experiencing learning difficulties has been considerably improved including the increase of STLD time to six hours a week over four days and the targeting of specific students experiencing language problems through a carefully structured teachers' aide program two days a week;
- approximately 80% of students achieving at or beyond staged outcomes;
- significant increase in the scope of text types taught; and
- increase in publishing of quality writing and production of published class writing booklets for Years 2 to 6 students.

**Target 2. To improve students' skills in the use and application of technology**

Due to a change of teaching personnel and disruption to the computer network as a result of the building program it has not been possible to progress with this target as far as originally planned.

Our achievements include:

- the development of a specialised mini-computer laboratory;
- the provision of computer lessons for the systematic teaching of skills occurred weekly in Years 4, 5 and 6 and included a number of specific lesson times for students in Years 2 and 3;
- 35% of students have successfully accessed the Internet for research purposes; and
- 75% of Year 4, 5 and 6 students displayed a greater than 50% improvement in word processing skill and in programs such as PowerPoint, spreadsheets, publication skills and the use of the digital camera.

### **Target 3. To improve assessment and reporting practices to ensure parents and students are regularly informed of student progress and learning needs**

Our achievements include:

- implementation of term one teacher/parent interviews for Kindergarten and Year 1 students;
- implementation of mid-year teacher/parent interviews including the opportunity for three-way interviews for Year 2 to 6 students;
- approximately 50% of parents attending the teacher/parent interview with 95% providing feedback commenting on their value;
- introduction of self-assessment opportunities for all students;
- refinement of the report indicators for Science and Technology and HSIE; and
- introduction of a new display folder for work samples improving ease of collection and quality of presentation.

## **Targets for 2004**

### **Target 1. To improve student numeracy outcomes in number**

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- review the school's scope and sequence in numeracy to bring it in line with the expectations of the new Mathematics syllabus;
- consolidate the Count Me In Too program in Stage 1 and extend it to the Stage 2 class;
- implement the new Mathematics syllabus through regular practical staff training;
- increase opportunities for parents to support and assist with class activities; and
- purchase additional resources to support the programs.

Our success will be measured by:

- 80% of students achieving at or beyond stage outcomes;
- improvement in the BST results for Year 3 students, evidenced through the tracking of results over the last three years; and
- benchmarking students at the beginning and end of the year to show improvement.

### **Target 2. To improve student literacy outcomes in talking and listening**

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- review the current teaching practices for talking and listening to identify areas that need further development;
- develop an integrated K-6 program, to ensure a balanced approach to the teaching of talking and listening;
- initiate and extend opportunities for all students to speak to a variety of audiences;
- audit and supplement school resources to support the teaching and learning program; and
- utilize district consultants to assist in staff training and program implementation.

Our success will be measured by:

- 25% improvement in students' skills in talking and public speaking as indicated by benchmarking activities at the beginning and end of the year;
- 30% improvement in student confidence in public speaking as measured through a student survey; and
- 30% improvement in students listening skills as demonstrated through school developed listening assessment tasks.

### **Target 3. To improve student outcomes in physical education focusing on skill development and fitness**

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- develop a whole-school physical education policy and approach to skills development and fitness;
- introduce a daily fitness program;
- increase opportunities for students to be involved in interschool sporting activities i.e. gala days;
- introduce a greater number of specialised coaching clinics; and
- provide improved opportunities for increased physical activity in other school activities such as walk-a-thons and Skip Rope for Heart.

Our success will be measured by:

- 50% improvement in students' mastery of basic coordination skills of throwing, kicking, catching and hitting and as determined through a skills audit;

- 20% improvement in students' fitness as measured through a fitness audit; and
- 10% increase in participation in school sporting activities.

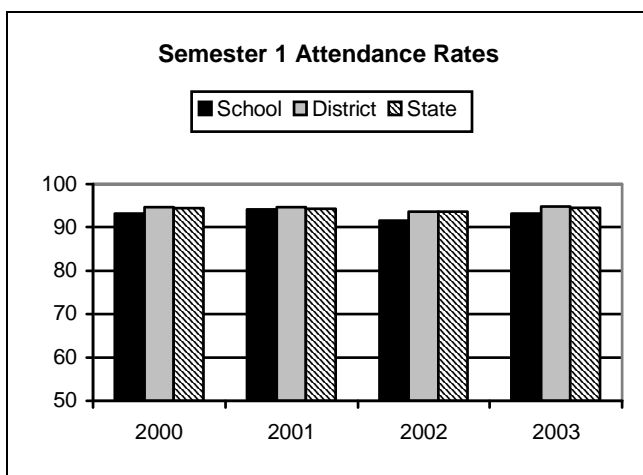
## Our context

### Enrolment profile

Our enrolment at the beginning of 2003 was 56 students. As the year progressed a number of families moved out of the area. Our enrolment at the end of 2003 was 51. This decline in student numbers will continue in the short term with a large 2003 Year 6 group moving on to high school.

### Attendance profile

Student attendance rates improved in 2003 with girls displaying greater improvement than boys. The attendance rate is marginally under the district and state rate.



### Class sizes

The school is structured into 3 multi-aged/multi-staged groups. Each class has been of a small size which has been of a great benefit in providing the flexibility to meet the educational needs of all students.

Roll Class	Year	Total per Year	Total in Class
K/1	K	7	14
	1	7	
Year 2/3	2	13	17
	3	4	
Year 4/5/6	4	8	23
	5	3	
	6	12	

## Parent and Caregiver Involvement and Participation

Parent, caregiver and community support is one of the main features of the school. In 2003 parent and community support, involvement and participation included:

- involvement in the P&C, Annual School Report Committee, Lunch Committee, Disco and Games Night Committee, Yengo Endurance Ride Raffle Committee and other fundraising activities;
- review and adoption of the P&C constitution;
- many parents regularly involved in helping in the classrooms with reading, craft and other activities;
- a large number of parents very involved in the school's special events including carnivals, gala days, picnic days, swimming programs and SRC special days.
- parent involvement in information sessions for Kindergarten new enrolments;
- continual improvement and maintenance of the school grounds by parents;
- two very successful enviro-days, resulting in significant improvements to the school grounds; and
- parent assistance with supervision and transport of students to various sporting activities and other activities.

## Community Use of the School Facilities

The school facilities were used as a polling station for the state election while the grounds were used by the Rural Fire Service as a car park for their community open day.

## Financial statement summary

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

Date of financial summary:	30/11/2003
<b>Income</b>	<b>\$</b>
Balance brought forward	41 143.91
Global funds	43 012.10
Tied funds	18 049.33
School & community sources	22 485.71
Interest	1 566.59
Trust receipts	2 740.15
Canteen	0.00
<i>Total income</i>	<u>128 997.79</u>
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Teaching & learning	
Key learning areas	3 495.84
Excursions	5 507.13
Extracurricular dissections	3 658.89
Library	2 127.15
Training & development	696.43
Tied funds	16 992.17
Casual relief teachers	2 114.77
Administration & office	34 171.33
School-operated canteen	0.00
Utilities	4 403.97
Maintenance	9 013.95
Trust accounts	3 031.72
Capital programs	18 115.18
<i>Total expenditure</i>	<u>103 328.53</u>
<b>Balance carried forward</b>	<u><u>25 669.26</u></u>

A full copy of the school's 2003 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meeting of the School Parent and Citizen Association. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

This balance is made up of tied grants which are funds tied to a specific purpose, unpaid orders and casual salaries, provision for asset replacement and new assets and a reserve.

## 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 has determined targets for the school's future development.

Members of the school self-evaluation committee included:

Mr Andrew Bowmer, Principal  
 Mrs Janet Norris, Teacher  
 Mrs Virginia Stewart, Teacher/Librarian  
 Mrs Irene Newton, Teacher  
 Mrs Roslyn Hilsden, Senior School Assistant  
 Mr Lance Ryle, P&C Secretary  
 Mrs Belinda Mackintosh, P&C Treasurer  
 Mrs Jenny Klein, P&C

The district chief education officer has provided guidance to the school during the self-evaluation process and validated the analysis of student performance data contained in this report.

**Ken Gill**  
**Chief Education Officer**  
**Blacktown**

The district superintendent has endorsed the targets contained in this report, which will be used to facilitate district planning and allocation of district resources.

**Dennis MacKenzie**  
**District Superintendent**  
**Blacktown**

