
2023

St Andrew's Cathedral
Gawura School
Annual Report to NESAs

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Theme 1 – Context

Messages from key school bodies

St Andrew's Cathedral Gawura School Council Chair

Mr Michael Winram

The importance of Gawura cannot be understated. Gawura was established by the Council as an expression of our Christian faith to prevent the gap from forming, by providing high quality education to First Nations students.

However, Gawura provides so much more than a high-quality education. It also celebrates our First Nations students and encourages our students to take pride in their heritage.

At the Gawura celebration evening this year, we heard from Emma Walker, an Aboriginal Education Mentor, who reflected on the importance of 'On Country Tours'. The 'On Country Tours' are weeklong excursions where our First Nations students travel to the lands of First Nations ancestors. Ms Walker reflected that:

There are countless men and women who find out later in life they are First Nations because of the societal shame of being Aboriginal. There are generations of our Parents, Grandparents, Aunties, Uncles, even our Sisters and Brothers that have been disconnected from their lands, from their ancestors... On Country Tours help to reduce shame and increase pride for our students, now and into the future. This immersion is helpful in deepening connection to culture and community for all.

Over the last year, the Council, together with the Head of School, have been focused on the development of the Gawura strategic plan. The plan well progressed, and the Council is particularly grateful for the thoughtful and respectful approach Dr McGonigle is taking to its development.

The Council also acknowledges the stewardship and unwavering support of two of Gawura's founders, Pastor Ray Minniecon and Sharyn Minniecon. Both Pastor Ray and Sharyn give significant energy to Gawura and to the development of the Gawura strategic plan - to ensure that Gawura is able to support and enhance the lives of first nations students into the future.

St Andrew's Cathedral Gawura Head of School

Mr John Ralph

What a wonderful year St Andrew's Cathedral Gawura School, Sydney has had in 2023.

A variety of year and staged based excursions have occurred with a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander themes. Our Stage 2 students in Miss McGrath's class 3/4GM along with the rest of the entire Stage 2 cohort (which comprises over 120 Junior School students) attended a cruise with Tribal Warrior on Sydney Harbour. This excursion relates to the Stage 2 unit of work 'First Contacts' which Years 3 and 4 are studying. It studies what life was like for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander First Nations Peoples prior to colonisation and this excursion, speaks of the impacts this had on the local Gadigal Clan of the Eora Nation. It is purposeful in our planning that, not is it only important for our Gawura students to learn about such units of work but it is also a priority that all non-First Nations students are able to access and participate in such rich and appropriate experiences presented by Aboriginal educators, Elders, and storytellers.

Another cultural excursion we had in term 3 was to Muru Mittigar at Rouse Hill. Students learnt about Aboriginal art, culture, food, and technology and throwing boomerangs. What was particularly nice about this excursion is that our Gawura students also invited a friend from their Junior School buddy class to go with them. There weren't just 40 Indigenous students who attended this excursion but in fact there were 80 students in total, with half coming from the Junior School. We plan to hold more excursions like this in the future where the cultural learning will occur across both schools.

Back in Semester 1 we were blessed to have Aunty Gail Mabo (daughter of Eddie Mabo) come and tour our school along with a delegation who were looking at our Gawura model of schooling. The tour ventured into the playground at lunchtime and our students who met Aunty Gail were asked, 'what did they like most about Gawura' the students replied with various responses such as, 'cultural excursions, Wiradjuri language lessons, school camps and playing with our friends in the Junior School'. My reply to Aunty Gail and the delegations was, "I sincerely and honestly did not script that!". The delegation saw for themselves that our students' answers were authentic and genuine, and it showed that our students love their school and appreciate the opportunities that we are able to provide for them here.

Our school continues to participate in the Waratah Project (which provides funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander initiatives in our schools). We were able to recommence our Yarning Session with Parents initiative which took place off site in the Long Room above Redfern Oval. We had over a dozen families attend this event where we discussed various options of including cultural learning opportunities for our parents to be a part of and even help deliver themselves. The first cultural event was on the Tribal Warrior cruise on Sydney Harbour where we had 19 families represented. Other Yarning Sessions this year included weaving and basket making and a walking

tour around La Perouse lead by local Aboriginal Elder Aunty Barbara Simms. We plan to hold this new initiative once a term each year moving forward, usually in Week 5. With our regular scheduled GPAC Meetings held in Weeks 2 and 8 of each term this would see our Gawura parent community be involved in our school on at least 3 occasions per term plus all the other regular events such as assemblies and sports carnivals.

On National Sorry Day, Friday 26th May, a group of secondary students from Years 8-11 attended the Indigenous Veterans Commemoration Service at the Hyde Park War Memorial. Two Aboriginal students from our Senior College, Aliyah, and Cyrus, placed a wreath on behalf of all students and staff from both St Andrew's Cathedral and Gawura Schools.

National Reconciliation Week had the theme of A Voice for Generations where students both Indigenous and non-Indigenous were able to write down how they can be a voice for generations themselves to make true reconciliation occur in Australia.

This year's National NAIDOC Week theme of For Our Elders saw our students perform 4 Aboriginal Dances in our annual NAIDOC Assembly. There was a NAIDOC Working Bee where over 20 volunteers from Gawura School, Junior School and the Secondary School gave up their time on a Saturday to help prepare for this wonderful assembly.

We have had the privilege of Aboriginal Dance being taught to our students K-6 every Tuesday morning before school from 8-9am. Aunty Rayma Johnson was recommended to us through a discussion during one of our GPAC Meetings. Aunty Rayma not only teaches the various dances to the students but also explains the cultural significance of what each dance means.

One of the highlights of the year was when our Gawura students in Years 3-6 participated in the JSJS musical production of My Son Pinocchio Jr. Our students danced and sang in three performances across two days and had a truly marvellous time. A very special thank you to all 40 Gawura parents, aunts, uncles, nans, and pops who attended the shows and supported your Gawura children. A very special mention to Nana Ruth who travelled all the way from Port Augusta in South Australia to see her grandson Johnny perform on the Friday night. Our students love seeing their family members in the audience. A very special mention to Year 6 student Mizpah who was also in the main supporting cast, who acted and sang beautifully and who has now led the way for more Indigenous students to nominate themselves and audition for roles in the main and supporting casts for future productions.

On a sad note, our highly respected Wiradjuri teacher and Aboriginal Elder in Residence, Aunty Leanna Carr-Smith left us at the end of Term 3 this year. Aunty Leanna accepted a role at Charles Sturt University (CSU) in Bathurst and was also looking forward to a much less commute. Leanna came from Bathurst each week. Aunty Leanna has made a wonderful contribution to our school, and we wish her all the very best in this new role. As Aunt says, there is no Wiradjuri word for Goodbye, instead it is see you next time and that we will, when we see her and other Bathurst Elders when go on our next Wiradjuri On Country Tour to Lithgow and Mudgee.

.I would like to thank all of the Gawura staff for their hard work and dedication throughout the year. We wish our amazing Year 6 students Mizpah, Winda, Jakayla, La Quaelah and Talaara all the very best as they enter Year 7 next year and hope they will come back to visit us as much as they like

I hope you all have a restful and peaceful break over January and look forward to seeing everyone again in 2024.

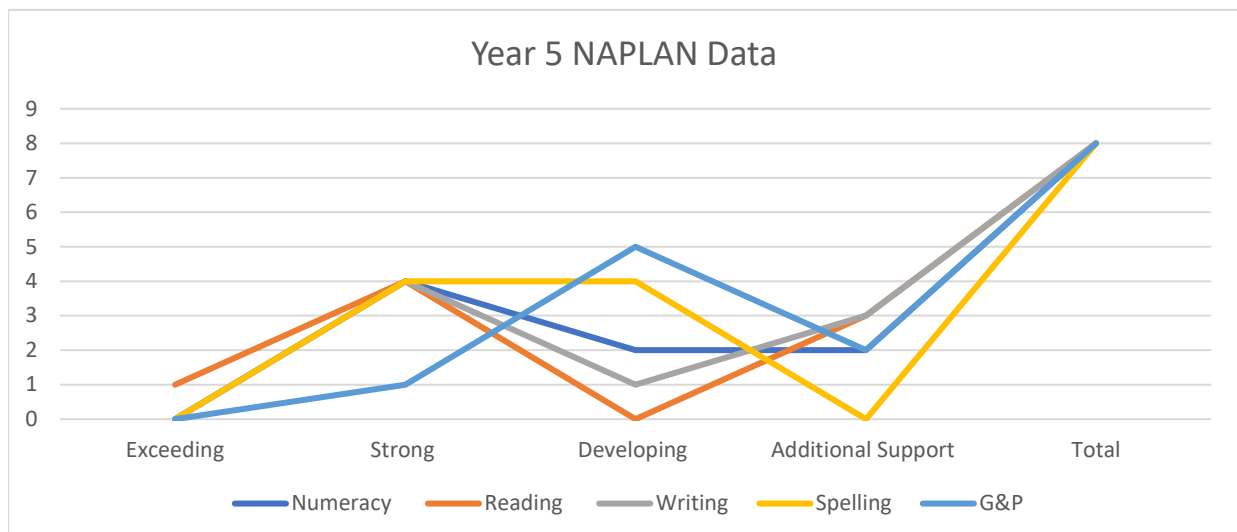
Theme 2 – Outcomes and Results

Standardised Testing

In 2023 the way NAPLAN was graded changed to Exceeding, Strong, Developing and Needs Additional Support. Therefore, a comparison could not be made from previous years compared to 2023.

Our results clearly show the majority of Year 5 students performed well in Numeracy, Spelling, Writing and Reading, with 2-3 students requiring additional support in Numeracy, Reading and Writing.

Year 3 students' performance was ranked as developing in several areas with one student exceeding in Numeracy, Reading, Writing and Spelling.

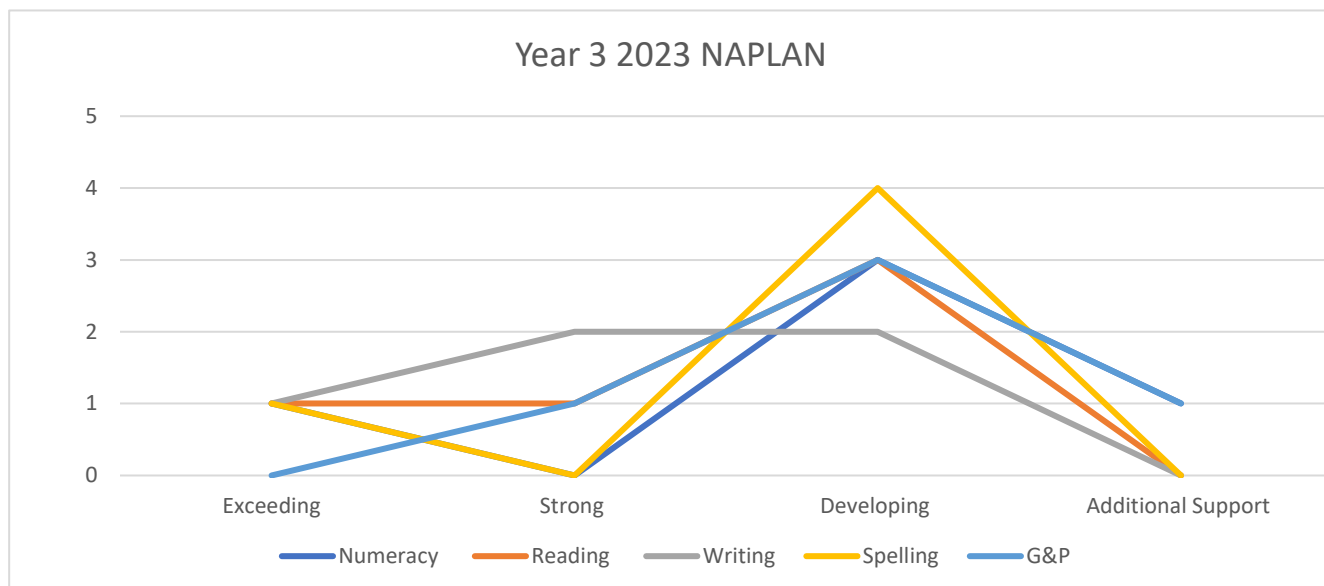


2023

Compare to Students with similar background All Australian students

	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar	Numeracy
Year 3	385	414	377	367	365
Year 5	440	441	456	426	436

Year 3 2023 NAPLAN



Year 3	Numeracy	Reading	Writing	Spelling	G&P
Exceeding	1	1	1	1	0
Strong	0	1	2	0	1
Developing	3	3	2	4	3
Additional Support	1	0	0	0	1

Year 5	Numeracy	Reading	Writing	Spelling	G&P
Exceeding	0	1	0	0	0
Strong	4	4	4	4	1
Developing	2	0	1	4	5
Additional Support	2	3	3	0	2

Due to the very small Year 3 and Year 5 cohorts, the NAPLAN results need to be addressed individually rather than attempting to over analyse presumed patterns.

Theme 3 – Staffing

Teacher Accreditation

Accreditation level	
Provisional	1
Proficient	27

Workforce Composition

School Staff 2023

Teaching Staff	35
Full-time equivalent teaching staff	8.8
Non-teaching staff	4
Full-time equivalent non-teaching staff	1.5

Staff Identification

At our School, we embrace our Indigenous heritage and culture and our Christian Faith. All of our full-time staff members identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Theme 4 - Attendance

Student attendance rates table

Year Level	Attendance Rate %
Kindergarten	85
Year 1	82
Year 2	86
Year 3	87

Year Level	Attendance Rate %
Year 4	86
Year 5	90
Year 6	91
Whole School	87

Student attendance in each Year group is shown. The School's policy requires attendance to be recorded for each lesson each day and anomalies dealt with forthwith.

Management of non-attendance

The Junior School has implemented the following systems and procedures in order to monitor the daily attendance of students and identify absences from the School.

The class teachers take the class roll promptly at the start of the school day. All absences are recorded using Edumate. They are then reported to reception and cross-checked against the absentee notifications that have been provided to the school that day.

Parents are responsible for ensuring that they notify the School to explain the absence of their child on any particular school day. Notification may be provided via text, email or by telephoning the School and should be made before the start of the school day.

When a student's attendance drops below 90% a letter of concern will be sent to the parent or caregiver asking for an improvement. Continuing concerning patterns of student attendance may result in parent school conference and the development of management plans to improve attendance. Other actions from the school may also apply, including mandatory reporting if attendance fails to improve and there are concerns for the student's welfare

When a student has been absent for ten days in one term a letter is sent to the parents. This letter is to bring to their attention to the School's concern for the cumulative absences of their child and to inform them of the need to improve the attendance.

Excessive absences for social or emotional reasons may require a referral to the School Psychologist for ongoing support strategies. Students in Gawura may also require consultation with the School's Aboriginal Education Mentor to assist with protocols of communication which acknowledge cultural safety for the parties involved.

Below you will see sample letter for Absence:

Dear Mr/ Mrs _____,

Please note that your child _____ has a total of __ absences to school this term and __ late arrivals. Her/ His teacher and I are concerned about the effects of this absenteeism on his/her educational progress. The New South Wales Compulsory School Attendance Legislation requires that children attend school every day and on time, unless an absence is necessary due to a sudden and unmanaged illness or some other unusual circumstance.

Many absences mean your child is constantly missing critical learning.

Ten days of partial absence in one term is generally considered excessive unless a chronic illness is involved. In such cases a letter from a GP is required to verify an underlying chronic medical condition. Otherwise, protracted absences may lead to a notification to the Department of Family and Community Services. I am obliged to advise you of these requirements to emphasize the importance of regular and punctual school attendance.

We are asking for your cooperation in making sure your child's school attendance and punctuality improves. If you would like to discuss the matter with me or their teacher, please call the school.

Yours sincerely...

Theme 5: School Policies

School Policies

The following School policies are publicly available on "[Policies and Procedures](#)" page on the School's website:

- Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Complaints Handling Policy
- Discipline Policy
- Enrolment Policy

Theme 6: Stakeholder Satisfaction

Stakeholder Satisfaction

The Students of St Andrew's Cathedral Gawura School

The student population of St Andrew's Cathedral Gawura School in 2023 was 40 students. This is the highest that our school has ever been.

Students are happy to come to our school which is a reflection of the deep care and respect that our teachers and support staff have for our students. The Gawura parent community are also happy with our school as we hold a high value and expectations of behaviour while at the same time achieving above state average in key NAPLAN results. This is all combined with a genuine love of Aboriginal culture which is embedded in our curriculum and the modelling of staff of Yindyamarra values, which is the Aboriginal way of doing, not only in Wiradjuri Nation but more for many other Nations as well.

All schools do a variety of school camps every year but a new initiative which we introduced 6 years ago was the On Country Tour specifically for our Aboriginal students in Years 5 to 12. The idea of 'walking on country' at least once a year is highly valued by our students, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff, and our collective parent body as a whole. Although we are a day school and not a boarding school, many of our families come from a variety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nations, with the majority of our families coming from Wiradjuri Nation. In 2023 our On Country Tour visited Wiradjuri Nation for 3 days and 2 nights staying in Mudgee. (We previously visited Wiradjuri Nation back in 2018 staying at Bathurst and Dubbo). On our way to and from Mudgee we stopped to hear from local Aboriginal Elders on Dharug and Gundungarra Nations, but it was just 30 kms north of Mudgee where we engaged in a full day of On Country learning with local Elders who shared their cultural knowledge with our 25 First Nations students. Local Elders, Auntie Fleur and Uncle Lachie carried out a 6-hour immersion on how various Aboriginal Nations would trade with one another and the cultural protocols that took place when travelling across several Nations took place. It is well known that Aboriginal Nations from Central Australia often traded with Nations along the East Coast of Australia, particularly around the Gold Coast region. Our students truly loved this experience and came back with an immense pride in their culture which was also reflected in their own personal wellbeing.

We have previously visited other Nations as part of our On Country Tours including Yuin Nation on the South Coast and Kuku Yalanji Nation in the Cape York region of Far North Qld.

The following are samples of answers that Gawura students provided when they completed the 2023 Social Emotional and Wellbeing Survey (SEW) that we do each year.

Gawura SEW survey- 2023

41 Responses 06:44 Average time to complete Active Status

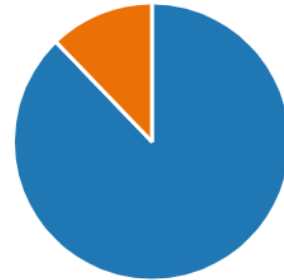
1. I am a

● Boy	21
● Girl	20



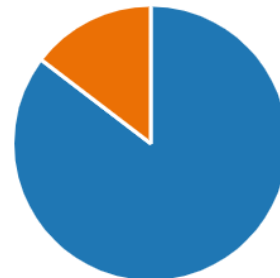
3. I am a happy person

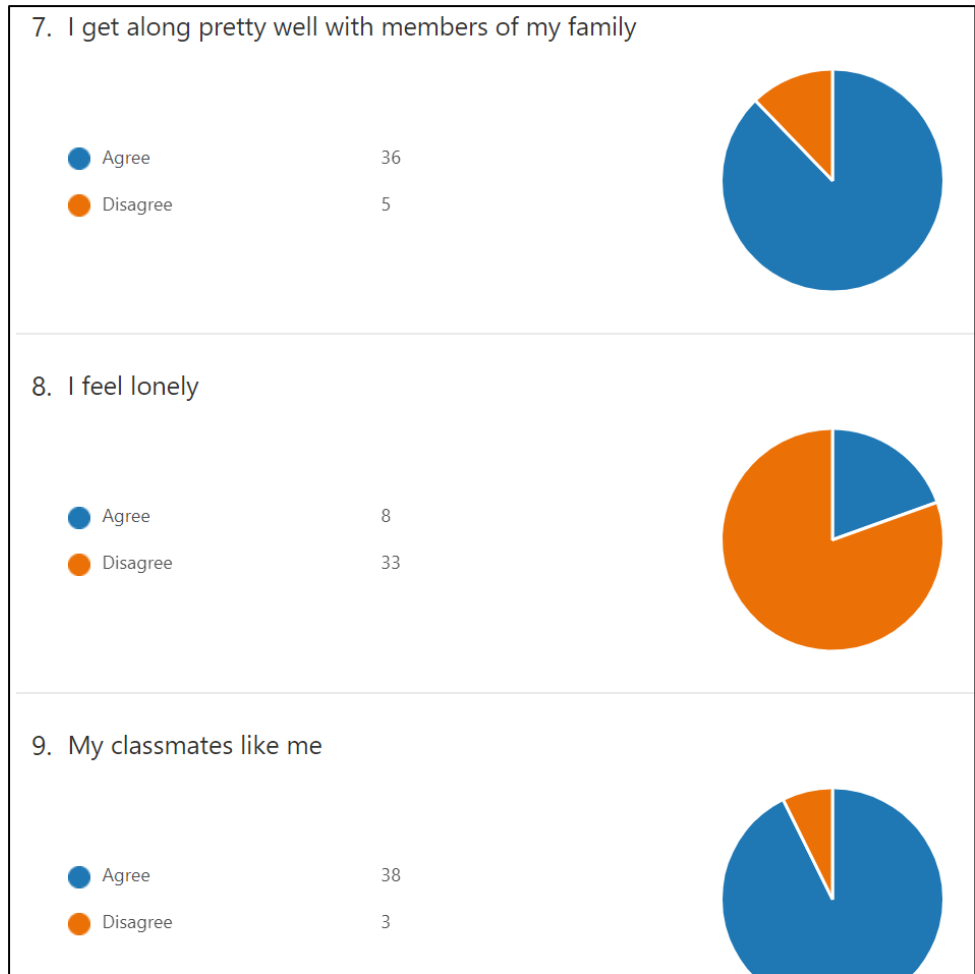
● Agree	36
● Disagree	5



5. I feel safe and free from danger

● Agree	35
● Disagree	6





The Teachers of St Andrew’s Cathedral Gawura School

Gawura staff are always included with St Andrews Cathedral School Staff in terms of staff wellbeing and satisfaction.

During the year Gawura staff were able to deliver Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander professional development sessions to over 330 staff at St Andrew’s Cathedral and Gawura Schools. Gawura staff appreciated and felt valued by presenting these lessons which covered a range of topics including the meaning and reason why we have NAIDOC Week, the Benefits of Yarning Circles and several staff shared their own personal stories, which other non-Indigenous staff greatly appreciated.

Gawura school staff (both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) are often sought after and asked their advice on how to best implement ideas into other teachers’ subjects. Gawura school staff feel greatly appreciated where they feel valued, and their ideas are well received and embedded into other school staff members teaching programs.

Our school is one of 40 schools around the state which is part of the Waratah Project. Each of these schools have a high level of Indigenous enrolments. The Waratah project provides our school with additional funds that allow us to focus on literacy and numeracy initiatives along with ways to further engage with our school community. The Yarning Session with Parents mentioned above is such an example.

Gawura school staff were able to purchase additional teaching resources and also spend extra time with literacy and numeracy coordinators to help modify programs and assist with analysing student data. This also provides additional satisfaction to Gawura teaching staff knowing they have access to these additional resources.

The Parents of St Andrew's Cathedral Gawura School

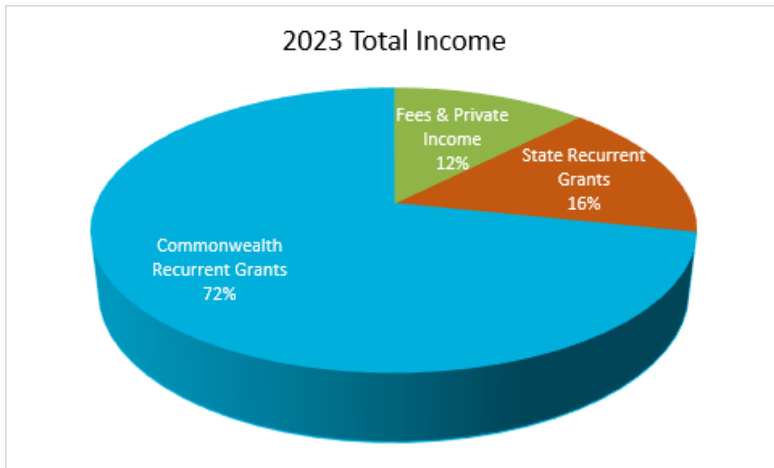
Every term in Week 2 and Week 8 we hold the Gawura Parents Advisory Committee (GPAC). This is an opportunity where the parents come into school or join online and hear about the events that are taking place and what else we have coming up. It's also an opportunity to ask parents for their input into school strategic plan objectives and seek their advice on issues such as what we should incorporate into an Acknowledgement of Country. The Gawura School parents highly value the opportunity to participate and be consulted in our GPAC Meetings. Executive school staff also attend this meeting, so our parents have access to the school leadership.

Another initiative which started the previous year in 2022 was the Yarning Session with Parents. This is where we meet off site, usually in Redfern over a coffee and morning tea and yarn about cultural themes and activities. Sometimes we have a Guest presenter who shares their knowledge on a topic or sometimes like in the lead up to NAIDOC we ran a bracelet making activity run by a local Aboriginal Knowledge Holder. In 2023 our best supported activity was taking our parents on the Tribal Warrior Cruise on Sydney Harbour. Local Aboriginal Elders shared their knowledge on what life was like for the Gadigal People before the arrival of the First Fleet and how their lives changed after European settlement. Parents are also encouraged to share their cultural knowledge with the group as well, which several have done so.

We hold our Yarning Session with Parents in Week 5 of each term, so when coincided with our regular GPAC Meetings in Weeks 2 and 8 of each term, our parents have access to see each other and engage with the school every 3 weeks of the school term.

Theme 7: Summary Financial Information

Financial Information



Graph 1: recurrent/capital income represented by pie chart



Graph 2: recurrent/capital expenditure represented by pie chart



Gawura
Gadigal Country
Sydney Square
Sydney NSW 2000, Australia
T +61 2 9286 9500
ABN 29 393 754 655

www.gawura.nsw.edu.au