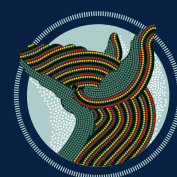


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2024  
St Andrew's Cathedral  
Gawura School  
*Annual Report to NESA*



GAWURA  
SCHOOL

## Contents

<b>Messages from key school bodies .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>St Andrew's Cathedral Gawura School Council Chair .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>St Andrew's Cathedral Gawura Head of School .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>St Andrew's Cathedral Gawura School Captain Report .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Standardised Testing .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Teacher Accreditation .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Workforce Composition .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Staff Identification.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Student attendance rates table .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Management of non-attendance .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>School Policies .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Stakeholder Satisfaction .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>The Students of St Andrew's Cathedral Gawura School.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>The Teachers of St Andrew's Cathedral Gawura School.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>The Parents of St Andrew's Cathedral Gawura School .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Financial Information .....</b>	<b>13</b>

## Theme 1 – Context

### Messages from key school bodies

#### St Andrew's Cathedral Gawura School Council Chair

##### Mr Michael Winram

This year has been exciting for Gawura as we launched the First Nations K-12 Strategic Plan, with the enduring purpose:

*Bridging Words, Building Futures: Authentically engaging with Christian faith and First Nations heritage, we bridge ancient wisdom with contemporary learning, educating students to lead a resilient future.*

The First Nations K-12 Strategic Plan reflects who we are, and who we are becoming.

First Nations communities are having a transformational impact on our whole school and the Strategic Plan acknowledges that embedding First Nations Knowledge into a rich, culturally informed curriculum creates significant learning opportunities for all students. This Knowledge, from the world's oldest continuous living culture, has survived for over 60,000 years ... remarkable, considering the immense losses and inequalities experienced by First Nations peoples over the past 250 years. As a Christian school, committed to justice, it is important to acknowledge this.

Yet as our society struggles with the effects of an isolating individualism, these deep and complex First Nations Knowledge systems, just like the Christian story that our Schools are founded on, have much to say about human sustainment, our approach to technology, our relationship to the earth, our idea of the social world, as well as the importance of place, belonging and connectedness. What a rich heritage our students are offered, as we build bridges between culture and faith. I am excited about what the future holds.

I would particularly like to acknowledge the wisdom of our founders, Pastor Ray and Aunty Sharon Minniecon, and thank them for their ongoing stewardship and contribution to Gawura. I'd also like to thank our Head of School Dr McGonigle, for her leadership, and our Gawura team for their drive to empower confident, hope filled champions of a just tomorrow.

#### St Andrew's Cathedral Gawura Head of School

##### Mr John Ralph

Our Gawura students have participated in a variety of excursions and camps and special events throughout 2024.

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

The theme for National Reconciliation Week this year was Now More Than Ever. Our Gawura and Junior Schools were visited by Ms Gibbs-Williams who presented a variety of workshop activities that all students in both Gawura and Junior Schools participated in and thoroughly enjoyed. The theme for this year's NAIDOC celebrations was Keep the Fire Burning! Blak, Loud and Proud. Our Gawura Dancers performed at both the assembly and the morning tea, where our students received a Gawura whale that reflected their stage on their Gawura educational journey – small (Kindergarten), medium (Year 6/Year 7) and large for our Yr 12 students.

Aunty Rayma Johnson has continued her Aboriginal Cultural Dance lessons with our students throughout 2024, performing at not only our NAIDOC Assembly, mentioned above, but they were invited to perform at the Commonwealth Bank of Australia's Global Financial Summit where our school founder Pastor Ray

Minniecon also gave the Acknowledgement of Country. Our Gawura Dancers have now performed to an international audience!

Our Yarning Sessions with Parents have also continued throughout 2024. Aunty Barbara Sims lead a tour of La Perouse where she showed our group several sacred sites, including a birthing area where the men present, were not allowed to enter. Another session was hosted by Souths Cares where the parents were presented with the design and story behind this year's Indigenous jersey. We returned to Souths Cares again in August where our parent community were invited to take part in an art workshop lead by Gawura parent and Aboriginal creative consultant Charmaine, where their ideas were shared and collaborated on to do with the Gawura Strategic Plan.

This years On Country Tour visited Awabakal and Worimi Aboriginal Nations. We visited the Wolutuka Institute as part of the University of Newcastle and explored the sand dunes of Port Stephens and listened about their special cultural significance with Elders from the Murrook Cultural Centre located at Williamtown.

I would like to thank all the Gawura staff for their hard work and dedication throughout the year. Mrs Gibbs-Williams left our school to start her own successful Aboriginal Consultative business. Mr Michael Kirk also moved on with his own professional career in higher education. We wish our amazing Year 6 students Nyarla, Djani, Maya, Graham, Anthony, Xavier and Kallarah 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 2025.

## **St Andrew's Cathedral Gawura School Captain Report**

### **Miss Kallarah Silva (Gawura School Captain 2024)**

It's been an honour and a privilege to serve as Gawura School Captain in 2024. I have enjoyed representing our school on many occasions and I take great pride in delivering the Acknowledgement of Country whenever the opportunity arises.

In Term 2 this year we celebrated Reconciliation Week with the theme of Now More Than Ever. Another highlight was the annual NAIDOC Week celebration that our school leads. This year's theme was 'Keep the Fire Burning – Blak, Loud and Proud'. I really enjoyed learning Aboriginal Dance with Aunty Rayma Johnson throughout the year. We learnt new dances this year that taught us more about our culture. It made us reflect about how, back in the day, our Elders could not dance and learn their culture during the Stolen Generations, but today we can, and it is an honour that we can learn more culture and language today.

One of my favourite events that we participated in this year was the Indigenous Literacy Foundation Day Live Event at the Sydney Opera House. We got to meet and sing with celebrity Jessica Mauboy. She was really nice and kind to us after we sang our song called 'Shorty Creek' which was a book written by the students at Barunga Remote Community School in the Northern territory.

I would like to thank all the teachers for everything they have done for us. All the excursions, camps, carnivals and little trips in between, they have been a lot of fun and a great way to meet new people.

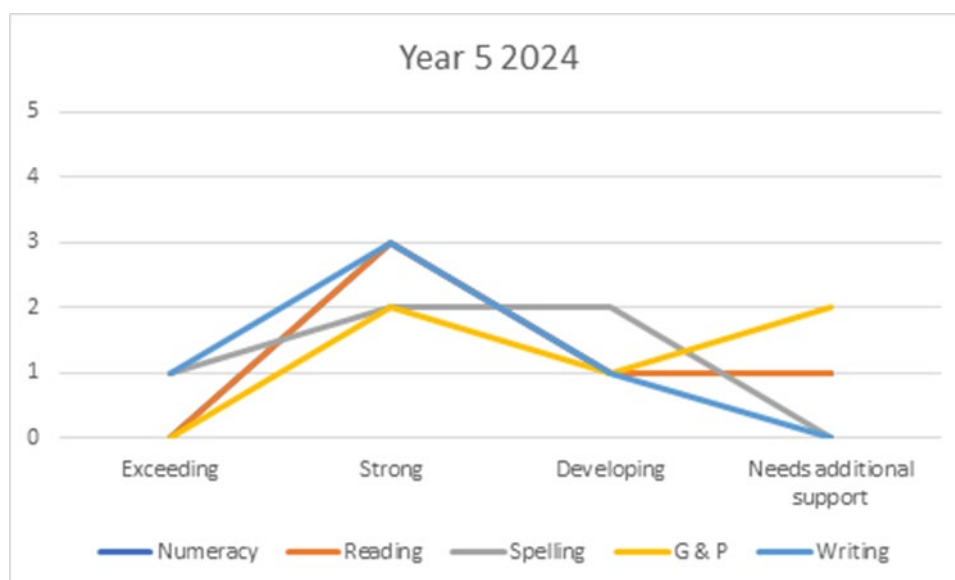
I would like to congratulate everyone in Gawura for their hard work this year and the friendships that have been formed. I have loved my time in Gawura with my friends and teachers and although a little nervous about starting secondary school, I am looking forward to seeing more people in high school next year. We also look forward to meeting another 6 Kindergarten students start next year as they enter our wonderful Gawura School.

## Theme 2 – Outcomes and Results

### Standardised Testing

Our 2024 results clearly show the majority of Year 5 students performed well in Writing, Reading and Numeracy with 1-2 students requiring additional support.

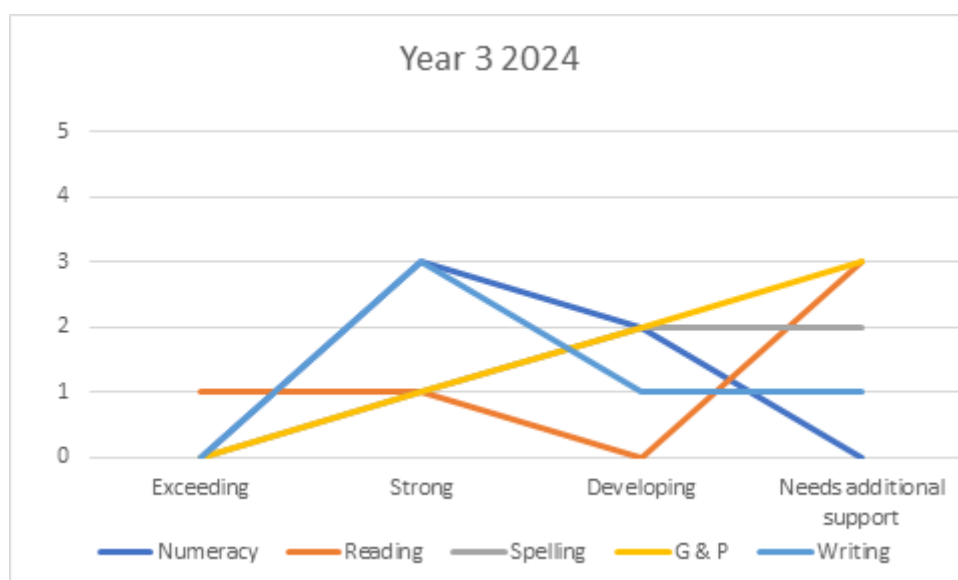
		Year 5			
		Exceeding	Strong	Developing	Needs additional support
Numeracy		0	3	1	1
Reading		0	3	1	1
Spelling		1	2	2	0
G & P		0	2	1	2
Writing		1	3	1	0



Year 3 students performed well in Numeracy and Writing with Strong results and 1-2 in Developing.

Reading and Spelling had 1-2 students in Exceeding and Strong with 2-3 students in either Developing or Needs Additional Support

	Year 3			
	Exceeding	Strong	Developing	Needs additional support
Numeracy	0	3	2	0
Reading	1	1	0	3
Spelling	0	1	2	2
G & P	0	1	2	3
Writing	0	3	1	1



## Theme 3 – Staffing

### Teacher Accreditation

Accreditation level	
Proficient	6

### Workforce Composition

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School Staff 2024

Teaching Staff	32
Full-time equivalent teaching staff	9.8
Non-teaching staff	6
Full-time equivalent non-teaching staff	2.4

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### Staff Identification

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

## Theme 4 – Attendance

### Student attendance rates table

Year Level	Attendance Rate %	Year Level	Attendance Rate %
Kindergarten	89.1	Year 4	91.1
Year 1	82.8	Year 5	93.9
Year 2	83.2	Year 6	88.9
Year 3	89.1	Whole School	88.0

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

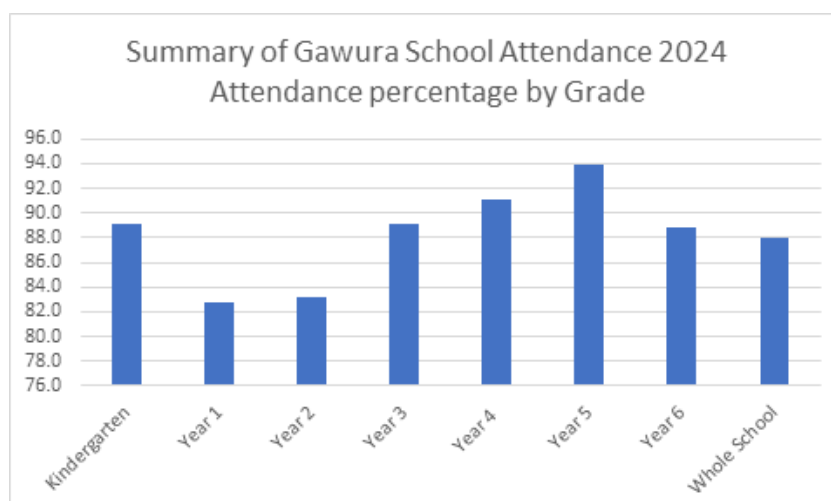
The Junior School has implemented the following systems and procedures in order to monitor the daily attendance of students and identify absences from the School.

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 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 2024 was 39 students.

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. Six years ago, we introduced the annual '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.

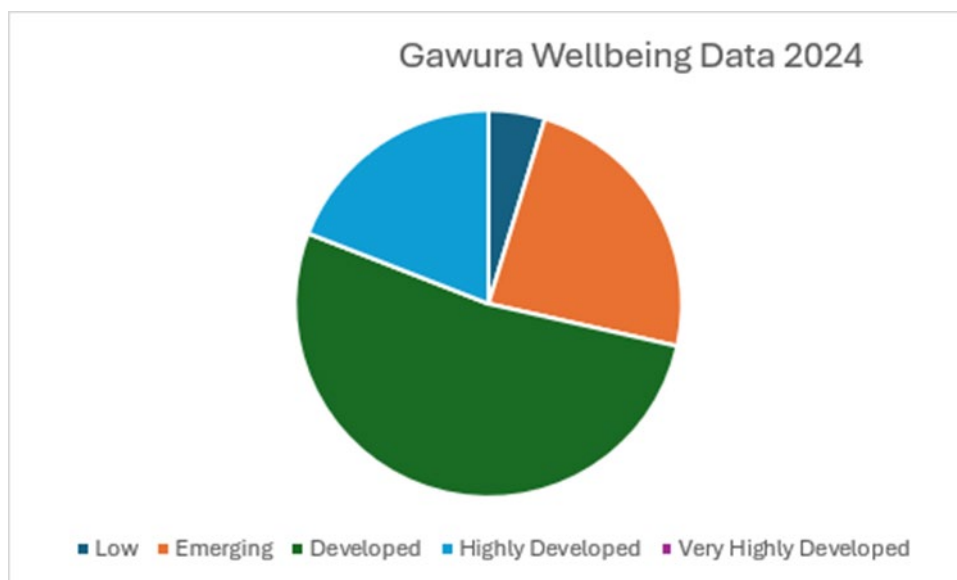
In 2024 our students visited Awabakal and Worimi Nations (Newcastle and Port Stephens) for 3 days and 2 nights. On our first day the Wollotuka Institute at the University of Newcastle hosted us for lunch the rest of the afternoon. Nathan Towney, Pro Vice Chancellor Indigenous Strategy at the University of Newcastle lead a discussion around the possibility of students attending university studying subjects that they already like that would benefit them in their chosen field of what they would like to do. Even our primary aged students in Years 5 and 6 saw the possibility of going to university as an option for them to consider. The second day we spent the at the Murrook Cultural Centre on Worimi Land. We were led by Elders around the sand dunes where the students were shown how traditional Worimi would hunt for food and search for fresh water. We then spent the afternoon looking at Hidden Histories and the impact these had on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. The final day we boarded a 4WD bus that took us further into the sand dunes where we had yarnning circles and were shown how to find fresh pippies from Stockton Beach. The students then enjoyed over an hour of sandboarding down large sand dunes which was a thoroughly enjoyable experience.

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. We have also visited Wiradjuri Nation twice to the areas of Dubbo/Bathurst and the second visit to Lithgow, Katoomba and Mudgee.

The following is a pie graph of student satisfaction that Gawura students provided when they completed the 2024 Social Emotional and Wellbeing Survey (SEW) that we do each year.

Low	Emerging	Developed	Highly Developed	Very Highly Developed
0 - 40%	41 - 60%	61 - 80%	81 - 90%	91 - 100%
4.50%	22.70%	50%	18.20%	4.6%



## 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 other 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 Aboriginal Perspectives across the curriculum and 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 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

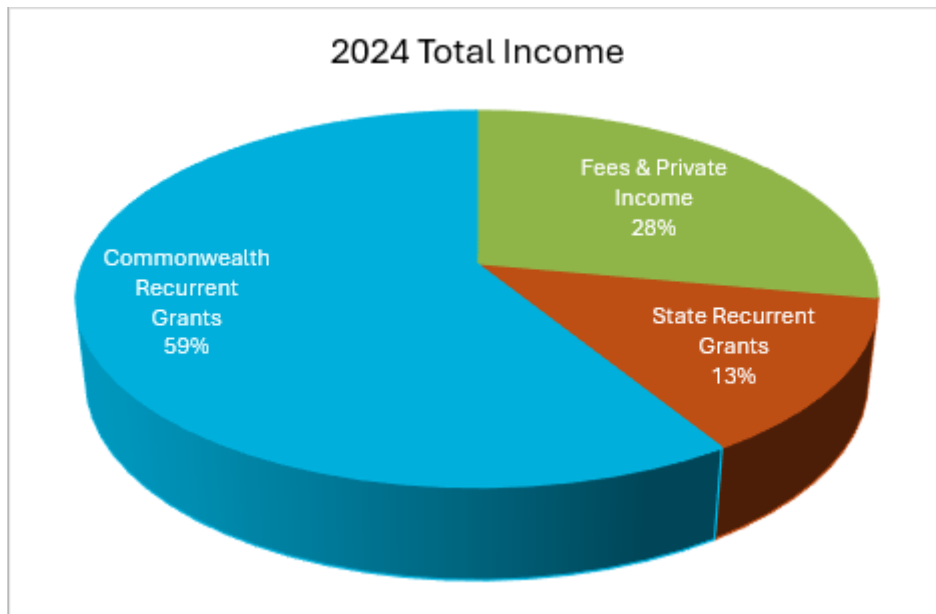
be consulted in our GPAC Meetings. Executive school staff also attend this meeting, so our parents have access to the school leadership. Another initiative for parents and wider school community is the Yarning Session with Parents. This is where we meet off site, usually in Redfern or Maroubra over a coffee and morning tea and yarn about cultural themes and activities. Sometimes we have a Guest presenter who shares their knowledge on a topic. In 2024 one of our activities was taking our parents on a walking guided tour of La Perouse lead by local Aboriginal Elder, Aunty Barabara Simms. Another activity was held at the NRL South Sydney Rabbitohs High Performance Centre in Maroubra where our parents were given a presentation on the Indigenous jersey for 2024, the design and the meaning behind the totems and the players that the totems represented. We also provide a morning tea or lunch that accompanies each Yarning Session with Parents.

Parents are also encouraged to share their cultural knowledge with the group as well, which several have done so.

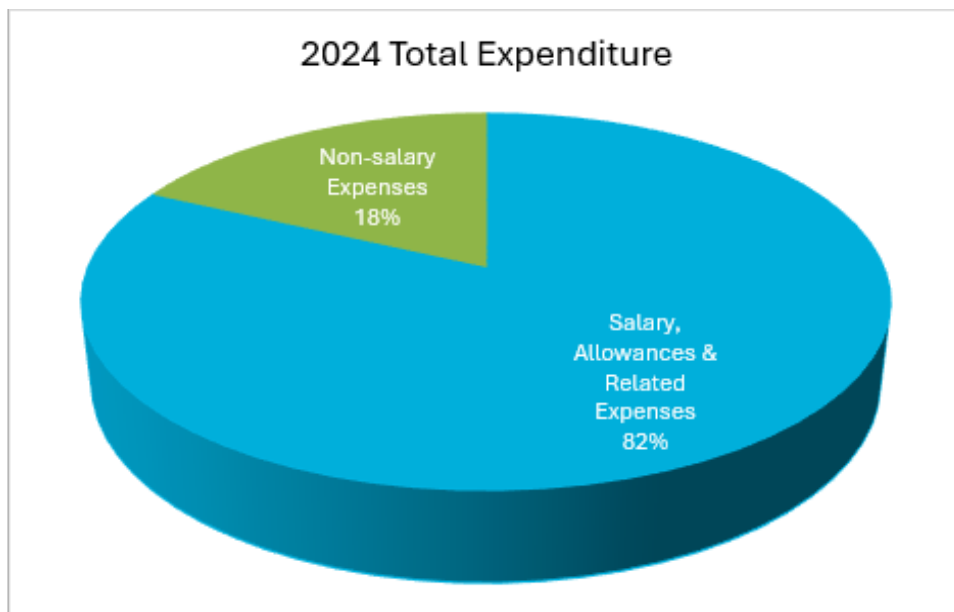
We hold our Yarning Session with Parents in Week 5 of each term, so when coincided with our regular GPAC Meetings in Weeks 2 and 8 of each term, our parents have access to see each other and engage with the school every 3 weeks of the school term.

## 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



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