



MARGARET JURD COLLEGE

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

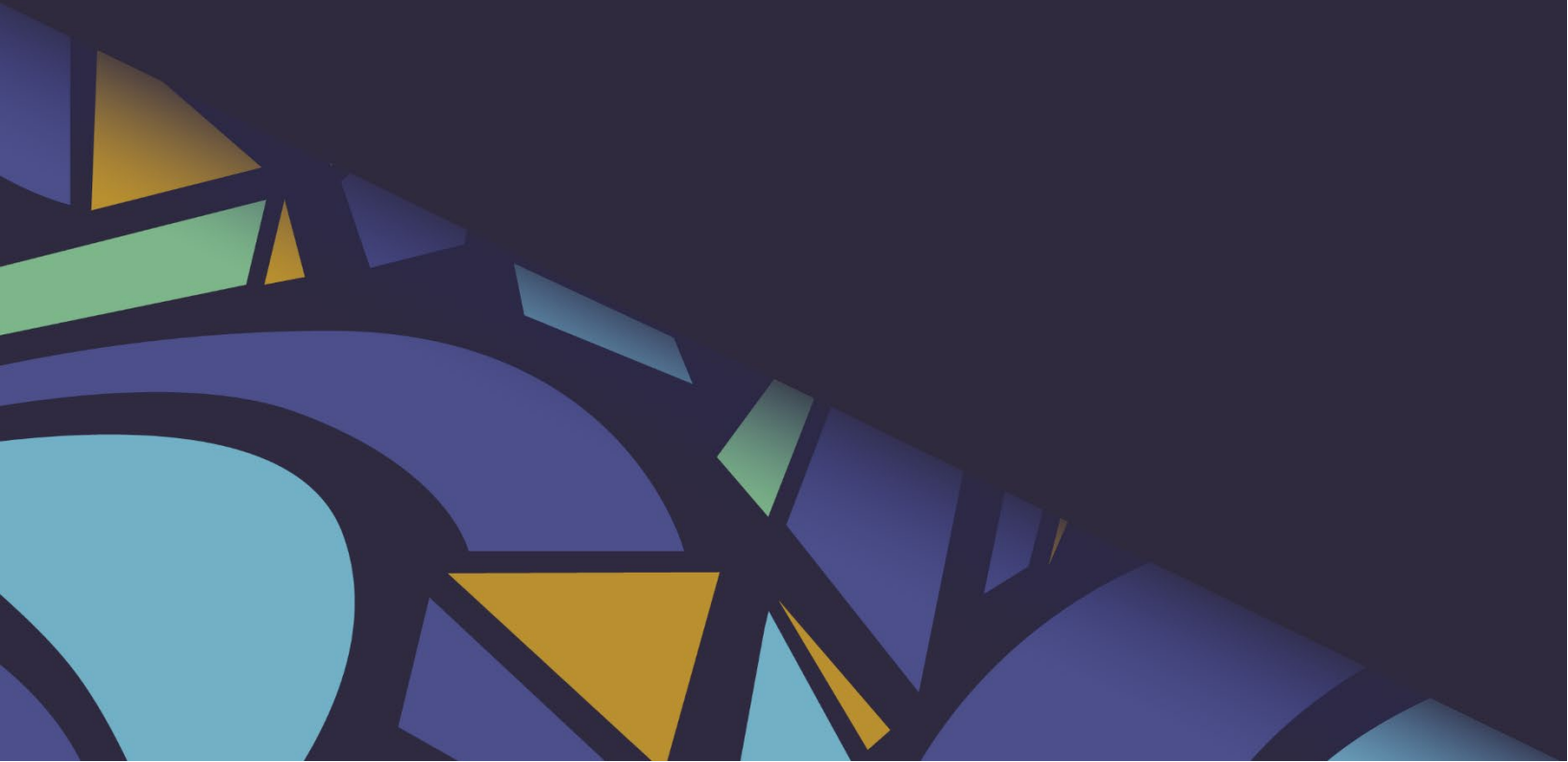


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Message from the Chair

2023 has been a big year for Margaret Jurd College in more ways than one. The Shortland campus continues to provide a safe, healthy and educational environment for both the students and the staff. This fits with our vision statement, to *Empower Personal Growth* and our mission statement. *To set the international benchmark for re-engaging young people in education. to create a place to belong for unique individuals who don't fit the mould, we are supportive, judgement-free, and offer an individual approach to all.* Finally, our values seek first to understand, better together, and think different.



The College continues to maintain strong student numbers and attendance rates with a number of potential students on the waiting list. Staff retention is excellent which indicates that the College is on target to becoming an “*Employer of Choice*” in the education sector.

Strategic Developments and Organisational Growth

In early 2023 the Board decided that the existing strategic plan needed to be reviewed and updated. A consultancy company was recruited to assist in developing a 5-year and a 25-year plan. This has been an exciting process involving board members, the College Principal and his executive staff as well as operational staff. The new strategic plan identified the need for a structural change at the executive management level and a position for Director of Corporate Services was created which incorporated the role of Company Secretary.

After several interviews with some excellent candidates for the position, Mr Stephen Phillips was appointed in October last year. Stephen comes with excellent credentials having been in many senior executive roles for a number of years. Since joining the College, he has vastly improved the College’s reporting and communication systems. His legal background has been invaluable in helping to re-write and update the College constitution which allows the Board to become more effective in its decision making.

Rebranding and Marketing Success

Following the College’s rebranding efforts that were launched at the end of 2022, GUTS Creative contracted to undertake this work and also ran a marketing campaign across the region at the start of 2023 which won two prestigious awards in the Brand Revitalisation category at the Australian Marketing Institute Awards. These were the *Best Brand Development Project to reflect a change of mission, values or positioning* and *Best Visual Identity from the Education Sector* at the Transform Magazine Awards. Congratulations to all involved; it was a great effort and outcome.

Board and Governance Updates

2023 saw some changes to the Board with the retirement of long-serving Director Garry Derkenne who retired in September, his position on the Board being taken in November by Mr Rob Hanks. Rob is an ordained minister in the Uniting Church and he brings a wealth of knowledge to the Board regarding the functions of the Uniting Church as well as 30 years of experience working with youth in the Newcastle area.

New Campus Inauguration

For the past three annual reports, we have been giving updates on the development of a new College campus in the Forster Tuncurry area. This project has been completed and is now up and running with the first round of students enrolled on Tuesday 30th April 2024. The buildings and open space have been beautifully renovated and constructed and is a wonderful resource for children with education difficulties in the local area. It will be officially opened later in the year when we can arrange for the Minister for Education to attend. The Forster Tuncurry campus is the first of many proposed campuses for Margaret Jurd College. The board has set an ambitious target of creating five new campuses before 2028 so watch this space.

Recognition and thanks

The governance of the College is an important responsibility shared by a hard-working group of committed Directors. I take this opportunity to recognise the contribution made by each of my fellow Directors who have given up their time and energy to serve on the Board during 2023-2024. In particular, I would like to express my gratitude for the work of the Chairs of the respective Board committees. The role played by them, and their committees is essential to the Board being able to undertake its duties and comply with its numerous regulatory obligations.

Finally, I would like to thank the College Principal, Darren Twist and his staff for their dedication and commitment to the students and the families who are served by the College. Without them, the College could not achieve its mission and vision.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Knowles'.

Jim Knowles
Chair of the Board

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRINCIPAL

The last twelve months have seen a number of changes at the College, one of which is the opening of our new campus in Tuncurry. This campus, seen as the first campus within the College's strategic expansion, is a huge milestone in the College's desire to continue re-engaging young people in education.

The recognition of MJC as a multi-campus school has coincided with our work to establish a College "base camp". This base camp process sees the continued development of our organisational structure, systems and processes including Governance review and improvement, targeted staff professional development and community partnerships all with the ultimate intention of continuing to deliver even higher levels of cultural support, responding to external communities who may need wellbeing support, fostering a community of supporters who's values align with the College and ultimately creating further opportunities for College expansion through the College's Satellite Schools program.



The College has also seen the continuation of the implementation of MJC's commitment to alternative and holistic education as we strive to further honour our values of Seek First to Understand, Better Together & Think Different.

Staff have worked hard to improve our students' educational outcomes with a continued focus on trauma-informed practice and Restorative Practice with a Casework focus.

The College spent a significant amount of time before the official opening of the Tuncurry Campus working with community groups, Non-Government Organisations and local educational settings ensuring that our unique alternative offering would be a value add to the town and, most importantly, benefit the young people who would attend. Our staff for the new campus consist of veterans of the College as well as locals with knowledge of and connection to the local area. We welcome all our Tuncurry students to the program!

2024 and beyond will see a focus on supporting College alumni, and expanding the College's service offerings through the introduction of a more unified approach to our wellbeing services. It is hoped that we will continue to broaden the support we receive from the community and corporate sector.

Staff across both campuses have embraced change and new ways of working to ensure sufficient support is offered to all students attending MJC irrespective of location.

Again, thank you for the continued support from our Directors, the Uniting Church Synod (NSW/ACT), and our local Congregations (with particular mention of the Lane Cove Congregation, the Forster-Tuncurry Congregation, The Gordon-Pymble Congregation and, as always, the Shortland-Wallsend Congregation who now include members of the Jesmond Park Uniting Church congregation amongst their number). Finally... a big thank you to my students and parents/ carers who have played a huge part in defining the "Jurd Way".

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Darren Twist".

Darren Twist
Principal

COLLEGE CONTEXT

Margaret Jurd College was born out of a vision to empower young people through supported education and care. Newcastle Youth Service (NYS) was a street service supporting young people at risk within the Newcastle area. Established as a ministry of the Hamilton Uniting Church Parish the service quickly became a vital part of the youth welfare sector in Newcastle. In 1985 the Board of NYS commenced a tutorial service in Carrington, using the premises of the old Carrington Club Hotel as an extension of the service. The need for supported alternative education comprising an accommodation service became quickly apparent. The institution which has become Margaret Jurd College was moved to its Lambton premises and grew from a tutorial centre to a registered school in 1996. The vision and drive from the beginning came from Dr Margaret Jurd, a Dr of Psychology who was integral in every step of the NYS story. Dr Jurd’s reputation for her work with disadvantaged youth established her as a widely respected figure among the community. What is now known as Margaret Jurd College was renamed in her honour after her passing and continues to grow in the direction inspired by her.

At Margaret Jurd College students defy their own expectations because our committed, open-minded, and passionate team think differently. We change lives and open minds by first understanding the why. Our community of students and staff is a judgement-free environment, where we see the person. A place of acceptance where uniqueness is celebrated, students connect with like-minded peers and potential is realised through the belief that one size doesn’t fit all.

Together with our students, parents, staff, and community and as part of the mission of the Uniting Church, we work together to empower our student’s personal growth.

We offer a unique model of education. Our students don’t fit into the typical mould and are therefore part of a College that thinks and does things differently.

At the College we see the opportunities; we help our students discover their potential and be mentored and supported along the way. We believe in a blended model of education and welfare.

As an independent College that is a registered Special Education provider, we specialise in exclusively addressing the educational needs of “at-risk students” with significant social-emotional, behavioural and intellectual challenges.

The students referred to the College come from a range of backgrounds with the majority having experienced significant adverse childhood experiences leading to trauma. This then translates into a series of diagnoses identified by registered by our partner medical practitioners. Students with these diagnoses often present with associated behaviours such as emotional dysregulation, defiance, withdrawal, helplessness,

College Workforce based on FTE

Executive Staff

6

Teachers

12

Wellbeing Support Staff

8

Educational Support Staff

7

Maintenance Staff

1.2

Administration Staff

6

fight/ flight/ freeze tendencies and difficulties forming and maintaining friendships. It is for this reason that they have often found mainstream education confronting and unable to be maintained.

Margaret Jurd College employs specialist teachers and full-time educational caseworkers to allow students to access education on the same basis as their peers. The College’s social program uses Case Plans to allow the students to have a voice in the creation of their own social coping mechanisms and assess their own abilities through the use of the Wellbeing Wheel an internally implemented self-assessment tool for students. This results in rigorous, meaningful and dignified social and educational programs.

The College also engages specialist external support such as a Clinical Psychologist and Clinical Social-Workers who specialise in young people with trauma to ensure our service delivery is effective and up to date. The College is also a registered service provider under The Department of Communities and Justice, delivering targeted support in early intervention to students, parents/carers and the community at large. The College also employs crisis prevention strategies to understand and respond to student behaviour, such as functional behaviour Assessments, Behavioural Plans, Medical Plans, Transition Plans and safety plans.

The College’s educational program involves the individual adjusting of teaching strategies and curriculum outcomes to allow the student to successfully engage in the full NSW Syllabus for the Australian Curriculum (Years 9-10) and the Higher School Certificate (Years 11-12). The College is fully registered for both the Record of School Achievement (RoSA) and the Higher School Certificate (HSC). Each teacher sits on an Individual Planning (IP) team to map out the educational goals of the students and other relevant stakeholders. This allows targeted, individually adjusted plans in the classroom environment supported by the social program of the College.

The College intends to continue to empower young people in achieving their social and educational goals to become adults that positively contribute to their community.

Student Composition

Total Enrolment

75

Shortland – 75

SWD

100%

ATSI

36%

Year Level Numbers

Year 9 – 15

Year 10 – 30

Year 11 – 22

Year 12 – 8

School Setting

Special Education/

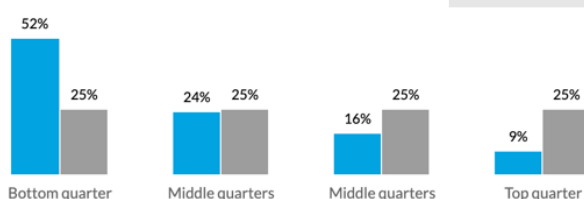
Co-Educational

Student background

Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA)

School ICSEA value	917
Average ICSEA value	1000
School ICSEA percentile	14

Distribution of Socio-Educational Advantage (SEA)



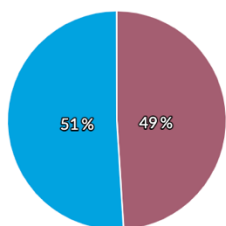
■ School distribution ■ Australian distribution

Percentages are rounded and may not add to 100

Students

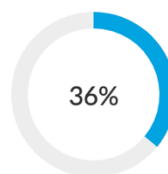
Total enrolments: 72

- Boys 37
- Girls 35



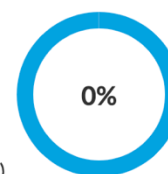
Full-time equivalent enrolments: 72.0

Indigenous students



Language background other than English

- Yes (0%)
- No (100%)
- Not stated (0%)



EDUCATION PROGRAM

In 2023-2024 MJC delivered Stage 5 at Shortland and Tuncurry and Stage 6 at Shortland. This includes two year 9 classes across the campus', one year 10 class at Shortland soon to include a further year 10 class at Tuncurry as well as 2 year 11 classes and one year 12 class at Shortland.

More than 15 teachers employed for their specific fields of expertise and commitment to disadvantaged young people delivered the Australian Curriculum (NSW). Whilst some of these teachers perform executive roles outside the classroom it would be foolish not to recognise their leadership and mentoring and the effect this has had on the classroom overall.

Students are provided with an alternative education program up to and inclusive of the Record of School Achievement at both campuses with the addition of the preliminary year and the final HSC year being offered at Shortland.

Individual Plans are developed for all students with reasonable adjustments provided ensure that all students are able to access education like their peers in other settings. In the 2023-2024 year this planning process has expanded to include Safety Plans, Behavioural Plans, Casework Plans and critical incident response plans that operate under the TAR3 Psychological First Aid framework. These plans form the overarching Student Planning Process which works with the traditional Individual Education Planning process.

The focus Key Learning Areas on offer at the College are as follows:

Stage 5

HSIE
Mathematics
Science
PDHPE
English

Stage 6

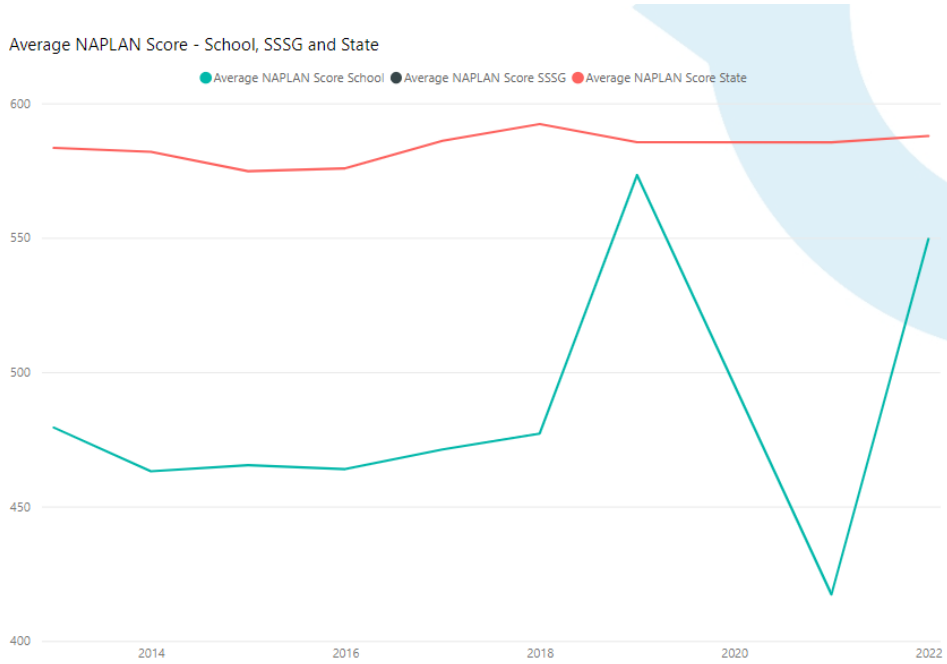
Modern History (LS)
Science (LS)
English Studies
Mathematics (Numeracy)
Sport, Lifestyle & Recreation
Work Studies

In addition, all students have the opportunity to engage in "Electives" focussed on real life learning. These electives include workshops such as cooking, fishing, tech etc.

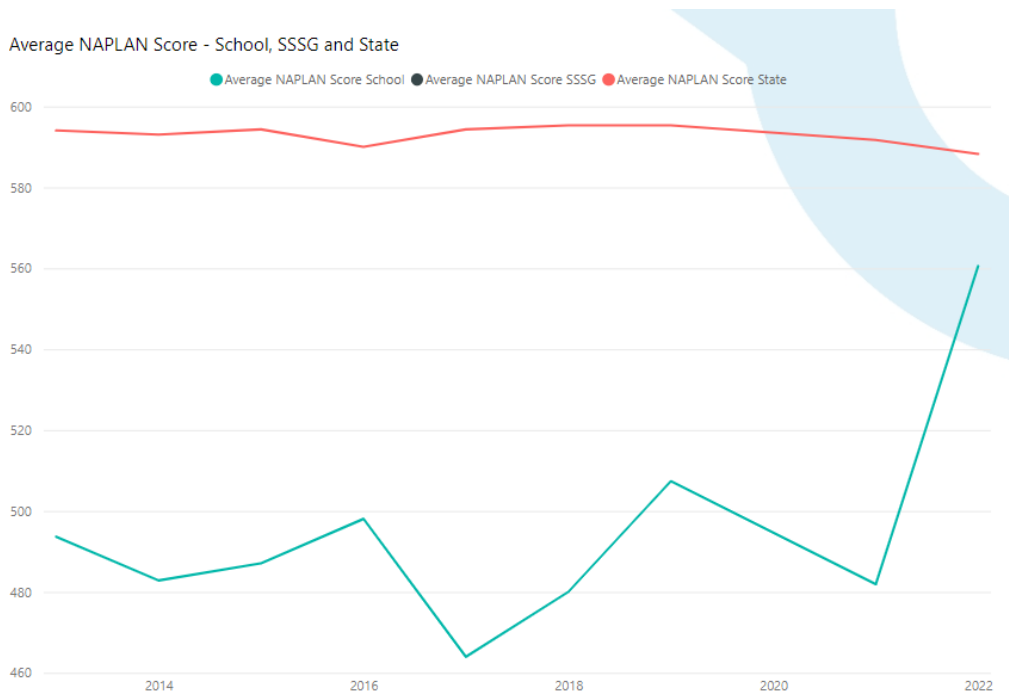
All students in the NAPLAN cycle as required (Year 9) and move through to complete the Minimum Standards standardised test throughout years 10-12.

Student NAPLAN results are as follows:

GRAMMAR AND PUNCTUATION

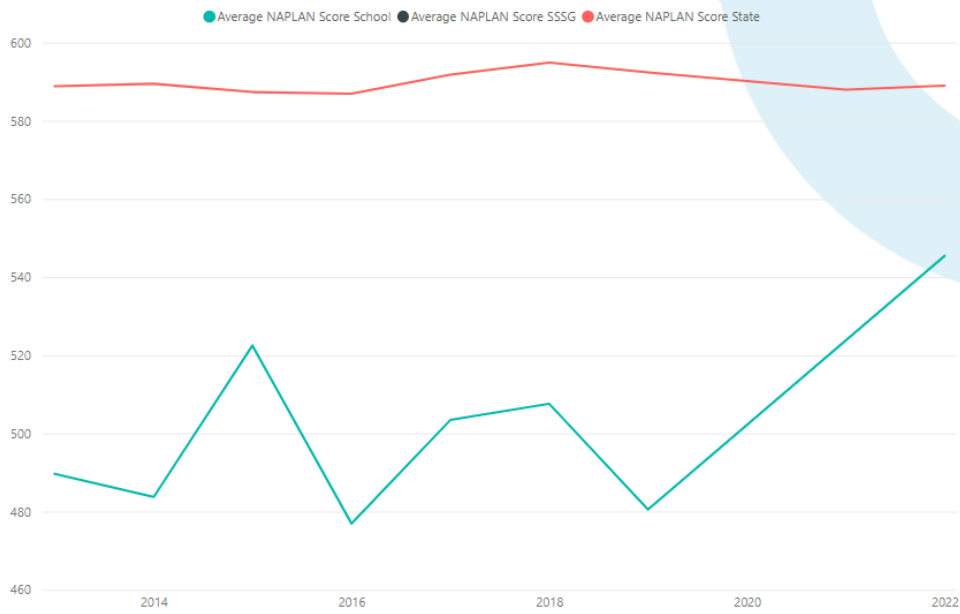


SPELLING



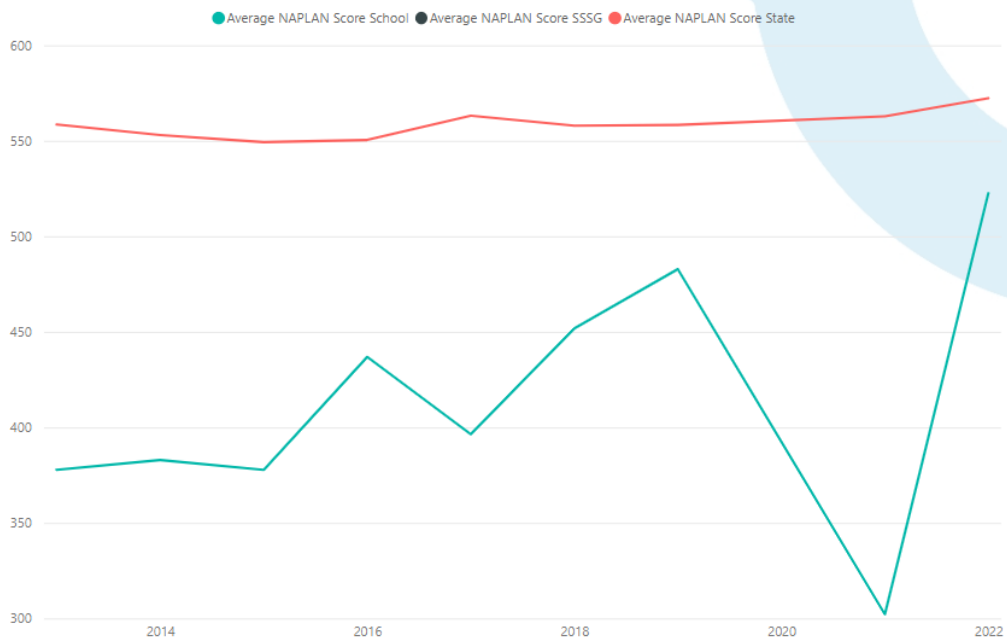
READING

Average NAPLAN Score - School, SSSG and State

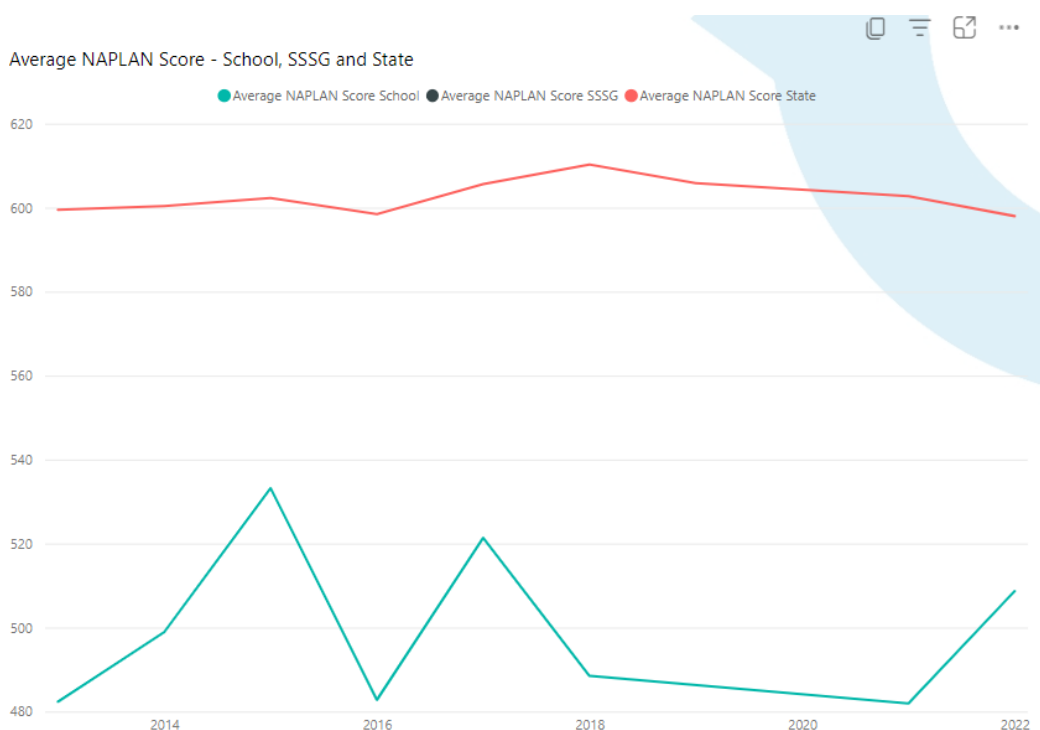


WRITING

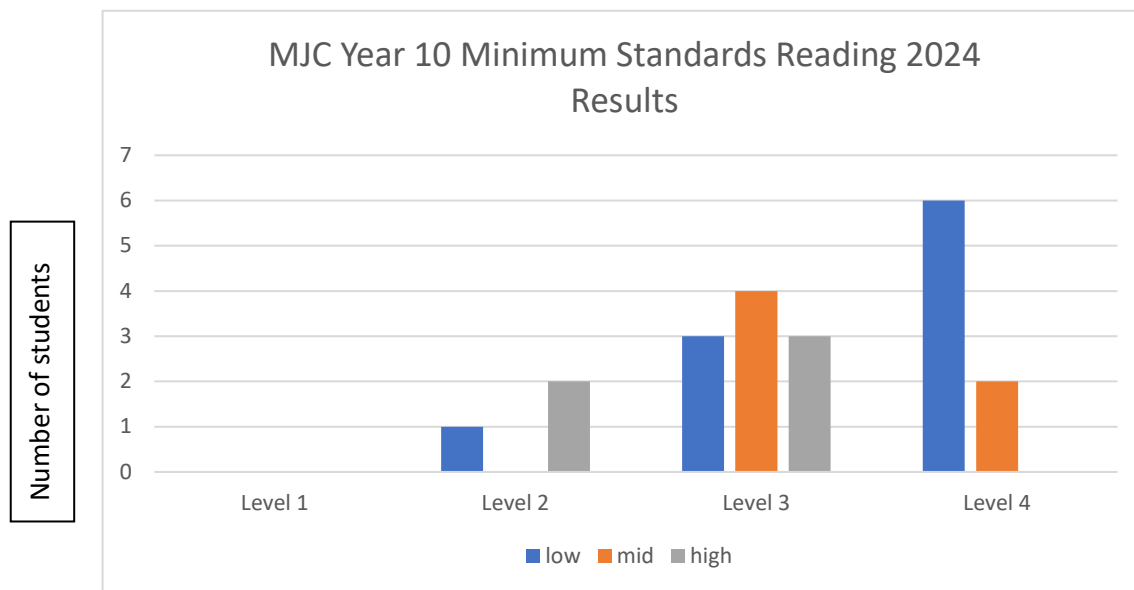
Average NAPLAN Score - School, SSSG and State



NUMERACY



Student Minimum Standards results are as follows:



At the end of term 1, 2024, 21 year 10 students sat the Minimum Standards Reading Test. This test was completed after the year 10 cohort had participated in 2x 45-minute lessons per week with the Learning Support teacher. These lessons were specifically designed to target gaps in reading skills, including but not limited to comprehension, punctuation, grammar, and spelling rules. 18 of 21 students who sat the test achieved a passing grade, making the pass rate 86%. Students will sit the Minimum Standards Writing and Numeracy tests later this year, after having completed units of work targeting these areas.

TEACHING STAFF ACCREDITATION STATUS

Experience	Number
New Graduate	3
Proficient	9
Experienced (ST1)	2

EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION

INTERNALLY RECORDED ONGOING RESPONSES INCLUDED:

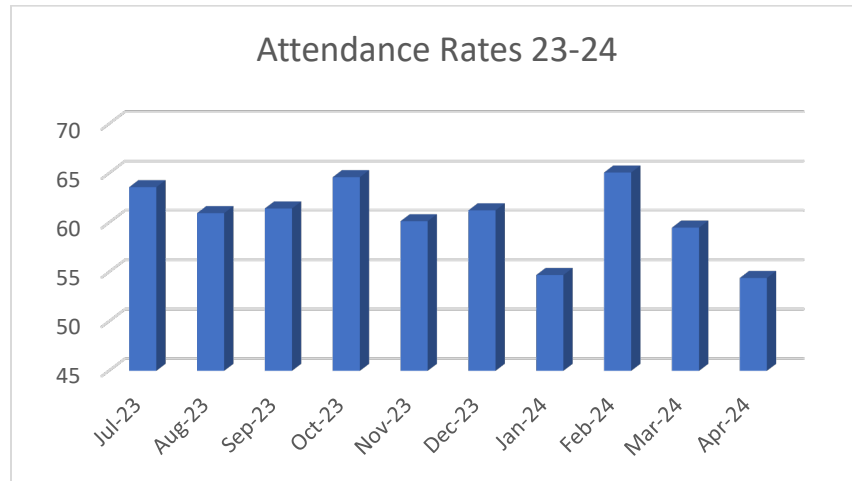
Positives

- Robust focus on staff wellbeing
- Small class sizes
- Positive social culture
- Improved communication
- Creative approach to the process of achieving educational outcomes
- Freedom to create workshops
- Improved purchasing process'
- Improved process' for returning students to school after disciplinary actions

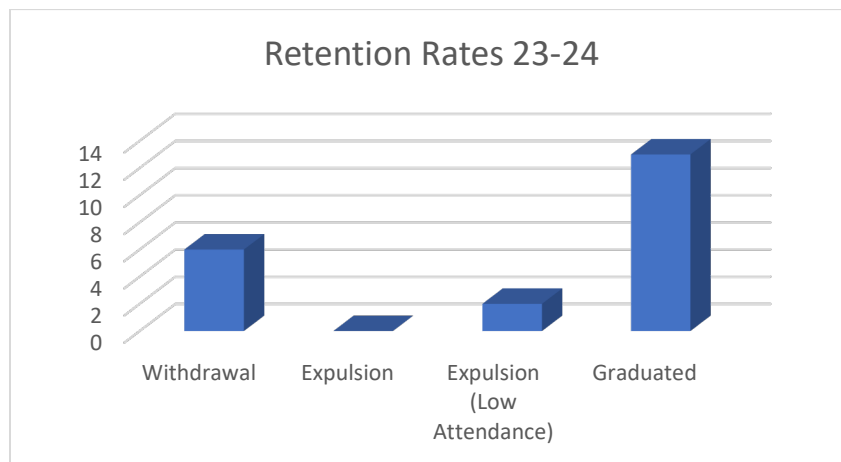
Room for Improvement

- More effective approaches to staff wide communication
- A more diverse curriculum and more student choice.
- Greater emphasis on expectations of senior school
- Encourage transitioning into employment.

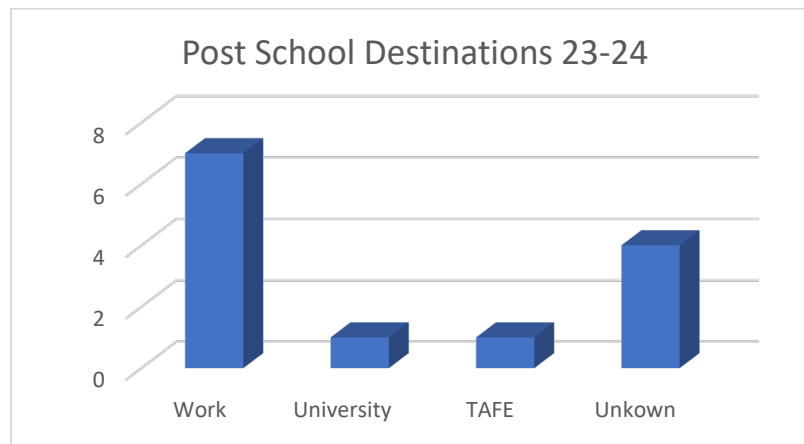
STUDENT ATTENDANCE



RETENTION DATA



POST SCHOOL DESTINATIONS



INTENTIONS FOR 2023-2024 AND SCHOOL IDENTIFIED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

College Senior Management has focussed on the following areas for overall improvement:

1. Effective Governance
2. People and Culture
3. Financial Performance
4. Stakeholder Satisfaction
5. Right Operations and Infrastructure

Effective Governance

- An overall review and potential redevelopment of the following functions including committee charters, audit Process', company Constitution, Director skills matrix, Director development policy and framework, Governance calendar of governance focus, Director succession plan, Risk management framework.

People and Culture

- WHS practice is being reviewed and re-developed including the establishment of an effectively trained WHS Committee.
- Staff work practice and culture remaining the focus with the development, review and or redevelopment of the College's Capability Framework established, Position Descriptions reviewed, Employment contracts reviewed, Negotiation and review of MEA for 2025, staff culture survey, staff Recognition program, staff learning, and development program and staff Code of Conduct reviewed.
- HR Practices will be overhauled with the college onboarding process' reviewed, the development of the new Student Services faculty, Payroll portal overhauled.

Financial Performance

- Overall financial capability will be improved with the appointment of an external accountant
- Our financial platform will be reviewed with the intention of implementing more effective systems and processes.
- Implementation of a new process around budgeting and effective expenditure.

Stakeholder Satisfaction

- A focus on external sponsorship and the College's approach to external support to be overhauled with the creation of a donor value proposition framework, direct engagement with local congregations, and initial implementation of a partnership framework.
- General engagement with external stakeholders improved through the development of a key stakeholder engagement strategy culminating in a stakeholder satisfaction survey.

Right Operations and Infrastructure

- A focus on I.T. will continue into 2024 and beyond with a strategic review completed by AISNSW, a review of Microsoft licensing arrangements, migration of any on-site servers to the cloud, a Review/strengthening ICT governance framework and the development of an IT dashboard.
- Data security will continue to be a focus with a security review being undertaken including an IT penetration test and deployment of identified security measures, the review of disaster recovery plans and business continuity plans.
- Overall facilities will also be in the spotlight with the creation of a facilities master plan in accordance with the College's strategic direction as well as including a review of operational growth options and facilities modernisation priorities.

COLLEGE STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2023-2028

OUR INTENT

To Develop a 2028 “base camp” structure for the growth of MJC

To identify 5 communities that could benefit from an MJC and move toward their establishment

To provide Education and Wellbeing services to our communities in the MJC Way

To develop robust evidence of our success through data and the establishment of an alumni program

To set the benchmark for inclusive schooling in Australia – “Come as you are”

COLLEGE POLICIES

The College’s policies can be found on our website at <https://mjc.nsw.edu.au/>

- [Grievance procedure for students, parents and caregivers](#)
- [Discipline Framework](#)
- [Student Welfare Policy](#)
- [Staff Grievance Procedure](#)

Financial Charts for 2023

