

**MJC**  
MARGARET JURD COLLEGE



**ANNUAL REPORT  
2024**



Margaret Jurd College is a ministry of the Uniting Church in Australia (UCA). We acknowledge the Indigenous peoples of the land on which we live and work and we pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

We are committed to fostering a culturally responsive and supportive learning environment where every student thrives. Our holistic approach supports academic success and wellbeing for all students, with a particular focus on improving outcomes for Aboriginal students. This includes targeted programs and resources that extend beyond the classroom to empower Aboriginal students and their families.



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## SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Margaret Jurd College was born out of a vision to empower young people through supported education and care. Newcastle Youth Service (NYS) began as a street-based initiative, supporting at-risk young people 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 the region.

In 1985, the NYS Board established a tutorial service in Carrington, utilising the former Carrington Club Hotel as an extension of their support initiatives. As the demand for supported alternative education and accommodation services grew, the need for a more structured approach became clear. This led to the evolution of the tutorial centre into what is now Margaret Jurd College, which relocated to Lambton and became a registered school in 1996. Today, our growing community is supported by two thriving campuses—one in Shortland and another in Tuncurry.

The vision and drive behind this journey came from Dr Margaret Jurd, a Doctor of Psychology who played an integral role in every step of the NYS story. Renowned for her work with disadvantaged youth, Dr Jurd was widely respected within the community. Following her passing, the institution was renamed in her honour and continues to grow in the direction she inspired.

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 fosters a judgement-free environment, where we see the person first. It is a place of acceptance where individuality is celebrated, students connect with like-minded peers, and potential is realised through the belief that one size does not fit all.



In collaboration with students, families, staff, and the broader community—and as part of the mission of the Uniting Church—we work together to empower our students' personal growth.

We offer a unique educational model tailored to students who don't fit the traditional mould. As an independent, registered Special Education provider, the College specialises in meeting the educational needs of at-risk students who are experiencing significant social-emotional, behavioural, and intellectual challenges.

Our students come from diverse backgrounds, with many having experienced significant adverse childhood experiences and trauma. These experiences often result in formal diagnoses identified by our partner medical practitioners. As a result, students may present with emotional dysregulation, defiance, withdrawal, helplessness, fight/flight/freeze responses, and difficulty in forming or maintaining friendships. These challenges often render mainstream education environments overwhelming and unsustainable.

To address this, Margaret Jurd College employs specialist teachers and full-time educational caseworkers, ensuring students can access education on the same basis as their peers. Our social program incorporates personalised Case Plans, which give students a voice in developing their own social coping mechanisms. They assess their capabilities using the *Wellbeing Wheel*—an internally developed self-assessment tool—leading to rigorous, meaningful, and dignified social and educational programs.

We also engage external clinical professionals, including a Clinical Psychologist and Clinical Social Workers specialising in trauma-informed care, to ensure our services remain relevant and effective. The College is a registered service provider under the Department of Communities and Justice, delivering targeted early intervention support to students, their families, and the wider community.

The College employs a range of crisis prevention and behaviour management strategies, including Functional Behaviour Assessments, Behaviour Support Plans, Medical Plans, Transition Plans, and Safety Plans. These proactive approaches help us better understand and respond to individual student needs.

Educationally, the College offers a flexible and personalised approach. Teaching strategies and curriculum outcomes are individually adjusted to enable students to engage meaningfully with the NSW Syllabus for the Australian Curriculum (Years 9–10) and the Higher School Certificate (Years 11–12). We are fully registered to deliver both the Record of School Achievement (RoSA) and the Higher School Certificate (HSC).

Each teacher participates in an Individual Planning (IP) Team, collaborating with students and relevant stakeholders to set and monitor educational goals. These goals are supported by both academic and social programming, creating a holistic environment for student growth.

Margaret Jurd College remains committed to empowering young people to achieve their social and educational goals and to grow into adults who positively contribute to their communities. This is the Jurd Way.



## OUR VISION

Our vision is to set the international benchmark for re-engaging young people in education.



## OUR MISSION

Our purpose is to empower personal growth.



## OUR VALUES

Seek first to understand.

We encompass an empathetic nature in all that we do. Listening to others' perspectives and views allows us to understand the why. We keep an open mind, and we are patient, creating a place of acceptance, where students can truly be themselves.

Better together.

Diversity is key to our success. We empower personal growth for our students by working together collaboratively and harnessing individual strengths within our own team as well as working closely with parents. Education and wellbeing are both equally important, our unique combination of the two is how we help our students reach their full potential.

Think different.

In order to achieve our vision, we require bold and unique ways of thinking. We aren't afraid to try new things and learn from them. We bravely challenge the status quo, as role models for our students to help them confidently forge their own paths in life.

2024 was another excellent year for Margaret Jurd College. It reached some key milestones and many changes have been achieved. One of these was the appointment of Jamie Shackleton as the Head of Campus, Shortland. The creation of this new role meant that the Shortland Leadership Team has been restructured giving way to a new opportunity for an Assistant Head of Campus to assist Jamie with the running of the school. These changes are starting to have an immediate impact on the learning outcomes for the students and also for the continued professional development of staff at Shortland. Jamie is a welcomed addition to Margaret Jurd College.

The Tuncurry Campus continues to grow from strength to strength with increasing student numbers and excellent attendance rates. Positive feedback from students' parents and carers and the local church community has been encouraging. This is a credit to the staff of the College whose tireless work and dedication to improving the lives of the students is bearing fruit.

Other organisational changes include the appointments of an Executive Manager, Technology Services, a Compliance and Human Resources Coordinator, and a contractor to oversee the new Marketing Strategy for the College. All of these appointments strengthen the College's capacity to grow and achieve its strategic goal of building Base Camp.

2024 also saw the departure of Luke Dolan, the Shortland Campus Coordinator who has started a business with his wife after 24 years of dedicated service to the College. We wish him well in his future endeavours.



**Mr Jim Knowles**  
*Chair of the Board*

In 2025 Michael (Mick) Hunter and James Shelton retired from the Board after many years' service and will be hard to replace. Mick has the honour of being the longest serving Director of the College completing three, three-year terms as a Director which is a wonderful achievement. James has been on the Board for the past six years. We sincerely thank them for their commitment and contributions and wish them both a happy and long retirement.

On the administrative side the Shortland Campus has had a major office restructure with teachers, caseworkers and SLSOs amalgamated into the one office space. This has allowed for easier communication between the team when needing to understand individual students' needs and requirements. The staff also have access to a new faculty lounge for break times. These renovations have included a new Board room with much more space and a state-of-the-art communication system.



In line with our strategic plan to create five new campuses before 2028 I am pleased to announce that we are in the process of opening our third campus in Beaumont Street in Newcastle. This is for our Year 12 students with plans to become a Registered Training Organisation (RTO). The aim is to provide facilities for students to undertake tertiary qualifications in specific areas such as hospitality, early child care and many more. The arrangement is designed to give our students a clear career path so that they can gain full employment in a career of their choice.

The facility at Beaumont Street will also become the corporate Head Office of Margaret Jurd College; freeing up much needed office space at Shortland.

### **RECOGNITION AND THANKS**

The governance of the College is an important responsibility which is 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 2024-2025. In particular, I would like to express my gratitude for the work of the Chairs of the respective Board sub-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.

2024 has been a remarkable year for Margaret Jurd College with the opening of our first purpose-built campus in Tuncurry. The opening of the Tuncurry Campus is the first step toward achieving our bold strategic plan which will see the College demonstrate its willingness and commitment to extending our unique model to serve the needs of the communities that see a need for a unique approach to secondary education like ours.

The Tuncurry Campus opened its doors in Term 2, 2024 welcoming its first cohort of year 9 and 10 students. Since its opening the Campus has seen connection to both our students and our new community grow. I would like to congratulate our Head of Campus Tuncurry, Josh Field, for his tireless work bringing the new Campus to life.

As a school that prides itself on various forms of personal growth amongst its students we would like to highlight the incredible academic achievements of our Year 12 graduating class. This class includes 6 HSC (non-ATAR) graduates of whom 83% were successful in gaining their minimum standards. We are proud of each of our students and the various paths they choose to take with a number of students securing Traineeships or taking part in various work experience programs either throughout the year or upon transitioning out of the College.

The year saw an increase of attendance rates some up to 86%. Truly impressive numbers! Our students should be proud of their efforts in turning up to the College, we know it isn't always easy. Well done!



**Mr Darren Twist**  
*Principal*

The Professional Development of Staff remains a focus for the Executive Leadership Team. This is an intentional strategy to aid our staff to both experience professional success and to ensure our approach to the complex needs of our students remains current and at the forefront of best practice. Staff have engaged in training around Youth Mental Health First Aid, Crisis Response and Intervention, Work Health & Safety, Workplace Investigations and Records and Data Management. The College continues its partnership with Real Schools with a focus on restorative practice continuing to have success with both staff and students.

The Executive Leadership Team continue to support staff to improve service delivery as it develops the *Integrated Student Growth Model* which will enable staff through data collection and analysis to assess the ongoing and varied needs amongst our student cohort. Enabling them to implement effective response plans and gauge student's academic, social and emotional growth during their time at the College.



The commitment shown by our staff towards the students is a true reflection of their professionalism and dedication. The supportive response by our staff to our students throughout the many and varied challenges they may experience is truly impressive. This, coupled with the tenacity and grit of our students, gives us the ability to create the unique environment of empowerment and growth that we are all so fortunate to be a part of. The Shortland Campus officially welcomes Jamie Shackleton, who will be joining us as Head of Campus Shortland in Term 1, 2025 following a lengthy recruitment process during the last quarter of 2024.

The College is, as always, blessed by the support it receives from its dedicated Board of Directors, particularly Chair, Jim Knowles. The Board operate in a volunteer capacity and bring with them incredible breadth of experience. This has been of particular benefit as the College continues to move down the path of achieving its ambitious strategic plan.

As the 2024 year closes out, I would like to thank our outgoing Campus Coordinator, Luke Dolan, for an impressive 24 and a half years' worth of dedicated service to the College. I have been lucky to have worked alongside Luke for close to 15 years and I can guarantee that the staff and students at the College will miss the unshakeable character and commitment to vulnerable young people which Luke brought to the campus every day. Luke, you will be missed, and we wish you all the best as you move on to new opportunities. *"Have a pleasant and peaceful day"*.

To our community, our students, congregations, staff and external stakeholders, thank you for such a successful year. This ends one of the biggest years of growth for Margaret Jurd College and it could not have been done without each and every one of you.

We look forward to 2025!

# EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM OVERVIEW

In 2024 MJC delivered Stage 5 at both 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 that this has had on the classroom overall.

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. 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**

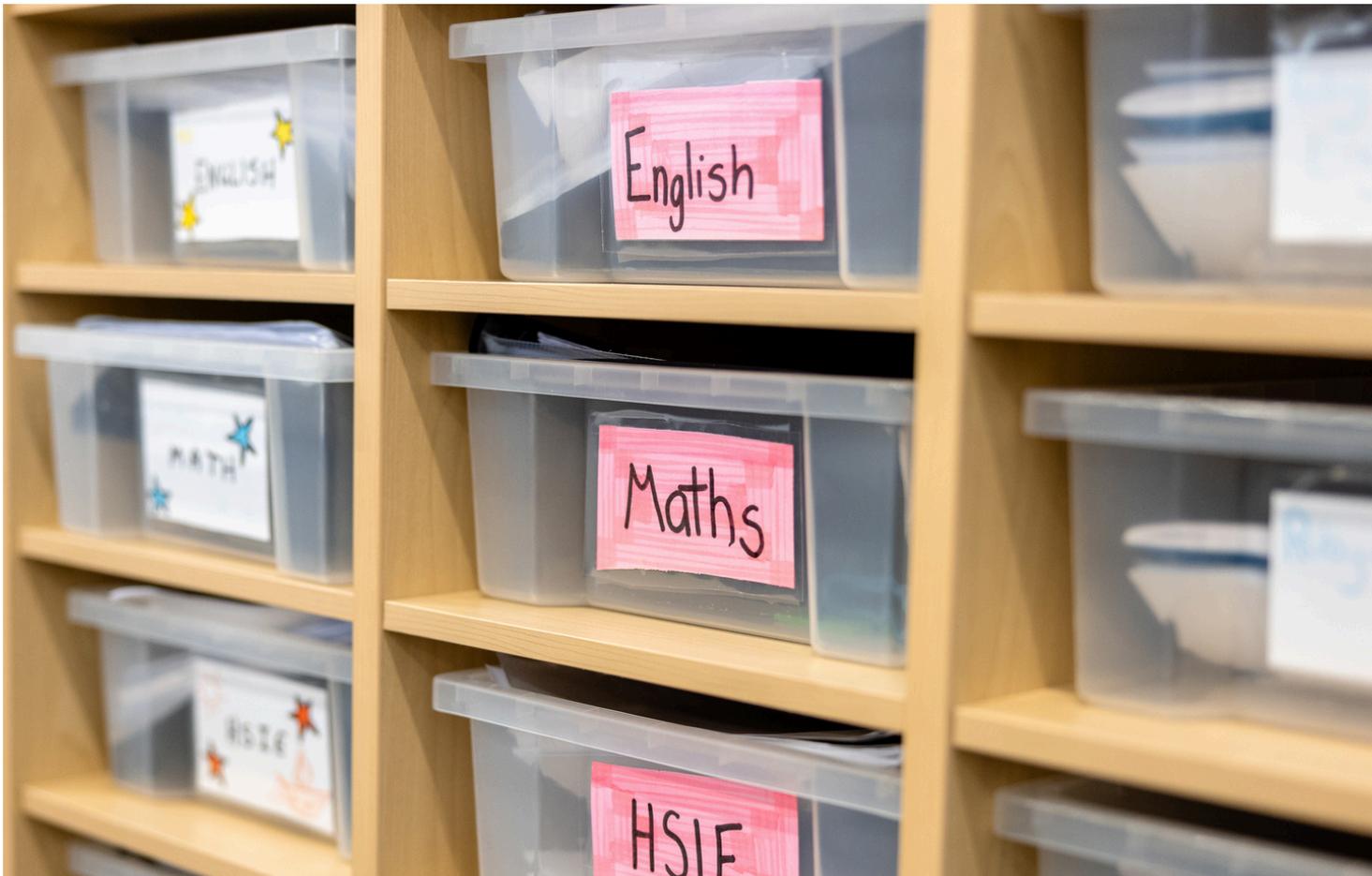
HSIE  
Mathematics  
Science  
PDHPE  
English

**STAGE 6**

Modern History (LS)  
Science (LS)  
English Studies  
Mathematics (Numeracy)  
Sports, 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.

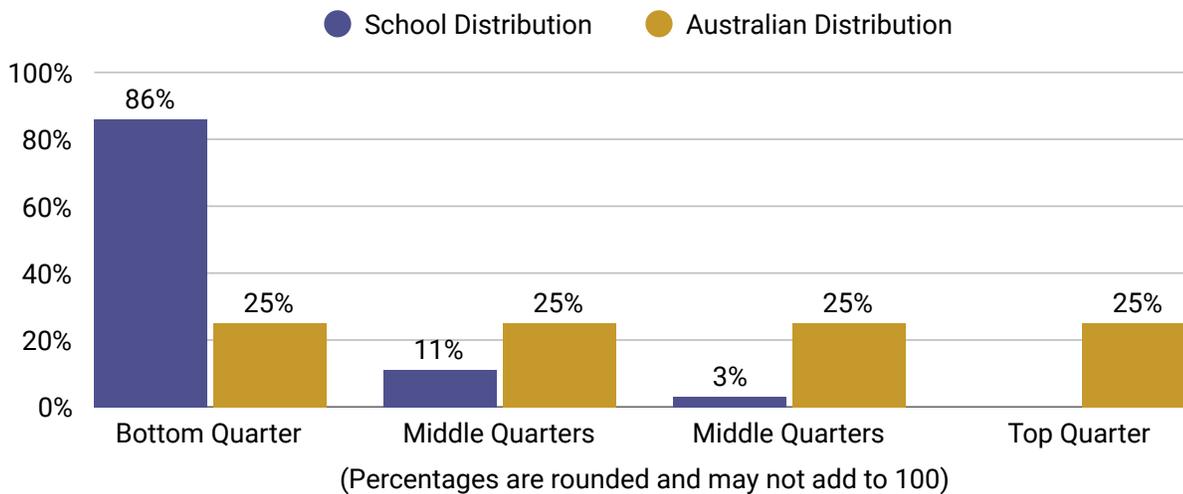


# STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS AND STATISTICS

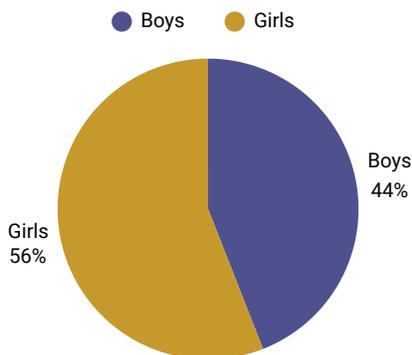
## INDEX OF COMMUNITY SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL ADVANTAGE (ICSEA)



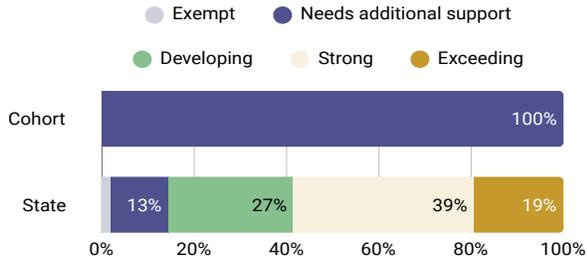
## DISTRIBUTION OF SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL ADVANTAGE (SEA)



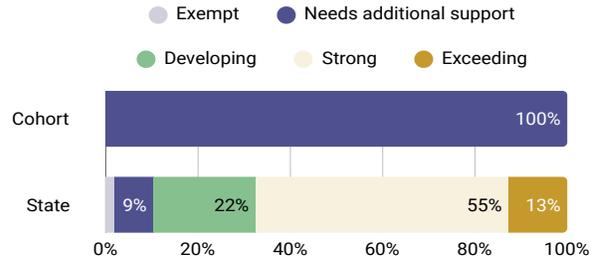
## STUDENT ENROLMENT



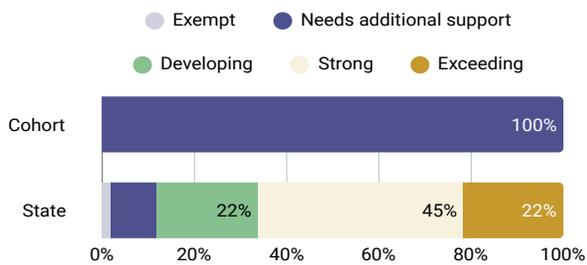
## NAPLAN PERFORMANCE 2024



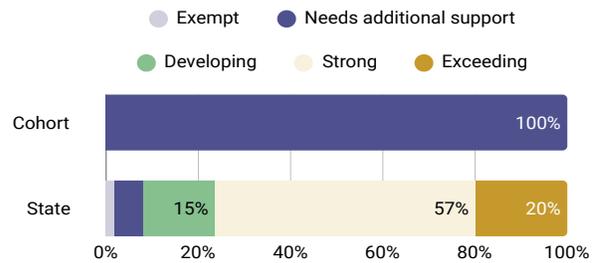
Grammar & Punctuation



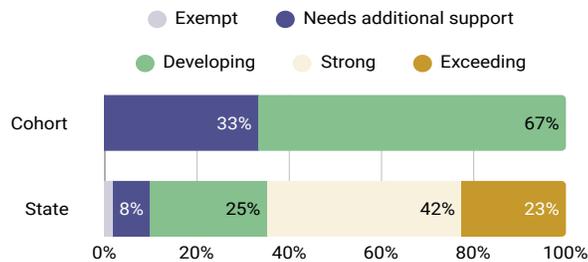
Numeracy



Reading



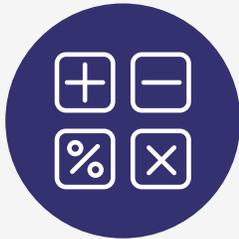
Spelling



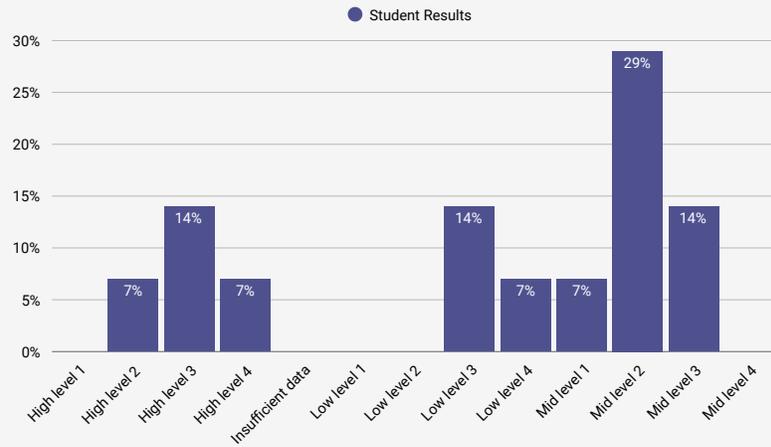
Writing

## STUDENT OUTCOMES | ATTAINMENT OF MINIMUM STANDARDS

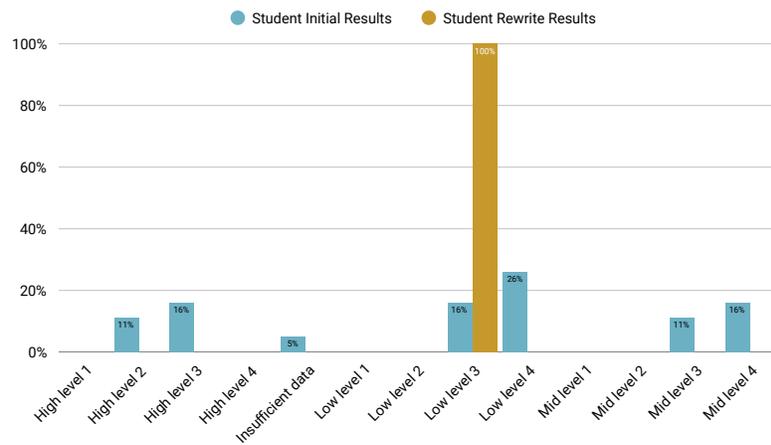
The following are the Student Minimum Standards results for Numeracy, Reading, and Writing, including both initial and rewrite outcomes.



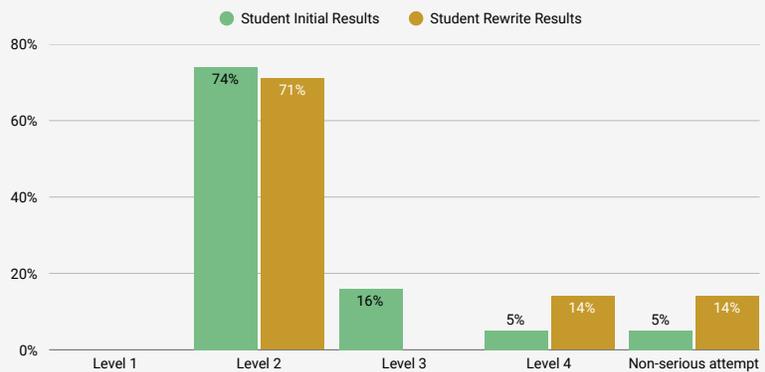
**MS NUMERACY**



**MS READING**

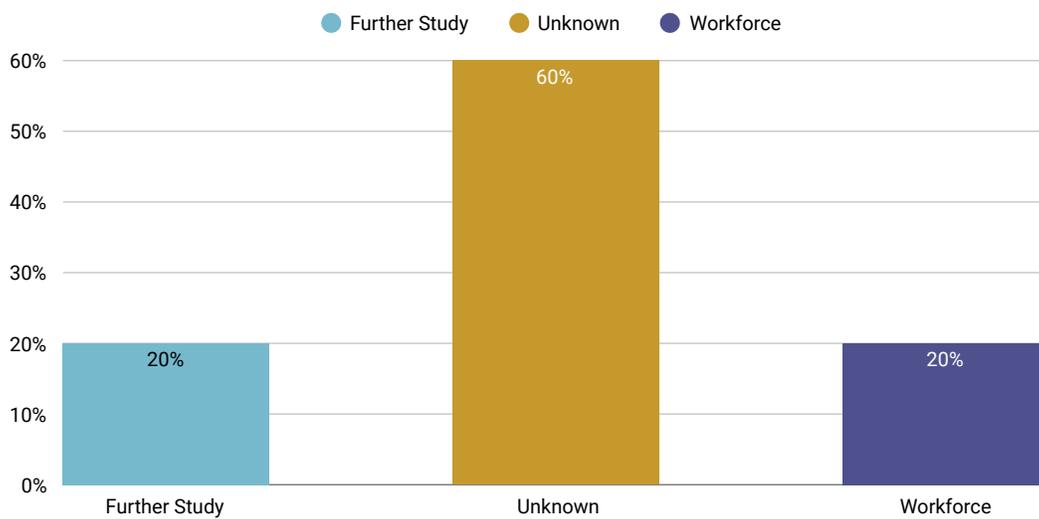


**MS WRITING**



## STUDENT OUTCOMES | POST-SCHOOL PATHWAYS AND DESTINATIONS

We are proud of each of our students and the various paths they choose to take with a number of students securing Traineeships or taking part in various work experience programs either throughout the year or upon transitioning out of the College



## WORKFORCE COMPOSITION

During 2024, Margaret Jurd College employed a dedicated team of teaching and non-teaching staff to support the College's educational and wellbeing programs. The workforce comprised in full-time equivalent (FTE):

- **Teaching staff:** 16.6 FTE
- **Non-teaching staff:** 24.5 FTE

The non-teaching staff includes administrative staff, caseworkers, educational support staff, and specialist wellbeing personnel.

The College continues to build a multidisciplinary team to support students with complex needs, drawing on a range of professional backgrounds to provide a holistic model of care and education.

## TEACHER ACCREDITATION

All teaching staff at the College hold appropriate qualifications and accreditation under the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA). The composition of teaching staff by accreditation level is as follows:

- **Proficient Teacher:** 72% FTE
- **Highly Accomplished Teacher:** 13% FTE
- **Provisionally Accredited Teachers:** 15% FTE

No staff are currently employed in roles that fall outside the NSW accreditation framework. All teachers maintain current Working with Children Checks and are registered with NESA as required.

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The College is committed to ongoing professional development that reflects our mission and the needs of our students. In 2024, key areas of focus included:

- Trauma-informed practice and inclusive education
- De-escalation and behaviour support training
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural competence
- Development of the Integrated Student Growth Model (ISGM)

A total of \$50,724 was invested in professional learning activities for teaching and support staff during the reporting period.

## STAFF ATTENDANCE AND RETENTION

This figure reflects the average attendance rate of permanent and temporary teaching staff during the school year, excluding approved leave.

- **Teacher attendance rate:** 92%

The College experienced stable staffing levels in 2024, with minor changes reflecting natural attrition and strategic recruitment to meet evolving program needs.

- **Staff retention rate:** 89%

# STAKEHOLDER SATISFACTION

Margaret Jurd College maintains a strong culture of feedback and reflection, engaging regularly with students, families, and staff to ensure the College remains responsive to the needs of its community.

## PARENT AND CARER FEEDBACK

Families provided feedback through structured meetings, surveys, and daily casework interaction. Common themes included appreciation for the College’s trauma-informed approach, personalised communication, and the sense of safety their children experience. Several parents highlighted improvements in their child’s confidence and engagement.

**Response:** The College continued to prioritise accessible communication, streamlined enrolment pathways, and tailored learning supports aligned to student wellbeing needs. Introduced additional transition support programs for students returning from extended absences.





### **STUDENT FEEDBACK**

Student voice was captured through check-ins, small group reflection activities, and informal engagement. Students valued being known and supported and expressed a desire for more creative and hands-on learning opportunities.

**Response:** Additional enrichment options were introduced through wellbeing programs and project-based learning modules. Exploring increased access to vocational electives and creative learning experiences.

### **STAFF FEEDBACK**

Feedback was gathered through professional dialogue, supervision, and culture-focused check-ins. Staff highlighted a strong commitment to the College's mission, while also identifying opportunities to strengthen internal clarity and cross-team collaboration.

**Response:** Internal planning processes were streamlined. Operational structures and role statements were updated and adjusted with clearer reporting lines and escalation paths for all key positions.

## STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATE 2024



## STUDENT NON-ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT

The College remains committed to balancing its duty of care with its mission to re-engage students identified as “at risk.” It aims to foster an environment that promotes consistent attendance and supports student success.

Attendance is closely monitored and recorded in line with the procedure detailed below:

1. Student attendance is recorded each school morning and maintained on the College’s online Student Information System *Seqta*.
2. If a student is absent from the College and the parents/carers have notified the College as to the reason why, administrative staff are to modify the attendance register to reflect the given reason.

3. If a child is absent from the College and a reason has not been supplied, then an automated text message notifying parents of student’s absence is sent to parents/caregivers. This text message prompts a response for parents to provide a return text to explain the absence.
4. If a student is absent from the College without a reason being supplied, the Caseworker is to attempt to contact the parents/carers within 5 days to understand why the student absence occurred.
5. If a student is absent from the College for 5 consecutive days, the student’s Caseworker will attempt to contact the parents/carers to ascertain a reason for the absence.



6. If contact with a student's parent or carer cannot be established after an absence of 5 consecutive days then the College will contact the parent/carers in writing to express their concern regarding the student's attendance and request the parent/carers contact the College to meet with the Wellbeing Coordinator
7. If the parent/carers does not respond to the written letter of concern and the student continues to be absent for a following 5 days a written letter of warning will be sent to the student's parent/carers outlining that the student's placement will be at risk if the student does not attend within the following fortnight.
8. After a further 10 school days of non-attendance, after the Warning Letter has been sent to the parent/carers, the student's file will be submitted to the Leadership team for discussion.
9. If it is assessed that the student should be withdrawn from the College, then a letter will be sent to the parent/carers outlining the Leadership team's actions. A Student Enrolment Unknown form will be submitted to [enrolments@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:enrolments@det.nsw.edu.au). A Risk of Significant Harm Report (Neglect) will be made if deemed appropriate by the student's Caseworker and the Wellbeing Coordinator.
10. If it is deemed necessary to withdraw a student from the College, it may be necessary to send a further letter to the parent/carers to outline some other organisations or educational environments that may be better placed to provide the student with the services they need.

## SUMMARY OF KEY POLICIES

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

### CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Sets out staff responsibilities for child protection and processes that staff must follow in relation to child protection matters.

### STAFF GRIEVANCE POLICY

Provides a fair, transparent, and consistent process for addressing workplace grievances for staff.

### STUDENT ENROLMENT POLICY

Outlines the framework and procedures MJC uses to manage student enrolments, ensuring compliance with relevant legislation.

### DISCIPLINE POLICY

Aims to clearly define expectations for student behaviour, acknowledging the complexity and diversity of our student cohort.

### COMMUNITY GRIEVANCE POLICY

Provides a fair, transparent, and consistent process for addressing grievances raised by or between members of the MJC community.

### ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Clearly outlines our commitment to identifying, addressing, and reducing bullying within the College community.

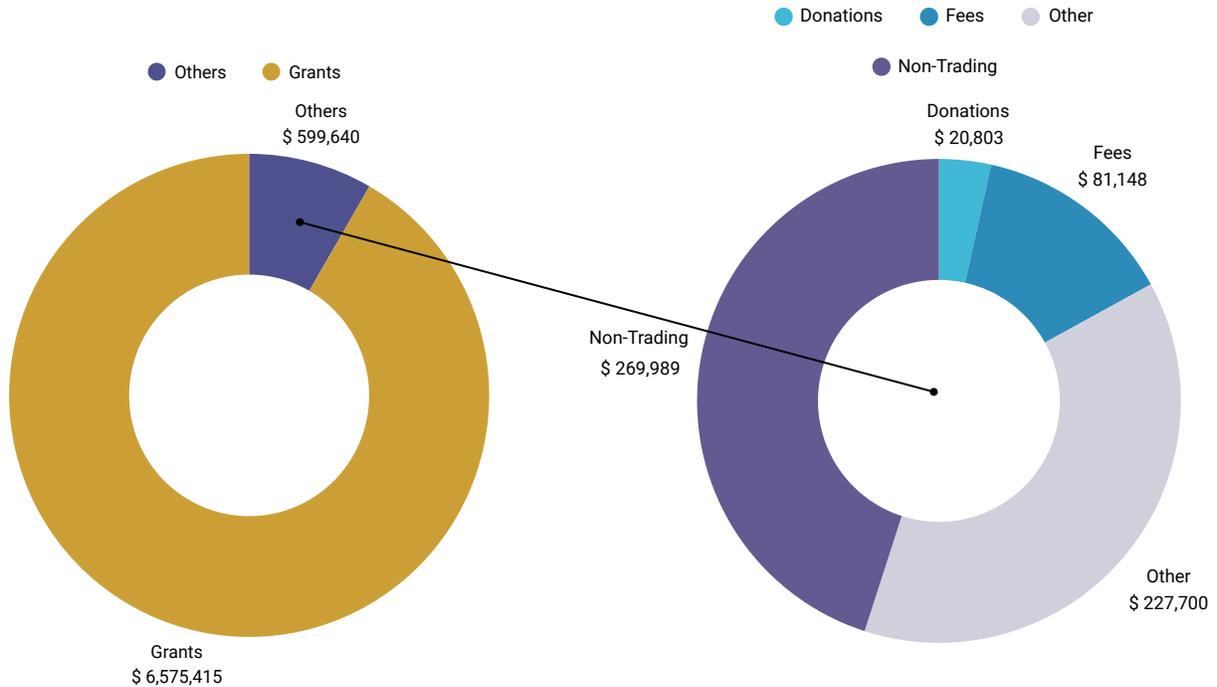
### CODE OF CONDUCT

Outlines the expected standards of behaviour for all members of the College community of MJC including parents, carers, guardians, extended family members, and other visitors.

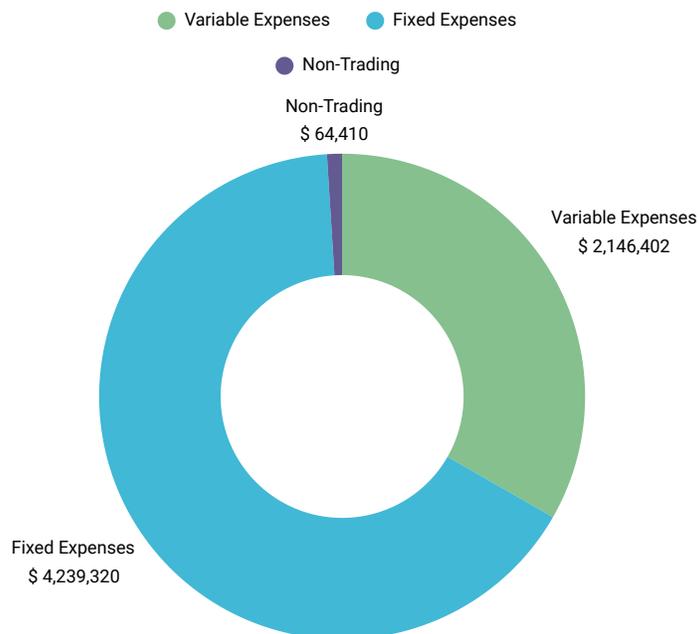
### STUDENT WELFARE POLICY

Outlines MJC's commitment to fostering student wellbeing, creating a supportive educational environment, and ensuring all students have the necessary support to complete their secondary education successfully.

## 2024 RECURRENT AND CAPITAL INCOME



## 2024 RECURRENT AND CAPITAL EXPENDITURE



## PRIORITIES FOR 2025

Margaret Jurd College continues to pursue a purposeful and values-driven strategy to meet the evolving needs of students, families, and communities. Our focus for 2025 is centred on capability uplift, mission-aligned growth, and systems that support long-term sustainability. Key priorities include:

### **STRENGTHEN EDUCATIONAL ACCESS AND READINESS FOR GROWTH**

Implement the next phase of our strategic expansion plan to support post-school transitions and increase student access across regions. This includes site activation planning and alignment of operations with future enrolment growth.

### **ENHANCE DIGITAL AND OPERATIONAL CAPABILITY**

Finalise the roll-out of cyber-resilient technologies and digital asset management tools across all campuses. Further investment in data systems will support secure operations, streamline enrolment workflows, and strengthen digital learning foundations.

### **DEEPEN STAKEHOLDER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Operationalise new stakeholder engagement platforms to enhance communication and collaboration across families, partner organisations, and allied services. Continued focus on partnerships will help expand wraparound supports for students.

### **BUILD ORGANISATIONAL STRENGTH AND STRATEGIC GOVERNANCE**

Embed College-wide feedback and culture data into workforce planning and leadership development initiatives. Strategic reviews of governance and performance frameworks will support measured growth, risk oversight, and mission achievement.





**SHORTLAND CAMPUS**

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NSW 2428, Australia  
Tel: 02 5582 5700

**CENTRAL OFFICE**

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