



Yirara
COLLEGE



School Performance Report
2016

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This report has been prepared in accordance with the Schools Assistance Act 2008, Education Act 2015 and Administrative guidelines as regulated by the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education, Training and Workplace Relations.

Part (1) Contextual Information about the College

(a) History of the College

Yirara College was established in September 1973 as a government secondary residential College specifically for traditionally-oriented Aboriginal students from remote communities in the Central Australian region. The main objective of the College was to provide Aboriginal youth with educational programs that advanced academic and life skills, and widened socio-cultural understanding and outlook to allow successful integration into mainstream Australian society.

In 1991 the Northern Territory government decided to pursue a privatisation option for Yirara similar to that pursued and enacted for Kormilda College in Darwin in 1988. Expressions of interests were sought from various organisations. A majority of Aboriginal people living in the feeder communities in Central Australia expressed strong support for Yirara College becoming a Christian college. They also expressed significant support for the proposal that the College be operated under the management of the Finke River Mission (FRM).

Later in 1991, negotiations began between FRM, Central Australian Aboriginal parent- family groups, the Northern Territory Government and the Federal Government with the aim to have FRM assuming control of the College under a suitable funding arrangement from the beginning of 1993. A compelling factor for FRM as it considered undertaking the operation of the College was that the change in status from government to non- government would allow a clearly expressed view of Aboriginal people to be given effect, namely, that Yirara be a Christian school where students learn about God. In the second half of 1992, FRM accepted the gift of the College from the NT government with the condition that Aboriginal people would be involved in its governance.

In 1993, Yirara College officially became a non-government provider of education. Its name was changed to *Yirara College of the Finke River Mission Inc* to reflect that it was now operating as a school under the auspices of the Lutheran Church of Australia. Since that time the College has continued to enjoy significant support from the Aboriginal families in Central Australia, and in more recent times, increasing support from communities in the Top End of the Northern Territory.

(b) Yirara College in 2016

Yirara College is a vibrant and busy community providing a wide range of academic, pathways, recreational, sporting, life-skills and socio-cultural immersion and development programs for students. These programs are run through the two educational divisions of the College: the *day school* and the *residential facility*. The academic and vocational training program is carried out predominantly in the day school, and the socio-cultural immersion and development program predominantly in the residential program, but other programs, e.g. life-skills and sport, operate across both divisions. Both programs seek to give effect to the vision of the College:

Empowering Indigenous youth through a Christ-centred education to re- imagine their future.

Developing students' English languages skills in oracy and literacy is a key objective of the College. Corollary objectives include providing students with experiences that develop their understanding of the socio-cultural context in which the English language operates, and their confidence in using spoken English in accordance with standard usage and the expected protocols of social exchange.

Although the importance of students developing competent English language skills and the associated socio-cultural understandings cannot be overstated, Yirara College nonetheless celebrates the fact that it is a cross-cultural community. Students come with their own world-views, Aboriginal language background and priorities. Sadly, many also come with the latent scars of complex trauma and grief arising from belonging to communities affected by the longitudinal loss or diminution of language, country and law. Accordingly, Yirara recognises the importance of respecting and affirming the identity of each student. Yirara is also fully cognisant of its responsibilities to Aboriginal families who entrust their children to the College's care for significant periods of time. The teaching of vernacular language, the observance of Aboriginal *mores* as guided by our parent-reference group (e.g. separation of gender groups in particular contexts), assisting students to attend funerals and other significant social and cultural events during Term time, valuing regular communication with families as partners in education, are some ways in which the College affirms the identity of its students and seeks to honour the trust families have placed in the College. But beyond this, the majority of our students come from communities where Christian missionaries have worked. And so it is especially in the context of a shared faith in Jesus Christ that staff and students come together in a united way each day at our morning chapel service to proclaim that we are "One Family, God's Family" (*school motto*).

The majority of students come to Yirara with low-level achievement in the core areas of literacy and numeracy learning. The College seeks to accelerate the learning of all students by providing suitably scaffolded teaching and learning programs for students to the Year 12 level. Students whose levels of attainment preclude them from mainstream senior secondary studies are offered

a rich program of integrated learning and Vocational Education and Training in which their literacy and numeracy learning is embedded in authentic contexts. These learning experiences then become possible pathways for students to move into employment. The College's Pathways program individually case manages and monitors students as they transition from school to employment.

Yirara College is a 24 hour, 7 days-a-week boarding school. The lights never go off during term time. Yirara is blessed with a highly dedicated and committed staff, many of whom feel called to work in this context. There are significant challenges for all staff in meeting the diverse needs of our students, and our efforts must be combined and supportive of each other if our students are to be well served. With challenge comes reward, and working at Yirara is truly a rewarding experience. The relational nature of our students and their families leaves a lasting impression on all who work at the College. To work with Aboriginal students, our first Australian brothers and sisters, is in the end, the work of great privilege. May God continue to bless the students and staff of the College, and the families who entrust their children to our care and safe-keeping.

Part (2) Teacher Standards and Qualifications

All staff hold current Working With Children Clearance (“Ochre”) Cards and teaching staff are registered with the Northern Territory Teacher Registration Board. All staff receive Professional Development as required by Lutheran Education Australia, the Lutheran Schools Association (LSA) and the Northern Territory Teacher Registration Board. This includes continually updating the knowledge and skills of teachers for Educational and Spiritual enrichment. Additional Professional Development is offered to staff to meet the needs of the College’s Strategic Plan with a particular emphasis on Cultural Orientation and developing understanding of how to care and engage young people suffering from the effects of complex grief and complex trauma.

The qualifications of Yirara’s teaching staff are on the table on the following page.

Chris Altus	D Teaching			
Beverley Angeles	D Teaching			
Roger Ashcroft	B Education			
Sltinder bahia	B Education			
Sheril Botha	H Dip Edu			
Steve Carli-Seebohm	B Education			
Nick deTarczynski	M Teaching			
Roxanne Egan	B Education			
Ralph Folds	B Education			
Owen Gale	Grad Dip Teaching	B Applied Science		
Selwyn Gilmore	B Arts	Dip Ed English		
Kylie Hoff	B Education	BA Arts		
Michael Jantzen	B Education	Dip Teaching		
Rachel McKenzie	BA Teaching			
Kairo McLean	Dip Education			
Steve McMahon	Dip Education			
Greg Miller	B Education	Bachelor Digital Media		
Lisa Newman	BSc	BScEd		
Viv Prebble	B Teaching & Learning			
Kymberley Rayner	B Education			
Olivia Rose	B Teaching	B Arts		
Katharine Smith	B Arts/Education	B Design		
Eric Thiel	B Education	Diploma of Theology		
Lauren Wapling	Grad Dip Ed	B Arts		
Deborah Waudby	BA Dip Edu	Grad Christian Education		

Part (3) Workforce Composition

Staff details as at the 2016 Commonwealth Census were as follows:

Teaching Staff	Full-time	Part-time FTE	Total
Male	10	0.4	10.4
Female	12	0.9	12.9
Total Full-time Equivalent	22	1.3	23.3

Non-Teaching Staff	Full-time	Part-time FTE	Total
Male	26	0.9	26.9
Female	22	10.5	32.5
Total Full-time Equivalent	48	11.4	59.4

The above includes nine indigenous staff.

Part (4) Student Attendance

Student attendance as per the 2016 DEEWR collection was as follows:

ALICE SPRINGS CAMPUS

Rates of Attendance (Males)	% 2016
Year 7	48
Year 8	55
Year 9	60
Year 10	54
Year 11	61
Year 12	43
Total Average Attendance	52

Rates of Attendance (Females)	% 2016
Year 7	48
Year 8	38
Year 9	46
Year 10	66
Year 11	57
Year 12	49
Total Average Attendance	55

KINTORE CAMPUS

Rates of Attendance (Males)	% 2016
Year 7	11
Year 8	29
Year 9	14
Year 10	6
Total Average Attendance	21

Rates of Attendance (Females)	% 2016
Year 7	39
Year 8	77
Year 9	23
Year 10	35
Total Average Attendance	40

Procedure for management of non-attendance at Kintore

Parents are contacted by the school to confirm the reason for non-attendance on the days of absence. (Kintore campus) All absences are documented in our electronic student administration system (QUAD) and patterns of non-attendance may be followed up directly with parents/carers. Total days absent are recorded on student reports.

Part (5) Student outcomes in standardised national literacy and numeracy testing.

Academic Performance

Yirara College draws students from remote locations across the Northern Territory and over the border into Western Australia, South Australian and Queensland. The majority of students entering Yirara have low levels of oracy and literacy in Standard Australian English, and generally operate at well below their age-for-grade level in numeracy. All students have English as a second or third language, and worldviews predominantly shaped by community life and the distorted images of the Western world as portrayed through various electronic media. Accordingly there are significant challenges for students when it comes to knowing how to respond to the NAPLAN testing instrument, especially as they possess limited understanding of the mainstream socio-cultural assumptions implicit in many of the questions. Nevertheless, students do move ahead in their literacy and numeracy development when they stay at Yirara for a period of time, but as is common for EAL/D students, a plateau effect may occur once students are challenged to move beyond the rudiments of literacy and numeracy - Year 5 and beyond - and are asked to engage in tasks requiring higher levels of English comprehension. Low-level competency in English oracy also contributes significantly to the plateau effect.

Not surprisingly, the strongly EAL/D background of our students is reflected in the College's 2016 NAPLAN results when measured against mainstream schools. However, they are similar to schools serving students from statistically similar backgrounds. In comparison to 2015 where most year 7 students fell below in Reading, Writing, Spelling and Grammar, in 2016 the average was close to similar schools. Year 9 student average improved in spelling, grammar and punctuation. It is universally known that EAL/D students are up to 5 to 7 years behind their first-language speaking counterparts.

YIRARA COLLEGE NAPLAN 2015

	Reading		Persuasive Writing		Spelling		Grammar and Punctuation		Numeracy	
Year 7	374 353 - 396		238 214 - 262		374 352 - 396		294 269 - 318		437 417 - 458	
	SIM 423 411 - 434	ALL 546	SIM 291 278 - 304	ALL 511	SIM 393 380 - 405	ALL 547	SIM 361 347 - 374	ALL 541	SIM 431 419 - 443	ALL 543
	430 407 - 453		296 269 - 324		402 379 - 425		352 329 - 376		487 467 - 508	
Year 9	SIM 443 427 - 460	ALL 580	SIM 299 278 - 321	ALL 547	SIM 418 400 - 436	ALL 583	SIM 387 368 - 405	ALL 568	SIM 487 471 - 504	ALL 592

How to interpret this chart

SIM schools serving students from statistically similar backgrounds
ALL Australian schools' average
 Student population below reporting threshold
 Year level not tested

Selected school's average is

 substantially above
 above
 close to
 below
 substantially below

- average of schools serving students from statistically similar socio-educational backgrounds (SIM box)
- average of all Australian schools (ALL box)

YIRARA COLLEGE NAPLAN 2016

	Reading		Writing		Spelling		Grammar and Punctuation		Numeracy	
Year 7	252 234 - 270		215 194 - 235		352 333 - 371		268 248 - 289		320 302 - 337	
	SIM 248 230 - 266	ALL 541	SIM 215 195 - 235	ALL 515	SIM 362 333 - 370	ALL 543	SIM 265 244 - 285	ALL 540	SIM 317 300 - 335	ALL 550
	278 260 - 295		200 178 - 221		383 365 - 401		276 258 - 295		347 330 - 363	
Year 9	SIM 275 259 - 291	ALL 581	SIM 202 181 - 224	ALL 549	SIM 383 365 - 401	ALL 580	SIM 272 253 - 290	ALL 569	SIM 349 333 - 364	ALL 589

How to interpret this chart

SIM schools serving students from statistically similar backgrounds
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Part (6) Parent, Student and Teacher satisfaction with the school

In 2009, Lutheran Education Australia initiated the Better Schools Project (BSP), providing staff, students and families with the opportunity to provide feedback regarding various aspects of school life. In 2011, Lutheran Education Australia conducted this survey again. Only staff data was collected in 2009, but in 2011, both staff and student data were collected. Unfortunately, because of our parents' location in remote communities, logistical issues overcame our ability to collect data from this source.

The journey of change has continued in 2016, with the College maintaining a strong focus on developing staff knowledge and awareness of the backgrounds of its students; with a focus on understanding the impact on young people growing up in communities suffering the inter-generational effects of complex grief and complex trauma. Shifts in thinking and practice were increasingly evident as the year progressed, and were expressed in a college-wide focus giving primacy to creating environments to “engage students in learning” over environments designed simply to “manage student behaviour”.

The Clontarf Academy program continues to be a strong part of the fella's community at the college. Student involvement with Clontarf is not only sport but also social and emotional well-being and support in the academic space. Yirara College's application for funding for an academy for Girls was successful in 2015 and the academy was opened early 2016. The Girls Academy have successfully engaged Yirara female students in life skill activities, social, emotional and well-being programs and through Red Dust role models produced a music film clip called 'Hey Sister'.

Social media continues to play a developing role in Yirara College community communication.

Further details on how the College regularly engages with its parent community for feedback and guidance are provided below.

Governing Council

An important element in the College's relationship with its feeder communities is parent participation in the Governing Council. This body is the major conduit by which the views of parents are reflected in the policies and practices of the College. In 2016, the Governing Council consisted of Aboriginal leaders from remote communities as diverse as Robinson River, Titjikala, Hermannsburg, Haasts Bluff, Areyonga, Mt Leibig and Papunya.

In 2016, the Governing Council met on two occasions. The Chair of the Governing Council in 2016 was Ms Lisa Sharman from Titjikala.

The College listens carefully when its Governing Council speaks, and the views and attitudes of the Governing Council are a constant reference point for the College in making important decisions regarding the direction of the College, and its programs and practices.

Community Liaison Office

In 2016, the Community Liaison Office of the College continued to be the significant continuous connection of the College to the families of our students. The role of this Office, consisting of three full-time CLOs, a full-time Administration Support Officer and a Director whose job it is to recruit students, speak with parents about how their children are faring at Yirara, conduct community meetings, deal with student management issues, manage homesickness and organise the incoming and outgoing travel arrangements required to get students to and from the College. Much of the CLOs' time is spent "on the road", regularly travelling to the disparate feeder communities to talk with families about College programs and student welfare issues.

Priming

At the beginning of some Terms, the residential facility staff travel to the closer communities to Yirara to "prime" (help prepare) students in readiness for their return to Yirara and to meet their family members. Priming creates another important means by which community members can meet and engage with the staff of the College, and build relationships of trust and mutual respect. Priming is also as valuable cultural professional development activity, especially for staff members who have not lived in or previously visited remote communities.

Part (7) Secondary Education

- a. Yirara College began to focus on potential VET and training in a trade in 2015. Throughout 2016, 105 students participated in VET related courses.
- b. We successfully sought training in a trade for 2 students for 2016.
- c. Several students worked towards a year 12 certificate in 2015 and continued in 2016.
- d. One female student Kaitlin Armstrong completed her Year 12 certificate in 2016.

Part (8) School Income broken down by funding source

The below pie chart shows the College's income in 2016 broken down by funding source.

The College does not charge school fees but families are nonetheless called upon to contribute towards specific student activities (e.g. excursions and camps) from time to time.

Yirara College School Income by Funding Source 2016

