Our school at a glance

Students
Barwon Learning Centre (BLC) is a School for Specific Purposes (SSP) designated to provide educational programs for students in Years 2 – 8. BLC caters for students who are identified by the Regional Placement Panel (RPP), as having significant behavioural challenges that cannot be met through a traditional school setting. We are committed to providing a balanced and meaningful approach to educational programs with particular focus on literacy and numeracy, as well as meeting the personal, social and cultural needs of all students.

Staff
In 2013 our staff included a Principal, Relieving Assistant Principal, three classroom teachers, three School Learning Support Officers, an Aboriginal Education Officer, an Aboriginal School learning Support Officer and a School Administrative Manager. All teaching staff meet the professional requirements for teaching in NSW public schools.

Significant programs and initiatives
Barwon Learning Centre participated in a range of educational programs and initiatives in 2013. A significant focus at B.L.C continues to be evolving a deepening understanding of Intergenerational Trauma since Invasion and Healing.

“The theory of intergenerational transmission of trauma, the findings of major reports like ‘Bringing them Home’ the daily realities of abuse, suicide, mental illness, alcohol and substance abuse and sky rocketing incarceration rates among Indigenous communities, all point to the imperative for community wide healing. All Indigenous peoples have been touched by trauma in some way. All Indigenous peoples deserve the opportunity to work through trauma to heal” (Social Justice Report, 2008, Australian Human Rights Commission)

As well as the ‘Educare’ program, which has proved significant in improving attendance at B.L.C, a number of other significant programs and initiatives were implemented:-

- Closing the Gap in Literacy and Numeracy
- ‘Fun Safety and Respect’ Day
- Drum Beat
- Aboriginal Artist in Residence
- Joint initiative with Catchment Management on ‘Seed Gathering, Identification and Propagation.’

Student achievement in 2013
Students at Barwon Learning Centre had significant gains in attendance, and improvement in literacy and numeracy. Attendance data reveals an attendance rate of 82.03%. Whilst the target of 88% was not achieved this still shows significant improvement on 2011 data of 50%. A number of students placed at B.L.C in this cohort had chronic non-attendance prior to placement. All students at B.L.C showed significant gains in literacy and numeracy during their placement.

Messages

Principal’s message

Acknowledgement of Country
We, the staff of Barwon Learning Centre acknowledge the continual custodianship of the land, the waterways and the North West Plains by our Elders and community members.

We thank and pay respect to our Elders and community members who are the keepers of our tradition, cultures and lore and acknowledge our children who are our future leaders.

2013 has been a year of significant positive change at Barwon Learning Centre. The Barwon
Team are passionately committed to having students attend regularly, engage with the diverse curriculum offered, and rebond with their schooling. A reparative approach is taken, and students are supported to become problem solvers in interpersonal disputes.

Parents and caregivers are genuinely valued as equal partners in the child’s education. It has been exciting watching the involvement of all our parents and families at significant school events.

There is genuine involvement of parents and caregivers in the development of each student’s personalized learning plan. Parents report that they appreciate the strength based approach taken to supporting each student.

The continued association of B.L.C. and Emeritus Professor Judy Atkinson has enabled programs to be made in addressing trauma and grief at an individual, family and community level.

Friday ‘Fun, Safety and Respect Days’ have been carefully planned to support the development of pro-social skills. The partnership with Miyay Birray has been crucial to this initiative.

I appreciate the flexibility, dedication and professionalism of the entire school staff in embracing reparative methods. I also respect the collegiality and cohesion of the Barwon Team.

At the 2013 Moree Reconciliation Awards, I was honoured and humbled to be chosen as ‘Non Aboriginal Elder of the Year’. Uncle Norm Sampson was runner up as ‘Aboriginal Elder of the Year’, and Mrs Von Duncan also had the honour of a nomination.

It is a privilege to work with children, and to support each student to reach their potential.

I certify that the information in this report is the result of a rigorous school self-evaluation process and is a balanced and genuine account of the school’s achievement and areas for development.

Margaret Hayes
Principal 2013.

Parent representative’s message

*Barwon Learning Centre (Deadly)*

Seen through the eyes of a family member of children who have attended the school. Thomas Lang Morely is my second grandson to attend Barwon L.C., starting April 2013.

B.L.C is truly a wonderful school for children who have had difficulties in main stream schools, mainly due to the high challenges that they have to face in their everyday life. The thing that impressed me most about B.L.C is the love and compassion that is given to each individual child by all staff members.

Every Monday morning B.L.C staff cook up a big breakfast for the children, staff members, family members and friends. What a great way to start the week. We all sit around the table and talk together, conversations about what at we did on the weekend, whose team won the footy and other interesting topics kids may wish to share. By the time breakfast is over everyone is in great spirits and ready for the week at school.

Children can also help themselves to breakfast every other morning if needed. Children love the fact that they don’t have to wear uniforms and this takes the pressure off family members at home.
I am very impressed with the way each classroom is set up. I have never seen such beautiful rooms as at B.L.C. The rooms are set up and filled with beautiful decorated children’s photos, colourful attractive learning aids and resources. The children’s desk is a special place set out with much pride. The whole room has a sense of warmth and happy to be there feeling.

The children soon adjust to the B.L.C. and are so pleased to be there that some children have a 100% attendance or near perfect. My Tom’s education has improved out of sight since he has started and it is the first time Tom was happy to go to school. The staff are to be highly commended on the way they guide our children’s behaviour and teach them about respect and putting their handbrakes on, so that they can settle into a normal classroom.

On the 5th November 2013 Thomas had a serious motor bike accident and was air lifted to John Hunter Hospital. The love and support by all staff members and well wishes and letters from Tom’s school mates has played a big part in Tom’s recovery. The best thing happened on presentation day when the staff got together with Tom’s school room at John Hunter and everyone got to see the presentation via satellite and with Tom as well.(Deadly) This was a first for John Hunter and B.L.C has paved the way for other schools to face page their sick students. Tom couldn’t stop smiling.

I must give Aunt Marg a big thank you as Barwon Learning Centre has gone ahead in leaps and bounds since her arrival. Also a big thank you for your support to the Moree Community, a big thank you to all staff members for your passion, commitment and love for our children, for turning negatives into positives and for giving all our kids a sense of self-worth and pride.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Viv McCosker.

Grandparent.

Student representative’s message

I have enjoyed my time at Barwon. It is the best school. We learned a lot of new things and we played good games, and had fun going to places like the pool. We learned to use our personal hand-brakes and stay inside of our personal bubbles and to use our mouth zipper’s to not talk out of turn. Monday mornings were the best because we started the new week with a big breakfast which was a great way to start the week.

I learnt a lot in my time at Barwon and would like to thank all the staff for how they helped me learn.

Patricia Binion.

Student Yr 6.
School context

Student information
It is a requirement that the reporting of information for all students must be consistent with privacy and personal information policies.

Student enrolment profile
In 2013 students were organized into three classes based on their ages and needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>2011</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
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</table>

Student attendance profile
Most students who participated in the Barwon Learning Centre program have demonstrated significant increases in their individual attendance rate.

Students referred to Barwon often had significant absences from schooling prior to attending BLC. Throughout 2013, a range of new initiatives targeting attendance were introduced, with significant improvement in attendance and subsequent learning engagement.

Management of non-attendance
It is a major focus of BLC to increase the attendance of students participating in the program. As placement is meant to be a short term intervention, it is vital that students attend daily to maximise the benefit of their placement at BLC. Barwon Learning Centre implements a range of strategies for students who are not regularly attending the program.

Post-BLC destinations
During 2013 two year 6 students were supported to attend Kirinari Aboriginal Hostel and Gymea High School. Family placement breakdowns saw some students relocated to other areas.

8 students were retained at B.L.C for the start of the 2014 school year, as it was felt they would benefit from the extra support offered.

Staff information
Commencing her appointment in Term 2 2012, Margaret Hayes continued as Principal in 2013.

Mr. Steven Sampson relieved as Assistant Principal at the beginning of Term 3, 2012, and also continued in this position in 2013.

In Term 3 and 4, Ms Elizabeth Murdoch travelled overseas teaching in London schools. During her absence, the classroom position was capably filled by Ms Ginger O’Brien, a recent graduate of Southern Cross University. Ms Kylie Smith, has been a classroom teacher at B.L.C since Term 2, 2012.

BLC has a relieving Aboriginal Assistant Principal and four Aboriginal Support Staff who proudly identify and are accepted as being Aboriginal.

National Partnership funding allowed the employment of another Aboriginal support
worker, who combined the roles of community artist with literacy and numeracy support.

**Staff establishment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Principal(s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal(s)</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>2.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Emotional Disabilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Mild Intellectual Disabilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Reading Recovery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Teacher Learning Assistance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Librarian</td>
<td>0.368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of ESL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsellor</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Administrative &amp; Support Staff</td>
<td>5.326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>10.114</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Staff retention**

The principal’s position has been filled since Term 2, 2012. All School Learning Support Officer positions are permanent.

**Teacher qualifications**

All teaching staff meet the professional requirements for teaching in NSW public schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>% of staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree or Diploma</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>0</td>
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**Financial summary**

This summary covers funds for operating costs and does not involve expenditure areas such as permanent salaries, building and major maintenance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of financial summary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward</td>
<td>171,404.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
<td>44,238.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>51,627.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
<td>156.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>5,378.96</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trust receipts</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canteen</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total income</strong></td>
<td>272,805.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Expenditure</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching &amp; learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key learning areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excursions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extracurricular dissections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training &amp; development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual relief teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration &amp; office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-operated canteen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust accounts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total expenditure</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balance carried forward</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A full copy of the school’s 2013 financial statement is available at the school. Further details concerning the financial statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

**School performance 2013**

BLC continued its focus on improving literacy and numeracy skills of students in 2013 as well as better equipping students to access the curriculum in a mainstream school environment.

**Achievements**

**Arts**

BLC has continued with its Artist in residence program in 2013. A beautification project centred on a mural at the school entrance, involving students at Barwon being mentored and supervised to add their own input to this distinctive project.
**Sporting activities**

Barwon Learning Centre continues to ensure all students are provided with the opportunity to actively participate in a range of meaningful activities. The benefits of increased confidence and enhanced fitness through participation in sport are reflected in student learning within the classroom.

Barwon promotes an active lifestyle, 2-8 through a daily fitness and skills program as well as promoting more formal sports events.

As always the focus for our sporting progress was on enjoying competition, learning new skills and working together as a team.

Combined school carnivals for cross country, swimming and athletics were successfully run during the year with a large contingent of Barwon students attending zone trials as a result of their strong performances at these carnivals.

Students represented the school at zone and regional sporting events. The Open Boys Rugby League team with the combination of Brewarrina Central School attended the Ricky Walford Shield in Walgett. Both combined schools demonstrated fantastic sportsmanship and were commended on their impressive performances throughout the day.

Barwon also benefited in the gymnastics department by a donation of two Olympic size trampolines by Mrs Tracie Lane and the Moree Gymnastic Club.

Barwon played host to several Rugby League Idols who gave words of encouragement and wisdom. That “You can be what you want to be as long as you believe in yourself”.

6
These idols were the Moree Boomerangs 1st Grade side along with coach Chris Binge, Nathan Blacklock, former NRL St George ‘Dragon’s’ player and Chris and Caleb Binge two rising stars of today who are with the Gold Coast Titans and Brisbane Broncos Under 20’s squad.

Highlights of Barwon Learning Centre Sports in 2013 include:

- Athletics
- Rugby League
- Indigenous games
- Intensive Swimming School Term 4

Throughout the year students representing B.L.C. demonstrated outstanding sportsmanship and skill. They competed in the spirit of the game and represented their school with pride.

Other

Respect and Responsibility

BLC students are supported to gain confidence in their ability to learn and take charge of their own behaviour. They also learn to become more responsible for and respectful of themselves, and others in their different environments.

Our students learn from the modelling of all staff, and our school’s diverse program of engagement, particularly our weekly, ‘Fun, Safety and Respect’ program. Students are taught to “pull on their personal handbrakes” and “invisible mouth zippers.”

Environmental Education

Environmental education was offered as a Monday afternoon interest elective and was a popular choice with students. Part of the activities centred around the Calm Garden where students were taught general gardening skills such as planting, watering and weeding of the garden.

Academic

BLC supported eligible students to sit NAPLAN Tests in their base school. Due to the small cohort of students at Barwon Learning Centre privacy protocols prevent disclosure of specific student data from the NAPLAN Tests.

Significant programs and initiatives

Attendance and the implementation of the ‘Educare’ model to improve attendance

Improving attendance was identified as a primary means to positively impact behavioural outcomes. Traditional consequence based models of behaviour management meant that children were being regularly sent home if their behaviour escalated past a point of no return and then consequences had to be implemented in order for the model to retain its legitimacy. The consequence based model resulted in the students most needing support being sent away and not being able to positively benefit from the school’s education programs in place. Once the ‘educare’ model with its reparative focus was
implemented and student’s poor behaviour acknowledged as a cry for help, the threat of consequences was replaced with words of care and understanding. This change in behaviour management strategy led to a dramatic improvement of attendance, which far surpassed the targets previously set for the school.

Closing the Gap in Literacy and Numeracy

Closing the Gap in Literacy and Numeracy is a program that helps engage students and improve their learning outcomes. It uses standardised tests to benchmark improvements in student outcomes.

Healing modalities Program

The healing modalities program was developed in 2013 in acknowledgement of the professional development of all staff conducted by Emeritus Professor Judy Atkinson, who ran multiple professional development workshops for staff, caregivers and community members, focusing on intergenerational trauma and healing. Classroom teacher Kylie Smith developed this program, further embedding the educare concept and recognising that children at Barwon Learning Centre are experiencing trauma.

The healing modalities program was embedded into daily practice and included the following modes that are aligned with the ‘We Al-li’ cultural tools for healing: music, dance, art, body work, theatre, and nature discovery.

The culturally safe, practical delivery in response to working with developmental trauma in children, within a complex trauma environment was trialled, recognising the strengths of an educare model in working with children and their families and being able to respond with tools for healing childhood trauma within the educational setting.

During 2013 the program was implemented and the results were life changing. Parents and caregivers noticed the change in their children and comments from their children included:

Music- ‘I really like drumming because it makes me feel really calm. I can hit the drum hard and it makes me feel better.’

Dance- ‘I really like dancing because I can feel the music inside me, from my head to my toes.’

Art- ‘I really like art because I can draw what I feel. There isn’t any mistakes in art.’

Theatre- ‘I really like theatre because I get to be different characters and act different to me. It makes me feel different and is really fun.’

Nature Discovery- ‘I really like nature discovery because I love going outside and learning new things.’

Body Work- ‘I like body work because it makes me feel calm and safe.’

The healing modalities program was particularly beneficial at Barwon Learning Centre because the program is student centred. The most powerful change throughout the program was the children’s engagement and improved well-being.
were not as angry and they had a better sense of belonging and who they are as a person.

Miss Kylie’s Classroom

Miss Kylie’s classroom recorded some remarkable achievements during 2013. Classroom teacher Kylie Smith partnered with Student Learning Support Officer (SLSO) Dawn Barlow, worked extremely hard to create the perfect learning environment for their class of seven cherubs.

The calmer classroom document, written by the Child Safety Commissioner-promoting the safety and wellbeing of children became the building blocks to an evolution of teaching and learning.

Together with professional learning from Emeritus Professor Judy Atkinson, and JudyKaye Goomaroi a Trauma-Informed pedagogy and practice was embedded into daily curriculum in literacy, numeracy and the healing modalities.

Connected as a family network, the cherub’s assessment data recorded up to 500% improvement in numeracy and 350% improvement in literacy.

This success was underlined with the embedded Trauma-Informed pedagogy and practice that was daily practice in the classroom.

During 2013, Miss Kylie’s class had many adventures. In term 1 they went all around Australia, using the children’s book ‘Are we there yet?’ written by Alison Lester as the focus for learning. The classroom was set up with a camping theme to engage all learners. Term 2 was a new adventure of ‘mini-beasts’.

The classroom changed into bug catchers and binoculars for learning. Term 3 started a new adventure of ‘Look how much we have grown.’ The cherubs were engaged in learning out on country and growing fresh fruits and vegetables to take home and share with their families. Term 4 the rocket launched the classroom into ‘Out in Space’. The classroom was transformed into a rich learning environment for learning all about space, even a field trip to the moon.
All students were supported in literacy and numeracy with their own Personalised Learning and Support Plan (PLSP). This PLSP is a working document, where student achievement is documented and recorded along the continuum for literacy and numeracy.

The students each have their own individual literacy and numeracy contracts with different activities to complete each day, which is then highlighted on their contracts to track their progress.

The individual literacy contracts included speaking and listening, writing and representing, handwriting and using digital technologies, reading and viewing, spelling, and grammar, punctuation and vocabulary. The activities are tailored to meet the needs of each student within the class.

The individual numeracy contracts included Targeted Early Numeracy (TEN) games, content for the particular maths strand for that week and counting activities to engage students in mathematics.

The healing modalities program was implemented into the afternoon session where students participated in the six healing modalities: art, dance, music, theatre, nature discovery, and body work.

**Miss Libby’s Classroom**

Miss Libby’s classroom made some significant changes in 2013. Not only did we have the first all-girls classroom we recorded some remarkable academic achievements. Classroom teacher Elizabeth Murdoch partnered with Student Learning Support Officer (SLSO) Gregory ‘Pop’ Sampson worked extremely hard to create a safe and positive working environment for the girls.
The calmer classroom document, written by the Child Safety Commissioner- promoting the safety and well being of children became the foundation to an evolution of teaching and learning. Together with professional learning from Emiritus professor Judy Atkinson and JudyKaye Goomaroi a Trauma-Informed pedagogy and practice was embedded into every aspect of our curriculum including Literacy, Numeracy and Healing Modalities. Providing the girls with a safe and positive environment, the data recorded a significant increase in their literacy and numeracy scores above the school’s expected targets for improvement.

The World of Roald Dahl opened the girls up to a sense of humour they were unaware of and sent them on adventures through reading. These units of work significantly increased Literacy skills as well as their maturity towards each other and their drive to become successful.

In term 3 the class welcomed a new teacher Miss Ginger who took over from Miss Libby while she was away. Throughout this term the girls discovered more about themselves through Girlosophy a unit created to enhance the girls self esteem and confidence. Within this unit the girls discovered the world of craft, make up, nail art, yoga and modelling.

In term 4, we entered the world of Out in Space where the classroom was turned into an engaging learning environment for all learners.

Throughout the year, the girls were given many opportunities to access and perform in a variety of activities within the community including the Careers Expo, meeting Roger Knox, Play Oz Tag with Moree and the surrounding communities as well as performing in the Moree Talent Show. The girls progressed well in their behaviour, leadership and maturity throughout the year.

All students were supported in literacy and numeracy with their own Personalised Learning and Support Plan (PLSP). The PLSP is a working document, where student achievement is documented and recorded along the continuum for literacy and numeracy.

During 2013, Miss Libby’s class had many learning adventures. In term 1 they went on a trip around Australia using the children’s book ‘Are We There Yet?’ by Alison Lester as the focus of their learning. The classroom was set up as a beach theme with bright colours and relevant stimulus material to engage all learners.

In term 2 we entered the world of Roald Dahl and immersed ourselves into the movie Rabbit Proof Fence. Our classroom was filled with Australian Aboriginal stories, artworks and photos as we learnt about the history of our Indigenous peoples. Whilst some of it was confronting we learnt more about our culture and what our ancestors had been through and the stories they now tell about their lives. Throughout researching and learning about Rabbit Proof Fence the girls were able to communicate to each other how they would feel in this situation and their feelings of safety in the classroom and school environment as well as the community.
Each student has their own individual literacy contracts with different activities to complete each day, which is then highlighted on their contracts to track their progress.

The individual literacy contracts included speaking and listening, writing and representing handwriting and using digital technologies, reading and viewing, spelling and grammar, punctuation and vocabulary. These activities were differentiated to meet the needs of all students.

Numeracy included a variety of activities including numeracy games, using technology, hands on activities as well as writing equations, times tables and algorithms.

The Healing Modalities program was introduced in Semester 2 and implemented in the afternoon sessions where students participated in six healing modalities: art, dance, music, theatre, nature discovery and body work.

Uncle Steve’s Classroom

Stage 2 and 3 boys were well supported in literacy and numeracy with their own Personalised Learning Support Plan (PLSP). Along with their own individualised learning contract and strong support from our SLSO’s “School Learning Support Officer”, all goals and targets were met.

As a class we studied the Solar System which really engaged the boy’s group as they showed a great interest and understanding of this unit.
Fun, Safety and Respect Program

BLC is a place for TLC (Tender Loving Care). We have incorporated a fun day and social skills program to connect and engage students and community into our school. The ‘Fun, Safety and Respect’ Program revolves around linking students to activities typically not on offer in a traditional school environment.

The basic difference with this program is that students are not denied entry to any of these special activities based on previous behaviour.

The purpose of the ‘Fun, Safety and Respect’ days is to help bond the students to the school in a positive way. Behaviour is subtly influenced by observing the calm attitudes their teaching staff constantly model.

Students are then better equipped to participate productively in normal learning activities as a result of their normalised experiences during each and every ‘Fun Safety and Respect’ day.

Transition Programs

Implemented in 2012, the Transition Program continued in 2013. The goal of the program is to continually return the student to their base school, supported by BLC staff, until they are ready to leave Barwon and be integrated back into their home school.

Drum Beat

Students discovered the world of DJEMBE (Drum Beat) in early 2012. The program continued in 2013. The benefits of DJEMBE are that as a group, students learn the foundations of team work, respect for themselves and others as well as demonstrating confidence and creativity without judgment.

Aboriginal education

The Barwon Learning Centre has strived to implement the recommendations of The National Aboriginal Education and Training Policy - Turning Policy into Action. The school continues to use this policy directive to adapt existing practice by embedding Aboriginal perspectives and incorporating pedagogies suitable for Aboriginal students into all Key Learning Areas.
The school is focused on fostering strong links between itself and the local community by being the hub around which many aspects of local lived experience connects to the school. The school actively works with the following programs, initiatives and organisations:

- Aboriginal Teaching and Learning Professional Development
- Miyay Birray Youth Services Inc
- Moree Community Support Services
- Moree Catchment Management Authority, Border Rivers-Gwydir
- Bush Tucker Program
- Pius X Aboriginal Medical Centre Hearing Program
- Kamilaroi Language Program
- Northcott, Northern NSW Region Moree-Supporting Choice & Opportunity
- NAIDOC Day – We Value the Vision.
- Sorry Day Commissions
- Apology Anniversary
- Aboriginal Artist In Residence
- Reconciliation Week

Closing the Gap in Literacy and Numeracy

Closing the Gap in Literacy and Numeracy is a program that has helped students improve on their learning outcomes. The program gives the whole school the opportunity to:

- Develop a Professional Learning Program supported with Regional Consultants

ensuring Aboriginal perspectives are being developed in teaching programs

- Develop a Professional Learning Program in the delivery of teaching and learning in numeracy
- Utilise a SMART board in every classroom and provide every student with a computer to enhance the use of technology in the classroom

Aboriginal Teaching and Learning Professional Development

The Barwon Learning Centre staff and community members have welcomed the professional development of this program. Some of the participating parents and community members have also volunteered to attend the courses offered at Barwon Learning Centre.

- Develop a Professional Teaching and Learning program to support teachers to incorporate pedagogies for Aboriginal students to engage in the classroom
- Increased parent and community engagement through working with Associate Professor Judy Atkinson utilizing the Intergenerational Trauma, and Healing Program

Community Partnerships

Working with partnerships in the community and building relationships with the wider community have been a priority in building capacity in and around our school life.

Miyay Birray Youth Services Inc

Miyay Birray Youth Services Inc have been a strong partner in driving our ‘Fun, Safety and Respect’ Program. The Youth Service has
provided support and transport in this program. Our ‘Fun, Safety and Respect’ day programs would not have been as successful without the support their staff and transport provided.

Miyay Birray Youth Services Inc:-
- Provides transport at an affordable rate
- Provides human support on outings
- Helps foster better relationships with children & young people
- Provides a range of holiday activities for children

Moree Community Support Services

Ms Jaye Underwood from the Moree Community Support Service has engaged our school in various activities throughout the region:-
- Increasing community awareness of our school and its purposes
- Engaging in community programs
- Teaching and Learning in the wider community

Moree Catchment Management Authority, Border Rivers-Gwydir

The Border Rivers and Gwydir catchments are rich in Aboriginal cultural heritage and there are a number of recorded objects and places, including:
- Artefact scatters and rock art
- Burial sites
- Scarred and carved trees
- Grinding grooves and middens
- Mission and reserve sites

The Border Rivers-Gwydir Catchment Management Authority (CMA) is working to raise awareness of the importance of protecting Aboriginal sites and artefacts that may be present on private and public property.

BLC has been involved with seed gathering, collection and propagation.
Bush Tucker Program

Students have been working on sustainable methods to grow and replant vegetation. These projects included:

- The School Calm Garden
- Vegetable Patch from the garden to the kitchen
- Fruit and citrus trees

Pius X Aboriginal Medical Centre Hearing Program

Pius X Aboriginal Corporation strives to be a welcoming, community focused organisation delivering culturally appropriate service programs aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of the Aboriginal community.

Students at Barwon Learning Centre were part of two hearing test programs conducted by Pius during the past year. The results of the tests indicated that student hearing had improved while they were at BLC and participating in our daily fruit program. Some of the other programs that were of benefit to the students were:

- Eating Healthy Eating Wise:
- Daily Fruit Program

Monday Big Breakfast Program
- Nutrition Program
- Sports and Recreation Program

Aboriginal Family Services Northcott, Northern NSW Region Moree-Supporting Choice & Opportunity

Northcott is an innovative and dynamic not-for-profit organisation that provides support to more than 11,400 people with a broad range of disabilities and their families and carers across NSW and the ACT by providing a range of services which promote a genuinely inclusive society. Some people with rare or lesser known disabilities find Northcott to be the only provider of appropriate support and services. We have welcomed Northcott’s friendly staff and services in:

- Attending BLC Staff Meetings to negotiate ways of supporting our families and inter-agency case conferences
- Aboriginal Intensive Crisis Management
- Diagnostic Early Services
- Support Network Program

NAIDOC

The theme for NAIDOC Week 2013 is We value the vision: Yirrkala Bark Petitions 1963. Celebrating 50 years since the presentation of the Yirrkala Bark Petitions to the Federal Parliament. A special NAIDOC Assembly was held at B.L.C & was well attended by parents, families and community members.
Barwon Learning Centre is involved in the Bringing The Children Home process, by initiating and acknowledging the wrongs of the past with many activities in the classroom and community. We address the processes by:

- Stolen Generations Education in our curriculum.
- Consultation with the community.
- Commemorative events.
- Active involvement of the Community in the life of the school.

Aboriginal Artist in Residence

The Barwon Learning Centre identified a talented local artist, Chris Roberts, to create a calmer environment through the painting of wall murals and other artistic projects that depict iconic Aboriginal imagery. This has helped students feel more secure and confident about the learning of Aboriginal culture within their environment, and promoted students’ sense of ownership and belonging.

Multicultural education

At Barwon Learning Centre we endeavor to have children accept and celebrate difference and diversity. This has involved creating an awareness of cultural differences and learning about other cultures.

Food and cooking have been used to create an understanding of different cultures. Our students enjoyed eating Chinese food on an excursion to a local Chinese Restaurant.

National partnership programs

Barwon Learning Centre is a low Socio – Economic Status school and received National Partnership funding in 2013.

Funding was allocated to support the achievement of outcomes in BLC’s five identified priority areas:

- Literacy and Numeracy
- Engagement and attainment
- Aboriginal Education
- Leadership and Teacher Quality
- Student Engagement

National Partnership funding also facilitated the employment of a School Learning Support Officer two days per week to assist with literacy and numeracy programs.
Progress on 2013 targets

Target 1
Increase attendance rate from 81% to 88% (previously 50% 2011).

Attendance data reveals an attendance rate of 82.03%. Whilst the target of 88% was not achieved, this still shows significant improvement on 2011 data of 50%. A number of students placed at BLC in this cohort of students had chronic non-attendance before placement (including 2 students who had not attended school for 2 terms and previously averaged less than 50 day a year throughout their school career)

A significant number of deaths this year in the community has resulted in absences for funerals and “sorry business”

Target 2
Increase student literacy levels by a minimum of 20% from the census school scores during their time at BLC.

An analysis of assessment data indicates all students have made significant progress in literacy in their time at BLC. The overall percentage increase including all students at BLC was 119% on the PM Benchmark, 57% on Reading Texts, 63% on Comprehension, 46% on Vocabulary, 49% Speaking, 84% Phonics and 16% Spelling.

Target 3
Increase the number of students attempting NAPLAN to build a rich data base from which to improve targeted support for students in their base schools.

All eligible students in Years 3 and 5 were supported by BLC staff to sit for their NAPLAN Test in their feeder schools.

Target 4
Improve the range of subjects available at BLC by a range of 20%.

As well as the core subjects teachers now program to the healing modalities of dance, body work, theatre, nature discovery, art, and music. This represents a 60% increase in subject availability.

Target 5
Increase student numeracy levels by a minimum of 20% from their census school scores during their time at BLC.

Standardised testing reveals a 51.40% increase across all students in counting sequences, 57.50% in EAS, 55% in Patterns and Numbers, 54% in Place Value, 48.70% in Multiplication and Division, 102.06% in Fractions, and 72% in Measurement.

School Evaluation Processes

NSW public schools conduct evaluations to support the effective implementation of the school plan. The processes used include:

- Formal school evaluation processes conducted each year.
- Regular student attendance reviews.
- Regular academic assessment and progress reviews.
- Regular data collection and review of progress towards goals identified in each student’s personalized learning plan.

Educational Management Practices

‘Educare’

Background

Barwon Learning Centre is a School for Specific Purposes (Behaviour.)

Over the last two years a structured approach has been taken to evolve the school as a ‘trauma recovery centre.’ Funding was accessed from ‘Special Schools as Centres of Expertise.’

Emeritus Professor Judy Atkinson has played a pivotal role in strategically planning for evolution from a school with punitive practices, to a school whose approach is now reparative.

Prior to placement at B.L.C, most students have experienced significant numbers of suspensions and been on partial attendance.
It was felt that the first priority needed to be a focus on the children and their needs for a safe learning environment.

It was important for students to learn that they were NOT ‘bad children,’ and that the educational approach called ‘educaring’ would provide an environment which would assist in meeting their personal, social, learning and Cultural needs. An ethical framework was developed which embodied the values inherent in the ‘educaring’ approach.

1. Respect – for the capacity and ability for each child to learn and grow at optimal levels when their basic needs are being met.
2. Rights – to safe learning and living environments with all the basic necessities for life.
3. Responsibility – knowing that each child is capable of being responsible for themselves and others, given the opportunity.
4. Relatedness - building relationships between children and teachers, and in family units
5. Reciprocity – understanding that what is given out will come back. In reciprocal relationships, between teachers and students, between students and students and within family units, children learn mutual respect.
6. Resilience – the children coming to BLC, were clearly resilient. They were surviving what was, under any standards, a harsh environment.
7. Resonance. The language of the heart brain, the neo cortex, and prefrontal lobes, involves empathetic engagement with others.

The parents and carers of the children were invited to attend an open day. This open day would have a number of objectives. Of primary importance was for parents - carers to begin to consider the school as a safe place for them to discuss concerns they may have for their children, as they themselves struggled to survive in a harsh and unforgiving world. This open day happened in May 2012. A formal presentation was delivered for open discussion about a different way of thinking about the circumstances of their lives and that of their children. Judy Knox, a Goomeri woman, presented the same talk given by Judy Atkinson in Italy to 150 people at the time she received the Fritz Redlich Award ‘Human Rights and Mental Health, from Harvard University. ‘Indigenous Peoples – Colonisation as Traumatisation – Healing as Changing Worldviews’. The invitation to community members was to begin to think of the school as a community learning centre, in support of the children at the school, and to think about ways the school and the community could work together for the children.

Staff participated in workshops on: *Children and Trauma - the art of teaching, the power of learning. Educaring as Aboriginal teaching practice*. There were immediate and clear outcomes. Two long-term staff members reported that the week after the school development day was the best week they have ever had at the school.

The children’s literacy and numeracy levels improved at astounding rates. In 2013, the PM benchmark for literacy increased by 119%. The numeracy level increased between 48.7% to 102.6%. Each child now has a personalised learning plan which includes emotional literacy, using theatre, dance, music, art.

Using the Educare model with its principles of early childhood neuro-development teachers said: “We have the freedom to teach in the way that the children need”. “They are so excited about learning”. “They are not angry anymore”.

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Using the Educare model with its principles of early childhood neuro-development teachers said: “We have the freedom to teach in the way that the children need”. “They are so excited about learning”. “They are not angry anymore”. 
The children said: “I like music because I can feel the beat through my body”. “I like dance because I can tell different stories’. “I like body work because I feel calm and relaxed”. “I like theatre because I can be different characters”. “I like art because I can’t make mistakes”. “I like the nature discovery because I can learn things when I am outside”.

The teachers became creative in the way they responded to the needs of the children. They were transformed as they were able to demonstrate real outcomes. They are ‘holding’ the children and their stories, waiting for other sectors to take up their responsibilities, to build a safe community for all children in Moree.

A further important outcome has been that in understanding the lack of relevant services to meet needs of children who have diagnoses that demands therapeutic care, two day workshops were held in Moree for Allied Health, Education, and Child Protection workers. These workshops were titled: Children at Risk Developmental Trauma within Complex Trauma Environments. This included cultural safety in working with children; understanding the trauma story; principles and practice of educaring; trauma healing a whole of community.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander healing Foundation has commissioned the Australian Institute for Family Studies to conduct an evaluation for the work at the Barwon Learning Centre for its possible application at other locations across Australia.

Findings and Conclusions

Results of surveys and workshop evaluations were examined, along with staff responses at daily debrief sessions.

- There has been a development of genuine partnerships with parents and caregivers which has enabled meaningful dialogue in the development of learning and support plans.
- There has been a clear commitment of staff to have trauma-informed policies and practices.
- Providing professional learning on ‘intergenerational trauma and healing’ to parents, community members and other agencies has enhanced the reputation of B.L.C as a lead agent of change.

Future Directions

Recommendations and future directions resulting from the school self-evaluation, which have begun to inform practice, include:

- Maintain daily psychological debrief sessions to address potential vicarious trauma in staff members.
- Whilst maintaining a focus on deepening the understanding of complex trauma in children, it is necessary to develop professional learning plans for teachers and support staff based on mutually identified areas for development.
- Continue programming to the healing modalities.
- Continue the professional partnership with Emeritus Professor Judy Atkinson.
Curriculum

The Targeted Early Numeracy (TEN) intervention program.

Background

The Targeted Early Numeracy (TEN) intervention program is a component of the Best Start initiative, intending to ensure that all students are on track in their literacy and numeracy learning by year 3. The TEN program compliments regular numeracy programs, and recognises that a small percentage of students are at risk of numeracy failure, even with high quality whole class early numeracy program.

Findings and Conclusions

During 2013, Student Learning Support Officer (SLSO) Dawn Barlow, and classroom teacher Kylie Smith participated in the TEN intervention program training with Lisa Green which involves three phases, implementation, maintenance and an independent phase. The TEN model includes short, focussed, frequent numeracy sessions (typically 10 minute blocks).

The activities are strategically targeted activities focussing on addition and subtraction, with continuous monitoring of student progress. The implementation of the TEN program at Barwon Learning Centre was particularly effective, with post data exhibiting a 300% increase of the EAS aspect of the continuum.

Future Directions

- To have more staff avail themselves of professional learning on the TEN’S program.
- To build the capacity of all staff to use the hands on strategies which are part of this program.
- To continue to develop appropriate resources to support numeracy development.

Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction

In 2013 B.L.C sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school. The school developed its own survey instrument, giving parents and students the opportunity to list what they perceived to be strengths of the school, and to comment on areas they would like targeted for improvement.

Of the 18 parents and caregivers surveyed, all unanimously responded that they felt comfortable contacting the school. All 18 parents indicated that they valued being involved in the development and ongoing review of their child’s personalized learning plan.

All parents reported that their children now happily attend school and that there has been an improvement in attendance, learning and behaviour.
Parents and community participation in events and celebrations has shown a significant improvement—with each student having family members attending our special Naidoc Assembly-Parent morning teas, Boomerang Football Presentation Assembly, and the end of the year awards ceremony.

The most frequent comment from students when asked what they valued the most about B.L.C, was “teachers here don’t growl.” All students reported that they enjoy being at B.L.C. All students commented that Friday ‘Fun, Safety and Respect Day was a highlight of their week. All students reported that their learning had improved during their time at B.L.C.

Staff were surveyed to assess the effectiveness of the workshops conducted by Emeritus Professor Judy Atkinson and Judy Kaye Knox. All staff responded that they found the workshops valuable and indicated that they now have a deeper understanding of the impact of unaddressed grief and trauma on children’s behaviour.

Professional learning
During 2013 Barwon Learning Centre staff attended a number of varied professional learning activities. A significant focus was work with Associate Professor Judy Atkinson on ‘Intergenerational Trauma and Healing.’ This has been extremely beneficial in developing Staff’s understanding of the impact of trauma in children, families and our Community, and has led to significant changes in the management of complex behaviour.

The introduction of strategies relating to ‘trauma recovery’ has led to significant documented changes in attendance, behaviour and learning outcomes.

Other Professional Learning activities included:
- Best Start (Ten) - Numeracy intervention
- Understanding performance management
- Understanding Autism spectrum disorders
- Managing Disturbed and Disturbing Behaviours
- Your school and the K-10 English syllabus for the Australian curriculum
- DEC Code of Conduct
- 2013 Child protection update
- First Aid training
- Work Health & Safety consultation

School planning 2012—2014
The school planning policy provides direction for the preparation and implementation of school plans including the identification of priority areas, intended outcomes and targets that are consistent with the NSW State Plan and the Department’s planning documents.
School priority 1
Literacy and Numeracy
Outcomes for 2012–2014
- Increased levels of literacy and numeracy for all students in line with BLC targets
- Increased level of parent participation in supporting the education of their children
- Enhanced Quality Teaching practices to improve student learning outcomes

2013 Targets to achieve this outcome include:
- Increase NAPLAN test participation to increase the data pool available
- Increase student literacy levels by a minimum of 20% from their census school scores during their time at Barwon Learning Centre
- Increase student numeracy levels by a minimum of 20% from their census school scores during their time at Barwon Learning Centre

Strategies to achieve these targets include:
- Provide in class mentoring and team teaching by A.P to support the implementation of effective literacy teaching across the school
- Increase the use of interactive whiteboards in all classrooms to improve student engagement in literacy
- Analysis of assessment information on student entry to plan teaching and learning outcomes to meet the student’s needs, monitor progress and reporting
- Shared partnerships with feeder schools

School priority 2
Engagement and Attainment
Outcome for 2012–2014
- Increase the use of ICT across Key Learning Areas
- Increase the amount of on task learning time
- Increase attendance and punctuality of students

School priority 3
Aboriginal Education
Outcomes for 2012–2014
- Diminish the gap in performance between Aboriginal students and all students based on school assessments
- Increase the capacity of teachers in utilising the Quality Learning Framework in their teaching and assessment practice
- Increase parent participation in supporting the education of their child
- Increase in Aboriginal Community involvement

2013 Targets to achieve this outcome include:
- Increase the number of students attempting the NAPLAN test to increase the amount of data available
- Increase student literacy levels by a minimum of 20% from their census school scores during their time at Barwon Learning Centre
• Increase student numeracy levels by a minimum of 20% from their census school scores during their time at Barwon Learning Centre

Strategies to achieve these targets include:
• Implement the Quality Teaching Framework in all teaching areas
• All parents and guardians involved in Personalised Education Plans and school decision making
• Increased inclusion and participation by parents, carers, elders and community members in school activities and programs
• Implementation of ‘Special Schools as Centres of Expertise’ project with BLC project ‘Listening with, Working with Parents and Community’
• Shared partnerships with feeder schools

School priority 4
Leadership and Teacher Quality
Outcomes for 2012–2014
• Strengthen teacher capacity in the Quality Teaching Framework
• Improved use of data to track student achievement
• Increase the evaluation and reporting of student progress in all Key Learning Areas

2013 Targets to achieve this outcome include:
• Develop a testing and reporting program to provide literacy and numeracy data for each student entering and leaving Barwon Learning Centre

Strategies to achieve these targets include:
• Support early career teachers through links with mainstream Head Teacher Mentors and Professional Development programs
• All new scheme teachers are assisted in achieving accreditation with the N.S.W Teachers Institute
• Implement systems and practices in the school culture that enhances staff feelings of being valued, appreciated and professionally accountable

• Develop units of work that implement aspects of the ‘hidden curriculum’ to promote formal curriculum outcomes
• Investigate ‘transfer of duty’ days of CT’s to base school of Barwon students
• Develop BLC ‘Core Beliefs and Values’ with all stakeholders and develop policies and procedures for placement, assessment, transition and sharing of information
• Return to Base School

School priority 5
Student Attendance
Outcomes for 2012–2014
• Increased achievement with literacy and numeracy
• Reduction in classroom behaviour incidences linked to poor attendance and engagement

2013 Targets to achieve this outcome include:
• Increase student attendance rates from approximately 81% to 88% by November, 2014

Strategies to achieve these targets include:
• Phone intervention program for absenteeism
• Consistent timely follow-up of student absences both by teaching and administration staff.
• Review of school practices and procedures and staff training on the encouragement of attendance.
• Improved links with the Home School Liaison program
• Incorporate ppt presentation of Friday ‘Fun, Safety and Respect’ day at weekly Monday Assembly
• Staff, Parent and Community Professional Learning on Intergenerational Trauma & Healing
• Investigate funding options to implement and research a five year project addressing Intergenerational Trauma and Healing
• Creation of ‘calm classrooms’ using trauma recovery processes
• Focus on appropriate diagnosis and referrals for individual students and families
About this report

In preparing this report, the self-evaluation committee has gathered information from evaluations conducted during the year and analysed other information about the school's practices and student learning outcomes. The self-evaluation committee and school planning committee have determined targets for the school's future development.

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Parents can find out more information about Annual School Reports, how to interpret information in the reports and have the opportunity to provide feedback about these reports at: