

Southern Highlands Christian School

ANNUAL REPORT 2022



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Southern Highlands Christian School

Annual Report 2022

Chairman's Report - Chris Barr

As the Board Chair, I look back at 2022 and so clearly see how God's hand was over our School. He already knew what 2022 would hold before it began. We didn't have to hope and wish for certain outcomes, we just simply needed to thank Him, knowing He will give us the strength to handle whatever came our way. Matthew 6:34 reads: "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own". 2022 gave our School plenty of opportunity to be content and trust in God's sovereign wisdom.

We welcomed many new families to our School community during the year and it is always a joy to see the students settle into their new classes and make new friends. We value the trust each family places in SHCS to educate their children as we partner together in the academic journey. The Board enjoyed an opportunity in March to host a dinner for these new families and to take a moment to share the heartbeat of SHCS. Belonging is a powerful gift and our School community is a wonderful place to belong. The original vision of our founding families almost 40 years ago was to establish a school that would be an extension of the home in the education of their children with the word of God as its central theme, our School motto "To know God and serve Him" encapsulates the desire of those first families and is no less important today.

2022 gave me another year to lead alongside our Board. Working with this group of skilled and innovative men and women who love the

Lord is a great privilege for me as Board Chair. A verse that reminds me how God is with us as we meet, pray and make decisions for our School is Matthew 18:20 "For when two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them". We strive to support our leadership team under our Principal Andrew Middleton, as they worked tirelessly to improve our educational offering whilst endeavouring to ensure the Lord Jesus Christ is at the centre of all aspects of our School life.

During the year we held a number of meetings to start planning for our 40th Birthday Celebration in May 2023. We launched our SHCS website and our History Walk. We officially opened our new Community Hub/Café space and our Library Resource Centre as well as our Chaplaincy and Meeting spaces. We also purchased a bus which allowed us to partner with Christian families in Goulburn looking for quality Christian Education for their children. We took advantage of a very rare date on the calendar 22/2/22 (both a palindrome and an ambigram), and Junior School celebrated by holding 'TWOSDAY' with a Noah's Ark theme. What fun that was for all of our younger students (and staff!) as we remembered that God is always faithful to His promises.



Southern Highlands Christian School

Annual Report 2022

Chairman's Report Continued

The end of 2022 saw us farewelling two wonderful leaders. Mr Andrew Middleton, our Principal and Mrs Catherine Leigh, our Head of Junior School. Both of these friends brought much to our School community and we will miss their wisdom and educational skills. I personally will miss Mr Middleton as an innovative educator and a good friend. A highlight of the year was our Thanksgiving service during which, Mr Middleton shared many memories of his time at SHCS and reiterated his heart for Christian education in general and SHCS in particular. We will be welcoming Mrs Meg Story as our new Principal in 2023 and we look forward to seeing how our School continues to grow and serve our Highlands community for God's glory under her leadership.

As the Board Chair, I want to personally thank the whole SHCS staff team for their tireless work during 2022. Each staff member contributed their expertise to our School and it is always appreciated. I am grateful we have banded together under God as a Board, Executive and Staff team to guide our School with flexibility and effectiveness.

What a privilege to be the Board Chair in seasons such as this.



Southern Highlands Christian School

Annual Report 2022

Principal's Report

On the eve of 40 years of teaching at Southern Highlands Christian School we have experienced a level of settling and great deal of reimagining education in a post pandemic era. While the many changes have been challenging, 2022 has been characterised by further development of the lessons learned in education during the years of COVID-19 disruption. We have continued to give thanks to our gracious God for His control over our world and our School as we move into new ways of teaching and learning within a biblical framework. As a school, we give praise to Him as we reflect on His provision at Southern Highlands Christian School.

2022 brought with it further growth in enrolments and, with that, a need to consolidate school culture, continually revisiting the roots of the School - reassessing the premise on which the School was founded almost 40 years ago. The process of review and change in the School's Constitution ignited valuable discussions and kindled a recommitment to intentional Christian Education in the Southern Highlands. We have passionately sought to build academic excellence, spiritual growth, social, emotional and physical development while seeking to transform the hearts and minds of our students for the glory of God and in service of others. It was a blessing to our school community to receive a gift of a new School Song, composed to highlight Gods provision and encourage staff, students and parents to "Know God and Serve Him", the words of the School's motto.

While we have other measures of growth including Christian maturity and academic enhancement, numerical growth has necessitated a continued development of the school site as well as the acquisition of new buildings and the redevelopment of existing structures, furnishing and ICT equipment. Most notably, the opening of the upgraded Library, new counselling and Chaplain's rooms and the addition of a three classrooms in Junior School. The uniform shop moved to an on-line service.

The Outdoor Education Program continued to expand and develop. The program now provides a continuum from Prep in Junior School through to Year 11 in High School. Included in this program are the school 'Mission' activities and trips that enable our students to progressively serve others within the school, our wider community, in Sydney, the outback and overseas. It was exciting for our Year 10 and 11 students to participate in the outback trip post lockdowns and restrictions.

During the year, the School shared many community events with families including; a Bush Dance, Mother's and Father's Day events, a very well attended Grandparent's Day and Nativity performance. Our students participated in the annual ANZAC Day March



Southern Highlands Christian School

Annual Report 2022

Principal's Report Continued

in Bowral. It was a pleasure to deliver the annual Bowral Family Carol event held at Bradman Oval. Students have participated in sport and academic competitions, with our Year 10/11 taking out awards in the MUNA (Model United Nations Assembly).

The School staff were committed to working with families to continue re-engaging all students for learning now that teachers and students were again physically together in the same learning spaces. Families remained central to the teaching and learning of their children with the School assisting parents in their responsibility in the education of their children. Increasingly receiving parents back on-site during 2022 was a highlight for teachers and School staff.

Staff participated in professional development across four professional fronts: Biblical, Pastoral, Academic and Pedagogical. The ongoing task of developing a Christian Curriculum framework in programs continued, encouraging teachers to plan units with overarching Christian/biblical perspectives, deeper questions and enduring understandings from a Christian perspective. The School continues to focus on the development of pedagogy that supports and challenges our students in the classroom and reflects evidence-based best practice. Our teacher development program remains the cornerstone of our continual desire to grow student engagement and learning in the classroom. Essential to this is the explicit use of student feedback. A number of teachers

received their accreditation at Proficient level during the year, demonstrating academic rigour and personal dedication to effective pedagogy.

After more than 10 years at Southern Highlands Christina school, in Term 3 the Principal announced that he would be moving to a new challenge in a metropolitan school for 2023. While such news has the potential to destabilise a school community, the School Board and Executive team enabled an honouring departure of while effectively preparing the community for a new season.

God has indeed been gracious to our thriving community and it is to Him we give glory, thanks and praise. We thank God for His continued grace and His leading of our School community. We continue to pray that God would draw many more students to Himself and encourage those who already know Him. Our prayer is that our students will ultimately go out and be leaders amongst our society living lives of firm faith and witness.



Southern Highlands Christian School

Annual Report 2022

Registrar's Report

At Southern Highlands Christian School, we ask: "How does the curriculum contribute to learning more about God, understanding who we are, what we should value and how we might live our lives?"

Within the areas of their expertise, our capable educators attempt to steadily and cumulatively start age-appropriate conversations to stimulate not only the intellectual learning process but also the gradual exercise of practical skills - creating a learning community from Prep to Year 12.

It is important to flesh out who our students are, and who they are becoming on completion of the academic journey at Southern Highlands Christian School.

This is but a snapshot of how we, at SHCS, try to encapsulate our Christian approach to education aimed at developing their minds, captivating their hearts and equipping their hands, as they explore God's world and everything in it.

The result: young adults well equipped for a lifetime of learning through academic excellence, and a lifetime of faithful servanthood as they are encouraged to develop a robust, biblical, and relevant faith in God. How does the curriculum contribute to learning more about God, understanding who we are, what we should value, and how we might live our lives?

Southern Highlands Christian School is in a semi-rural setting in East Bowral, in the fast-

growing region of the Southern Highlands, NSW and had over 400 students enrolled Prep - 12 during 2022. Families are an integral part of the School community and a strong home/school learning partnership supports student achievement. The School is non-selective and has a diverse enrolment with students from a range of backgrounds, including Indigenous (3%), language backgrounds other than English (2%), and students who have identifiable disabilities (16%). For further comparative information about Southern Highlands Christian School please visit the My School website: <http://www.myschool.edu.au>.

Enrolment Policy

Policy Statement

With today's culture allowing families a choice in education for their children, the distinctive character and environment offered by a Christian School will appeal to a cross-section of the community. This policy establishes protocols and procedures for all families wishing to enrol students at Southern Highlands Christian School. The emphasis is to ensure that the Christian character of the School is at the forefront of the presentation to prospective enrolments, and that business is conducted courteously and efficiently.



Southern Highlands Christian School

Annual Report 2022

Registrar's Report Continued

Definition

Christian Enrolment: Where either parent is a regular attendee at a recognised mainstream church and can attest that the School's Statement of Faith or a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour is the basis of their belief, then this enrolment shall be considered a Christian family enrolment. A Christian enrolment may also be considered such where the student has made a known personal commitment, is a regular attendee at a recognised mainstream church and can attest that the School's Statement of Faith or a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour is the basis of their belief.

Procedures

1. Following enquiry, families receive an Enrolment Pack including a Prospectus, Application for Enrolment, Minister's Reference Form, Fee Schedule and other documentation as appropriate.
2. Families desiring to proceed, return the completed Application for Enrolment with relevant documentation and payments (as determined by the Fee Policy).
3. The Enrolment Registrar makes an appointment for the Principal to interview the family.
4. If the Principal deems necessary, an appointment for ability assessment is made, based upon Academic Reports and meeting the prospective student(s).
5. The Principal interviews the parents and prospective students. This interview will

answer parent questions and cover:

- Philosophy and ethos of a Christian School
- and its Curriculum;
- Governance model and the School Company - Company membership forms are given Christian families as appropriate;
- Fees Policy matters including affordability of the school and termination requirements;
- The Pastoral Care and Discipline Policy;
- The School's Volunteer Code of Conduct and the opportunity for parent involvement;
- The Uniform Policy;
- Commitment to all School activities and events.

6. At the Principal's discretion, he/she may decide on the outcome of the Application for Enrolment or discuss the Application with the Board at its next Board meeting.

7. Families shall be formally notified of the outcome of the Application for Enrolment by the Principal, by email. Commencement of attendance will be subject to:

- A place being available;
- Payment of the Administration Fee, Enrolment Bond, and arrangements being in place for the payment of School fees and Capital Levy (if applicable);
- An Administration Fee of \$220 payable when the family Application for Enrolment is lodged and is non-refundable;
- An Enrolment Bond of \$500 payable within two weeks of the letter of approval and covers the family. At the termination of



Southern Highlands Christian School

Annual Report 2022

Registrar's Report Continued

Enrolment or conclusion of the education of the last child from the family at the School, the Enrolment Bond is refundable provided all outstanding liabilities and debts have been met. If, after payment of the Enrolment Bond, the family fails to take up the place secured at the School, the bond is refunded less any potential accrued debt.

- The Capital Levy of \$500 per family is paid prior to commencement or with School fees when these are paid via direct debit by arrangement with the Business Manager.

8. Priority of place is given to maintain a preferred majority of 70% Christian family enrolments. The priority of approved enrolments subject to place availability is as follows:

- a) Children and grandchildren of SHCS Company members;
- b) Siblings of children currently in the School from Christian families;
- c) Siblings of children currently in the School from non-Christian families;
- d) Children of Christian families not currently in the School;
- e) Children of non-Christian families not currently in the School.

Priority of place within b), c), d), e) is according to the date of lodgement of the Application for Enrolment or at the Principal's and/or Board's discretion.

9. When necessary, waiting lists shall be created by the Principal according to priority of place (refer to Point 8). Vacancies arising during the current year shall be allocated by the Principal, with the family notified in writing, according to the waiting list, with acceptance of the offer and start of student

required within one week from the date on the written offer of a place. The Principal shall review waiting lists at the end of each term, or at his/her discretion.

Student Population

In 2022, there were 423 students, from Kindergarten to Year 12, enrolled at the August census. These students were from Bowral, Mittagong, Moss Vale and surrounding villages. The ratio of boys to girls was 49:51. The proportion of students from regular church attending families (representing over 30 churches) was approximately 70%. There were 19 students enrolled in Prep with the School offering both a two-day and three day program. Classes operated on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

In Junior School there were eleven classes from Kindergarten to Year 6. In High School, there were three Year 7/8 multi-age classes and generally one class per grade in Years 9 to 12. English was taught in three classes per stage, Mathematics was taught in two classes per year as part of a deliberate focus on Literacy and Numeracy.



Southern Highlands Christian School

Annual Report 2022

Registrar's Report Continued

Enrolments - August Census

Years	2020	2021	2022
K - 6	201	235	254
7 - 12	153	157	169
Totals (excluding Prep)	354	392	423

Student Attendance and Management of Non-Attendance

90% of students attended SHCS on average each school day in 2022. This included absences for sickness, medical appointments and approved leave. Non-attendance at school is managed by an electronic attendance roll. If a parent letter of explanation for non-attendance is not received, the class teachers are to follow up parents/guardians with a phone call. If a letter of explanation is not forthcoming after several attempts, senior staff are alerted to determine the appropriate follow-up, including consideration of potential student welfare issues. Where attendance patterns may affect the ability of a student to achieve educational outcomes for an external certificate, formal warning letters are provided to the student and parent.

Percentage Attendance per Grade Attendance Percentages

Kindergarten 92%
Year 1 93%
Year 2 91%
Year 3 91%
Year 4 92%
Year 5 92%
Year 6 88%
Year 7 89%
Year 8 89%
Year 9 85%
Year 10 86%
Year 11 91%
Year 12 95%
School Average 90%

Actual Retention Rates

Of the students who completed the HSC in 2022, 88% of students also completed Year 10 (in 2020) at the School. At the conclusion of Year 10, four SHCS students transitioned to TAFE or College courses and two students secured an apprenticeship or moved into fulltime work. The School is delighted to have helped each of these students' transition to their post-school option of choice.



Southern Highlands Christian School

Annual Report 2022

Christian Perspective

Christian Education is about cultivating critical thinking. Trusting someone else with your opinion and having a robust, authentic exchange. Thinking through the well-established paradigms and considering them through the lens of the Bible. Staff at SHCS intentionally set out to help students grow in wisdom and instruction, guiding them through the Australian curriculum with more than just academic rigour. Christian Education aims to instil young people with a dynamic sense of hope as they develop an understanding of how to live responsively and responsibly.

“...we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance, perseverance, character; and character, hope.” Romans 5:2-4.

Staff

At the Mid-Year Staff Retreat, all teachers and enabling staff had an opportunity to reassess their own faith, the positive impact that each person's faith can have on our students and how planning and implementation of programs and activities are expressed from a Christian worldview. Staff also had time to address personal and corporate concerns that arose during the pandemic and to do this with the support of health professionals and their peers. A range of staff attended other PD sessions across our four professional foci; Biblical, Pastoral, Academic and Pedagogical. Small group

sessions were held throughout the year to, among other things, build ICT skills in the context of the SAMR model, to develop class management strategies and processes and to further refine teaching and learning programs and lesson plans.

Christian Literature

Staff were provided with a number of books to read in 2022, 'Truth on Fire', by Adam Ramsey, in which he examines the fine line between being thrilled about the Word of God and being doctrinally accurate with the Word. We are encouraged to do both. We also shared in 'Being the Bad Guys' by Stephen McAlpine who opened up some realities of our current age, discussing how to live for Jesus in a world that essentially says we shouldn't. In addition, the School, as is our usual practice, used the Christian Teachers Journal and the Nurture magazine to encourage thinking and discussion around key issues confronting education in this era.

Challenges

Christian schools such as Southern Highlands Christian School have an ongoing challenge to provide biblically based education in a world that is becoming more hostile to perceived deficiencies of the Christian faith. Some resources that are



Southern Highlands Christian School

Annual Report 2022

Christian Perspective Continues

published for enhancing lessons, guiding student support and directing core business, can often distort the School's biblical framework. The challenge is always to assess these resources through the lens of God's word, not to simply dismiss them but to encourage staff and students to be critical thinkers so that they can grow in their understanding of who God is and their knowledge of the world that He created. English shines the light on the importance of the word, communication and culture, while Maths and the Sciences declare God's order. Music and Art show us an attribute of God's heart to celebrate good things and magnify His greatness. We desire to instil a biblical foundation of identity, purpose and hope that leads to successful contributors in our world.

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."
Philippians 4:6-7



Southern Highlands Christian School

Annual Report 2022

Teaching and Learning

Junior School

Junior School during 2022 saw the tail-end of the impact of COVID-19 on the day to day running of the school, and the gradual return to traditional schooling for our students.

While there were some disruptions, and the continuation of aspects of online learning, our students were delighted to have spent the majority of their school year in face to face learning.

The school was conscious of the impact of COVID-19 disruptions on our students over the previous years, particularly in the area of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), and ensured that programs and considerations were in place to assist with the transition back to full time onsite schooling. The opportunity to meet with parents, initially online, but later face to face, was a key component in assisting students with this transition. The School continues to greatly value the partnership with parents in all facets of the education of their children.

Literacy remained a significant focus in Junior School, with the continued embedding of the InitialLit and MiniLit programs across Kindergarten to Year 2. Selected staff received training and upskilling in the administration of these programs, and students continued to work on research based and targeted activities aimed to increase their literacy skills.

The InitialLit program provides:

- a reading program that incorporates a synthetic approach to the teaching of phonics alongside a rich literature and vocabulary component;
- a thorough and consistent instruction across classrooms in a year level, and a reduction in the number of children needing support in higher grades;
- an evidence-based approach to reading and spelling that is aligned with the new NSW English Curriculum and the Australian National Curriculum.

Alongside the above, our existing Spelling programs were supplemented with the addition of Sound Waves Spelling, alongside further training for staff in the implementation of Spelling Mastery. We continue to move students towards the understanding that Spelling exists in all subjects and to strive for consistent implementation in all areas.

Staff in Kindergarten to Year 2 also worked to implement the new NESA Curriculum in English and Mathematics, as per the NSW Government's timeline. This work was completed in time for the required 2023 implementation for all schools and will be seen across all 2023 K-2 programs.

Numeracy saw the introduction of a number



Southern Highlands Christian School

Annual Report 2022

Teaching and Learning Continued

of new resources K-6, including the Oxford Mathematics Program. Staff received training in the implementation of this program from Oxford Education. This is an online program, used alongside of variety of other resources, which provides numerous benefits to our students including:

- Pre and post testing facilities, to immediately identify a student's skills in a given area of mathematics.
- Tailored pathways to progress students towards a deeper understanding, based on their pre-testing.
- Online student friendly activities to reinforce skills taught.
- Alignment with the new NSW Mathematics Curriculum and the Australian National Curriculum.

A further tool was implemented across the Junior School, to allow the tracking of students in the key areas of Literacy and Numeracy. Essential Assessment was introduced, and will continue to be rolled out over the 2023, with the goal of providing ongoing tracking of students over their years at the school. Essential Assessment is linked to the NSW and Australian Curriculums, and provides teachers with up to date information regarding their students' progress as well as resources for remediation and extension as needed.

A wonderful blessing in 2022 was to see the gradual reintroduction of the School's Outdoor Education program, previously curtailed by COVID-19. At SHCS we strive to educate the whole child, and recognise the

importance of moving beyond the classroom to do so effectively. Students from Year 3 and above were able to participate in the structured camping program, which begins with an onsite overnight camp for our younger students, moving though offsite cabin-based camping until culminating in an under canvas experience for our Year 6 students. Despite missing some of these steps due to previous cancellations, our students undertook these challenges with great enthusiasm and success. Our students in Kindergarten to Year 2 were also able to experience age appropriate activities, designed to build their confidence and resilience as they explore God's creation.

Alongside the Outdoor Education program, the School was also able to reintroduce offsite educational experiences for our students. Carefully selected activities, aligned with clear curriculum goals, were organised and proved to be effective in furthering our students' understanding in many learning areas. Key amongst these experiences were visits to the local Ngununggula Southern Highlands Regional Gallery as well as the entire Junior School visiting Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens.

Creation Week was a highlight of the Junior School year. The idea was student



Southern Highlands Christian School

Annual Report 2022

Teaching and Learning Continued

generated and brainstormed, coming out of a discussion around the things we choose to celebrate in Australia. Such was the enthusiasm of the students involved, the activity quickly grew to a week of focusing on God's amazing creation and our part in it. The week contained cross-curricula activities involving all students in the Junior School, and culminated in an art installation representing God's creation that consumed a large portion of the school auditorium. The aforementioned visit to the Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens was also a highlight, as the volunteers from the gardens worked with our staff to tailor a program to meet our particular needs.

The School was also able to engage with outside agencies to build sporting skills amongst our students. Term 3 saw the entire Junior School involved in a professionally run swimming program in which each student was assessed and provided with a program to suit their current skills. Other sporting professionals from groups such as Cricket NSW, AFL NSW/ACT and professional gymnastics coaches also worked with our students over the year to provide them with high quality sporting experiences.

In keeping with our School motto "Know God and Serve Him", it was encouraging to see more opportunities for our Stage 3 students to experience leadership opportunities, both within the school and the wider community. Our leaders received training in godly leadership, through attending activities such as CruFIT (Crusaders Followers In Training),

which they then put into practice back at School. These activities ranged from organising small class-based events, through to assisting with Prep to Year 12 activities. Those without formal leadership roles were still involved, working with younger students in a variety of authentic ways.

As we reflect on 2022 for the Junior School, we can clearly see God's blessings. It was a year in which schools transitioned back to normal, and school communities reopened. The staff at SHCS worked within the changing parameters to ensure our students were well educated alongside being well cared for as they returned to "normal" schooling. Our students rose to the challenge and achieved great things over the year, and, in God's good grace, are well positioned as they move into the challenges of 2023 and beyond.

High School

The impact of COVID on the learning and development of students has been observed in a variety of ways within schools. One aspect of this impact has been seen in a reduced sense of service and sacrifice for other people. As these are basic to living life as a servant of Jesus, we have aimed to start building these characteristics into our students. Our Chaplaincy team has worked



Southern Highlands Christian School

Annual Report 2022

Teaching and Learning Continued

hard with local community groups to provide situations for as many students as possible to have opportunities to serve other people less well off than themselves. Our students have supported Riding for the Disabled, served at a local aged care facility and worked in several local church and community based welfare venues. After each of these visits the students are debriefed and helped to think through the practicalities of what they have done and the way that their service has helped other people. For many of our students this has been a delightful experience as they realise that they have the ability to bless other people.

We were able to resume a full range of experiences and opportunities for our high school students. Off site excursions, leadership development opportunities, inter-school sports and competitions were all eagerly attended and participated in. Outdoor education was able to be restarted with all students participating in several activities including bushwalks, mountain biking and canoeing.

One of the greatest delights was being able to restart our Mission trips to outback NSW. Year 11 students visited Broken Hill and worked with an Indigenous church leader there. Year 10 travelled through NSW visiting several small Christian schools and reaching Lightning Ridge before returning home. Both of these trips were critical in the developing growth and maturity of these young people.

Along with the resumption or re-energising of

these activities school has continued in a rich and full manner. As in previous years we have been able to support a wide range of learners, especially in English and Mathematics, with small and focussed classes in Stages 4 and 5, whilst Stage 6 enjoyed more personal attention in their small class sizes.

Students in Stage 5 High School can select from a wide variety of electives including:

- Drama,
- Music,
- Visual Arts and Photographic & Digital Media,
- Design & Technology,
- Food Technology,
- Commerce,
- Japanese,
- Physical Activity and Sports Studies.

Year 11 and 12 (Stage 6) students were able to choose from a broad range of subjects, including:

- English Standard, English Advanced,
- English Extension 1 and 2
- Mathematics Standard, Mathematics,
- Mathematics Extension 1 and 2
- Visual Arts, Drama, Music 1
- Business Studies, Legal Studies,



Southern Highlands Christian School

Annual Report 2022

Teaching and Learning Continued

- Ancient and Modern History
- Biology, Physics, Chemistry
- Engineering Studies
- PDHPE
- Design and Technology
- Biblical Studies

Students in Stages 5 and 6 were able to choose from a range of TAFE and online courses through Distance Education providers to provide specialised and personal subject choices outside the normal scope offered in schools. These students have been supported by a teacher who provides regular input and supervision to them in these courses.

Whole School

The rich world of education came roaring back to life in 2022 with the resurrection of diverse and stimulating opportunities for students to engage across cohorts and with a range of communities, who themselves were restarting after lying low during the pandemic. Navigating the liminal space between old and new led to the term 'new normal' being invoked in all areas of the school.

The school year opened with orientation days to welcome new students and families onsite, meeting their teachers and staff, seeing renovated rooms and equipment, and taking time to settle in before the rush of the term began. Pastorally good beginnings were rounded out with the return of Meet The Teacher or Pastoral Care Team events

aimed at quickly establishing good communication between school and home. The buzz of the 'new normal' was tangible!

On a daily basis, extra curricular groups began to re-emerge, rehearsing and training once more, brushing the rust off instruments and voices alike, to reform choirs and bands that suddenly faced the demands of a school year ready to embrace the world anew. Students performed and learned alongside professional musicians at the Bowral Autumn Music Festival, thrilled residents of local aged care facilities and choirs and string groups found their voice once more. Peripatetic tutors returned to onsite tutoring alongside other specialists who were relieved to see students on a regular face to face basis once again. The power to once again worship in song as a school community was evident in many gatherings of every scale and type.

Students from all year groups joined the community in commemorating ANZAC Day with the local march getting underway in Bowral. Mission trips, mufti days for fundraising, food drives to restock empty charity pantries and service programs sprang up throughout the year, galvanising the great generosity of students and families, and their commitment to considering the lives of all people in our various communities. Mothers



Southern Highlands Christian School

Annual Report 2022

Teaching and Learning Continued

and Fathers found themselves celebrated through special events catered for by Food Technology students, entertained by the school's various music groups and warmly hosted by an eager leadership team from both domains of the school.

Sporting opportunities saw an eclectic range of sports offered for competition including the State volleyball tournament, touch, netball, soccer and hockey Gala Days, even CSSA Golf was on the agenda! Swimming Carnivals, Cross Country and Athletics all made a return, albeit some in grotesquely muddy conditions! The Outdoor Education program returned after its hiatus, seeing students abseil, canoe, surf, hike, ski, orienteer, light fires (safely!), pitch tents, navigate flooding rain, wildlife, identify indigenous sites and foods, tell stories and enjoy camaraderie while rediscovering the joy of movement and the wonder of the outdoors. Students across the school relished these moments of intentional reconnection.

Professionally, it was important to monitor the aftereffects of Covid on staff and students and a range of initiatives and changes assisted in acknowledging the welfare concerns that emerged during and after the pandemic. SHCS officially became a member school of the Association of Independent Schools (AIS) providing all teachers access to highly professional support across a number of domains, from leadership to literacy. AIS Deputy Executive Director Michael Carr met with SHCS

Executive onsite to welcome the school into the association and outline the wealth of services offered to members. The support offered by the organisation broadens the SHCS horizon and adds support to policy thinking as well as easier access to teaching and learning experts and curriculum advice. Staff also enjoyed their first Staff Retreat during the winter PD week at the remarkable Stanwell Tops Centre, led by Jade Barr and, as a way of reflecting on the difficulties of the lock downs and remote learning months, and refocusing our restorative narrative on God's immense and ongoing provision for us. Counselling services through Anglicare were also provided for some ongoing care.

The implementation of TASS, the new learning management system, was carefully initiated and NAPLAN finally went online. Funding was secured and architectural meetings commenced for the new Prep building with the pedagogy and theology of early childhood education sat squarely at the forefront of its vision.

ATICS (The Association of Illawarra Christian Schools) was reconvened onsite with Melbourne University Associate Professor Amy Berry speaking regarding student engagement in a post pandemic system and Natasha Moore from The Centre for Public Christianity who addressed the intersections



Southern Highlands Christian School Annual Report 2022

Teaching and Learning Continued

of faith and culture in our classrooms. The wider fraternity of christian teachers celebrated being able to meet and collaborate on teaching and learning once again.



Southern Highlands Christian School

Annual Report 2022

Priority Areas

Christian Perspectives

- Address the issue of Religious Freedom with all stakeholders.
- Embed Christian perspectives of creation, God's purpose in our lives, and outreach into the Outdoor Ed Program
- Through consultation with Company members and the School Board, review and update the School's Constitution.
- Further refine School practices (management through to pedagogy) to the School's Vision and Mission

Teaching and Learning

- Focus on developing a more streamlined feedback protocol for learning across the School.
- Implement the next phase of the ICT strategic plan with a focus on continuous reporting via the LMS.
- Deepen Critical Thinking strategies for all students.

Community

- Continue to activate more features of the new School Information System (SIS) to increase reliable and effective communication and access to data.
- Educate parents on their role in growing children with a distinctive Christian Worldview.
- For the Board to recruit a new Principal and critical Administration staff.

Facilities and Resources

- Complete the Refurbishment of the School Café and Library.
- Upgrade TAS design space.
- Deepen Critical Thinking strategies for all students.



Southern Highlands Christian School

Annual Report 2022

Key Policy Outline

Student Welfare

The welfare of students at Southern Highlands Christian School is a paramount responsibility and privilege of the School as it partners with families in the education of their children. Welfare encompasses the whole of a student's well-being and healthy development. It therefore includes nurturing, building up and encouraging; protection from harm (Child Protection Policy); and also training, direction and correction (Discipline Policy). The School partners with families and the wider community, in strategies which are preventive and proactive in caring for students; and responsive in identifying welfare needs and determining best actions. The School's policy outlines the procedures and policies of the School in pursuit of the welfare of students; and its obligations to government authorities for the protection of children.

The School recognises that the responsibility for a child's welfare is given to his or her parents by God; but that this task is shared by the community of faith, and the wider community. Southern Highlands Christian School considers the welfare of the children in its care as a sacred trust from God, through the families who enrol their children. In partnership with families, every person who belongs to the community of Southern Highlands Christian School is encouraged to take responsibility for, and seek the well-being of, others.

At Southern Highlands Christian School,

student welfare and academic achievement involves the balance of physical, emotional, psychological, social and spiritual well-being of the child. Thus, student welfare is incorporated into every area of school life. SHCS aims to provide:

- A safe and nurturing environment in which students can learn (WHS Policy suite).
- Effective teaching and learning experiences which engage students in the activities of the School, including extra-curricular activities (Teaching & Learning Programs).
- Oversight of day to day monitoring of student well-being as determined by observable signs at School.
- A fair and effective discipline system which encourages behaviour consistent with the Student Code of Conduct and School Rules; and seeks to improve the behaviour of students who do not meet those expectations. (Discipline Policy)
- An environment in which students can come to understand how God has given them abilities and gifts and how they can use them.
- An environment that encourages attitudes of self-respect, self-discipline, and respect for others, as
- people made in God's image; and an understanding of individual differences.
- An environment in which it is clear that



Southern Highlands Christian School

Annual Report 2022

Key Policy Outline Continued

- bullying, violence and aggression are unacceptable (Anti-Bullying Policy).
- Monitoring of student attendance at school to ensure safety and well-being of students, and the continuation of a sound educational program (Attendance Policy).
- Staff who are committed Christians, qualified teachers, have current clearance under WWCC and who seek to care for and nurture the students in their care (Employment Policy, Child Protection Policy).
- Open Classroom culture – classrooms are open to visits from other staff, team teaching arrangements, the support of an Educational Assistant; and a teacher may invite observation by their Section Coordinator or have a class observation agreed to as part of Staff Appraisal.
- A clear understanding across the School community of duty of care; the provisions of the Child Protection Act; and commitment to reporting incidents relating to child protection. (Child Protection Policy)

Anti-bullying

At Southern Highlands Christian School our key policy objective is to foster a positive, safe environment for students, their families and staff and to ensure that, while at School, all students are given opportunities to develop positive attitudes and appropriate values. All students need to develop tolerance and understanding of others and their needs and to prevent and respond to bullying behaviour in learning and working

environments via a shared responsibility of all staff, students, parents, caregivers and members of the wider School community.

- Bullying is not acceptable and will not be condoned by the School. All students, parents and teachers have the right to feel safe travelling to and from school, while at school and its associated activities.
- Southern Highlands Christian School will seek to provide opportunity for members of the School community to gain a heightened awareness of varying forms of bullying. By definition this includes physical, verbal and non-verbal harassment, racial and sexual discrimination, within a school setting.



Southern Highlands Christian School

Annual Report 2022

School Performance

School Performance Annual Report 2022

Higher School Certificate Results

In another pandemic affected cohort, there were pleasing achievements from a range of students who faced online learning and lockdowns at a number of crucial moments during their education. Many in the group sustained strong focus, particularly on a range of individual projects including Music compositions and Design and Technology projects, leaning on strong support from staff and families. The students sat examinations across 19 subjects, including off site courses in Building and Construction and Human Services. Strong results were achieved again by Humanities and Creative Arts, alongside great contributions to student ATARS from Extension 2 Mathematics. Many students took up early entry offers with tertiary institutions including the Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

Record of School Achievement (RoSA)

Eligible students who leave school before receiving their Higher School Certificate (HSC) will receive their Record of School Achievement (RoSA). The RoSA records completed Stage 5 (Year 10) and Preliminary Stage 6 (Year 11) courses and grades, and participation in any incomplete Preliminary Stage 6 courses. In 2022 there were two students who elected to finish their course of study at this level and moved into apprenticeships at the end of Year 11.

National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy

NAPLAN (National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy) is an annual assessment for all students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. It tests the types of skills that are essential for every student to progress through school and life. The tests cover skills in reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation, and numeracy. In the 2022 NAPLAN tests, our students exceeded the benchmarks in many areas. The implementation of the School's literacy initiative continues to bear fruit in many domains, with the gaps between the National and school's results continuing to widen as the students enter High School, with clear foundations laid and acceleration taking place between Year 7 and 9. According to NAPLAN analysis, Southern Highlands Christian School results are generally above statistically similar schools in every area by the time students reach Year 9. This is a wonderful testament to the hard work of teaching staff, Educational Assistants and parents. However, NAPLAN remains only one measure of the students' development and never an objective in and of itself.



Southern Highlands Christian School

Annual Report 2022

School Performance

NAPLAN RESULTS	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar & Punctuation	Numeracy
SHCS Year 3	419	420	420	430	390
National Year 3	438	422	418	433	400
SHCS Year 5	517	493	510	516	483
National Year 5	510	484	505	499	488
SHCS Year 7	537	557	549	528	535
National Year 7	543	530	547	533	546
SHCS Year 9	612	579	594	605	602
National Year 9	578	560	577	573	584



Southern Highlands Christian School

Annual Report 2022

Staff and Financial Report

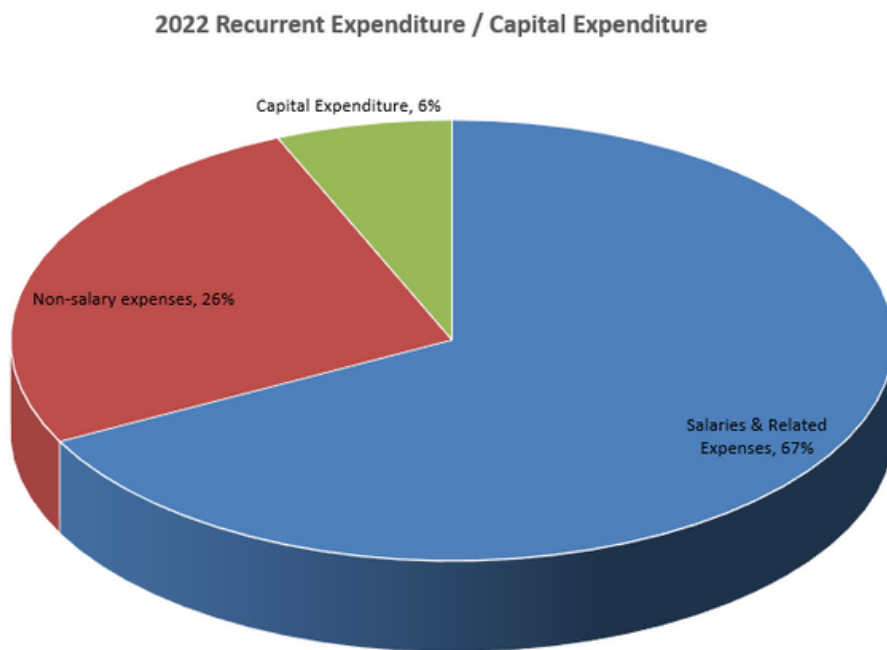
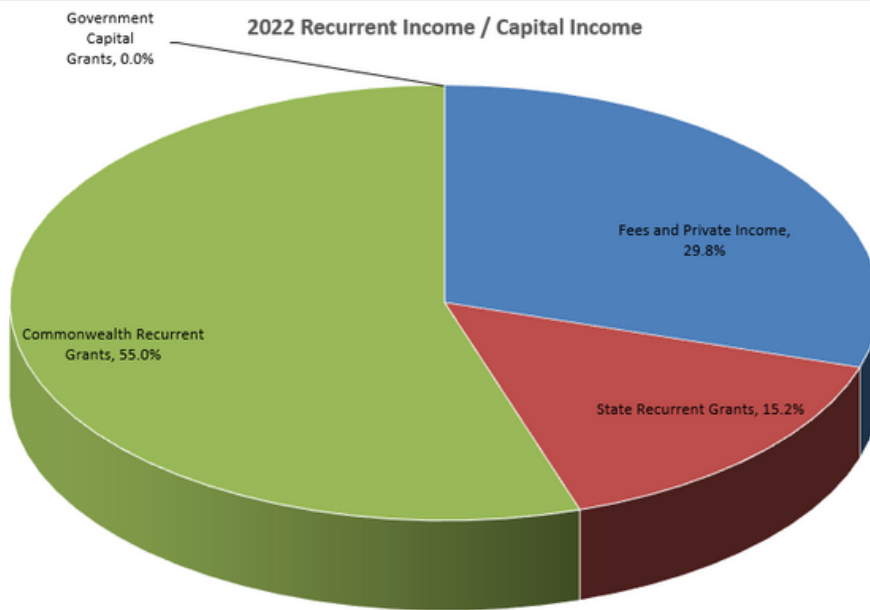
In 2022, the School employed 75 staff of whom 47 were teaching staff (22 full time and 25 part time) and 28 non-teaching staff (3 full time and 25 part time). Of the 40 teachers, all had teaching qualifications from a higher institution within Australia or recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AE-NOOSR) Guidelines. Toward the end of the year the staff turnover was significant though stability was strong amongst remaining staff. The following table summarises the Professional Learning undertaken by staff at the school throughout 2022.

Description of Professional Learning Activity	No. of staff participating
Christian World View	
Staff Retreat	80
developing leaders conference and teaching and learning conference	1
General	
First Aid	80
Maths	
PD4 maths	1
K-6	
Multitit - initialit	2
behaviour management for beginning teachers	1
Training enhancement for schools, teachers and students	20
new maths k-2 syllabus	3
new english k-2 syllabus	3
high challenge interactive language and literacy experience	1
instruction in read and writ & supp pos beh stud wellbeing	1
Learning Center	
Tier 2 proficient	1
Outdoor Ed	
inperson delegate pass	1
wildwood	3
History	
stage 6 teaching day	1
TAS	
learning in technology	2
SCIENCE	
Preparing for the 2022 HSC Chemistry Exam	1
experiments for HSC Physics teacher	1
lawsense	
Preparing for the 2022 HSC Biology Exam	1
LIBRARY	
How to help a student choose a book	2
Library help	1
EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP	
National Policy Forum	1
principals conference	1
CEN conference	5
developing leaders conference	1
School Business Admin conference	1
Why measuring culture counts in the financial sustainability of schools	1
lawsense	1



Southern Highlands Christian School Annual Report 2022

Staff and Financial Report





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