

skillset. senior college

Annual Report 2020



School... but not as you know it

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Messages from Key School Bodies

Message from the Chair of the Board

Although the past twelve months presented many challenges for all in the education sector, the approach adopted by our school leadership, staff and students will ensure the enduring memory of 2020 will be how our college successfully responded, remaining stable and dependable throughout a once in a lifetime pandemic. Our students always inhabit the central point of focus for all our planning and implementation at Skillset Senior College, and our response to this massive challenge was no different, with a comprehensive remote and face to face support strategy rolled out across both campuses in what was no more than a few days. I congratulate the leadership team and teachers for the continuing commitment to the well-being of our students, their families and carers.

As can be seen documented in this report, our school is unlike any other, and we know provides some core critical differences to mainstream settings, that allows many young people to access the life-changing gift of education. Our educational approach is informed by learning from our students' needs and the best contemporary evidence, and is delivered by highly committed and passionate teachers and leaders. The word "family" is often used by students when asking them to describe our school culture. Importantly, that well-being framework is also extended to all our, support staff, teachers and leaders. We fully understand the linear relationship that exists between the mental health of teachers and those in their care.

Despite the major disruptions of 2020, the school managed to again provide a rich and extensive range of activities and learning opportunities for our staff and students. It was exciting to see our school, along with only one other across the state, awarded a competitive school-based research grant, funded through the NSW Association of Independent Schools. The project titled *"Identifying, implementing and assessing effective school-wide strategies to increase wellbeing for at risk-youth in secondary education"* aims to investigate the effectiveness of three different school based interventions and the impact they have on the well-being of our students. The project is being led by experienced researcher and Skillset Senior College teacher Dr Martin Hughes. Although disruptions due to COVID delayed the full implementation of the project through 2020, the project will be completed in 2021. The College gained nation-wide exposure when ABC National Education Correspondent Conor Duffy filed several stories on our school and the research we are pioneering.

It was very encouraging to see our Dubbo campus expand with a new intake of staff and year 10 students in 2020 with this campus being able to offer years 10 to 12 by 2021. Almost half our Dubbo students and 30% of our Bathurst cohort identify as First Nations people, and we feel proud that we have been able to create a school environment that caters for the diverse needs of all students and families in our regional communities.

A strategic planning exercise was undertaken in 2020 informed by the school leadership attending professional development on school improvement. The strategic focus decided for the school is based on five priority areas, summarized below:

- attracting and maintaining a functional student body
- develop and invest in high quality staff
- develop and maintain appropriate infrastructure and systems to support learning
- promote and maintain best practice in the delivery of learning, well-being and administration
- build and maintain a credible reputation as a first class centre of learning to maximise opportunities for students whilst at the College and beyond

During the year it was wonderful to welcome Dr Libbey Murray, Associate Head - School of Teacher Education at Charles Sturt University to our Board along with Mr Chris Nichols, Legal Practitioner Director of McIntosh McPhillamy Legal Services. I thank all our Directors who volunteer their time and bring a range of skills, views and experiences to the Board table to the benefit of the school. I also thank our Skillset corporate services team for their work throughout the year who provide a range of back-office services to the school across a number of domains including finance and IT services.

My final thanks to the great team of professional school staff, led by Head of College Abbey Barrett who provide the constant guidance, support, role modelling and great teaching that makes our school such a special place.

I commend this annual report to you and am honoured to present my first message as Chair of this great institution.



Craig Randazzo BA (Psych., Ed.); Adv. Dip. Mgmt.; FIML; MAICD
Chairperson

Message from the Head of College

It is a pleasure to present the 2020 Annual Report as Head of College for Skillset Senior College (SSC). With COVID – 19 at the forefront of the risks and issues for our school, our community and for the world to contend with, 2020 was a year like no other! SSC navigated a year like no other, with the school values of kindness, courage and consideration informing each decision we made. Our wellbeing model of education was under the spotlight, and our 2020 outcomes highlighted that when staff and student wellbeing is at the heart of our approach, attendance and learning can seamlessly continue online; together we can overcome any hurdle. The team remained agile and responsive, and in turn, the COVID – 19 experience led to greater team connection and cohesion.

The Skillset Senior College vision of “Best Future Imaginable” lives and breathes in our school. The SSC team are inspirational in their approach and in their dedication to the student body. The team continually look for opportunities to expand horizons, to dream big and to implement strategies to fulfil those dreams. Staff stand shoulder to shoulder and it is the alchemy of their skills, shared values, their great wisdom and their tenacity that sets the school apart from any other.

2020 marked the second year of our Dubbo campus and the establishment of our inaugural Dubbo Year 11 cohort of students. Libby Wilson heads up the Dubbo campus as Campus Coordinator, and together with an experienced teaching and learning support team, embarked on the second year of SSC Dubbo. For the majority of 2020 the campus was based on the old Dubbo TAFE site (corner of Fitzroy and Bultje Streets) and in the final days of Term 4 we moved to our new home on Sheraton Road. The entire SSC community generously assisted with the move and set-up of the school. We were humbled by, and grateful for their commitment and support.

Deputy Head of College, Mark Whitfeld, managed the site acquisition, school set-up, renovations and registration of Sheraton Road. The site is now thoroughly fit for purpose and has land available for the SSC Agriculture Program or further infrastructure development. 2020 was a year of growth and further expansion; the new Dubbo site, increased staffing, and developing team culture were all included in our main lines of effort.

We take the opportunity to thank our community partners in Dubbo and Bathurst for their support over the year; these included Apollo House, Headspace, CAMHS, Uniting, Mission Australia, Omni Building and NSW Police. The highlight of our year at both campuses was the graduation of 41 students in Dubbo and 36 in Bathurst who attained their Year 10 RoSA, and 12 Year 11 students who articulated into Year 11 in Dubbo and 18 in Bathurst. In 2021, the Dubbo Campus will have a full cohort of students and offer Years 10, 11 and 12.

During 2020, school activities and excursions included the Parkes radio telescope, the Botanical Gardens, Wellington Caves, regular farm visits for Agriculture, Halloween, bowling, Aussie Sports World, hosting school Wellbeing days and visiting numerous small businesses and cultural sites. At SSC we offer before- and after-school sporting activities at both campuses, the highlight being the SSC Touch Football team who contribute to the local Monday night competition in Bathurst, and the gym sessions offered at both campuses.

The Bathurst Campus is headed up by Meg Hitchick. Meg and her dedicated team successfully graduated their fourth cohort of HSC students. Our 2020 team of Year 12's were a connected and cohesive group of students who courageously navigated the hurdles they encountered. It is exciting to note that 60% of the cohort went on to further study or training.

The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award program and the Skillset Senior College Research Institute remained at the forefront of our program delivery for 2020. Research highlights included the submission of a research manuscript on our response to COVID-19 at Skillset Senior College, the paper titled 'Flocking as an adaptive strategy: Schools as enabling spaces during a global pandemic'. Our mid-term 'in schools research program' report was approved by the AISNSW, and we received the subsequent release of funds for the project in December 2020. In November 2020, Dr Martin Hughes delivered a Masterclass to principals across New South Wales, hosted by the AISNSW. Headed up by Chris Harris, the Duke of Edinburgh team completed one of the required hikes and fulfilled the service and skill components of the award. For the successful 2020 Duke of Edinburgh participants, the remainder of the Bronze award will be completed in 2021.

In the SSC Wellbeing domain, we have achieved our goal of developing individual education plans for every student. Parents and carers, external agencies, occupational therapists and key providers have collaborated to plan for the best possible holistic approach. The wellbeing team has expanded to include our College Mentor, whose role focuses on careers and the students' professional and personal development.

The SSC model of education is founded in counselling, educational and adolescent theory, and is intentionally solution focused, student centred and strengths based. The success of the model is witnessed through positive student outcomes, and the palpable sense of belonging and purpose experienced by staff and students alike. During the COVID – 19 response period, our SSC Tribes system was an effective example of our wellbeing approach in action. Each student was allocated a staff Tribe leader and contacted daily by their Tribe leader to assist with academic or wellbeing concerns. Along with many COVID – 19 protocols, we have maintained the Tribe system, as it was a great way to connect and maintain communication with students.

In 2020 our teaching, administration and learning and support staff grew to a total of 35 individuals, who all bring a diverse range of work and life experiences to the school. All our teachers are university qualified with either proficient or provisional status, but also boast rich vocational and experiential backgrounds including:

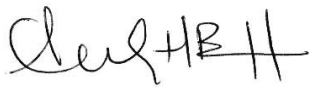
- A practising registered clinical counsellor, specialising in adolescent therapies
- A Major in the Australian Army Reserves, and a former senior Federal Police officer
- A qualified practicing midwife
- A former legal-aid lawyer, outdoor activities specialist and Duke of Edinburgh program coordinator
- A PhD qualified university research scientist
- 2 primary school trained teachers
- A highly acclaimed, award winning performance artist
- A qualified fine arts graduate and practicing visual artist
- A fluent Mandarin language speaker and Asian culture enthusiast

Our students benefit greatly from the collected wisdom and combined experiences of our team of professionals.

In terms of capital improvements this year, the highlights included the acquisition of the Sheraton Road campus in Dubbo, and the purchase of the agriculture and sports sheds for the Bathurst campus which, in time to come, will be a welcome addition to both programs. The Agriculture Team continues to grow with the extension of the agriculture program to include the Dubbo campus for the 2021 Year 11 cohort. Students further develop their skills by stewarding at local agricultural shows and events, and foster

connections in the community through working with the animals. Watching students grow their skills through the care and maintenance of our animals and facilities provides us all with a great sense of confidence and motivation. This, in turn, establishes great learning for the students; developing routines, work habits and vocational preparation skills that will serve them well in their next work or study endeavours.

I would like to acknowledge the Skillset Senior College Board for their continuing support and the Chair of the Board, Mr Craig Randazzo, for his ongoing contribution to the work of our school. I am incredibly grateful to all our teachers and support staff, for the continuing passion, kindness and dedication they bring to our school every day. In particular, I would like to thank Mr Mark Whitfeld, Deputy Head of College, for the acquisition and management of the new Dubbo site, and the leadership he offers to the whole school community. It is exciting to witness the life changing impact of our small, but mighty school throughout the Central West. We look forward to the coming year with hope, optimism and high expectations as we expand our model of life-changing education with a full wellbeing focus.



Abbey Barrett

BA (Psych), University of Sydney; Grad.Dip.Couns.; PACFA Reg. (Clinical) ACAP

Head of College, Skillset Senior College

Contextual information about Skillset and Skillset Senior College



Aidan Cooke – Randazzo Award Recipient
2020 with Founding Principal Craig Randazzo,
now Chair of the College Board.

Skillset Senior College offers young people of the Central West NSW region a holistic and supportive approach to high school education, in an alternative learning environment with a full wellbeing focus.

The school is an independent, coeducational senior secondary school, registered and accredited with NESA, and a member of the Association of Independent Schools NSW.

We promote a flexible learning environment where we work with students to accommodate their individual psychological, physical, emotional and cultural needs. We highlight and celebrate students' individual differences, and are proud we support an environment where there is no "normal" and no "average".

We offer students understanding and the resourcing to genuinely provide an individual approach to each student, understanding that not all young people succeed with a conventional approach to learning, and that historical barriers to education may have entrenched a reluctance to attend or participate fully in school.

Skillset Senior College:

- is a regionally based Special Assistance School
- has an enrolment capacity of approximately 150 students (in 2020)
- enrolls students in Years 10 to 12
- aims to reengage disadvantaged young people with a love of learning
- features small class sizes, and at least two staff in each classroom
- has a large Indigenous cohort with around 35% identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- has a significant proportion of students who have one or more disabilities
- has close links with community partners including youth services, housing providers and public mental health agencies
- caters for young people for whom school-refusal and mental health challenges have been major problems

The story of Skillset Senior College

The first campus of Skillset Senior College opened in Bathurst NSW in 2015, and was originally formed as a sub-unit of Skillset Ltd, in response to the recognised need for an alternative secondary education option for students in the Central West of NSW. The campus is still located in the Flannery Centre, an architecturally designed, six-star environmentally rated building that also hosts the Bathurst Skillset offices and corporate head office for Skillset Ltd.

The school graduated its first HSC (Year 12) cohort in 2017. In January 2018, Skillset Senior College became a separate legal entity from parent organization Skillset Ltd., establishing its own ABN, accounts and governance arrangements to improve the effectiveness of the operation of the school. Around the same time, Skillset Senior College underwent the NESA re-registration process, and was awarded NESA accreditation and registration through to 2023.

Skillset Senior College opened a second campus in Dubbo NSW in 2019, with the first HSC cohort of this campus expected to complete in 2021. The two campuses operate under the same leadership and governance structure, sharing the same fundamental approach to education and student wellbeing, while tailoring the school experience to meet the unique needs of their student populations.

Skillset Senior College - Vision, Purpose and Values

Skillset Senior College strives to re-engage young people into school participation leaving them with a positive and optimistic view of school life. We provide a small and friendly learning environment with the most passionate and effective teaching staff and practices that creates an environment where young people thrive. The school particularly succeeds with young people challenged by a history of poor school attendance and experiences, and also with those who have yet to find positive solutions for persistent mental health challenges.

Vision and Purpose

Our vision is for the “best future imaginable” for our students, staff and community. We understand that for many, gaining education is a significant element of forging a pathway to that future, and our hope is that we can support our students to develop, strive towards and attain their personal goals as they self-determine their own “best future”.

Our purpose is to promote “engagement through relationship.” We provide a safe, connected and supportive learning environment, with a focus on wellbeing and a ‘whole-person’ approach to working with young people and their families/carers. At Skillset Senior College, students re-engage in education, develop the desire to learn and the skills to succeed at school, at work and in life.

Values: Kindness, Courage, Consideration

- We support ourselves and each other through positive communication, encouragement and kindness
- We promote courage by celebrating positive risk-taking, healthy vulnerability, and taking responsibility for our own learning and growth
- We create a learning environment where all students and staff are treated with consideration and respect
- We are ‘student-centred’ – using an individualised approach to creating the conditions for students to thrive
- We are ‘strengths-based’ – building on students’ skills, abilities and talents in helping them to achieve personally and academically
- We are ‘solution-focused’ - choosing to find a way forward in overcoming challenges and putting our energy into innovative approaches

About Skillset Ltd.

Skillset Ltd. is an innovative, regionally based not-for-profit organisation delivering an integrated range of services throughout NSW and beyond. We work with individuals, businesses, industry and communities to increase their success through our service offerings. We have structured our organisation to deliver the best outcomes possible, ensuring our services are clustered around our clients, participants and students to provide the highest positive impact possible for those we serve. Skillset is an Apprentice Employment Network provider as a registered Group Training Organisation (GTO) and is the largest employer of apprentices and trainees in Western NSW with over 450 young people employed by Skillset annually.

Registration details of Skillset Senior College Ltd.

First Accredited by NESA:	September 2014
Opened in:	January 2015
Re-registered:	February 2018 (Stage 5&6) for 5 years
NESA School Number:	78096
Dubbo Campus Site Certification:	December 2018 (Cnr Bultje & Fitzroy St) December 2020 (Sheraton Rd)

Student Outcomes

Year 10 Record of School Achievement (RoSA)

In 2020, 33 students from the Bathurst Campus, and 41 students from the Dubbo Campus completed the requirements of Year 10 and received a RoSA. The majority of students benefited from significant adjustment in learning delivery, assessment modification and tailored learning support, with a smaller proportion of students requiring substantial adjustments to meet requirements.

Course	School Total	State Total	School A(%)	School B(%)	School C(%)	School D(%)	School E(%)	School None(%)	State A(%)	State B(%)	State C(%)	State D(%)	State E(%)	State None(%)
<u>English 200 hours (300)</u>	64	87056	7.81	14.06	45.31	21.88	9.38	1.56	12.81	28.52	36.25	15.83	5.86	.73

Course	School Total	State Total	School A(%)	School B(%)	School C(%)	School D(%)	School E(%)	School None(%)	State A(%)	State B(%)	State C(%)	State D(%)	State E(%)	State None(%)
<u>Mathematics 200 hours (323)</u>	64	87400	1.56	7.81	42.19	25.00	21.88	1.56	15.35	22.24	32.26	22.80	6.71	.65
<u>Science 200 hours (350)</u>	64	87109	6.25	20.31	39.06	28.13	4.69	1.56	13.24	24.59	35.99	18.87	6.64	.66
<u>Geography 100 hours (4015)</u>	64	87026	4.69	17.19	29.69	32.81	14.06	1.56	15.36	27.82	34.53	15.74	6.00	.56
<u>History 100 hours (4007)</u>	64	87048	1.56	10.94	17.19	50.00	18.75	1.56	15.05	27.28	34.69	16.22	6.12	.64
<u>PDHPE 100 hours (2421)</u>	63	20554		15.87	46.03	36.51		1.59	17.49	34.61	34.32	9.90	3.25	.43

Senior Secondary Outcomes

Preliminary Course (Year 11) Results

In 2020, 19 students from the Bathurst Campus, and 12 students from the Dubbo Campus completed the requirements of Year 11, with access to the following on-campus subjects: English Standard, Mathematics Standard, Investigating Science, Agriculture, Computing Applications (Bathurst only), Community and Family Studies and Food Technology (Dubbo only). These subjects were offered to allow students to qualify for an ATAR in 2021, but also to appeal to a wide range of interests and abilities. A small number of students completed alternative, individual subjects through concurrent enrolment with Dubbo School of Distance Education, or through the T-VET programme at TAFE NSW.

Course	School Total	State Total	School A(%)	School B(%)	School C(%)	School D(%)	School E(%)	School None(%)	State A(%)	State B(%)	State C(%)	State D(%)	State E(%)	State None(%)
<u>English Studies 2 unit (30105)</u>	34	9892	14.71	20.59	32.35	20.59	11.76		4.57	18.74	37.23	24.43	12.23	2.79
<u>Mathematics Standard 2 unit (11236)</u>	34	40775	17.65	26.47	20.59	29.41	5.88		7.72	20.91	36.78	23.84	10.05	.69
<u>Investigating Science 2 unit (11215)</u>	19	3910	21.05	31.58	36.84	10.53			8.13	24.02	37.57	21.10	8.18	1.00
<u>Agriculture 2 unit (11010)</u>	20	2289	20.00		35.00	45.00			17.21	25.64	30.80	17.43	8.17	.74
<u>Food Technology 2 unit (11180)</u>	14	5398	7.14	28.57	28.57	14.29	21.43		13.12	25.08	33.22	19.12	7.98	1.48
<u>Community and Family Studies 2 unit (11060)</u>	34	11806		17.65	47.06	32.35	2.94		11.51	26.59	36.34	17.58	6.98	1.00

HSC Results

The 2020 Year 12 cohort (HSC Course) subject offerings were English (Standard), English Studies, Mathematics (General), Investigating Science, Agriculture, Community and Family Studies, and Computing Applications.

The English Studies course was introduced as an alternative compulsory English course to better suit the literacy levels and abilities of some students in the cohort.

Course	Course	Students Included	Students Omitted	E.M. Mean	State E.M. Mean	School/State Variation	Z-score
<u>Agriculture 2 unit</u>	15010	13	1	56.35	72.61	-16.26	-1.15
<u>Community and Family Studies 2 unit</u>	15060	15		60.03	74.06	-14.03	-1.37
<u>English Standard 2 unit</u>	15130	15		56.95	69.93	-12.98	-1.52
<u>Investigating Science 2 unit</u>	15215	15		53.28	70.79	-17.51	-1.33
<u>Mathematics Standard 1 Examination 2 uni</u>	15232	14		58.06	68.97	-10.91	-.84

Course	Name	Included Students	Omitted Students	Band 6	Band 5	Band 4	Band 3	Band 2	Band 1
15010	Agriculture	13	2			1	2	8	2
15060	Community and Family Studies	15				1	7	7	
15130	English Standard	15					4	11	
15215	Investigating Science	15				1	5	3	6
15232	Mathematics Standard 1 Examination	14	1			2	7	2	3
	Band Total					5	25	31	11

Professional Learning and Teacher Standards

All teaching staff met the professional requirements for teaching in NSW according to the following categories:

Category	Number of Teachers
Teachers having teacher education qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) guidelines	15
Teachers having a bachelor degree from a higher education institution within Australia or one recognised within the AEI-NOOSR guidelines but lack formal teacher education qualifications	0

NESA Teacher Accreditation Status	Number of SSC Teachers
Lead Teacher Accreditation	0
Highly Accomplished Teacher Accreditation	0

Proficient Teacher (ISTAA 'Experienced') Accreditation	2
Proficient Teacher Accreditation	6
Provisional Accreditation	3
Pre-2004 Teacher accredited at Proficient level	1
Conditional Accreditation	2
Not accredited with TAA	0

Professional Development and Formal Training

In 2020, teaching staff attended the following training events:

Training Event	Number of Staff Attended
Framework for Offsite Learning	All Staff
AIS NSW Principal Induction Program	1
Ethical Leadership – Australian Defence Force Academy	1
NCCD Training	4
AISNSW Research Project PD	4
Staff PD on Career Planning	14
Child Protection	All Staff
Student Gender & Diversity Webinar	2
Sexuality & Gender PD	10
Statement of Attainment in Aboriginal Cultural Sensitivities	20
Indigenous Education Perspectives	Bx
Outdoor Education – Canyoning PD	9
Certified Irlen Screener Training	1
Trauma Informed Practice	All Staff
AISNSW School Based Research Project PD Day x 2	4

Workforce and Student Profile

Workforce Composition

By 01 Dec 2020, Skillset Senior College employed:

- 1 x Head of College (1.0FTE)
- 1 x Deputy Head of College (1.0FTE)
- 2 x Campus Co-ordinators (2.0FTE)
- 1 x Student Liaison Coordinator (1.0FTE)
- 12 x Teachers (10.3FTE)
- 2 x General Assistant/Learning Support (2.0FTE)
- 10 x Learning Support Assistants (7.7FTE)
- 2 x College Liaison Officers (2.0FTE)
- 1 x College Mentor (1.0FTE)
- 1 x Aboriginal Education Officer (1.0FTE)
- 1 x Reception/Admin Assistant (0.8FTE)
- 1 x Administration Manager (1.0FTE)

Total School Staff = 35 (30.8FTE)

Administration support is also provided to Skillset Senior College on a contractual basis by Skillset Ltd in areas of marketing, ICT support, finance, payroll and human resources. Casual teaching and learning support staff were also engaged on a needs-basis to cover sick leave and support operations.

Workforce Qualifications

Staff member	Qualifications
Head of College	BA (Psych), University of Sydney; Grad.Dip.Couns.; PACFA Reg. (Clinical) ACAP
Teaching Staff	Bachelor of Information Technology (2002) CSU; Grad Dip Education (secondary) CSU; Cert III/IV in Training and Assessment SWSI TAFE
	Bachelor of Teaching (Primary) 2006, CSU, Bachelor of Psychology 2006, CSU
	Bachelor Applied Science (Agriculture) 1987, Hawkesbury Ag College, Dip. Ed, 1987, Sydney Teachers College, Certificate of Policing CSU 1996, Cert IV Project Management UNE 2003, Masters of Educational Leadership University of Canberra 2003, Grad. Dip of Psychology (Charles Darwin University) 2010.
	Bachelor of Education 2016, CSU.
	Bachelor of Education (Primary, Inclusive Education) 2008, CSU.
	Bachelor of Science (Macquarie) 2003; Post Graduate Diploma of Education; (CSU) 2008; Bachelor of Midwifery (WSU) 2017
	Bachelor of Applied Science (Natural Resource Management) 2010 (SCU); Bachelor of Laws 2010 (SCU); Graduate Diploma of Legal Practice (CL) 2010; Graduate Diploma of Education (Secondary) 2013 (SCU); Statement of Attainment in Trip Planning and Bushwalking 2016 (TAFE Western)
	Bachelor of Science (University of Glasgow) 2012; Doctor of Philosophy (University of Glasgow) 2017.
	Bachelor of Art Education (UNSW) 2003
	Bachelor of Exercise Science (Rehab),CSU , 2011, Masters of Teaching (Primary), University of New England, 2016, Certificate IV Training and Assessment, 2019. Certificate IV Agriculture and Horticulture, 2018.
	Bachelor of Teaching (English), Bachelor of Psychology (Social) 2012 CSU
	Bachelor of Education, (Primary/Secondary) (2020)
	2008 University of Western Sydney (now called Western Sydney University), Bachelor of Arts 2009 University of Western Sydney, Master of Teaching 2014 OTEN, Certificate III in Children's Services 2018 OTEN, Certificate IV in Training and Assessment TAELLN40116 (current version)
	Bachelor of Science (Mathematics & Computing) (1993) UWS Bachelor of Education (Secondary Science & Religion) (1997) ACU Graduate Cert in Physics (1998) ACU Cert IV TAE, Cert IV Project Management (2018)

National Diploma in Performing Arts (2008) Hopwood Hall College
 Bachelor of Arts Upper Class Theatre Arts Degree (2011) Middlesex University, London
 Post Compulsory Education Training Certificate (2014) Edge Hill University, Liverpool
 Diploma in Teaching English Literacy and ESOL (2017) Bury College



SSC Dubbo Staff from left: Ben Palmer (Teaching), Ben Kirkness (ICT Manager), Libby Wilson (Campus Coordinator), Mel Hazzard (Learning Support), Craig Turner (Teaching), Tracey Strawns (College Liaison), Justin Clarke (Aboriginal Education Officer), Janalee Conroy (Learning Support), Alison Cope (Teaching), Mel Cudworth (Teaching), Lillyann Mason (Learning Support) Scott Leach (Learning Support), Jennifer McNeight (Teaching), Paul Readett (Learning Support), Danni McLaughlin (Wellbeing), Abbey Barrett (Head of College), Mark Whitfeld (Deputy Head of College).



SSC Bathurst Staff –front from left: Craig Randazzo (Founding Principal), Helen Conroy (Learning Support), Ange Masters (Learning Support), Amy Raveneau (Learning Support), Abbey Barrett (Head of College), Mark Whitfeld (Deputy Head of College)
 Second row: Sandra Simpson (College Mentor), Reg Rudd (Learning Support), Barbara Olsen (Administration Manager), Meg Hitchick (Campus Coordinator), Khiara Ryan (Learning Support), Jono Hosking (Teaching)
 Back: Damian Wilesmith (Teaching), Sarah Bradbury (College Liaison), Lisette Dale (Teaching), Jaye Shean (Student Support), Dr Martin Hughes (Research/Teaching), Chris Harris (Teaching), Adam Ryan (Teaching)

Student Profile, Attendance and Retention

Student Profile

In our sixth year of operation, Skillset Senior College commenced 2020 with 138 enrolments across two campuses, and Years 10, 11 and 12. The NSW Minister for Education has granted Skillset Senior College 'Special Assistance School' status, which recognises that our school primarily assists students with social, emotional or behavioural difficulties, who are better suited to an alternative learning environment. At the time of the 2020 census, 25% of Bathurst students and 47% of Dubbo students identify as Indigenous. Around 84% of students had an identified disability meeting the criteria for NCCD funding.

Many students face serious barriers to attendance at – and full participation in – school. These barriers include (but are not limited to):

- mental health issues
- homelessness
- trauma and conflict
- substance misuse
- disability
- socioeconomic disadvantage
- family instability
- COVID -19

Attendance

Year	Non-Indigenous Attendance		Indigenous Attendance		Total Attendance	
	Bathurst	Dubbo	Bathurst	Dubbo	Bathurst	Dubbo
10	70%	74%	62%	52%	68%	63%
11	73%	62%	59%	48%	70%	59%
12	78%		74%		77%	

Management of Non-Attendance

Due to the nature of our cohort, non-attendance and school refusal have the potential to significantly impact on our student population. The school follows compliance guidelines by sending attendance letters so that parents/caregivers are aware of the dates students are absent. Parents/caregivers are always encouraged to discuss attendance matters with the school, and build an attendance plan with relevant teaching and support staff. Skillset Senior College has also invested in school management software that sends daily text messages to parents and carers updating them in real-time on their young person's attendance status.

Skillset Senior College employs the following strategies to address school non-attendance and to minimise the effect of this on student outcomes.

- Effective roll-marking procedures, complemented by a text messaging service to alert parents/carers when their student has not attended school
- Timely follow-up of unexpected or unexplained absences by phone call, message or email
- Clear communication of expectations regarding attendance to the student body, including a guideline that requires students to remain on campus at all times during the school day, and no unsupervised temporary departures (such as a visit to shops)

- Provision of food, drink, simple medical and basic hygiene supplies on campus to encourage attendance even when these aspects may be a challenge for students
- Assistance with navigating the public transport system, including support to access bus passes, timetables and safe transport options
- Individual education plans and case management for students with risk factors for sporadic attendance, in partnership with parents/carers and other key stakeholders such as mental health services.

For students who have a significant pattern of non-attendance, Skillset Senior College provides flexible opportunities and additional learning support, to ensure that students have the best chance of success. Assessment delivery is tailored to ensure maximum participation even for students for whom irregular attendance is a significant barrier to learning.

Retention

2020 Year 10	Commenced	Additional	Withdrew	Completed	Articulated	Other
Bathurst	38	4	6	36 (86%)	25 (60%)	11
Dubbo	34	18	11	41 (79%)	33 (63%)	8
Total	72	22	17	77 (81%)	58 (62%)	19

2020 Year 11	Commenced	Additional	Withdrew	Completed	Articulated	Other
Bathurst	29	-	10	19 (66%)	18 (62%)	-
Dubbo	29	1	18	12 (40%)	12 (40%)	-
Total	58	1	20	33 (56%)	31 (53%)	-

2020 Year 12	Commenced	Additional	Withdrew	Completed
Bathurst	18	-	3	15 (83%)

All eligible students who did not choose to articulate into the next school year were offered enrolment with the Skillset 'Youth Connect' program, designed to assist young people aged 15-19 into work, training or further study. A number of students accepted intake to the program, while 9 students enrolled at a secondary school elsewhere.

Post School Destination Survey

Year 10: 58 students (62%) of our cohort articulated into Year 11. Of the remaining 36 students, 3 students re-enrolled in Year 10 to repeat, 5 students went to TAFE, 5 students engaged in paid employment (full- or part-time, or approved volunteer activities), 3 students transferred to other schools, with the remainder of students status unknown.

Year 11: 30 of the original 59 students (51%) remained enrolled and articulated into Year 12 (beginning of Term 4) at Skillset Senior College. Other students withdrew enrolment during Year 11 for various reasons including entering the workforce, transitioning to TAFE or moving from the area.

Year 12: 15 students graduated with the HSC. Of the graduates, 2 students (13%) were accepted into university, 8 (53%) enrolled at TAFE or in further training, 4 students (27%) engaged in paid employment (full- or part-time, or approved volunteer activities) with the remainder of students' employment status unknown.

School Policies (Summary)

The policy documents below are excerpts from the Skillset Senior College Policy Manual. The policies below were updated and adopted in February 2020.

Enrolment

See policy documents online at <http://skillsetseniorcollege.nsw.edu.au/enrolment-policies>

Anti-Bullying Policy

See policy documents online at <http://skillsetseniorcollege.nsw.edu.au/antibullying-policies>

Discipline Policy

See policy documents online at <http://skillsetseniorcollege.nsw.edu.au/discipline-policies>

Complaints Policy

See policy documents online at <http://skillsetseniorcollege.nsw.edu.au/complaints-policies-and-procedures>

Student Welfare (Summary of Main Welfare Policies)

See policy documents online at <http://skillsetseniorcollege.nsw.edu.au/student-welfare-policies>

School-Determined Improvement Targets

2020 was our sixth year of operation as a NSW Independent Special Assistance School. The Skillset Senior College Leadership developed a School Master Plan to identify the forward direction of the College. In turn, the School Master Plan informed the School Strategic Plan. The development phase of the SSC Strategic Plan took place during 2020, with the final draft to be presented to the SSC board for approval in February 2021. The updated School Strategic Plan will be presented in the 2021 Annual Report.

The School Master Plan outlines the following objectives for the College:

- ▶ To attract and maintain a functional student body in order to secure a viable organisation, positioned to create the best future imaginable for its community.
- ▶ To attract, maintain, develop and invest in high quality staff, in order to support the learning, welfare and administration of the college community to the highest industry standard.
- ▶ To develop and maintain appropriate Infrastructure and systems, in order to maximise potential to create a positive learning and work environment for the SSC community.
- ▶ To develop, promote and maintain relevant best practice in the delivery of learning, wellbeing and administration, in order to maximise the human experience for the SSC community and ensure the sustainable viability of the organisation.
- ▶ To build and maintain a credible reputation as a first class learning and development organisation in order to maximise support and opportunities for SSC students and staff throughout their journey at the college and beyond.

As part of the plan, the following options for consideration have been incorporated for further discussion and consideration in 2021:

- Proactive roll-out of the SSC ethos and format beyond the Central West
- Responding to community need – opening further SSC campuses
- Leadership stream – providing professional development training to schools who may choose to refine how they operate

- Expansion of the SSC Research Institute
- Appetite for SSC becoming a Registered Training Organisation to be reviewed in 2021

Skillset Senior College set local target areas for improvement at the end of 2019. The table below describes each domain, and the ways in which we undertook to meet these targets during the 2020 school year, in some cases continuing into 2021.

The table below outlines these improvement domains:

Improvement Domain	Targeted Improvement	Improvements in 2020
Improve support for low literacy / numeracy students	Identify literacy and numeracy needs, and support these with individual approaches	Increased learning support staffing, intake testing for all new students to the College, with testing repeated part way through the year to track development and adjust supports. NCCD funding for students with identified literacy/numeracy difficulties targeted to improve intensive support for these students (both in-class and withdrawal settings).
Development of Individual Plans	Development of IEPs for all students to guide critical actions and high impact support interventions	Achieved target of the development of an IEP for every single student of SSC, including curriculum and wellbeing aspects. All teachers trained and supported in accessing and using the IEP to create appropriate curriculum modifications for each student, in consultation with Learning Support staff.
Professional Development for teachers	Enhance PD opportunities for all staff, with support to attend conference.	Individual staff attended PD of their choice throughout school year. Due to COVID-19 the annual conference was postponed to 2021. SSC is set to host the 2021 Alternate Schools Conference. In-house PD facilitated by staff, with programs to enhance our focus areas of wellbeing, curriculum and learning support. 'Lines of Effort' concept continued to guide selection of appropriate PD activities.
Increase community awareness and support	Media, marketing and communications enhancements. School governance body consisting of representative and actively engaged members with a commitment to maximising the potential of the school.	Social media presence enhanced and increasing reach in the community. Website improvements continue to make site more accessible and navigable. New SSC website set for development in 2021. Facebook marketing features utilised to enhance effectiveness of enrolment advertisements. Engagement with community partners in facilitating the Agriculture program. The SSC board welcomed Dr Libbey Murray and lawyer Chris Nicols to the board.

Enrolment and intake procedures	Improve targeting and efficiency of enrolment process	Enrolment interview process streamlined and delegated to the College Liaison Officer(s), commenced earlier in Year to encourage enquiries with the College. Partnerships with local schools to facilitate referral of suitable candidates. Both campuses achieved a full cohort of incoming students prior to the commencement of Term 1, with wait lists established as needed.
Improve physical facilities	Provision of facilities to support curricular and extra-curricular activities as identified by school community as priorities.	Dubbo Campus found a new home in 2020 Renovations began with planning for the site in progress for 2021. Classrooms fitted out with technology, art studio and staff areas developed. Sports shed and Agriculture shed purchased, awaiting construction in 2021. Equipment purchase approved for school-run outdoor sports programs. Upgrade of laptop facilities for student and staff use. Further upgrades planned for 2021. ITC remains an area of focus for 2021 and beyond.
Improve student wellbeing	Development of a dedicated team of professionals to support student wellbeing, navigate complex student issues and integrate wellbeing into all aspects of curriculum.	Further staffing of 'Student Support Team' increased to incorporate a dedicated full-time Student Support Coordinator in Dubbo (to commence in January 2021), the Chaplain role to continue at both sites, and College Liaison Officer included at the Dubbo Campus. Further plans to expand with College Mentor position in 2021. Bathurst Student Support Team continued to include these critical roles. Funded research project in planning for 2021 to examine effect of simple OT interventions on student wellbeing.
Curriculum	Evaluation and review of subject offerings, tertiary entry pathways.	Subject planning for senior students at Dubbo Campus (SLR, Food Technology and Investigating Science to change to Construction, Marine Studies and Work Studies in 2021 for Pre-lim students). HSC English changed to English Studies (Bathurst and Dubbo) to support different literacy needs of cohort. An increase to 53% of students transitioned into tertiary study or further training. ATAR pathway reviewed in 2020 and the decision was made to remain student centred and support alternate routes to tertiary education rather than ATAR.
Governance effectiveness	Expansion of SSC Board	Skillset Senior College is a separate legal entity to Skillset Ltd, with own Board now engaged and active. Skillset Ltd contracted to provide

		HR, admin, finance and logistical support to Skillset Senior College.
Policy	Full review and wider consultation with all stakeholders including students	All school policies reviewed and updated to better reflect the current operations of Skillset Senior College, and to enhance the effectiveness of processes. Staff induction includes the reading of all Policies and Procedures. Began research into the organisation CompliSpace, to be further looked into in 2021.

Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility

Skillset Senior College endeavours to instil the values of respect and responsibility in a number of ways and through a range of forums. In 2020, we continued to refine and develop our wellbeing focus of 'engagement through relationship', with significant investment into initiatives that promote community connection, strong interpersonal relationships and participation in the 'family life' of the school.

One key initiative continued in 2020 is the Duke of Edinburgh Award, which sees students participate in voluntary activities in the areas of Community Service, Skills, Physical Activity and Adventurous Journey. The program increases participants' self-efficacy, and encourages meaningful connection with the community and environment.

Additionally, students participated in a range of on- and off-campus activities designed to enhance their connections with each other and the staff. Awareness events and celebrations such as Reconciliation Week, Refugee Week and Harmony Day are complemented by regular sports afternoons, social BBQs, as well as elements embedded into the formal curriculum (such as Workshops for art, cooking, woodwork, Agriculture field trips, PCYC visits, and learning about Indigenous and Australian history and culture).

In 2020, we continued to implement our wellbeing focus with teachers actively providing pastoral care, and utilising a system of escalation and referral for significant challenges to allow the most efficient use of our resources. This is especially pertinent given the social disadvantage profile and significant mental health complexities for our student population. The School Chaplain - supported by funding from the National School Chaplaincy Program - was active in assisting with the delivery of the pastoral care program.

Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction

Skillset Senior College conducts scheduled parent teacher conferencing, with all SSC staff present on a bi-annual basis. In a round table environment, with all teachers, parents and students as active participants in the individual feedback session, real understanding of issues affecting students and parents can be articulated, considered and responded to. The Parent Meet and Greet evening was as success in Dubbo, however due to COVID-19 the Bathurst Meet and Greet evening was postponed for 2020.

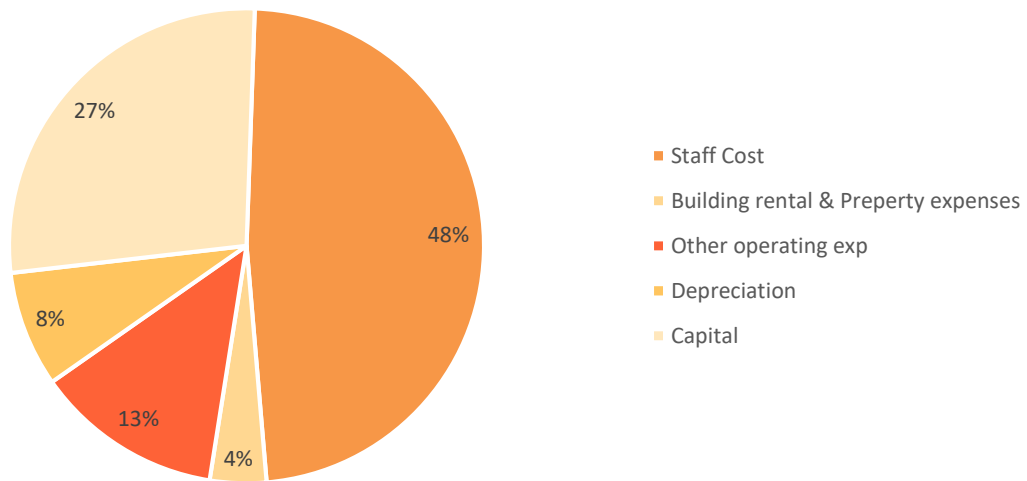
Staff appraisal interviews held in December 2020 gave staff the opportunity to reflect and communicate their satisfaction and wellbeing in the workplace. Responses shared during these interviews indicate a high level of staff satisfaction at Skillset Senior College, and a workplace that has a culture of kindness, innovation, support and collaboration.



2020 Year 12

Financial Information

Recurrent/ Capital Expenditure



Recurrent/ Capital Income

