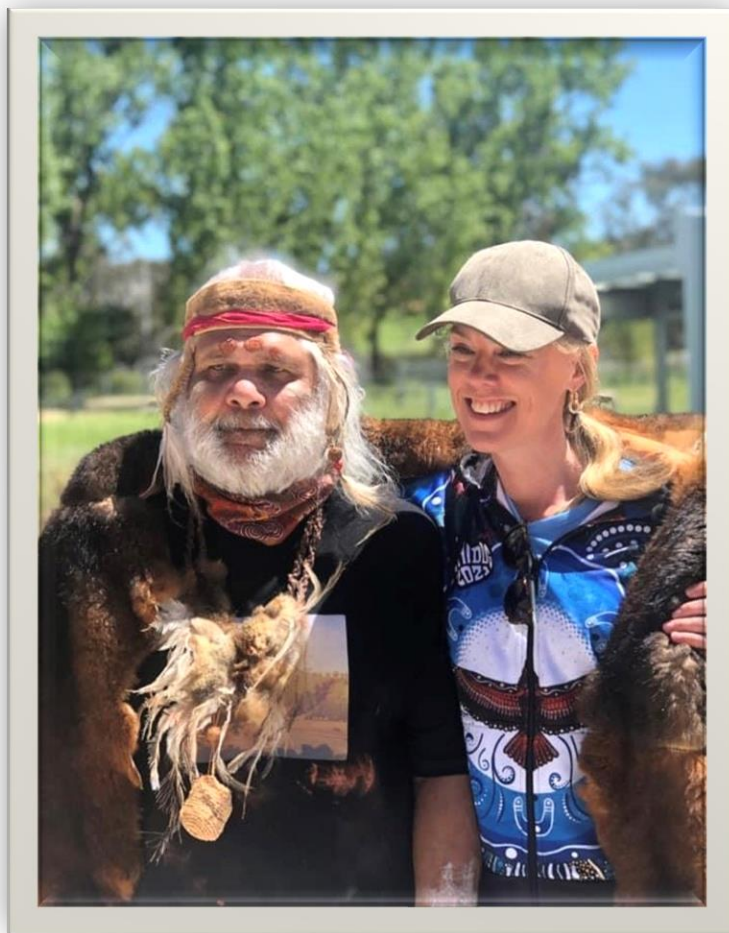


skillset. senior college

Annual Report 2021



School... but not as you know it

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Messages from Key School Bodies

Message from the Chair of the Board

I recall with some amusement the nationwide celebrations as a very difficult 2020 came to a close, and the widespread view that everything would return to “normal” at the onset of 2021. As we now know, the education sector headed into yet another very difficult year of major challenges including various restrictions, staffing shortages and disrupted timelines. I congratulate the Skillset Senior College leaders, staff and students on how they handled these challenges once again, and were able to complete another successful year, where the student always remained our central focus.

Skillset Senior College is unique. Set up in Bathurst in 2015, with only 34 Year 10 students and a handful of staff, our school today employs 36 passionate teaching and support staff and has 152 students enrolled across two regional cities, Bathurst and Dubbo delivering a broad curriculum across years 10 to 12. The school today is a thriving educational community at the forefront of the alternative school sector in Australia and internationally. 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 cultural framework is 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.

Excitingly, our school-based research project funded by the NSW Association of Independent Schools will be launched in 2022. This significant body of peer-reviewed work led, by our Head of Research Dr Martin Hughes, will demonstrate how our well-being model positively impacts on student mental health. It will provide academic rigour to what we already know is a life-changing educational environment. Our aim is to share our findings with the whole school education sector so that as many students in as many settings as possible benefit from the work. I look forward to sharing the results of this major project with our school community and supporters in our next annual report.

It was a great pleasure to celebrate our first HSC graduates from our Dubbo campus which opened in 2019. I was delighted to attend some of the end of year celebrations with students, staff, carers and families, where I heard first-hand the immense positive impact the school has had on individuals and whole families. We are proud that our educational setting has resonated with the Aboriginal community in Dubbo with 47% of students at this campus identifying as First Nations people. The capital improvements at this campus have added to the character of the school, with the addition of horses, cattle and sheep giving the students a much richer educational experience as it supports the enhanced delivery of the agriculture program.

We thank and farewell Mr Chris Nichols who retired and left the Board during the year, and welcome Ms Jacqueline Woods as a Director. Ms Wood’s skills as a practicing forensic accountant are a welcome addition. I thank all our Board of Directors who all volunteer their time, bringing a range of backgrounds, 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, providing a range of back-office services to the school across a number of domains including finance and IT services.

My final thanks go to the Head of College, Abbey Barrett, who has again demonstrated exemplary leadership throughout another challenging year to the great benefit of the whole school community. The passionate and dedicated leadership and staff of the college create an environment where mental

health improves, anxiety is calmed and learning can take place, providing the constant guidance, support and role modelling that makes our school such a special place.
I commend this annual report to you and am honoured to present my second annual message as Chair of this great school.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Craig Randazzo', with a stylized, flowing design.

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

Message from the Head of College

It is a pleasure to present the 2021 Annual Report as Head of College for Skillset Senior College (SSC). COVID - 19 was again at the forefront of the risks and issues for our school, our community and for the world to contend with. SSC navigated a year like no other, with the school values of kindness, courage and consideration informing each decision we made. Our 2021 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 team developed the student QUEST books that interactively involved students in their online learning experience. The student "Tribe" system assured every student was connected with a staff team member daily. The QUEST books, daily "Tribe" catch up and daily online interaction made the COVID - 19 learning environment fun, safe and innovative.

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 is a great way to connect and maintain communication with students.

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.

2021 marked the establishment of our inaugural Dubbo Year 12 HSC cohort of students. With an experienced teaching and learning support team, we embarked on the third year of SSC Dubbo and the campus settled into its new home on Sheraton Road. The site is now thoroughly fit for purpose and has land available for the SSC Agriculture Program or further infrastructure development. 2021 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.

The highlight of our year at both campuses was the graduation of 34 students in Dubbo and 34 in Bathurst who attained their Year 10 RoSA, and 19 Year 10 students who articulated into Year 11 in Dubbo and 26 in Bathurst. Both campuses had a full cohort of students, offering Years 10, 11 and 12.

During 2021, 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 highlights being the SSC Touch Football team who contribute to the local Monday night competition in Bathurst, the Dubbo Frisbee Monday night Competition 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 fifth cohort of HSC students. Our 2021 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 46% of the cohort went on to further study or training.

The Skillset Senior College Research Institute remained at the forefront of our program delivery. In 2021, we resumed our AISNSW School Based Research Project after postponement due to COVID-19 in 2020. Although the study was impacted again in August 2021, the team managed to complete the study, collecting substantial data on the impact of interventions on student anxiety, depression and cortisol levels. When we compared pre-test scores between Term 1 and Term 3 in 2021, we found statistically significant drops in anxiety and depression scores. The mean anxiety score dropped from 11.2 to 7.35 (35% decrease) and the mean depression score dropped from 13.45 to 9.9 (26% decrease). Although we found no statistical difference between cortisol levels at any sampling period, there was a noticeable shift in both female and male cortisol levels. Interestingly, we found variation (standard deviation) in male cortisol levels decreased over time. Less variation or spread in cortisol levels within males, may indicate less chaotic cortisol release being expressed over the duration of the study.

Our study demonstrated that school-based interventions can significantly improve adolescent anxiety and depression within a relatively short time frame. The interventions are brief, flexible and most importantly effective. If schools could replicate similar drops in severity amongst their own student populations, the ramifications for students, parents, families, communities and health care providers could be significant.

We have already begun to translate our findings into practice within the school. We have embedded elements of the study into the school day such as maintaining a weekly 'wellbeing walk' and our lead teacher Chris Harris has replicated some of the practical sensory engagement lessons with students.

We will disseminate our findings in multiple ways to maximise the impact of our study. We aim to publish our results in peer-reviewed journals to provide a level of academic legitimacy to our results. Most importantly however, is designing resources that can be used by education practitioners. We aim to create hands-on resources that can be used by practitioners globally, such as a 'teacher toolkit' created by staff involved in this study. In addition to this we aim to create an online module that can be used by pre-service teachers and existing teachers as formal professional development. We have approached universities with global reach to assist in this process to once again maximise the impact of our knowledge transfer.

The School Based Research Project has had a profound impact on Skillset Senior College. It has raised our awareness of other fascinating, school-based research taking place across New South Wales and beyond, and broadened the schools existing network. Since the inception of our project, we have engaged with an extensive number of organisations including The Evidence Institute, St Philip's Christian College DALE, Queenwood School for Girls, Roseville College, Warakirri College, Minarah College, Charles Sturt University, the University of Wollongong, Curtin University, the University of New England, Newcastle University, the University of Aberdeen, the University of Edinburgh and the University of Glasgow.

In 2021, we were invited to join a group of 30+ schools from across Australia in a Research Invested Schools group, connecting us with a number of research oriented organisations.

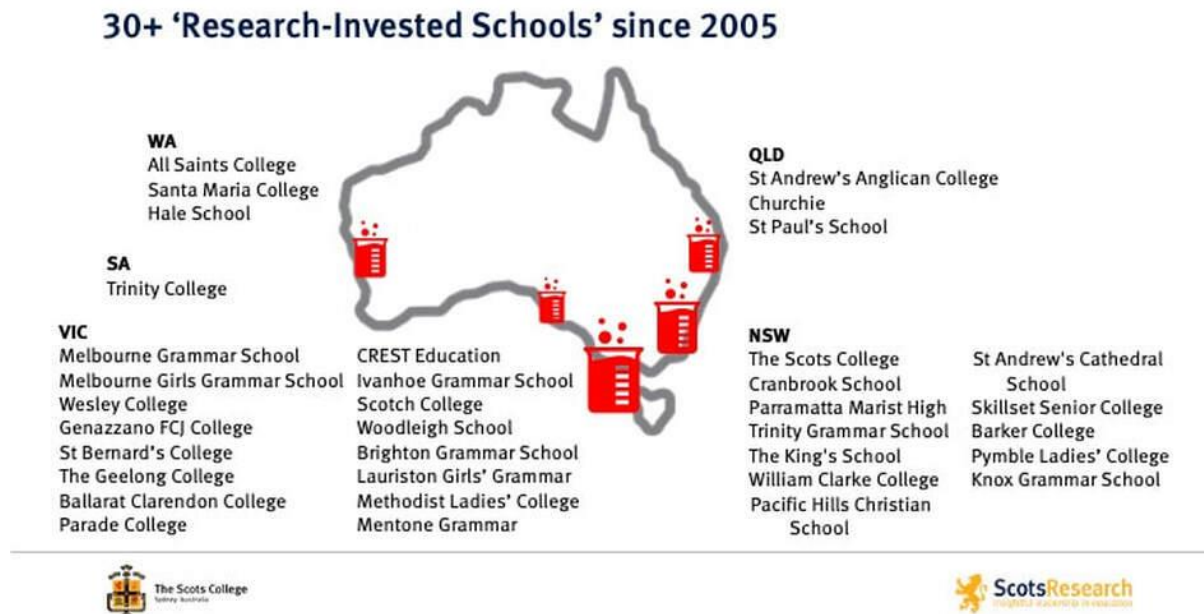


Figure 1. Research-Invested Schools from across Australia. Source: www.researchinvestedschools.net

We look forward to initiating exciting new projects in partnership with the University of Wollongong and Charles Sturt University in 2022.

In 2021 our teaching, administration and learning and support staff grew to a total of 36 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:

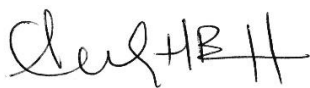
- A practising registered clinical counsellor, specialising in adolescent therapies
- A Major in the Australian Army Reserves, and a former senior Federal Police officer
- A qualified practicing midwife
- A former legal-aid lawyer, outdoor activities specialist and Duke of Edinburgh program coordinator
- 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
- 17% of staff identify as Aboriginal

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 development of the Sheraton Road campus in Dubbo, and the purchase of the agriculture and sports sheds for the Bathurst campus which were 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 our school. I am incredibly grateful to all our teachers and support staff, for the passion, kindness and dedication they bring to the college every day. 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

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.



Marshall Beale Callaghan –
Randazzo Award Recipient 2021
with Founding Principal Craig
Randazzo, now Chair of the College

Skillset Senior College:

- is a regionally based Special Assistance School
- has an enrolment capacity of approximately 152 students (in 2021)
- 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 37% 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 completing the HSC 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 2021, 32 students from the Bathurst Campus, and 28 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>	60	89368	6.67	21.67	40.00	23.33	8.33		13.32	28.80	35.62	15.64	5.98	.63
<u>Mathematics 200 hours (323)</u>	60	89574		16.67	51.67	23.33	8.33		15.34	22.86	32.01	22.68	6.57	.54
<u>Science 200 hours (350)</u>	60	89344	8.33	16.67	33.33	23.33	18.33		13.87	25.17	36.37	17.72	6.22	.64
<u>Geography 100 hours (4015)</u>	60	89378	1.67	8.33	46.67	31.67	11.67		15.90	27.94	34.11	15.25	6.30	.49
<u>History 100 hours (4007)</u>	60	89382	3.33	13.33	35.00	33.33	15.00		15.54	27.95	34.29	15.18	6.52	.51
<u>PDHPE 100 hours (2421)</u>	59	18669	8.47	13.56	45.76	28.81	3.39		18.52	36.79	31.43	9.65	3.32	.29

Senior Secondary Outcomes

Preliminary Course (Year 11) Results

In 2021, 21 students from the Bathurst Campus, and 22 students from the Dubbo Campus completed the requirements of Year 11, with access to the following on-campus subjects: English Standard, Mathematics Standard, Marine Studies, Agriculture, Computing Applications (Bathurst only), Community and Family Studies and Industrial 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>	41	9792	12.20	24.39	34.15	21.95	7.32		5.18	19.85	35.17	23.89	12.97	2.94
<u>Mathematics Standard 2 unit (11236)</u>	39	40589	5.13	28.21	30.77	25.64	10.26		9.57	23.43	37.07	20.77	8.21	.94
<u>Agriculture 2 unit (11010)</u>	40	2208	17.50	15.00	15.00	27.50	25.00		21.01	26.86	29.66	13.68	7.56	1.22

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>Industrial Technology 2 unit (11200)</u>	12	9440	16.67	16.67	25.00	16.67	25.00		12.65	25.47	34.70	17.56	8.46	1.15
<u>Community and Family Studies 2 unit (11060)</u>	18	12172		16.67	33.33	50.00			13.16	26.58	35.66	17.04	6.51	1.05

HSC Results

The 2021 Year 12 cohort (HSC Course) subject offerings were English Studies, Mathematics Standard 1, Investigating Science, Agriculture, Community and Family Studies, and Computing Applications. Of these courses, 6 units were Board Endorsed courses with external exams.

Course	Course	Students Included	Students Omitted	E.M. Mean	State E.M. Mean	School/State Variation	Z-score
15010	Agriculture	15		55.44	71.01	-15.57	-1.05
15060	Community and Family Studies	19	1	63.86	74.28	-10.42	-1.03
15215	Investigating Science	14		58.59	75.52	-16.93	-1.50

Course	Name	Included Students	Omitted Students	Band 6	Band 5	Band 4	Band 3	Band 2	Band 1
15010	Agriculture	15	3			2	2	7	4
15060	Community and Family Studies	19	6			6	8	4	1
15215	Investigating Science	14	3		2	1	3	6	2
	Band Total				2	9	13	17	7

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	16

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
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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	7
Provisional Accreditation	4
Pre-2004 Teacher accredited at Proficient level	1
Conditional Accreditation	2
Not accredited with TAA	0

Professional Development and Formal Training

In 2021, teaching staff attended the following training events:

Training Event	Number of Staff Attended
Framework for Offsite Learning	All Staff
AIS Research Symposium	4
Marine Teachers Conference	3
Canoe Building Masterclass	5
Coaching Clinic	Dubbo – all staff
Slam Poetry PD	1
Sustainable Agriculture	1
Black Dog Institute	2
Anaphylaxis and CPR Training	All Staff
Facilitator Training	1
Maths in Trade	2
Rhythm to Recovery	1
Dyslexia Training	1
Equine Learning Therapy	1
Child Protection	All Staff
Teen Mental Health First Aid	1
Accidental Counsellor training	4
TIG Training	2
NCCD Training	4

Workforce and Student Profile

Workforce Composition

By 01 Dec 2021, Skillset Senior College employed:

- 1 x Head of College (1.0FTE)
- 1 x Deputy Head of College (1.0FTE)
- 2 x Campus Co-ordinators (1.8FTE)
- 2 x Student Liaison Coordinator (1.8FTE)
- 15 x Teachers (11FTE)

- 1 x General Assistant/Learning Support (1.0FTE)
- 6 x Learning Support Assistants (5.1FTE)
- 3 x Learning Support Trainees (2.6FTE)
- 2 x College Liaison Officers (2.0FTE)
- 1 x College Mentor (1.0FTE)
- 2 x Aboriginal Education Officer (1.9FTE)
- 1 x Reception/Admin Assistant (1.0FTE)
- 1 x Administration Manager (1.0FTE)

Total School Staff = 36 (32.7FTE)

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 Animal Science 2012, CSU; Bachelor of Teaching 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)

	<p>2008 University of Western Sydney (now called Western Sydney University), Bachelor of Arts</p> <p>2009 University of Western Sydney, Master of Teaching</p> <p>2014 OTEN, Certificate III in Children's Services</p> <p>2018 OTEN, Certificate IV in Training and Assessment TAELN40116 (current version)</p>
	<p>Bachelor of Science (Mathematics & Computing) (1993) UWS</p> <p>Bachelor of Education (Secondary Science & Religion) (1997) ACU</p> <p>Graduate Cert in Physics (1998) ACU</p> <p>Cert IV TAE, Cert IV Project Management (2018)</p>
	<p>National Diploma in Performing Arts (2008) Hopwood Hall College</p> <p>Bachelor of Arts Upper Class Theatre Arts Degree (2011) Middlesex University, London</p> <p>Post Compulsory Education Training Certificate (2014) Edge Hill University, Liverpool</p> <p>Diploma in Teaching English Literacy and ESOL (2017) Bury College</p>



SSC Dubbo Staff front row from left: Mel Hazzard (Learning Support), Jennifer McNeight (Teaching), Ben Palmer (Teaching), Mark Whitfeld (Deputy Head of College), Abbey Barrett (Head of College), Janalee Conroy (Learning Support), Mel Cudworth (Teaching)

Second row: Craig Turner (Teaching), Kayla Valentine (Student), LaQuan Ranginui (Student), Patrick Hatch (Student), Serena Lewis (Student), Ally Motton (Student), Deanne Davis (Student Support), Paris Sidoti (Student), Tracey Strawns (College Liaison), Rachel Croft (Teaching).

Back Row: Lillyann Mason (Learning Support), Alison Cope (Teaching), Justin Clarke (Aboriginal Education Officer), Libby Wilson (Campus Coordinator).

Student Profile, Attendance and Retention

Student Profile

In our seventh year of operation, Skillset Senior College commenced 2021 with 152 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 2021 census, 26% of Bathurst students and 47% of Dubbo students identify as Indigenous. Around 84% of students had an identified disability or required significant adjustments to access learning therefore 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	79%	62%	69%	50%	76%	55%
11	75%	77%	64%	47%	71%	66%
12	73%	73%	72%	33%	73%	63%

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. 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

2021 Year 10	Commenced	Additional	Withdrew	Completed	Articulated	Other
Bathurst	34	1	1	33 (94%)	27 (77%)	1
Dubbo	29	25	7	34 (72%)	19 (40%)	13
Total	63	26	8	67 (82%)	46 (57%)	14

2021 Year 11	Commenced	Additional	Withdrew	Completed	Articulated	Other
Bathurst	30	-	9	21 (70%)	21 (70%)	-
Dubbo	28	4	10	22 (69%)	17 (53%)	-
Total	58	4	19	43 (69%)	38 (61%)	-

2021 Year 12	Commenced	Additional	Withdrew	Completed
Bathurst	18	-	3	15 (83%)
Dubbo	13	-	4	9 (69%)
Total	31	-	7	24 (77%)

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 11 students enrolled at a secondary school elsewhere.

Post School Destination Survey

Year 10: 46 students (57%) of our cohort articulated into Year 11. Of the remaining 21 students, 14 students re-enrolled in Year 10 to repeat, 5 students went to TAFE, and 2 students transferred to other schools.

Year 11: 38 of the original 62 students (61%) 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: 24 students graduated with the HSC. Of the graduates, 4 students (17%) were accepted into university, 9 (37%) enrolled at TAFE or in further training, 7 students (29%) engaged in paid employment (full- or part-time, or approved volunteer activities) with the remainder of students' employment status unknown.



SSC Bathurst Staff –front from left: Jono Hosking (Teaching), Lisette Dale (Teaching), Damian Wilesmith (Teaching), Mark Whitfeld (Deputy Head of College), Abbey Barrett (Head of College), Barbara Olsen (Administration Manager), Angela Masters (Learning Support), Bill Tink (Teaching)
Second row: Adam Ryan (Teaching), Helen Conroy (Learning Support), Khiara Ryan (Learning Support), Meg Hitchick (Campus Coordinator), Jaye Shean (Student Support), Sarah Bradbury (Student Support), Scott Anderson (Learning Support), Chris Harris (Teaching)
Back row: Rachel Brawley (Learning Support), Sandra Simpson (College Mentor), Donna Kennedy (Learning Support), Paula Hundy (Learning Support), Jenny Donnelly (College Liaison)

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 <https://www.skillsetseniorcollege.nsw.edu.au/school-governance/#1>

Anti-Bullying Policy

See policy documents online at <https://www.skillsetseniorcollege.nsw.edu.au/school-governance/#2>

Discipline Policy

See policy documents online at <https://www.skillsetseniorcollege.nsw.edu.au/school-governance/#3>

Complaints Policy

See policy documents online at <https://www.skillsetseniorcollege.nsw.edu.au/school-governance/#4>

Student Welfare (Summary of Main Welfare Policies)

See policy documents online at <https://www.skillsetseniorcollege.nsw.edu.au/school-governance/#5>

School-Determined Improvement Targets

2021 was our seventh 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, which was ratified by the SSC Board in February 2021. The School Strategic Plan is attached on the school website for review:

<https://www.skillsetseniorcollege.nsw.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Skillset-Senior-College-Strategic-Plan.pdf>

Skillset Senior College set local target areas for improvement at the end of 2020. The table below describes each domain, and the ways in which we undertook to meet these targets during the 2021 school year, in some cases continuing into 2022.

The table below outlines these improvement domains:

Improvement Domain	Targeted Improvement	Improvements in 2021
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). All staff trained in involved in the NCCD moderation process. We initiated planning and staffing for the COVID-19 Intensive Learning Support Funding
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 2022. SSC is set to host the 2022 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.	Social media presence enhanced and increasing reach in the community. Website improvements continue to make site more accessible and navigable. New SSC website

	School governance body consisting of representative and actively engaged members with a commitment to maximising the potential of the school.	developed and launched 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 Jacqui Woods 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. We continue to meet above targeted student numbers.
Improve physical facilities	Provision of facilities to support curricular and extra-curricular activities as identified by school community as priorities.	Dubbo Campus renovations began with planning for the site in progress for 2022. Classrooms fitted out with technology, art studio and staff areas developed. The Dubbo Campus "House" and "Hub" areas were fully renovated to assist with College assemblies, functions, visual design and science. The Bathurst sports shed and Agriculture shed were 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 2022. ITC remains an area of focus for 2022 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 (Dee Davis commenced in January 2021), the Chaplain role to continue at both sites, and College Liaison Officer continued at both campuses. Further plans to expand with College Mentor position in Dubbo in 2022 – Ben Kirkness hired in 2021. Bathurst Student Support Team continued to include these critical roles. AIS funded research project in action during 2021 to examine effect of simple OT interventions on student wellbeing. The report and project to be completed in 2022.
Curriculum	Evaluation and review of subject offerings, tertiary entry pathways.	Subject planning for senior students at Dubbo Campus (SLR, Food Technology and Investigating Science changed to Construction, Marine Studies and Work Studies in 2021 for

		Prelim students). HSC English changed to English Studies (Bathurst and Dubbo) to support different literacy needs of cohort. An increase to 54% of students transitioned into tertiary study or further training. The decision was made to remain student centred and support alternate routes to tertiary education rather than ATAR. This proved to be an outstanding decision and outcome for the college.
Governance effectiveness	Expansion of SSC Board	Skillset Senior College is a separate legal entity to Skillset Ltd, with own Board engaged and active. Skillset Ltd continues to be contracted to provide HR, admin, finance and logistical support to Skillset Senior College. There is an appetite to investigate and attain educationally specific business and ICT support for the school in 2022.
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. Engaged the organisation CompliSpace, to be best practice and up to date in relation to policy, procedure and compliance.

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 2021, 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 2021 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, Wear it Purple Day, Refugee Week and Harmony Day are complemented by regular sports afternoons, social BBQs, family lunches 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 2021, 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. The school Tribes system, developed during the pandemic lockdowns, is an effective staff and student means of engagement that we have continued to maintain post-pandemic.

Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction

Skillset Senior College conducts scheduled parent teacher conferencing, with all SSC staff present on an 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. During COVID-19, parent teacher interviews were conducted via Zoom or Microsoft Teams. 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 2021.

Staff appraisal interviews held in Term 4 2021 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.



2021 Year 12 Bathurst

Financial Information

