

2021 Annual Report to The School Community



School Name: **Alkira Secondary College (8874)**



- All teachers at the school meet the registration requirements of the Victorian Institute of Teaching (www.vit.vic.edu.au).
- The school meets prescribed minimum standards for registration as regulated by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) in accordance with the Education and Training Reform (ETR) Act 2006. This includes schools granted an exemption by the VRQA until 31 December 2021 from the minimum standards for student enrolment numbers and/or curriculum framework for school language program.
- The school is compliant with the Child Safe Standards prescribed in Ministerial Order No. 870 – Child Safe Standards, Managing Risk of Child Abuse in School.

«PrincipalSignDescription»

- All teachers employed or engaged by the school council meet the registration requirements of the Victorian Institute of Teaching.
- To the extent that the school council is responsible, the school meets prescribed minimum standards for registration as regulated by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) in accordance with the Education and Training Reform (ETR) Act 2006. This includes schools granted an exemption by the VRQA until 31 December 2021 from the minimum standards for student enrolment numbers and/or curriculum framework for school language program.
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«PresidentSignDescription»

About Our School

School context

Alkira Secondary College; the 'School on the Hill', is a large secondary school located in Cranbourne North; the growth corridor of the south-east. We were the first PPP or Public Private Partnership school under the Partnership Victoria in Schools (PViS) model.

The school is proud to be the school of choice for our community; providing personalised learning in a positive and productive environment, encouraging our community to live our shared values of Respect, Integrity, Care and Excellence. We exist to 'secure the entitlements of every student'; where every child should progress through their years of learning feeling challenged, supported and equipped with the necessary skills to face the future. Our aim is to enable students to be contributing, empathic and responsible citizens, who see learning (in all its forms) as the norm.

In 2021, our enrolment was 1616 students, divided into five Sub Schools; four Houses (7 – 10 Sub Schools); Malloo, Towera, Yaan and Cowarr, which operate within a SWIS model (School Within a School) and Later Years (11 – 12 Sub School). All students are connected to a house, which provides students with a 'sense of belonging' to a close network of peers and teachers within a bigger school setting and as the transition into Later Years they are supported through specific structures, processes and enhancement programs that enable our senior students to achieve their individual bests.

The total workforce composition of the College in 2021 consisted of 189 staff members; equating to 6 Principal Class members, 136 teachers and 47 Education Support (ES) staff. (104 EFT and no Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage).
SFOE is 0.4204.

Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO)

In 2021, the College's Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) focused on the implementation of Key Improvement Strategies (KIS) around the Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO) dimensions of; Building practice excellence, Curriculum planning and assessment, Evaluating impact on learning, Vision values and culture, Empowering student and building school pride, and Health and wellbeing. This included:

- Improve understanding and use of formative assessment and differentiation in the classroom
- Further embed a positive climate for learning through the development of a college model
- Review wellbeing structure and practices (staffing and resources) to identify, support and monitor student wellbeing

To support implementation of these KIS, the college made strategic Leading Teacher and Learning Specialist recruitments, continued staff collaboration through ALCs (Alkira's PLCs) and took advantage of external professional development to drive work around formative assessment and differentiation.

Significant time and energy was put into

Achievement

In 2021, Alkira Secondary College again made significant changes to its learning and teaching program (to cater for Covid-19) and, where there were some periods in a remote and flexible learning approach. Teachers, teacher aides, students (and parents) continued to be flexible and committed to the education of students at the school. NAPLAN tests were able to be conducted for families and the school for the first time in two years.

Analysis of benchmark growth showed a decline in Reading at Year 7 level from previous results. Although stable in the middle bands the top percentage growth declined and there was a substantial increase in the below benchmark growth band. This was also the case in Year 9 where students in the upper and middle growth band decreased from 2019 to 2021. Conversely, there was an improvement across all bands in both the year 7 and year 9 Writing from the 2019 results. There was also a substantial reduction in growth in Numeracy in both Year 7 and Year 9 with stable growth in meeting the benchmark but a reduction in both above benchmark growth and below benchmark growth. Consequently there is a need to transform our programs in Reading and Numeracy. Unfortunately, this trend continues to leave us behind our 'similar schools' cohort in Reading but in Numeracy we were lagging behind as a percentage.

The 2021 data for Yr.12 students, as indicated by our English results, showed that there was a consistency in VCE completion. Our middle band of students remained at 53% with a decrease in scores at the high level with 10% of students achieving a score of 37+. A large group of students achieved study scores between 29 and 36 and an increased number achieved scores of below 28. This is a trend that the school has been showing over a number of years despite the big improvement shown in 2017 – 2018.

VCE results:

- 97% of students satisfactorily completed their Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE).
- The average study score was 29.
- The highest student ATAR was 99.64.
- 7 students received an ATAR of 90 or above.
- 15 students received an ATAR of 85 or above.

VCAL Results

- 91% of student passed their Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL).

These were pleasing results but provide opportunities for improvement.

Engagement

In the 2021 school year the College focused on connecting students to the College as we again went through periods of lockdown during the Covid-19 Pandemic. The focus was on identifying students who were disconnected and at risk of disengaging. The work that was undertaken around offering support and re-engagement enabled to get students back to school.

This approach was supported through the College's connection to their Sub-School / House and their Homegroup Teacher through our Pastoral Care program. The weekly check-in and monitoring of student attendance became a key focus in ensuring that all the work undertaken in 2020 to reduce absenteeism did not go to waste. In 2021, school absenteeism (across Yr.7-12 students) was 17.92 days increasing from the average of 9.64 from 2020. However, it was 5% lower than the state average of 21.17%. In the last two years, with this focus on absenteeism, we have continued to trend below state average.

Absentee averages (the average number of days absent) across all year levels were: Yr.7 (17 days), Yr.8 (18 days),

Yr.9 (21 days), Yr.10 (18 days), Yr.11 (16 days) and Yr.12 (12 days). This result is similar to like-schools and clearly represents the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. There is no doubt the systems set-up to monitor attendance in 2021 allowed us to identify early absenteeism and then work with relevant families for continued support for student learning and wellbeing either remotely or within school. On reflection, working collaboratively with our community, the student attitudes to school survey results demonstrated an 81% positive attitude to attendance. This was only a slight decrease from 87% in 2020.

The College continues to provide opportunities for community engagement and connection through Pastoral Care teacher communication with parents at Round Table Conferences, the First Day Conference and communication through Compass and newsletters. Much of the on-site connection with our community was impacted by the restrictions of the pandemic. Conscious efforts were made to ensure we continued community engagement through on-line platforms

Student engagement, through inclusion, continues to be a focus. As a result of some key planning targeted staffing appointments were made at the end of 2021 to further drive student inclusion and agency within the classroom. Our student leaders continue to attend network and regional forums, they continued to sit on key college planning teams, such as curriculum and they played a key part in the planning of college events. House Assemblies and school presentations that continued to provide unique opportunities and platforms for agency, were run 'remotely' again in 2021. Through these platforms, students were able to engage with a wider audience. Looking forward there is plenty of work to be done to reverse the impacts of the two year pandemic which has seen connectedness data go from 73% in 2019 and 2020 to a low of 52% in 2021.

The college is proud of the steps that it has taken to engage in the respectful relationships program. This is where staff professional learning focused on aspects such as: links to social expectation, cultural sensitivities, equity and tolerance. The development of further gender inclusive policies, such as the running of a lunchtime club that supports inclusion, have been the key drivers that the wellbeing team have continued in 2021.

Whilst the ability to access external programs was somewhat limited in 2021, the college continues with its strong networking connections with: Narre Community Learning Center, Merinda Park Community Learning Centre, the Adolescent Recovery Centre, Stepping Stones, YPARC, Head Space and Operation New Start (Casey and Dandenong). These have proven to be successful partnerships, that provided alternative pathways and options for 'at-risk' students, where continued engagement and attendance at a structured school setting is a challenge. Student retention (percentage of Yr.7 students who remain at Alkira SC through to Yr.10) continues to improve with data indicating an upward trend from 2018-202, improving marginally each year. In 2021, our 'retention' percentage was 75.6% with a 4-year trend of 78.5%. School VCE completion remains high at 96.9% compared with that of the state average which is 97.1%.

As our student numbers increase, so too does a continued focus on engagement, through creating a Positive Climate for Learning. The college has developed a Positive Climate for Learning model that will begin to be rolled out in 2022. Important professional learning focusing on student engagement, 'sense of belonging' and celebrating positive aspects of college life are key platforms, from a social sense, are designed to bridge the gap that the pandemic has caused. The College's newly developed Strategic Plan incorporates a whole school approach to engagement.

Wellbeing

Throughout 2021 the college made significant structural changes to the whole school framework supporting wellbeing. The restructure, which included employing three fulltime staff in wellbeing, enables more students to receive the wellbeing support they needed to flourish in their classes and in our school community. Collaboration with significant leaders in the college has ensured wellbeing needs were identified, coordinated and managed and that students are supported both in and out of the classroom. Their social and emotional skills were developed to ensure success both in and out of the school environment.

The college has continued with its tiered system, which is used to identify students deemed 'at risk', and a whole school approach to the 'notice and enquire' safe minds strategy. These priorities have built the capacity for all education support staff and teachers to embed a culture of wellbeing, through their immediate interactions with students. This has been a priority so that staff understand the diverse needs of the students as they transition back into onsite learning after the extended lock down.

The college remains committed to identifying, recording and monitoring students 'at risk' and developing 'teams around the learner'. A dedicated and purpose-built Wellbeing Centre is in the planning stages and will provide two flexible classrooms, private counselling rooms, individual office spaces, meeting rooms, toilets, a kitchenette and specific wellbeing resources. It will further enhance a strategic approach to supporting students' mental, physical and social wellbeing. In addition, the new centre will house a multi-faith room to enable students to connect to their faiths throughout the school day. A further sensory room is also planned for students requiring such provision.

The employment of a Leading teacher, for students with additional needs, will elevate the importance of the use of ILPs and IEPs for: Koori, OOH, PSD funded and PSD non funded students. In addition to this new resource, the college has invested in staff training in Positive Behaviour Support Strategies, to help understand the function of student behaviour, reduce stress in the classroom and equip students with skills beyond the curriculum. The college's commitment to inclusion has seen the PSD department double in size within the year. Students are receiving supports from inclusion aides in the classroom more frequently and the intervention programs to build capabilities are now being implemented.

A strong grade six into year 7 transition program with our feeder schools ensures a smooth and successful movement into secondary education. Transition opportunities, outside of the state wide orientation day, are provided for vulnerable students and the impact of these extra transition sessions are notable with students feeling more confident and comfortable as they embark on their journey in high school. Equally, a rigorous approach to managed individual pathways; through course counselling, close collaboration between the college, the student and parent / carer, ensures a critical transition into further education and/or employment.

English as an Alternative Language (EAL) at Alkira Secondary College continues to be a major growth area, across Yr.7-12. The college has employed multi-cultural aides who work at a ratio of 1:1 with students to enhance their classroom abilities, work with staff to build EAL understanding and acknowledgement in the classroom, and engage with parents. Recently, the College has partnered with Foundation House to roll out a Refugee Education Support Program over the next two years. Positions of Responsibilities within the college reflect our commitment to supporting cultural diversity with regular promotion of our many nationalities occurring throughout the school year.

Finance performance and position

Alkira Secondary College maintained a sound financial position throughout 2021. By ensuring our school fees were kept low and specific to subject areas, we were able to receive a high level of family contributions. These funds were vital in maintaining our ability to deliver a high standard of programs. The School Strategic Plan, along with the 2021 Annual Implementation Plan, continued to provide the framework for school council allocation of funds to support school programs and priorities. All funds received from the Department, or raised by the College, have either been expended or committed to subsequent years, to support the achievement of educational outcomes and other operational needs of the school, consistent with Department policies, School Council approvals and the intent/purposes for which funding was provided or raised.

For more detailed information regarding our school please visit our website at
<https://www.alkirasecondarycollege.com.au/>

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In 2021, the College's Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) focused on Learning Catch-Up and Extension, Happy Active and Healthy Kids and Connected Schools priorities. This included:

- Maintaining PLCs structures to support teacher collaboration and reflection of strengthen teaching practice
- Implementing the Teacher Learning Initiative
- Strengthen the Schools Within Schools structure / Houses
- Focused on teachers consistently implementing identified aspects of the instructional model

To support the implementation of these Key Improvement Strategies the college prioritised staff collaboration time, upskilling staff to work in a remote learning and teaching setting, continued ALCs (Alkira's PLCs) at school and remotely, made strategic tutor staff recruitments, triangulated data to identify students and took advantage of external professional development to drive work around formative assessment and differentiation.