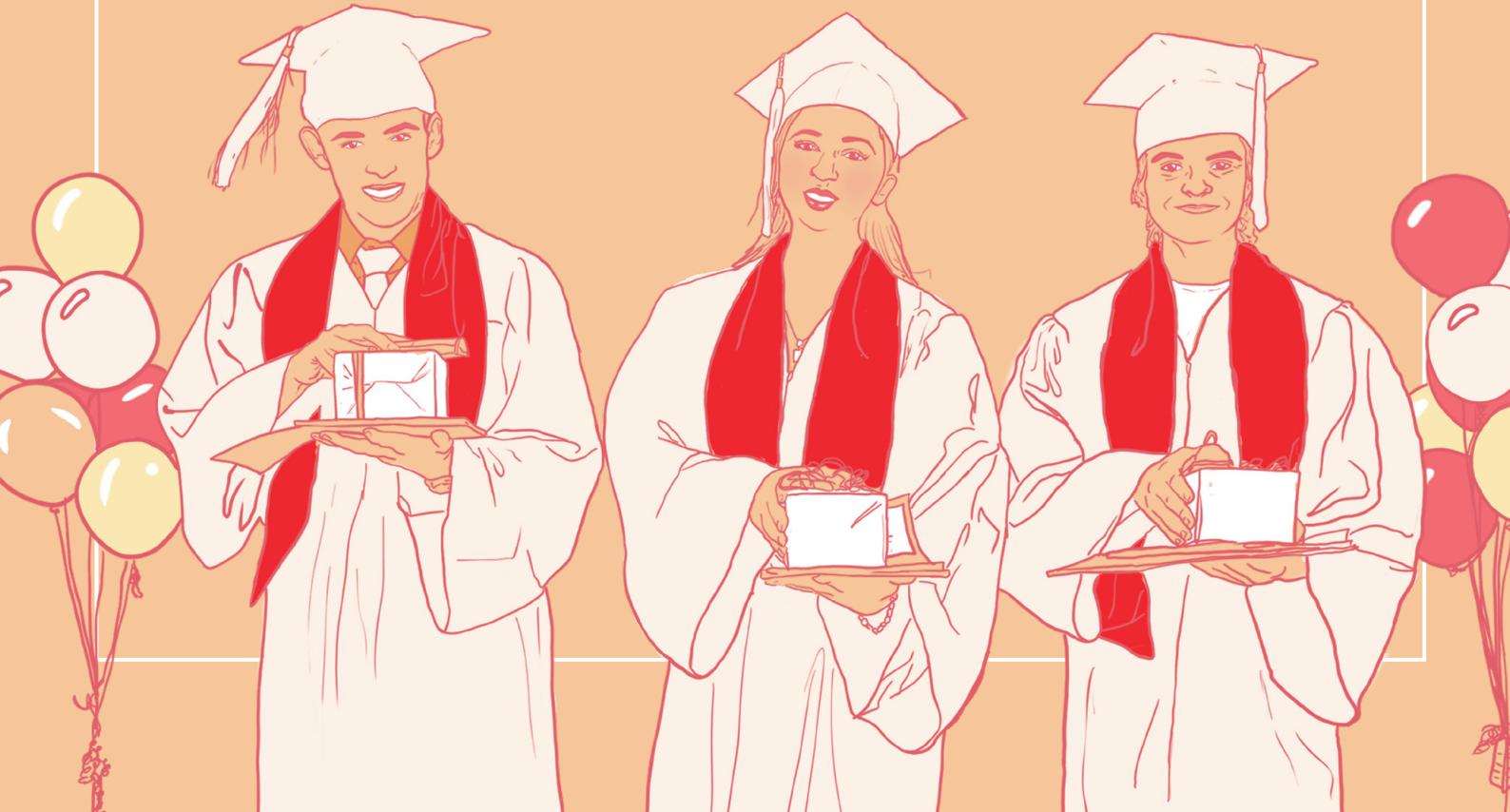




Alesco Secondary College

Annual Report 2023





Atwea College



Alesco Secondary College

The Waterlily is the symbol for Atwea College and Alesco Secondary College.

A Waterlily is a very unique flower - it is strong, and beautiful in its simple geometric design. A Waterlily will grow to accommodate whatever size vessel it is planted in – it will keep on growing until it's reached its full potential.

To this end, the waterlily is representative of our students, and the pot is the size of the opportunity provided to them by their learning experiences.

Without water, a Waterlily doesn't have the strength to grow towards the sunlight on its own. Atwea and the community of support we give our students is much like the water that holds up a waterlily. We are there to assist and support the learner to reach their full potential. We surround and nurture the learner to grow and develop ever upward with strength.

Alesco Secondary College would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we live, work and learn. We wish to acknowledge and show our respect to the elders, past, present and emerging for their deep culture and the contributions they make to the life of our community.

Alesco is committed to fostering and advancing inclusion and welcomes and celebrates the strength this diversity brings us. We welcome people from all backgrounds, cultures, genders, ages, abilities and orientations to help unlock our potential.

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Our Locations

- Head Office
- Alesco Secondary College

Wonnaruwa

Geawegal

Worimi

Abermain

Head Office
Northlakes

Awabakal

Charlestown

Newcastle

Tomaree

Biripi

About Us



Alesco Secondary College is a part of Atwea College (formally known as WEA Hunter), which is one of the oldest continuous community-based education providers in NSW. It has been in the Hunter since its inception in 2002 and now stretches to the Mid North Coast. Starting in 2002 as Alesco Learning Centre, changing its name to Alesco Senior College in 2013, and to Alesco Secondary College in 2023.

Alesco is a collaborative model between all the stakeholders involved. Alesco is a registered and accredited, non-government independent school specifically designed for the inclusion engagement of young people who are struggling to find success in a traditional school setting.

Alesco Secondary College has campuses located in: Newcastle, Charlestown, Cessnock, Northlakes, Raymond Terrace, Tomaree and Tuncurry. We stand by our policy of a zero tolerance for bullying, which is implemented into all of our campuses day to day activities and processes.

Every campus is run by a Head of Campus, who has the delegated authority of the Principal on a day to day basis. The Head of Campus works very closely with the Student Wellbeing Officer of the campus to reflect the balance in the Alesco focus. In addition to these two roles, every campus has a teaching team, and at least one Student Learning Support Officer. Depending on the size of the campus, there may also be a Student Wellbeing Support Officer.

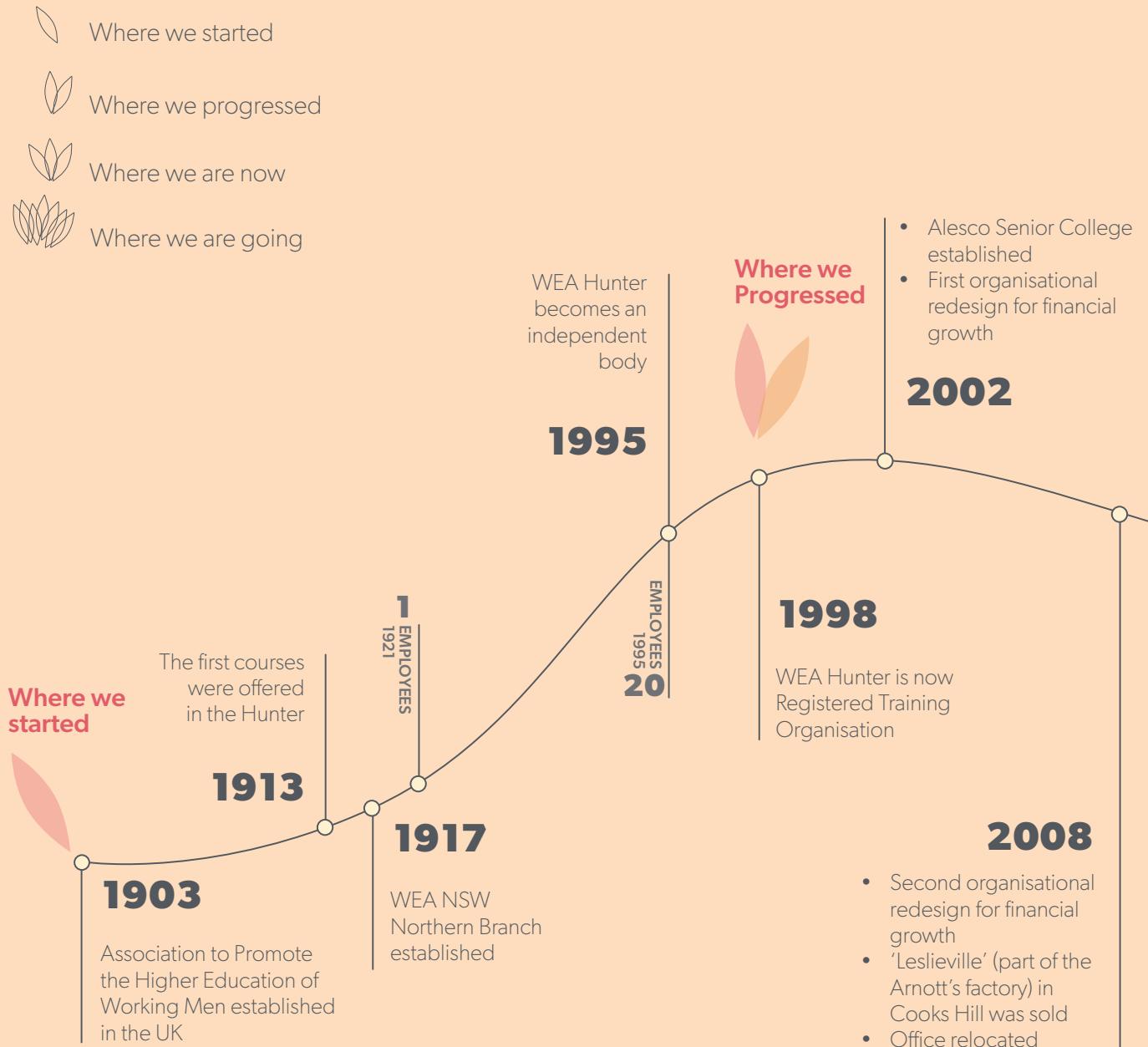
Alesco Secondary College believes that students need solid grounding in the key learning areas in order to find success in learning. Many of our students, for a variety of reasons, often have gaps in their learning which means that they sometimes need additional time in the core subjects. For this reason, Alesco does not offer an over complicated timetable to students. Having a clear and simplified timetable also allows our teaching staff to engage in innovative teaching practices to ensure that students are participating and enjoying their learning experience.

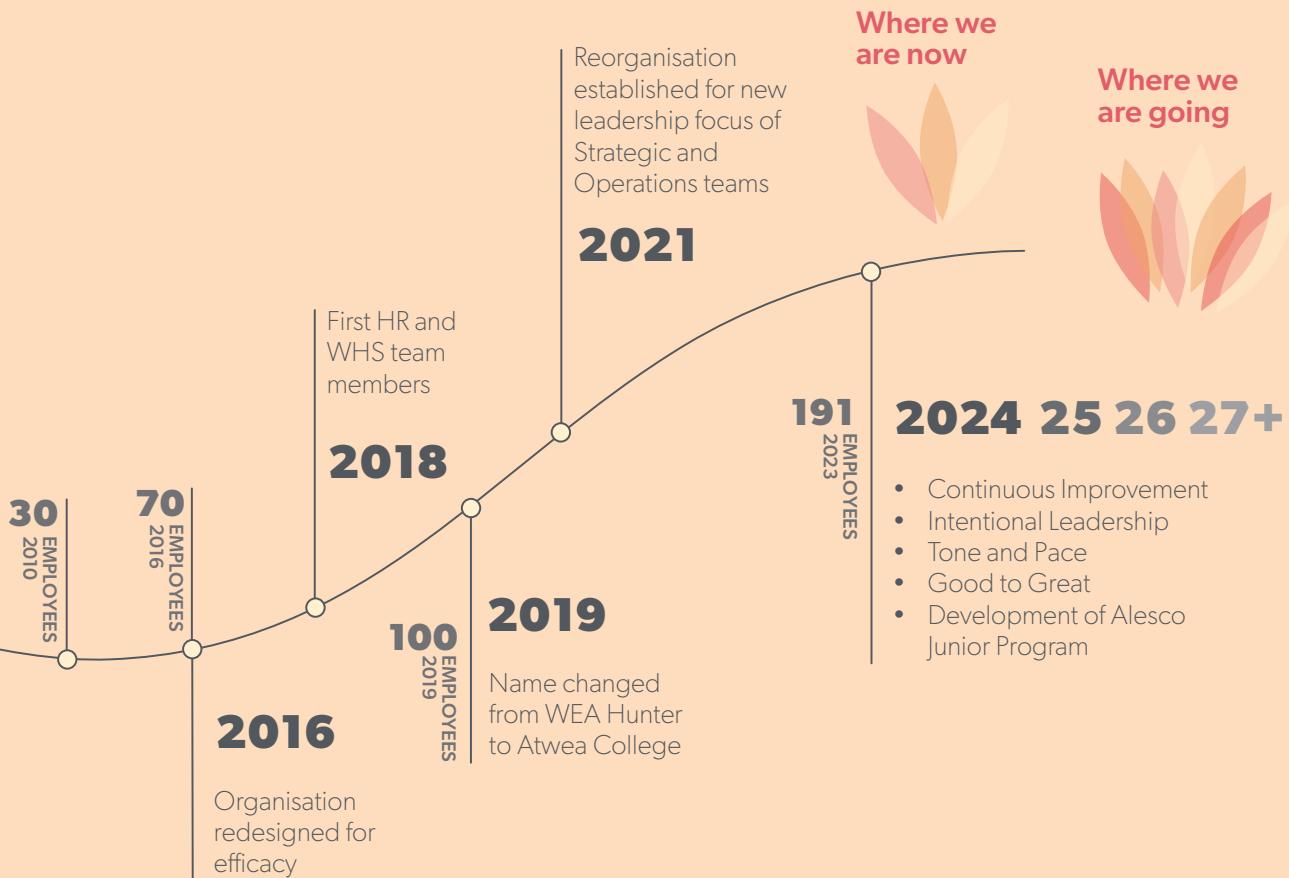
Alesco offers students a HSC compressed delivery model which allows them more time per year in each subject but they study fewer subjects in the 12 month period. This means that in any 12 month period they will complete all Preliminary (Year 11) and HSC (Year 12) course hours in 3 subjects. For this reason we break our students into Senior 1 and Senior 2 groups, rather than Year 11 and 12. We also offer a Year 13 program, designed to assist students in the transition from school to work or further education.

Alesco aims to promote education as important for young people, as well as helping to create better future citizens of our community through the development of the values of respect and responsibility for themselves and others around them.

Alesco Secondary College, like its auspicing organisation Atwea College, does not have any religious affiliations.

Our Evolution





Governance Framework

Alesco Secondary College comes under the governance of the Atwea College Board of Directors. The Board sets and oversees plans and policies for the sound management of Atwea College and Alesco Secondary College including the organisation's culture, values, strategic direction, financial performance, operational objectives, remuneration framework and risk governance.



Risk Management Framework

The Board of Directors has adopted a Risk Management Framework for the effective management of material risks, comprising of the following key elements:



Our Mission, Vision and Values

Our Vision

is to provide quality and accessible learning opportunities that enhance people's lives and unlocks their potential.

Our Mission

is to continuously improve our services in accordance with our values to respond to learners' needs.

Our Values

Integrity

We demonstrate a consistent and uncompromising commitment to the highest personal, professional and ethical standards.

Inclusion

We strive to create an environment where a diverse range of people can access opportunities and be valued. We intentionally design strategies for the active engagement of all, especially those who may need support for their successful involvement.

Innovation

We embrace new ideas and are open to moving forward with a positive curiosity to the possibilities. We challenge ourselves to continually improve and positively influence the things that can be achieved.

Board of Directors

Our Board of Directors provide independent oversight, counsel and decision-making support to the Strategic Leadership Team.

The Board meets at least six times annually and members also provide expertise to advisory committees in the areas of Education, Finance & Audit, and People & Culture.



Jane McConvile
Chairperson



David Larkman
Deputy Chairperson

Jane joined the Atwea College Board of Directors in 2019 and stepped into the role of Chairperson in 2023. She currently sits on the Executive Committee and the People and Culture Advisory Committee. Jane brings over 20 years of experience working across large national Not-For-Profits, education and consulting firms and holds qualifications in law, environmental science and governance. In 2017 she launched her Newcastle-based Professional Services firm, FiveSeven Consulting where she works alongside some of the state's largest employers supporting their people and culture functions. Jane is passionate about the positive impact education can have for our youth and communities, and the importance of both accessibility and diversity of the services available.

David joined the Atwea Board of Directors in 2020, becoming Deputy Chairperson in 2023. He sits on the Executive Committee and the Finance and Audit Advisory Committee. He brings expertise in driving operational efficiencies, leading significant system transformations, steering high-performing teams while promoting a balanced approach to work and life. David is deeply committed to expanding access to learning opportunities and empowering others to achieve their educational and vocational aspirations.



Pru Killick



Darrell Evans



Gillian Malcolm

Pru joined the Atwea Board of Directors in June 2023 and currently sits on the People and Culture Advisory Committee. Pru brings over 18 years of experience in HR strategy, learning and development, service operations, compliance, and Governance. She is currently the People and Culture Strategic Partnership Manager with the City of Newcastle supporting and enabling the HR and IR teams within the council to deliver operational excellence.

Darrell joined the Atwea Board of Directors in June 2023. As a former Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) in universities, he is passionate about the transformative power of education and its promise for future generations. He is the founder of globalDARBE (Consulting and Training) and an academic by background. Darrell is currently an honorary professor at The University of Newcastle and Adjunct Professor at Monash University.

Gillian brings significant experience in risk management and business continuity from her roles working for Coal Mining Industry (Long Service Leave) Funding Corporation, Westpac, and Defence Housing Australia. As General Manager Risk, Governance and Assurance for Coal Mining Industry (Long Service Leave) Funding Corporation, she is passionate about embedding sound risk management practices in decision making and supporting the business achieve its strategic objectives. Gillian holds a Bachelor of Commerce from the University of Newcastle, is a Certified Internal Auditor, Certified Practicing Accountant, Professional Member of the Institute of Internal Auditors and holds a Master of Business Administration. Gillian is passionate about helping people in the community as evident with her volunteer work with Meals on Wheels and she brings this passion and commitment to her role at Atwea.



Chris Seysener



Peter Collins



Cass Phillipott



Seamus Fagan

Chris joined the Atwea Board of Directors in 2016 and served as Chairperson from 2018 to 2022 inclusively. He currently sits on the Executive Committee. Chris brings 20 years of experience across several areas including service delivery, program governance, commercial and fiscal management, and organisational change. Committed to contributing to the Newcastle community, Chris believes everyone has the right to a good education and that lifelong learning enables people to develop to their full potential, lead happy and fulfilling lives and better adapt to inevitable change.

Peter lends his experience in coaching, industrial relations and working with councils and schools to the Atwea Board of Directors. Peter has over 26 years experience as an HR operations practitioner, working with both large and small organisations in HR training and education. He is currently HR consultant with Hunter New England Health.

Peter resigned from the Board in December 2023.

Cass joined the Atwea College Board of Directors in 2022 and currently sits on the Finance and Audit Subcommittee. She has over 15 years of experience across a range of industries including mining, local government, and education. Cass has a sound knowledge and understanding of the not-for-profit sector including the finance, commercial and governance requirements of non-government schools. She is passionate about people, education and making a positive contribution towards empowering students to receive quality education and thrive in a safe learning environment where they can achieve their full potential.

Seamus is an honorary Associate Professor at the University of Newcastle and former Director of the English Language Foundation Studies Centre which hosted the largest enabling program for students in Australia. Seamus is committed to ensuring education is for all, and firmly believes that all people have untapped capabilities.

Committees

Atwea College draws on the expertise and advice of three advisory committees that meet throughout the year to guide the organisation. The Finance and Audit Advisory Committee and People and Culture Advisory Committee consist of members of the Board of Directors.

The Educational Integrity Advisory Committee is made up of Board members together with other experts. The 2023 Advisory Committee members included Ms Donna Hensley, Mr Greg Preston and Ms Sharon Cooper.

Emerging Director Program

In 2023 we welcomed La Toya Pinner to the Board as a participant in the Emerging Director Program. La Toya has many years' experience working in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs within public and private sector organisations.



Strategic Leadership Team

Rowan Cox

Chief Executive Officer and Acting Principal

Previously serving as the Executive Director since 2016 the role title changed to Chief Executive Officer in 2023. In her tenure with the organisation Rowan has played an enormously influential role in the evolution of Atwea College and the growth of Alesco Secondary College.

Rowan is responsible for setting Atwea's strategic direction and ensuring financial stability and sustainability. She is also tasked with overseeing the delivery of senior secondary and vocational education across Atwea College's seven campuses.

In her earlier years Rowan experienced the good, the bad and the ugly of all education styles and these experiences are a contributing factor in her desire to influence the way education is delivered as well as how it is accessed by students.

Prior to taking on the role of CEO, Rowan spent many years in several positions at Atwea. These included the Manager for VET and Equity, Deputy Director and General Manager. Rowan knows the organisation from the ground up and understands the unique challenges in how a community college such as Atwea is best placed to connect, engage, and serve the local communities in which it operates.

Rowan is passionate about making community-based education accessible to all members of the community without compromising on the quality-of-service provision.

Nicola Bartlett

Adult Community Education Manager

After a career in the military, Nicola pursued her zest for vocational education and training in 2017, joining Atwea College as Senior Education Manager. Nicola has worked in compliance for the energy, community and training sectors and has a Masters in Business Administration, Change Management, International Enterprise and Strategic Human Resource Management.

John Radvan

Operations Manager

With formal education in Management, Science and Law, John developed a strong interest in regulatory compliance over his 20 year tenure with the organisation. He now provides strategic leadership across Compliance, Policy, Facilities Management, Capital Works, Communications, Marketing and IT. John is passionate about the opportunities that Atwea provides to the communities that it serves.

Glen Pearson

Finance Manager

Glen has spent his career working for community based organisations. As the former Chief Financial Officer for the customer-owned The Mutual Bank, Glen brings experience in strategic development, system implementation and corporate governance. He holds a Master in Business Administration and Bachelor of Commerce from the University of Newcastle and is a Certified Practicing Accountant.



Theresa Pantalone (Alesco Principal – Development) and Joy Robbins (People Strategy Manager) left the organisation during 2023.

Chairperson's Report

Jane McConville

It is my honour to present the Chairperson's Report for Atwea College for 2023. As we reflect on the past year, we are proud of the strides we have made in advancing our mission and providing quality education to those who need it most.

Mission and Impact: Our commitment to providing accessible and equitable education has remained steadfast. This year, we have continued to make significant strides in reaching marginalised communities and empowering individuals through education. Our programs have touched the lives of hundreds, if not thousands of individuals, creating a positive impact on communities and contributing to the broader goal of fostering education as a catalyst for positive change.

Financial Overview: Let's address the financial aspect transparently. Despite our best efforts, both the RTO and the School experienced challenges that contributed to the position we find ourselves in at 31 December 2023. In the RTO external factors such as changes to funding across the sector, changes in the key indicators for partner stakeholders such as Employment Service Agencies and unforeseen circumstances led to financial struggles. The RTO funding is not anywhere nearly as robust as the funding for school, and this means that margins for impact are significantly lower. In Alesco, the impact of low Senior student numbers going into 2023 was realised too late as being a hole we were unable fill.

Despite 2023 being 4.95% increase in revenue on the previous year, our income was 5.3% under what we had projected for the budgeted year. Atwea has had ten years straight of strong surplus and responsible spending, and in those years even when one element of the organisation didn't do well, overall, we were still financially well positioned. 2023 however, was a reminder that to be financially successful we cannot have both core arms struggle to achieve.

However, it is essential to acknowledge that our commitment to financial transparency and accountability remains unwavering. We have implemented cost-cutting measures where possible, engaged in strategic financial planning, and explored new avenues for sustainable uses of funding to ensure the long-term viability of our organisation. In addition to this we have increased the measurement and analysis of Risk Indicators, not only in finances, but also in areas that are the precursor to financial risk. Areas

such as enrolment, attendance, and outcome achievements.

While our financial performance may not have met our expectations, I am pleased to report significant achievements in delivering quality education and support services to our clients. Our commitment to our mission remains steadfast, and the outcomes we achieved speak to the heart of our organisation.

During the year Atwea:

- Updated the organisation's MAA to a new contemporary Constitution, without compromising our core objectives or PBI status.
- Sold property no longer required for operations (the CAS, Hamilton, and Salt Ash), and acquired property that is essential for operations (Abermain Campus)
- Tracked student attendance rate across all campuses combined, with strong attendance rates reporting in Years 11 & 12 and opportunities to connect more strongly within the Junior Program.
- Collated academic outcomes from the past 5 years, with a noticeable & positive improvement in academic results in Year 10 (across all subjects) and Senior Years.
- Celebrated the 21st Birthday of Alesco and transitioned to our new name of Alesco Secondary College
- Launched the Flexible Learning Framework working party
- Increased access to internal PD opportunities for tutors and trainers in our RTO
- Continued our Intentional Leadership program for all Operational Team Leaders
- Successfully completed the BGA Capital Works Grant for Charlestown Campus and were successful in securing a grant for 2024 for our Abermain Campus
- Commenced the review of the Enterprise Agreement for all staff
- Secured additional funding for the RTO through our Smart and Skilled contract for the 2023/24 period
- Expanded our EVET contract offerings to new Industries

The progress made in 2023 would not have been possible without the combined leadership of the Board and Senior Leadership Team and the strong operational and financial performance delivered by our people in what was at times a challenging year.

As Chairperson of the Board of Directors, I am grateful to have led a team of like-minded

volunteers, who regularly come together and freely give their time, expertise, and guidance to provide sound leadership. I am pleased to report that the organisations governance and oversight have matured significantly over the last 4 years, which was strongly contributed to in 2023 by our Finance, Education and People and Culture Advisory Committees.

In 2023, the Finance Advisory Committee monitored our financial risk, applied significant focus to ensure that strong, prudent financial management processes and systems were maintained and drove improvements in our 2023 budgeting process. In addition, our Financial Delegations, Procurement, and Investment Policies were updated, to ensure sound operational and financial management were aligned with Atwea's growth in recent years.

The Educational Integrity Advisory Committee (EIAC), worked closely with Senior leaders to reflect on the impact of COVID-19 on our learners now and in the future. It was this careful and considered deliberation that became a significant driver in the development of Atwea's Flexible Learning Framework that will be finalised in 2024. In addition, the EIAC contributed to the Strategic Plan and validated the internal controls used to monitor compliance to educational standards. In addition to this the EAIC also contributed to the development of measures of success for Alesco to implement as it progresses forward with its Junior School Program concept. The EIAC is currently our only Advisory Committee with membership from the Board and external expertise. This team of insightful, intellectual people with experience across the education spectrum, is incredibly valuable to Atwea. As a team they genuinely understand and are passionate about Atwea's approach of balancing wellbeing and learning and its affect in driving the best outcomes for all our students.

As a people centred organisation, the work achieved in 2023 by the People and Culture Advisory Committee was a key part of our success. Substantial work has gone into ensuring that leadership and clear decision making is maintained, a continuous focus on improving our employee engagement and ensuring our employee value proposition remained aligned with employment market and trends. The outcomes in both employee retention and recruitment throughout 2023 are evidence of this success.

Every year the Board undertakes a Board

Performance Evaluation and assesses gaps in Board capability, to ensure we are effective and best placed to meet Atwea and member needs. This year's evaluation highlighted that while transparency, accountability and strategic focus remain strong, a key area for improvement was to gain a greater understanding for the spaces Atwea operates in. To that end, we've made a commitment to hold every other Board meeting in a campus, such that those responsible for governance experience where those decisions are implemented.

We welcomed three new Board members - Darrell Evans, Pru Killick and Gillian Malcolm. We also welcomed an Emerging Director Program Participant, La Toya Pinner who brings experience in indigenous participation. We give thanks to Peter Collins and acknowledge the hard work he has provided throughout 2023. I will also take this opportunity to thank Chief Executive Officer Rowan Cox and her Strategic Leadership Team; Glen Pearson, John Radvan and Nicola Bartlett.

Given the volume of change over the last two years, 2024 will be a year of consolidation and recovery for Atwea, as we embed strategies for improvements made throughout 2023 and prepare for what lays ahead. Despite reviewing our strategic plan for optimal achievement, our vision to provide quality and accessible learning opportunities that enhance people's lives and unlock potential remain unchanged. I believe our vision remain true to our purpose and that we have a critical role in enhancing people's lives through quality education. The education we deliver provides a ripple effect that not only improves the lives of the individual but also their families and communities.

In conclusion, I would like to take the opportunity to thank our members. We are a member owned organisation, and although many of our members are our directors and staff, it doesn't change the original intent of having a member owned entity. That is, it is our members who provide feedback, who create opportunity and who come together to ensure the successful future of Atwea College. Without their support to get in and get it done we wouldn't be able to positively impact so many students and communities.

I am incredibly proud of Atwea, the dedications of our teams, the outcomes we deliver, the ways in which our people, staff and the Board alike commit to our values and the positive changes we create in the lives of so many students. Thank you for your continued support of Atwea.

Principal's Report

Rowan Cox

I am delighted to present the Principal's Report for 2023. It is with great pride and a sense of accomplishment that I reflect on the achievements, challenges, and growth we have experienced as a school community.

We have had another exciting and successful year at Alesco Secondary College.

We are thrilled to announce that we have changed our name from Alesco Senior College to Alesco Secondary College. As we will be commencing our offering to Year 7 and Year 8 in future years, we wanted our name to clearly define this evolution for our teachers and students, and to remove any further assumptions about alternative education to assist with the validity as a 7-12 school.

Educational Achievement

Our commitment to academic rigour remains unwavering. This year, our students have demonstrated remarkable dedication and achieved commendable results in various subjects. Our teachers, with their tireless efforts and innovative teaching methods, have played a crucial role in fostering a conducive learning environment.

We have compiled data from the last five years that clearly demonstrates our students' achievements continue to grow in strength year-on-year. This is a clear indicator that the passion and commitment from our teachers to engaging students in meaningful and relatable lessons is not compromised because we are considered 'alternative education'.

We continue to focus on personalised learning, integrating more technology into the curriculum, and promoting critical thinking skills. All students are given the opportunity to have reasonable adjustments designed for them where necessary which ensures that each student receives the best attention to their education that we can offer.

Throughout 2023, Alesco defined our wellbeing framework more clearly and implemented this across our school environment. Alesco focuses on the premise of 'learning and wellbeing in balance' as opposed to only focusing on academic wellbeing. We also include

emotional, social, cultural, physical, and financial wellbeing in our model for the holistic development of our young people.

Infrastructure Development

The school has witnessed significant improvements in infrastructure during 2023. We were pleased to be able to provide a major infrastructure project at our Charlestown Campus which included a renovation of a former church space into three open, flexible learning spaces. We also engaged in expanding space for our Tomaree Campus with the installation of two new Prefab Classrooms and further amenities for students.

We were fortunate enough to have the opportunity to purchase our Abermain Campus which enabled us to successfully apply for a Capital Grant in 2024. This will help bring this campus up to the standards we would want for our students' educational environment.

We have commenced many infrastructure projects across our campuses over the last few years and are continuing to plan future projects to ensure we offer more places to students, as the demand for enrolment continues to be strong.

Community Engagement

Building strong ties with the community is an integral part of Alesco's mission. Throughout the year, we have actively engaged with parents, community organisations, and local businesses. The positive feedback and collaboration have strengthened our sense of community and support for our shared goals. Alesco has also increased engagement with our cross-campus community by organising several multi-campus activities and whole-school activities, which has helped our school build strong ties with our external communities. Some of our activities in 2023 included a Mud Run, the inter-campus Netball competition, AMAZE Performing Arts night, and Rainbow Run. These activities bring a sense of belonging to our students and provide opportunities to expand their social circles with other young people.

Social and Emotional Learning

We recognise the importance of holistic development and always place a greater emphasis on social and emotional learning. We have implemented various workshops, counselling services, referrals, and campus activities to foster the wellbeing of our students.

We have created 'Wellbeing Week' across each campus that takes place every term to raise awareness of the importance of being empowered to manage our own wellbeing for both staff and students. In the future, we see this week becoming more aligned to our Wellbeing Framework and ensuring that all elements of the framework are covered during these weeks throughout the year.

Challenges and Future Plans

While celebrating our achievements, it is important to acknowledge the challenges we have faced. This included providing the right support for our Senior students and transitioning them from Stage 5 and Stage 6. We were reminded that not all communities are welcoming of an Alesco Campus in their suburb, however our resilient school community has navigated through these challenges with adaptability and determination.

As part of our culture of continuous improvement, we look forward to

supporting our staff around shared curriculum development, developing more strategies to support and retain our Senior students, providing more access to technology in the classrooms and continuing to find ways to come together as a whole school for shared experiences. We will continue to invest in professional development for our educators and support staff to ensure they remain at the forefront of innovative teaching practices.

In conclusion, I express my gratitude to the entire school community – students, parents, teachers, and staff – for their unwavering support and dedication. Together, we have created a unique and inspiring learning environment, and I am confident that our collective efforts will pave the way for even greater success in the future.

"This is my family. This is where I feel safe."

- Alesco student



Meet Madisson

Alesco Student of the Year

Despite facing many challenges in her life, Madisson has proven herself to be a resilient, independent, driven and incredibly strong young person.

Madison started at Alesco Northlakes in 2021 as a Year 9 student. In those early days, she found it difficult to open up to staff and often suffered in silence through the personal challenges she faced. Madison worked hard in class and proved to be very academically motivated - frequently requiring extension work.

Not only did Madison demonstrate an excellent academic ability, she also showed a social maturity that allowed her to develop easy friendships with all students.

In her senior years at Alesco Northlakes, Madison worked hard to achieve outstanding academic results. At the same time, she demonstrated maturity and wisdom beyond her years in her social life, becoming a role model and mentor for many Northlakes students.

Madison is positive about all aspects of school at Alesco. She was elected Senior Leader in 2023, showing strong initiative in organising school-wide events including the Alesco Op Shop, being the MC for the Alesco Anzac Ceremony as well as the Alesco Northlakes Sorry Day ceremony. Madison also took on the challenge of organising the Northlakes Senior Formal.

Madison could often be seen checking in on younger students, cleaning common areas, organising the

kitchen and suggesting improvements for students on campus. At the same time, Madison was independently completing the HSC Legal Studies course via distance education and commenced her University studies via an online Biology course.

Madison completed her studies with Alesco in 2023, one year ahead of her peers. She has shown what can be achieved and what can be overcome with resilience and strength, providing example and inspiration to all Alesco students. She is very deserving of the award of Alesco Student of the Year.



Alesco - One school, many campuses

Here's a snapshot of what's been happening at each of our locations in 2023.

Abermain

We have continued to provide opportunities for our young people to step out of their comfort zones and re engage with their education.

2023 was an exciting year for our campus where we welcomed our largest student cohort to date along with a number of new staff members.

Our students were immersed in a range of exciting adventures such as Taronga Zoo, Tree Tops Adventure Park and Finchley reserve. Our campus initiated a number of successful learning programs such as our numeracy program and engagement with our local AECG.

In addition to this our VET students have experienced great success through their hospitality course and our creative arts students performed in Amaze, our school's variety performance night. These opportunities have allowed for student growth as well as fostering a strong sense of community at our Abermain campus.

We are looking forward to adding an additional class which will allow us to increase the number of young people we can support through their education. We are also looking forward to seeing our largest senior cohort yet complete their first HSC courses and farewell those who successfully complete their final year.

Charlestown

Alesco Secondary College Charlestown has experienced another wonderful year of growth in 2023.

Our students were provided with amazing opportunities to participate in activities to support their growth and development as young people and enhance their sense of personal wellbeing, including Raw Challenge, our inaugural Alesco Netball Gala Day, Yula-Panaal Cultural Education & Healing Centre, Philippa Anderson Surf School, Pride Week silent disco and celebration, ice skating, sailing with Making Waves Foundation, as well as our second annual inter-campus performance night, Amaze: Hit The Lights!

BGA works were completed at the end of 2023, into January 2024, transforming our hall space into two spacious classrooms and a student support office in the foyer of the hall. This work will allow us to support the growing needs of our local community and grow our student cohort to capacity as we make the transition to a senior campus, catering to Years 10 – 12 in 2024.

We are looking forward to growing our student cohort further in 2024 to cater to even more young people in need with the addition of our new learning spaces.

Cooks Hill

Alesco Secondary College Cooks Hill remains committed to student engagement and future pathways as an important component of education.

We've emphasised initiatives such as Driver Training courses, White Card Training, Careers Expos, volunteering experiences and partnerships with HVTC to prepare students for diverse career opportunities.

Our focus on engagement is evident in our high retention rates and exceptional attendance records throughout the year. Notably, seven Senior 2 students successfully graduated, marking significant academic achievements.

Additionally, our students have shown remarkable enthusiasm for extracurricular activities, with the highest participation levels in excursions like Treetops and Dolphin Cruise, further enriching their educational experience.

We look forward to strengthening these future opportunities for our students in 2024. We are dedicated to fostering an environment where every student can thrive academically and personally.

Northlakes

In 2023, our students demonstrated resilience and maturity to embrace the evolving nature of the campus.

Our campus focus was on student engagement, wellbeing in and out of the classroom and ensuring that students are supported to achieve their goals.

Alesco Northlakes enjoyed many successes including highly commendable HSC results for many of our Senior students, excellent attendance rates and consistent positive participation from students in classroom learning and extracurricular activities.

Our students were given the opportunity to connect with our wider community by participating in our Sorry Day ceremony and the official opening of our campus.

Our students participated in wellbeing activities including whole school breakfasts, the Maitland Gaol excursion, whale watching and bushwalking.

We are excited to move into 2024 with a focus on student retention and engagement and ensuring that all students are supported to reach their goals.

Raymond Terrace

The school year has seen a vibrant influx of new staff and students, injecting fresh energy into our community.

Attendance rewards every Monday have encouraged a culture of punctuality and commitment among students. Additionally, exciting Above and Beyond activities such as fishing, career exploration, cooking classes, music sessions, gym workouts, and bowling have provided diverse avenues for student engagement.

The establishment of a Student Voice and Suggestion Team has empowered students to actively contribute to shaping school initiatives.

Collaborative workshops with the council and neighbourhood centre, focusing on art and cooking, have enriched students' skill sets beyond the academic realm.

We also welcomed the new opening of our senior campus in 15 William Street Raymond Terrace.

In 2024 our staff are looking forward to new students, new ideas, engaging students in wellbeing and asking for support where needed. We love seeing student success and supporting the Alesco journey.

Tomaree

Tomaree had a significant growth year with the school introducing several initiatives to support the young people in the area.

The introduction of a transport program allowed a number of our students to shorten travel time to and from school by up to an hour each way. It also allowed the school to grow its catchment area significantly. Staff took time to drive the school bus each way for over half the year which showed a positive impact on student wellbeing and attendance. In the second half of the year, we gratefully found a bus driver who has now moved into a SLSO role as well.

Tomaree for the first time expanded into a third class. This had been a plan for a number of years and with the addition of demountables we launched our 3rd class term 4. This allowed us to now have a year 9,10 and senior class.

We look forward to another year of growth in 2024, as we continue to welcome new students to Alesco Tomaree.

Tuncurry

2023 was the year of independence and interpersonal growth for our students. Successes includes the implementation of TVET and SBAT opportunities for our students; as a result we have had students successfully obtain School Based Apprenticeships in the Mechanic and Child Care sectors.

Our students have been working closely with local organisations such as Homebase to complete their L's through their Learner Drivers Licence program and we have had the largest cohort obtain their P Plate licence as a result of the extensive support provided.

We have engaged in community and the act of giving back to others in need by holding a fund raiser for the Cancer Council, with students raising over \$1500.

We underwent an entire renovation with the remodel of the campus to allow for a new class in 2024, which is exciting to offer more places to students to feel safe and supported in their learning environment.

We are excited about the growth of the campus with the new addition and class commencing in 2024. We are also implementing a Student Advisory Board where students will be encouraged to develop their leadership and advocacy skills in both enhancing campus culture and giving back to the community.

We are looking forward to the inclusive and innovative learning opportunities our team are working toward providing our amazing students.

Our Year 13 program assists students in their transition from school to work or further education

Alesco's Year 13 program is designed to assist students in the transition from school to work or further education.

The program is an additional year of study that some students can choose to undertake after completing Year 12 (or the equivalent).

The Year 13 program develops understanding of the issues faced by students in the transition to work and the skills needed for effective career planning and performance in work environments.

The focus is on practical skills - like crafting resumes and cover letters to completing employment forms, ensuring students are proficient in employment-related skills. Students are given opportunities to attend mock interviews and practice dressing for interviews, which enhances readiness for work.

Building upon previous years' experiences, the Year 13 program was further refined in 2023, including blended delivery of both practical and online components.

Contextual Information

Alesco Secondary College is a Special Assistance School which places emphasis on the strengths in provision of services to students, including:

- the creation of small, safe, supported environments;
- using an empowerment approach with students, rather than a model of power and control;
- understanding that access through education allows the inclusion of other support mechanisms.

Connected with these service provisions are the key principles of Alesco:

The student is the centre of the education plan, and all plans revolve around the needs of the student educationally, emotionally and socially;

that there is rigor in the educational program provided;

that students have the opportunity to experience an adult learning environment and undertake a NESA-based curriculum.

Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility

Alesco Secondary College prioritises the needs of students, making their wellbeing the core of our educational approach. We recognise that student wellbeing is crucial for both academic and social growth and strive to create safe, supportive and positive learning environments. Our policies and procedures are designed with a strong focus on promoting student wellbeing and ensuring their overall development.

The Alesco Secondary College Handbook outlines student behaviour expectations through the Code of Conduct, which addresses:

Respect:	For self
	For peers
	For staff
Responsibility:	For own learning
	For own actions
	For the environment
Honesty:	Be honest with oneself and honesty with others will follow. An honest relationship is a trusted relationship.

Students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the Code, both on premises and on outings. The Code of Conduct also serves as a guideline for teachers in assessing student participation levels.

The Code of Conduct also asks students to adhere to the three golden words: safe, supportive, positive.

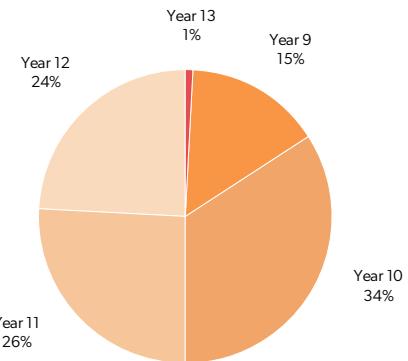
Student Body Characteristics

Our student body is dynamic and inclusive. Each of our students have different talents, interests, academic abilities, socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds.

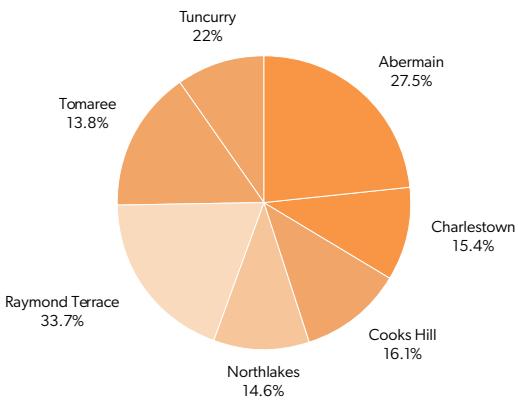
Alesco Secondary College places emphasis on the engagement of students through a positive and supportive culture:

- Students are encouraged to be self-motivated. Therefore, there is no emphasis on being 'forced' to go to school. Alesco is a choice.
- Students have life experience which informs the way they learn. All students have different life experiences which mean there is no 'one size fits all' method. Each Alesco student, team and campus is unique.
- Students like to be respected. The way we communicate with our students, involve them in decision-making and allow them to make choices regarding their engagement in the program, demonstrate our respect for their growing capacity as young adults in our community.

Student Enrolments by Year



Indigenous Students



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island students account for 17% of all enrolments.

Granting of RoSA

	English	PDHPE	Science	Geography	History	Maths	
A	0	0	0	0	0	B7	2
B	2	3	4	2	3	C5	6
C	12	11	14	15	11	C6	4
D	8	11	11	5	11	D3	5
E	15	12	8	15	12	D4	8
						E2	12
Total	37	37	37	37	37		37

Senior Secondary Outcomes

Students in Year 12 undertaking vocational or trade training	
Total students	142
Active	46
Percentage	32.4%
Students in Year 12 attaining a Year 12 certificate or equivalent VET qualification	
Total students	142
Students attaining	24
Percentage	16.9%

HSC Results

Community & Family Studies		
	Alesco	State
Band 1	7%	2%
Band 2	22%	6%
Band 3	48%	20%
Band 4	19%	36%
Band 5	4%	30%
Band 6	0%	6%

Design & Technology		
	Alesco	State
Band 1	0%	1%
Band 2	10%	4%
Band 3	40%	17%
Band 4	30%	31%
Band 5	20%	35%
Band 6	0%	12%

Earth & Environmental Science		
	Alesco	State
Band 1	43%	5%
Band 2	38%	12%
Band 3	14%	22%
Band 4	0%	27%
Band 5	5%	26%
Band 6	0%	7%

English Studies		
	Alesco	State
Band 1	13%	15%
Band 2	38%	40%
Band 3	38%	36%
Band 4	13%	9%
Band 5	0%	0%
Band 6	N/A	N/A

Food Technology		
	Alesco	State
Band 1	0%	2%
Band 2	25%	9%
Band 3	25%	24%
Band 4	13%	35%
Band 5	38%	23%
Band 6	0%	7%

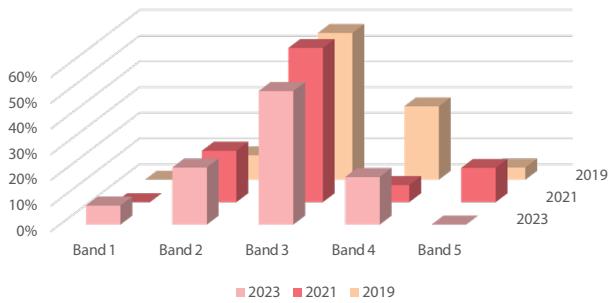
Legal Studies		
	Alesco	State
Band 1	0%	3%
Band 2	33%	7%
Band 3	22%	21%
Band 4	22%	27%
Band 5	22%	29%
Band 6	0%	14%

Mathematics Standard 1		
	Alesco	State
Band 1	0%	2%
Band 2	0%	7%
Band 3	20%	30%
Band 4	20%	40%
Band 5	60%	18%
Band 6	0%	3%

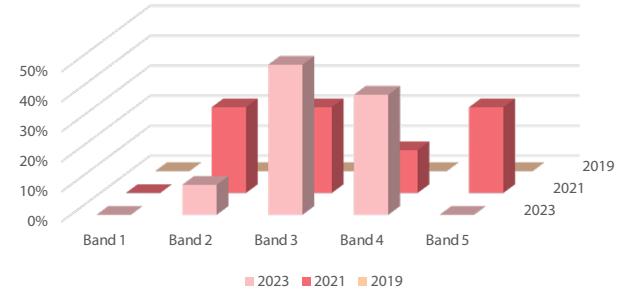
Visual Arts		
	Alesco	State
Band 1	0%	0%
Band 2	0%	1%
Band 3	53%	8%
Band 4	47%	26%
Band 5	0%	47%
Band 6	0%	19%

Trends in HSC Performance

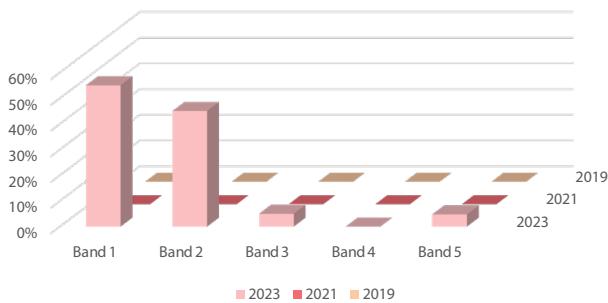
Community & Family Studies



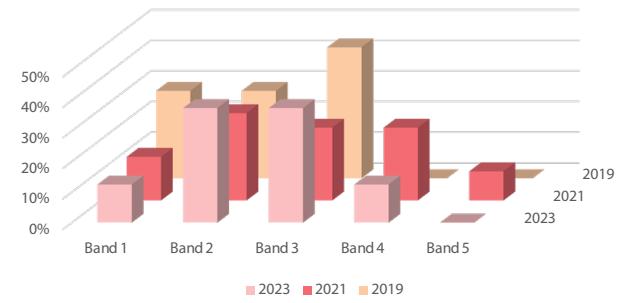
Design & Technology



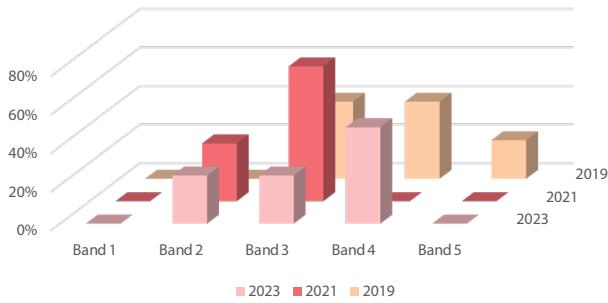
Earth & Environmental Science



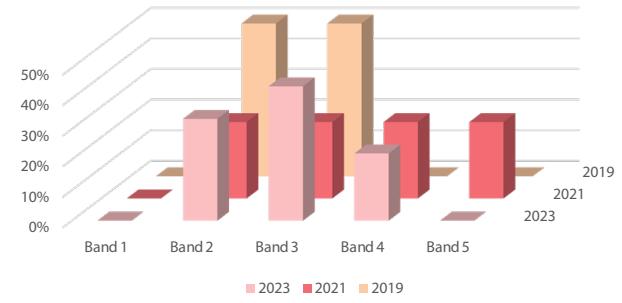
English Studies



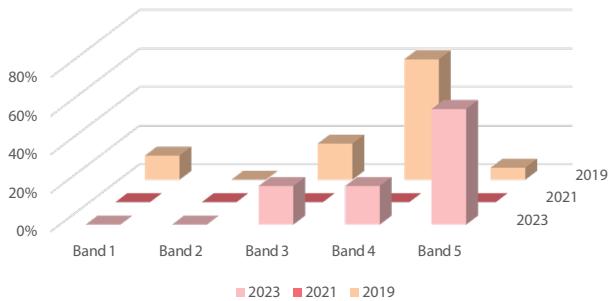
Food Technology



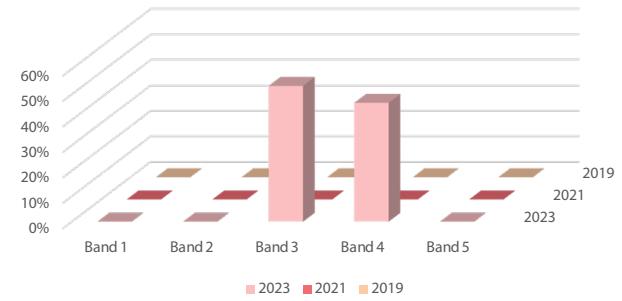
Legal Studies



Mathematics Standard 1



Visual Arts



Student Attendance

Year	Average
Year 9	73.3%
Year 10	72.8%
Year 11	98.3%
Year 12	96.1%
Year 13	99.7%

Whole School Average: 79.8%

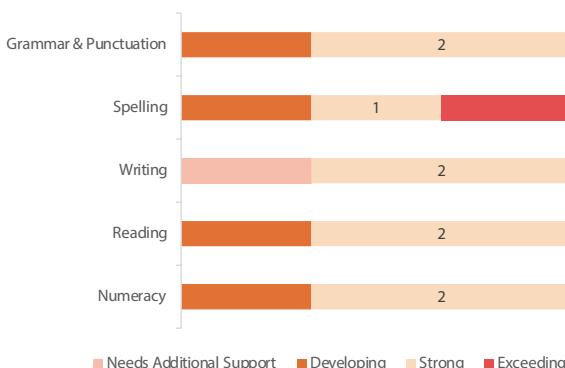
Retention of Year 10 to Year 12

Year	Retention
Year 9	86.84%
Year 10	78.92%
Year 11	57.24%
Year 12	67.24%
Year 13	42.86%

Whole School Average: 73.96%

NAPLAN

In 2023, 3 students participated in the Year 9 NAPLAN test. Average student results were:



Management of Student Non-Attendance

The Alesco Student Handbook, which is provided to all students and caregivers, provides information regarding their responsibilities in relation to attendance. Students and caregivers are reissued the attendance information at intervals determined by the students' adherence to attendance expectations.

Encouraging attendance is a core responsibility and belief of Alesco. Early intervention at Alesco is aimed at reducing poor attendance and increasing the number of students who finish a school year and ultimately complete Year 12.

Early intervention at Alesco acknowledges each student's individual situation such as health, housing and relationships, however all students whose circumstances impact adversely on their attendance are offered support to address the underlying problems and are given intervention options to help address their attendance.

Alesco Secondary College diligently checks student attendance on a daily basis.

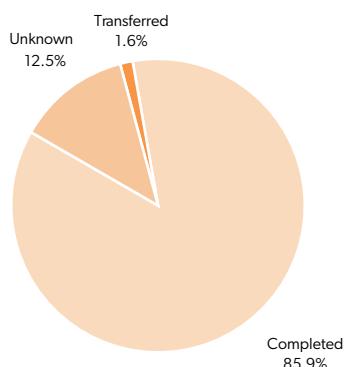
Alesco Secondary College actively promotes and monitors regular attendance, including the provision of attendance updates and discussions during weekly meetings. Where an issue is identified, students may be referred to the Student Welfare Officer and a Parent/Carer Attendance Contact Form is used to ensure precise reporting.

The Alesco Student Attendance Policy includes process maps for the following scenarios:

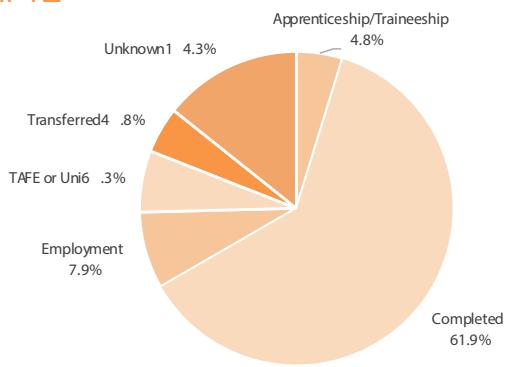
- Daily roll marking
- Student attendance management
- General attendance
- Sporadic attendance
- Where a student proactively leaves
- Withdrawal
- Appeal
- Re-engagement

Post-School Destinations

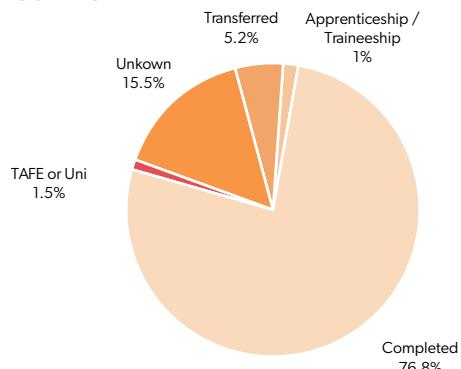
Year 9



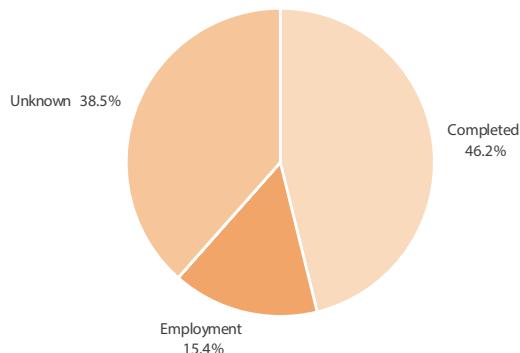
Year 12



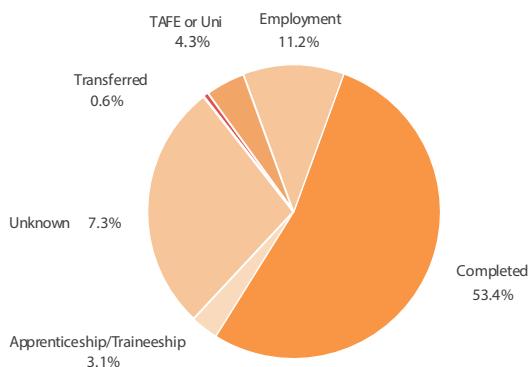
Year 10



Year 13



Year 11



*Successfully completed

Students completed the school year and either continued at Alesco or did not disclose a post-school destination.

#Unknown

Students withdrew from the school year and did not disclose a post-school destination.

School Policies

Enrolment Policy

The Alesco Enrolment Policy provides information on the requirements to apply, enrol and record student enrolment, as well as how to end an enrolment. The policy addresses the key areas of:

- application for enrolment
- waitlist for enrolment
- interview for enrolment
- retaining student files
- access to information
- withdrawal of student enrolment

Other Policies

Alesco has the following policies in place:

- Child Protection and WWCC Policy
- Student Management and Support Policy
- Student Wellbeing Policy
- Student Attendance Policy

All policies are available for viewing at www.atwea.edu.au/high-school-at-alesco

Values in Education Awards

The annual Atwea Values in Education Awards (AVEAs) recognise the uniqueness of Atwea in providing quality adult and secondary education and celebrate the commitment and achievements of both staff and students. The Awards align with Atwea's three core values of Integrity, Inclusion and Innovation. This year, 68 staff nominations were received, together with 46 student nominations. Congratulations to all of our 2023 Award recipients:

Alesco Student Awards

Alesco Award for Integrity

Emma Peka

Alesco Award for Inclusion

Tia Harrison

Alesco Award for Innovation

Logan Ruiter

Paul Mather Memorial Award:

Alesco Student of the Year

Madisson Hall

Alesco Teaching Awards

Integrity in Education Award

John Hodgson

Inclusion in Education Award

Lucas McBeath

Innovation in Education Award

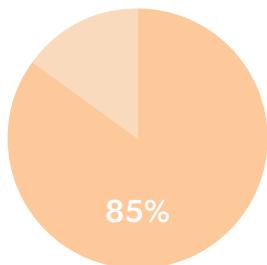
Darren McDonald

Alesco Teacher of the Year

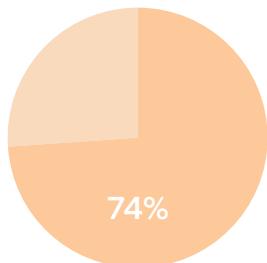
David Torres Smith



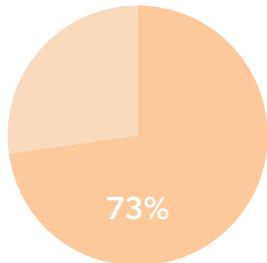
Alesco Student Feedback



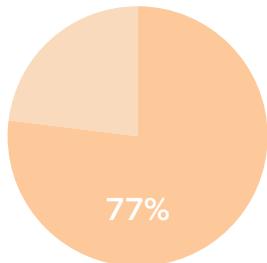
85% of students said their teachers always try hard to help them learn.



74% of students said that Alesco helps them to work towards their goals.

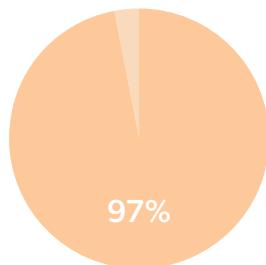


73% of students agree that Alesco is a supportive and positive environment.

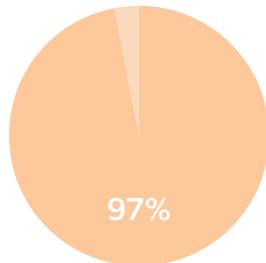


77% of students said they always feel safe at Alesco.

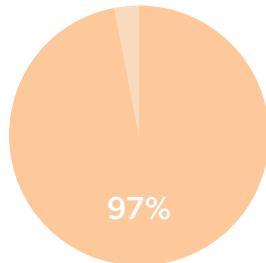
Parent/Carer Feedback



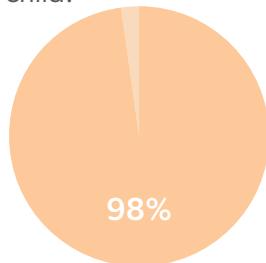
97% of parents said that Alesco balances the needs of their child's learning and wellbeing.



97% of parents said that Alesco tries to bring out the best in each child.



97% of parents said that Alesco staff are approachable when they have questions or need to advocate for their child.

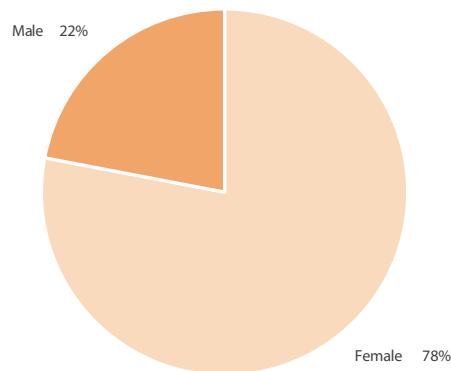


98% of parents said that they are likely to recommend Alesco.

Feedback is based on results of surveys conducted in Semester 2, 2023 involving 142 students and 92 parents representing all campuses.

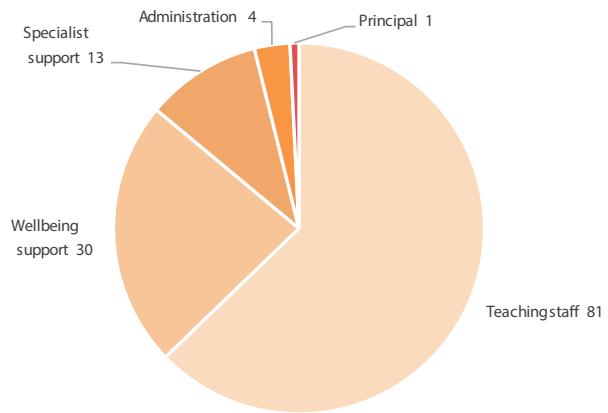
Workforce Composition

Staff Gender

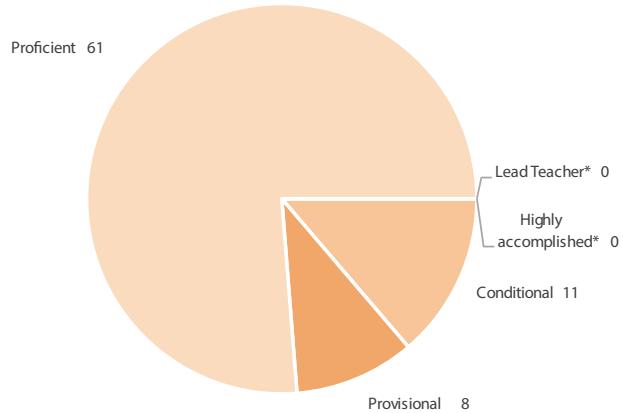


In 2023, 5 Alesco Secondary College employees identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Staff Function



Teacher Accreditation Status



Professional Development

Alesco staff have actively participated in a range of professional development activities throughout 2023.

Staff understand the value of continuous development and the positive impact that it has on the educational journey of our students.

This year's Professional Development program included:

- Aboriginal cultural Education - Let's take the first step together
- Aboriginal education Focused School development Day
- Accidental Counsellor (Presented by PaC)
- Adaptive leadership (Presented by AIS)
- Anti-Racism Policy training
- ASIST Training
- Basic Intensive training - Choice theory, Reality Therapy and Lead Management
- Broadening what is valued in leadership (Presented by AIS)
- Building student Resilience 1
- Bush Fire Management Plans (Presented by WHS)
- Chemical Safety in Schools (Presented by WHS)
- Child Protection Awareness Induction Training
- Community Engagement - Understanding Community Engagement
- CPR and anaphylaxis training (Presented by WHS)
- Cyber Security NSW Essentials Refresher Training
- Data Breach Response Plan - Reporting data Breaches
- Disability legislation and NCCD
- Early Support
- Emotional Intelligence and Business Communication (Presented by PaC)
- Enhancing Curriculum Through the 8 Aboriginal ways of learning
- Evolution, Design Thinking and Radical Candor (Presented by PaC)
- Explicit teaching strategies
- Family Partnerships
- Fire Warden Training (Presented by WHS)
- First Aid (Presented by WHS)
- Fraud and Corruption Control
- Identifying and responding to Children and Young People at Risk
- Incident Reporting (Presented by WHS)
- Industry Update Day
- Junior Aboriginal Education Consultative Group
- Law sense workshops - note taking and record keeping
- Leading through Natural Disasters and other Community Trauma
- Leading with impact (Presented by AIS)
- Learning Resilience
- Life skills: Eligibility & Implementation
- Love bites
- Making a Short film
- Making adjustments for students in Stage 6
- Managing difficult Conversations in K to 6 Schools - How to discuss what matters
- Maths pathway workshops
- Mental health first aid (Presented by PaC)
- Mental Health in Communities
- Mental Health Supports
- NCCD imputing processes
- NCCD Workshop (Presented by AIS)
- New school metrics for success (Presented by AIS)
- New State 5 Maths and English Curriculum Workshops
- Operational manager training (Presented by PaC)
- PAT Testing/data analysis
- Peer supervision training
- Planning and programming for the new Mathematics 7-10 syllabus
- Preparing a theory of action (Presented by AIS)
- Professional learning module for alcohol and other drugs
- Professional learning module for Online Safety
- Quality Teaching: Enhancing Assessment Practice
- Racism: Its nature and impact on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Reconciliation - shaping the future through healing, understanding and unity
- Respect matters
- Responding Together
- Restrictive Practices in NSW Public Schools and Government Schools
- RoSA and HSC eligibility and Credentialling
- School refusal and attendance improvement planning
- Student IEP and NCCD Processes
- Supporting students with Challenging Behaviours: Modules 1-5
- Therapeutic Storytelling
- Trauma informed Practice
- Understanding collective efficacy (Presented by AIS)
- Understanding Social and Emotional Learning
- Understanding the female brain and delivery of student wellbeing
- University pathway webinar
- WHS Roadshows
- Work Health & Safety Induction for Employees
- Workplace Learning Policy and Procedure e-learning Module

Priority Areas for Improvement

The 2023-2025 Strategic Plan provides focus areas for improvement for the organisation. The Strategic Plan serves as a compass, empowering us to make informed decisions and steer Alesco towards an impactful future.

The key areas of focus for improvement within Alesco are:

Goal 1

Enhanced services
to current students

- 1.1 The reinforcement that education and wellbeing in balance is a recipe for success in learning outcomes.
- 1.2 Increased partnerships and networks to provide long term success for students.
- 1.3 Providing more innovative and engaging learning opportunities and increase access to diverse learner groups.

Goal 2

Expand services to
new students and
communities

- 2.1 To provide better access to new students and community groups to the Atwea model of learning.
- 2.2 To increase the income diversity of Atwea.
- 2.3 To grow the model of wellbeing and learning in balance.

Goal 3

Quality staffing and
leadership in focus

- 3.1 Employee engagement and value proposition embedded in practice.
- 3.2 Continued development of culture that reflects Integrity, Inclusion and Innovation.
- 3.3 Attract and retain staff aligned to the Atwea model of education.
- 3.4 Increase leadership capability and capacity at all levels of the organisation.

Goal 4

Responsive
and sustainable
operational
delivery

- 4.1 Social, environmental and organisational governance is demonstrated in practice.
- 4.2 Demonstrated relevant and responsive risk management in practice.
- 4.3 The delivery of a positive experience which meets the functional needs of staff and students.
- 4.4 Demonstrated synergy; effectiveness and efficiency, through improved connectivity.

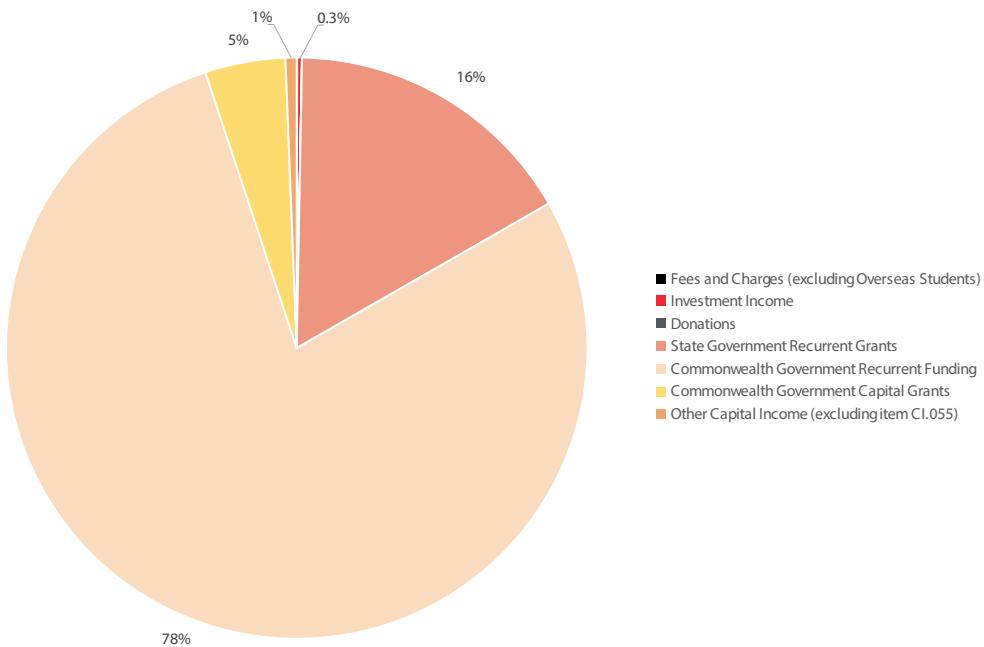
Achievement of Priority Areas

The table below provides a snapshot of Alesco's progress on priority areas for 2023. Evaluating and reflecting on the year's challenges and achievements, this serves as a valuable reference for future planning.

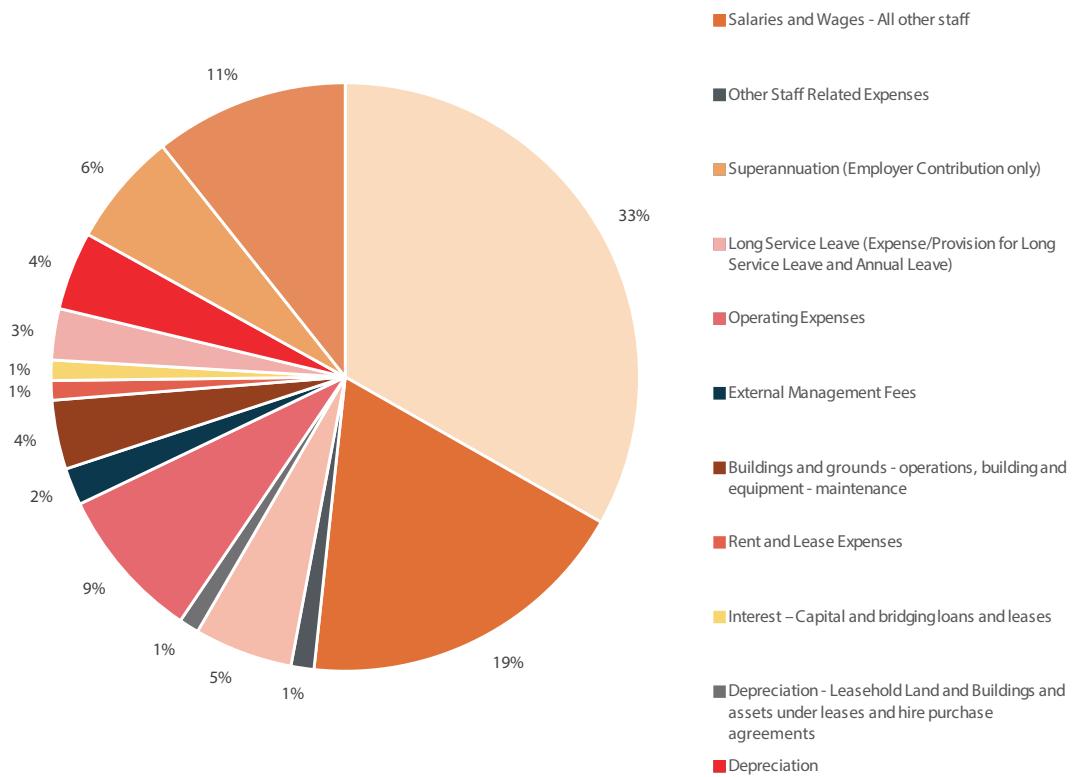
Goal 1 Enhanced services to current students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increased access to Learning Management System for all studentsTrialed first hybrid delivery across multiple campuses in Work StudiesCreated online resources for flexible delivery when students are unable to participate in standard timetableCreated the Alesco Wellbeing FrameworkReviewed the schools IEP process to include the new Wellbeing Wheel assessment
Goal 2 Expand services to new students and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Began work with Maitland City Council on the potential future of Alesco in the LGAGained Board approval for the registration of Stage 4 and undertook consultation with the Education Integrity Advisory Committee for the pilot of a new Junior model
Goal 3 Quality staffing and leadership in focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Heads of Campus participated in the Intentional Leadership ProgramReview of targeted staffing to focus on retention strategies and reasonable adjustment support in 2024Increased focus on Employee Engagement and Value Proposition focused on teaching staff
Goal 4 Responsive and sustainable operational delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Reviewed the NCCD processes and practices across the organisationConducted our own internal audit against NESA Compliance to inform Continuous Improvement strategiesCompleted upgrades to campus facilities at Charlestown Campus through the BGA GrantConverted a campus property from a 'lease property' to an 'owned property'Successfully applied for additional capital works funding for the new owned property.

Financial Report

Recurrent/Capital Income



Recurrent/Capital Expenditure



Our Supporters

Non-Government Organisations

Alasco
Aon
Approved Fire Gear
Artform Audio
Australian Institute of Management
BCA Certifiers
Beyond Church
Booktopia
Brownsmith Unit Trust
CCSG Collect Pty Ltd
Cessnock Business Chamber
Coverite Projects
Colliers International (Newcastle) Pty Ltd
Commercial Collective
Community Business Bureau
Community Colleges Australia
Copyright Agency Limited
Diamond IT
Elcom Technology Pty Ltd
Elmore Vale Men's Shed Inc
Employment Hero Pty Ltd
Formsite
Giuntabell
GWG Partners Pty Ltd
Instructure
ish Group
JB Hi-Fi Business
Monday.com Ltd
Modern Star Pty Ltd
Newcastle Toyota
Newcastle Weekly
NEX
Optus
Oz Harvest
PCYC
PKF Newcastle
Port Stephens Coaches
Port Hunter Toastmasters
RapidClean
RTC Group
RTO Materials Ltd
Sage Painting
Santdell Pty Limited
Sapio Pty Ltd

Scion Audio and Events
Seed People Consulting Pty Limited
SEEK Limited
Sentral Education
Service Industry Skills
SHAC Architects
Skin Deep Learning Pty Ltd
Sparke Helmore Lawyers
Sharp Office
Samaritans
The Mobile Shredding Company
The Uniform Place
Viatek
WJ & LM Carstens
Zoom

Government Organisations

Association of Independent Schools NSW
Australian Skills Quality Authority
Cessnock City Council
Lake Macquarie City Council
City of Newcastle
Maitland City Council
Midcoast Council
NSW Ambulance
NSW Department of Education
NSW Education Standards Authority
NSW Food Authority
NSW Government Education Standards Authority
NSW Government Planning
Port Stephens Council

Atwea Life Members

Ms Donna Bain*
Ms Kath Blaxland*
Mr Tom Blunden*
Ms Jan Brown*
Mr Martin Coates
Mr John Collins*
Mr Brett Gleeson
Mr Ben Grushka
Mr Brian Keegan*
Mr Mike McCluskey
Ms Margaret McNaughton
Mr Allan Melling*
Ms Glenys Morgan
Ms Anna Starrett

**deceased*



Atwea College



Alesco Secondary College

Workers Education Association – Hunter
ABN 61 062 580 634
Incorporated as a Public Company Limited by Guarantee
RTO No. 90020

Our Locations

Head Office: 112 Lake Road, Elmore Vale 2287 (Awabakal Country)
796 Hunter Street, Newcastle West 2302 (Awabakal and Worimi Country)
100 Laman Street, Cooks Hill 2300 (Awabakal and Worimi Country)
27 Chapman Street, Charlestown 2290 (Awabakal Country)
7 James Street, Argenton 2284 (Awabakal Country)
15 William Street, Raymond Terrace 2324 (Worimi Country)
7 Austral Street, Nelson Bay 2315 (Worimi Country)
31 Manning Street, Tuncurry 2428 (Worimi Country)
9b Hall Street, Cessnock 2325 (Darkinjung and Awabakal Country)
298 Cessnock Road, Abermain 2326 (Darkinjung and Awabakal Country)

Registered Office

112 Lake Road, Elmore Vale NSW 2287



Registered Trading Names

Atwea College
WEA Hunter
WEA – Hunter Adult Education and Training
Workers Educational Association – Hunter
WEA Coast
Alesco Senior College
Alesco Secondary College

Authority was granted by the Australian Securities and Investments Commission under Section 383 of the Corporations Law on 309 May 1994 to omit 'Limited' from the trading name.



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