



**GATEWAY**  
COMMUNITY HIGH



Child & Family Services



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WHERE YOU CAN  
**ACHIEVE.**  
**BELONG.**  
**GROW.**

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**ANNUAL  
REPORT**

2023

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**This report is prepared by Gateway Community High to meet educational and financial reporting requirements for the 2023 reporting year. It fulfils the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) requirement for registration and accreditation for Non-Government Schools in NSW.**

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**Gateway Community High would like to thank:**

- The students and their families who made the decision to enrol in our School.
- NSW Education Standards Authority.
- The Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment.
- The NSW Department of Education.
- The Association of Independent Schools NSW.
- The Alternative High School Advisory Group volunteers who worked tirelessly since 2018 to bring our vision and concept to the reality of opening in 2021 – and continue to do so.
- The Board of Directors of Macquarie Community College for their commitment and investment in this purpose-driven educational initiative.
- The Staff of Macquarie Community College who have worked on and supported this project and continue to do so.
- The current and former members of the Board of MCC Child and Family Services.
- The current and former Staff of Gateway Community High.
- Community College and Special Assistance School colleagues and leaders for their generosity and mentoring.
- Colleagues in local school leadership roles and wellbeing teams, counselling and allied health practitioners, and individuals and organisations that have become our referral networks.
- Government and opposition politicians and staff who support and take interest in our goals.
- Like-minded NGOs and community organisations that have provided practical assistance, services, support for our students, donations and programs.
- Organisations and individuals that have presented programs, provided activities and engaged with our school community to enrich our learning options and create connections.

**Report completed and published June 2024**

This report was compiled by:

Natalie Creighton: Head of Campus, Theresa Collignon: Group CEO, Macquarie Community College and the Leadership, Teaching, Wellbeing and Administration staff of Gateway Community High.

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## Acknowledgement of Country

Gateway Community High is located in Carlingford, in the northwest of Sydney and we respectfully acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands on which we gather, the Burramattagal people of the Eora nation. We acknowledge the first nations peoples as the original story tellers and teachers of the land on which we learn today.

## 1. MESSAGE FROM KEY SCHOOL BODIES

### The Board

The Board is pleased to present the Gateway Community High 2023 Annual Report outlining the School's operations and achievements. 2023 has been another year of successes amidst significant growth and change for the School. It is very rewarding for the Board to oversee and support the ongoing development of Gateway Community High in its first years of operation. We continue to stay focussed on the most important goal – creating a student-centred learning environment that is inclusive, welcoming and supports motivated young people to achieve their educational goals. It is very pleasing to report that in 2023 the School moved further towards its goal of improving the wellbeing of young Australians through transformational education.

The Board is proud to report on the achievements of our 2023 School Improvement Focus Areas. We are fortunate to keep growing our staff team of talented and committed professionals, under the leadership of our Head of Campus, Natalie Creighton. You will read here about the achievements of staff and students as a result of continuous improvement in the quality of teaching and learning, increasing attendance rates and structured wellbeing programs and practices.

We are especially proud to celebrate that all 32 of our 2023 Year 10 students attained their Record of School Achievement (RoSA). Our successful submission to NESA for Gateway to offer a Stage 6 progression pathway to the Higher School Certificate from January 2024 was another highlight.

The Board committed at the outset to using student outcomes data to inform our decision making about the effectiveness of our alternative high school model. Our 3<sup>rd</sup> annual independent research report undertaken by Huber Social shows that student wellbeing, at the School, had increased by 9 % over the 2023 school year. More detail about these findings, and direct quotes from the survey process are included in this annual report.

We congratulate the students on their efforts and achievements. Our thanks go to their families, our staff, volunteers, State and Federal Government bodies, supporters, referral agencies, professionals and community members for their ongoing dedication and support.

We are proud of the School's outcomes and achievements in 2023. We look forward to continuing to develop and grow our unique learning environment to support our students to thrive.



Sue Westbrook  
Chair of the Board,  
MCC Child and Family Services

## Group CEO and Representative of the Proprietors

It never ceases to bring joy and pride to me when we see the reality each year of our amazing young people engaging with their education at Gateway Community High. As a new, small alternative high school we are learning along with them every day about how to create and continuously improve the learning environment. We continue to build a genuine school community where they can achieve their learning and personal goals, feel and create a sense of belonging for themselves and others - and grow towards adulthood, while taking positive and purposeful steps on their learning and life pathways. Our third year of operations in 2023 was another year of progress and achievements to make us all proud. Sincere thanks to all that made that happen, but especially to our students and their families.

Kudos for the efforts and achievements of our wonderful staff under the leadership of Natalie Crieghton our Head of Campus and our Learning and Support Teacher Emma Marshall. Sincere thanks and recognition to the volunteer directors on our Boards, our supporters in the community and like-minded professionals and colleagues in our referral network. It takes a community effort to create a successful community of learners such as Gateway Community High.



Theresa Collignon

Group Chief Executive

Macquarie Community College

## Head of Campus

My first year at Gateway Community High has been one in which I have experienced great connection and pride. Pride in the team of dedicated school staff with whom I work and pride in the achievements of the amazing young people we support to **Achieve, Belong and Grow** on a daily basis.

The ongoing improvement in attendance, wellbeing and learning is down to the dedication and passion of the staff and the determination of the students who see Gateway Community High as a place that they can safely become their best selves and reengage with learning, understanding the importance of education as a platform into their individual futures.

The continued growth, development and success of the School can also be attributed to the strong relationships being built between our student's families and the School, recognising that supporting our young people is a shared responsibility where we work together to achieve positive outcomes with the backing of the wider community.

As the year came to an end, we had the honour of celebrating with the graduating cohort of thirty-two Year 10 students who achieved their RoSA. It was with an increased sense of self-worth, resilience and hope for the future that over half of those students planned to return to Gateway Community High in 2024 to become the School's first students to undertake the Higher School Certificate. Our other graduates moved on to TAFE courses, creative colleges, apprenticeships and employment opportunities.

We congratulate all of our students in overcoming the significant barriers that brought them to Gateway Community High and celebrate their ongoing success with them.



Natalie Creighton  
Head of Campus  
Gateway Community High

## 2. CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

### Executive Summary

Gateway Community High is a registered and accredited non-denominational, independent secondary school, created to provide opportunities for young people to thrive in an alternative educational setting tailored to support their learning and belonging.

Gateway Community High's approach is specifically designed for the inclusion of motivated young people who may not have felt supported or included in a traditional school setting and are at risk of disengaging from their formal education.

As a Special Assistance School we provide motivated young people with a gateway to learning in a unique environment that offers a positive, personalised and inclusive experience. This provides young people in our community an opportunity, and for many a second chance, to develop their capacity to learn and gain a sense of meaning and purpose. We aim to empower them to create better futures for themselves, their families and their communities.

Our Stage 5 (Years 9/10) program offers a flexible, engaging and practical learning environment for a small cohort of students to reconnect with their education and set a new direction.

Our Stage 6 (Years 11/12) program achieved initial accreditation in Semester Two 2023 to commence its inaugural year in January 2024.

**Initial Registration:** approval and establishment of the School (September 2020 – December 2020).

**Inauguration date:** 1 January 2021.

**Full Registration: Stage 5,** Year 9 and Year 10 to 31 December 2026.

**Initial Registration: Stage 6,** Preliminary and HSC Years from 1 January 2024. Full registration application in progress as of June 2024.

**Relevant codes:** NESA: 78225; AGEID 87255 - Gateway Community High; AGEID 87254 - MCC Child and Family Services Ltd.

### Business and Governance Structure

Gateway Community High is a registered business name of MCC Child and Family Services (MCC CaFS). The company was created in 2019 with the object of establishing services for young people and their families, including school education.

MCC Child and Family Services is a registered not-for-profit charity with both Public Benevolent Institution (PBI) and Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) Status. MCC CaFS is as a wholly owned subsidiary of Macquarie Community College (MCC).

The Board of MCC Child and Family Services is the governing body of the School. The Board approves the appointment of members of the School Leadership Team. The Head of Campus reports to the MCC Group Chief Executive Officer and attends the MCC CaFS Board meetings.

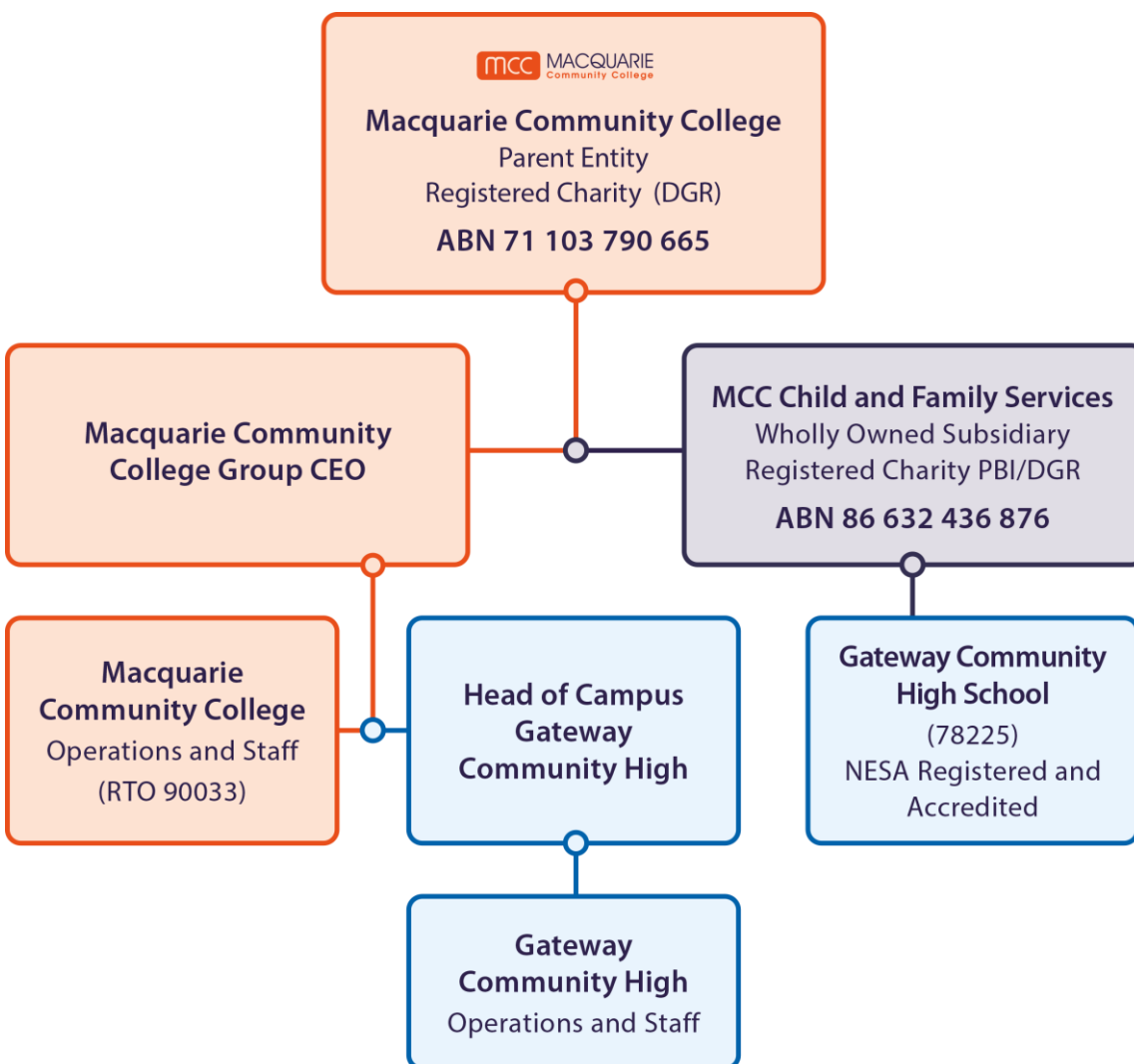


MCC is a leading not-for-profit adult community education provider serving North-Western and Western Sydney for more than 70 years. MCC is an established Registered Training Organisation (RTO 90033) that has helped tens of thousands of students to attain qualifications, skills and community connections by creating and providing affordable Vocational Educational Training (VET) courses in Early Childhood Education and Care, Aged and Disability Care, Business, Computer Basics, English Language skills and Job ready programs, as well as hundreds of short courses for engagement in life-long learning.

Auditing of the School’s operations against regulatory requirements is undertaken by the New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA), including for re-registration and accreditation or on the basis of random inspection. Gateway Community High achieved 5 years of full NESA registration and accreditation for Stage 5 RoSA programs after its inspection in May 2021, and is in the process of seeking full NESA registration and accreditation for Stage 6 HSC programs that commenced in January 2024.

The operations of the School adhere to the requirements of key legislation governing schools, employers and charities. From a corporate governance perspective both MCC and MCC CaFS are regulated by the Australian Charities and not-for-Profits Commission (ACNC), and subject to Australian Corporations Law.

## Our Structure



## Our Program

In 2023 Gateway Community High offered the NSW Stage 5 curriculum for Years 9 and 10 that leads to the award of the Record of School Achievement (RoSA). Classes are taught across the Stage with both Year 9 and Year 10 students within the same classroom.

Only the subjects mandatory to the successful achievement of the RoSA are taught in the Stage 5 program. This means additional teaching hours are devoted to the core subjects of Mathematics and English, Science, Human Society and its Environment (HSIE) and Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE). It also allows for time to focus on the fundamentals and re-engage students with learning.

Gateway Community High is a small community of learners and is ideally suited to students who:

- Are interested in learning, and willing to put in effort to succeed
- Will thrive outside a mainstream educational environment
- Are looking for a place of belonging and safety
- Could benefit from extra support and attention to re-engage in their education
- May have missed some language, literacy or numeracy fundamentals
- Are looking to build their pathway to future VET or Stage 6 (Years 11/12) studies.

The School's approach includes a focus on:

- **Achievement** – setting and achieving progress towards educational and personal goals.
- **Belonging** – feeling welcome, respected and supported in a learning environment that is individualised and inclusive.
- **Growth** - social and emotional growth and improved wellbeing through relationship building, trust and interpersonal skills.

The focus to **Achieve. Belong. Grow.** at Gateway Community High creates an environment for students who face various barriers to learning to thrive in a supportive environment. With the combination of personalised attention, individual assistance and small class sizes, all student-types can develop and grow in a way that works for them, and which will set them up for future success.

The learning opportunities and experiences aim to enable our students to develop the skills, values and attitudes needed both in learning and in life, whether that be for further study or future employment. Apart from gaining knowledge we aim to excite our students about the benefits of flexible, solution-focused thinking, the importance of respect for oneself and others, and a willingness to take a positive approach to trying something new or trying again.

The commitment and approach of the School is underpinned by our belief that engaging in life-long learning is transformational and empowers young people to create better futures for themselves, their families and their communities.

## Our Philosophies

### The Philosophies that Drive Us

A positive, personalised and inclusive community of learners



**Agency**

Young people can take control of, and responsibility for, their learning.



**Student-centred**

Individualised learning pathways; support and guidance to achieve goals.



**Authenticity**

A fresh start is possible for all; positivity and truthfulness matter.



**Community**

Our community of learners must feel valued, safe and have a sense of belonging.

## Our Values

### Our Values Inform our Approach

A positive, personalised and inclusive community of learners



**Respect and Relationships**

Treat all others with consideration and dignity  
Listen and respect other points of view  
Make meaningful personal connections and friendships  
Demonstrate that positivity and kindness matter  
Value and work on stronger relationships



**Learning and Development**

Commit to acquiring knowledge and skills  
Explore, be curious and be willing to learn from mistakes  
Participate and share your ideas  
Reflect on your personal and academic progress



**Empowerment and Engagement**

Be proactive, taking charge of your future  
Be a champion of fairness and justice  
Make informed decisions, ask for help  
Plan, then take your next steps  
Contribute to making school a great place to be



**Diversity and Inclusion**

Celebrate and embrace our differences  
Accept people for who they are  
Understand our different abilities and backgrounds  
Be fair and suspend judgment  
Be a great team player



**Achievement and Accountability**

Set a goal to accomplish something worthwhile  
Take pride in achieving your personal best  
Help others achieve and excel  
Take responsibility for your own actions towards yourself, others and the environment



**Safety and Belonging**

Be confident that you can be your best self every day  
Care for yourself and others  
Resolve differences in a constructive, peaceful way  
Be honest and trustworthy - your word is your bond  
Feel valued and confident

## School Premises

Gateway Community High is located at 263 Marden Road, Carlingford in Northwest Sydney in a dedicated precinct of buildings leased from Macquarie Community College.

The site has been used by MCC for adult and community education since 1989 and a selection of the buildings were reassigned in 2021 to Gateway Community High in order to facilitate the establishment of the School. The Gateway campus from January 2021 to July 2023 was within three separate buildings surrounding a garden and courtyard, including the original 1886 sandstone cottage home of the then Principal of Carlingford Public School.

As the School's enrolment grew steadily each year additional space on the campus site has been provided. The School reached another milestone of growth and development and moved into the larger original Carlingford Public School building on the site during the July 2023 school holiday period. The changed location allowed for increased student numbers in the Stage 5 program with facilities to support all students. The College moved its daytime training delivery to a new campus in Epping at the same time.

The new premises for the School has 4 large classrooms, a large double room for whole school assemblies and activities and various break out rooms. The School is fully equipped with fibre to the premises, laptops for all students and staff, hi-speed wi-fi, large monitors and kitchen facilities.

Students access the facility via public transport, walking or by car, generally driven by a parent/carer. As the School grows its Stage 5 and Stage 6 program and staffing it is envisaged that the School will eventually use the whole site, with an ambition to create ever better facilities for our students, staff and school community.

## Quality Control and Continuous Improvement

As we are still a relatively new school we are exceptionally committed to continuous improvement, learning from and leveraging what works, staying open to new ideas and approaches and re-thinking what needs improvement. We again learned a great deal in 2023, our third year of operation, as a result of our commitment and investment in:

### *Quality of Teaching and Learning*

- All students within the school have Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) which are developed and refined by the Learning and Support Teacher (L&ST) through an ongoing consultation process. New students commence at the School with an initial ILP which involves a comprehensive interview with students and parents/carers.
- Active communication of individual student needs by the L&ST and the wellbeing team, combined with integrated use of ILPs by teaching and support staff to improve engagement and wellbeing outcomes.
- Development of our Stage 5 teaching programs and refinement of curriculum resources, aligned with NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and AIS (NSW).
- Development of Stage 6 guidelines, scope and sequences, documentation and process requirements for NESA registration, and in preparation for the 2024 launch.
- Additional staffing in teaching, student support, counselling and administration to support the increased student enrolment and growing school complexity.
- Incorporation of subject-specific excursions linked to curriculum planning.
- Regular Teaching and Learning meetings to collegially plan for and evaluate teaching and learning content, assessment and strategies.
- The integration of a systematic process for teachers to review and finalise programs and resources post evaluation.

To support ongoing upskilling of staff and board members training and development included:

- Accredited workshops for teaching and support staff through AISNSW and NESAs.
- Whole staff consultation with external experts, including from AISNSW and NESAs, to guide organisational development for the implementation of Stage 6.
- Whole school staff training and skills workshops including Universal Design for Learning (AIS), *SENTRAL*, specific child protection policies and risk recognition, Special Assistance Schools Conference.
- Governance and Child Protection training for Responsible Officers (AIS, Complispace).
- The Berry Street Educational Model (BSEM).

### *Developing our Approach to Wellbeing*

- We have adopted the Berry Street Educational Model (BSEM) as a whole of school approach. BSEM is a trauma informed approach that provides educators with a consistent approach to support students in and out of the classroom. Training and implementation of the model commenced in Term 2, 2023 with the four days of training spaced over fourteen months. Part of the process has included contextualising the model to Gateway Community High so as to be effective with students. The process of implementing and embedding the relevant learning and strategies is ongoing and expected to be a two-to-three-year process. Some of the strategies introduced include:
  - Ready-to-learn plans
  - Ready-to-learn check-ins
  - Morning circles
  - Lesson routines
  - Brain breaks
- Addition of a part-time dedicated School Counsellor, plus consulting advice from other trained professionals.
- Establishment of a structured Wellbeing Team that includes the Head of Campus, School Counsellor, Learning & Support Teacher and Wellbeing Officer.
- Wellbeing Wednesdays were introduced for students to participate in a combination of activities for wellbeing support, life lessons and personal interest. Including:
  - Planned wellbeing incursions - GPs in Schools, Lovebites, KYDS
  - Excursions – Staff v’s student competitions, Challenge Day, Taronga Zoo
  - Programmed wellbeing lessons
  - Community engagement – work experience, volunteering at Wesley Mission, Bush to Bowl
  - Sport and Leisure sessions – gardening, cooking, art, touch football
- Circles groups are an important part of the structure for the school day. Each Circle is made up of a small group of students and a staff member. During Circles the staff member checks in with each student. The group then focuses on a wellbeing activity or lesson. The lesson content for Circles was developed by the L&ST or Consulting Psychologist according to the Berry Street program and delivered to each Circles group by their leader.
- Using the results of our Huber Wellbeing Surveys and Reports to inform our “theory of change” especially around our wellbeing plans and activities. The Huber report is part of a 3-year longitudinal research project on social impact measurement commissioned by the Board in 2021. (*See page 33 and the inside back cover for more detail*). The 2023 Huber Social Impact Report is on our [website](#) and quotes and data extracts from the report are highlighted in this Annual Report.

### *Building Connections and Community*

- Circles groups are one of the ways students build connections across Year groups and classes. It gives them the opportunity to strengthen their feelings of belonging and safety.
- The fortnightly Student Voice meeting is an opportunity for the student body to present their concerns, issues and ideas to the School leadership. Representatives of each Circles group volunteer and are selected to participate in the student-run process.
- Fortnightly student assemblies including recognition of individual and team achievements
- Regular staff meetings for all staff and dedicated meetings for Teaching and Learning, Wellbeing, special projects.
- There is open two-way communication with the parent/school community by email, phone, newsletter and in-person meetings.
- Community gatherings and events. In 2023 Gateway Community High hosted parents, carers and stakeholders to a variety of welcome and orientation events, end of term events and special events such as Harmony Day and the Graduation/End of Year event.
- Regular contact, including information sessions, with our referral network of colleagues in schools, allied health, youth support and other government and community organisations.
- Scheduled Open Days for prospective students and their families and carers.
- Frequent interaction with the network of similar Special Assistance Schools, especially those run by other Community Colleges.
- Connection and contact between students and other services including the police through a school v's police touch football game and school visits.

## **Memberships and Affiliations**

Gateway Community High is a member of the New South Wales Association of Independent Schools (AISNSW), which provides a peak body to support the operations of independent schools. AISNSW has been a tremendous source of advice and support since the outset, and we look forward to continuing to build close working relationships with them.

The School also maintains strong networks with similar alternative high schools, especially those established by the Community College network across regional NSW. We connect directly and often with local schools and professionals that refer students to us and a range of community organisations and agencies.

We have developed strong working relationships with professionals with specialist skills and knowledge in indigenous culture, resilience, child safety and curriculum. Additionally, we work closely with other community organisations, government and supporters who appreciate and support the outcomes being achieved for the students and the community as a result of the creation and development of our unique school.

## Communications

At Gateway Community High we believe in the importance of keeping open lines of communication with parents and carers and the greater school community in order to serve the best interests of the student.

Being a small and inclusive school, proactive outreach and engagement with students, parents and carers is a key priority for staff.

Based on our philosophies of Agency, Authenticity, being Student-Centred and building Community, the School takes an open and transparent approach when communicating with students, parents and carers, the broader community and stakeholders.

Communications also accord with our privacy and legislative requirements.

### *Regular Communications*

Examples of regular communications include:

- Regular in-person and on-line information sessions for any interested students, families or referral agencies. The sessions outline the unique aspects of the School's philosophy and approach, and the enrolment process, so that all potential students and their families are fully informed about the unique nature of the School.
- One-on-one meetings with staff where families and the student can be given information about their academic progress, social and wellbeing matters, engagement in their schooling, interpersonal skills, issues about attendance and behaviour.
- Emails circulated to families containing relevant and specific information about upcoming events, highlights, activities.
- Term newsletters reviewing the student engagement and achievements
- Access to information and relevant forms available from the School's website.
- Individual calls and in-person meetings arranged by teachers with parents and carers as the need arises, and/or vice versa.
- Student reports provided to students, parents/carers twice per year.
- Invitations extended to visitors, members of parliament and the community, to our school community and special events.
- Staff check their school emails daily or as soon as practical.
- Staff correspond directly with students via their Gateway Community High email address and, where necessary, by phone from the School.
- Staff maintain professional boundaries with respect to digital and social media, and privacy of home contact details.

### 3. STUDENT OUTCOMES IN STANDARDISED NATIONAL LITERACY AND NUMERACY TESTING

Results for Year 9 Students enrolled in 2023 who completed Naplan testing were as follows:

Source: [My School - Gateway Community High](#)

Average Result	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar	Numeracy
<b>Gateway Community High Year 9 2023</b>	527	537	575	534	537
<b>Similar Schools 2023</b>	545	556	573	544	559
<b>All Schools 2023</b>	564	567	568	557	564

100% of students enrolled in Year 9 in 2023 participated in the 2023 Naplan tests, an increase on the previous year in percentage and overall numbers participating. All of our Year 9 students are to be congratulated on their efforts and willingness to attempt or complete the testing. We acknowledge that many of our students experience anxiety and barriers to participating in timed testing and assessment and are also apprehensive of receiving their results. This significant achievement is recognised and appreciated by all involved.

All Year 9 Naplan tests were moved to the online format in 2023. The School provides each student with a laptop and students were assisted, where needed, to use this for the Naplan testing.

As a special assistance school whose students have often disengaged with their schooling in previous years Gateway Community High recognises that many of our students may have gaps in their literacy, language and numeracy development. A significant design principle for the School is the specific focus on building confidence and progress in these fundamental educational foundations. Language, literacy and numeracy are targeted across the curriculum including the additional timetabling of hours in the teaching areas of English and Mathematics.

In-class support, as well as some individual and small group support, is available for students where required. Students may be supported through dedicated literacy and numeracy groups. Literacy and numeracy are embedded across the curriculum and a whole school focus on literacy through comprehension was implemented strongly in 2023. All students participated in one-to-one York Assessment for Reading Comprehension (YARC) to inform targeted support for groups and individuals.

A lower grading of students in standardised testing is a reflection of the School's purpose - to re-engage young people who may have missed school and therefore some literacy and numeracy fundamentals, and to better equip them to achieve their maximum potential.



## 4. THE GRANTING OF RECORDS OF SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT (ROSA)

In 2023 thirty-two (32) Year 10 students completed their Year 10 schooling at Gateway Community High. 100% were deemed to have fulfilled the requirements for their Record of School Achievement (RoSA).

Compared to our inaugural cohort of Year 10 completers in 2021 this was more than triple the number of graduates and a higher percentage that qualified for the ROSA. (2021: 9/11) (2022: 20/20)

This increase over time is a significant reflection of achievement and growth in both the School and the Gateway Community High students.

### Year 10 Results 2023 (Source: Schools Online)

Subjects / Stage 5 Hours	Number of students	Average grade
English 200 hours	32	C
Mathematics 200 hours	32	D
Science 200 hours	32	C
Geography 100 hours	32	D
History 100 hours	32	C
PDHPE 100 hours	32	C

At Gateway Community High we target a Stage 5 cohort of students that may have been disengaged from education or have been overcoming individual challenges impacting on their education for some time prior to enrolment.

These results acknowledge and recognise the persistence and positive achievement for some of our students in simply being able to complete their Stage 5 schooling.

Most of our students in 2023 entered the school with lower-than-average attendance rates and/or grades lower than their potential, due to the barriers they experienced during their schooling in prior years. As a result, the number of students who achieved an A or B grade in any given subject is generally lower than the State averages.

Additionally, The Year 10 students of 2023 were all impacted in their high school studies - since 2020 - by the Covid-19 Pandemic. Covid caused extraordinary disruption to their learning and connections to their school communities, as well as significant mental health impacts for many.

## 5. PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND TEACHER STANDARDS

Teaching and support staff employed at Gateway Community High participated in a range of professional development activities in 2023. In addition to this the Responsible Officers of the School (Directors and some key staff of Macquarie Community College) also completed a range of learning activities.

The priority focus areas for professional learning in 2023 included implementing school-wide training as a strategy - including the Berry Street Education Model, curriculum development, strategies for improving quality teaching and learning, attendance improvement, wellbeing and student support.

All staff complete child protection training, reinforced by ongoing revision of practices during staff meetings. In addition, key staff participated in professional development in *Sentral* and *Complispace Policy Connect* for administrative and compliance processes.

Staff professional development opportunities were undertaken in person and virtually in 2023.

The following table summarises the key professional learning activities undertaken by staff in 2023:

### Staff Professional Development Activities 2023

Program or activity	Mode	Participants	Notes
Programming for Differentiation in Science – AIS NSW	Face to face	1	AISNSW
Universal Design for Learning – AIS NSW	One-to-one mentoring	3	AISNSW
The Inclusive Classroom: Differentiating for All	Blended	1	AISNSW
Governance Training Modules	On-line	5	AISNSW
CompliSpace training modules on key policy and procedure areas	Online	14	Complispace Assurance
Alternative High School conference	Face to face	10	Hosted by Warakirri College Campbelltown
Berry Street Education Model <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Module 1 – Body Domain</li> <li>- Module 2 – Relationships Domain</li> </ul>	Face to Face	16	Berry Street
<i>Sentral</i> School Management System Training	Teams training online	5	<i>Sentral</i>
NCCD Collection and Implementation	Webinar	2	AISNSW

## 6. WORKFORCE COMPOSITION

As Gateway Community High experienced student growth in 2023 the numbers of staff also increased.

Gateway Community High roles and positions as of 31 December 2023 included:

- 1 x full time Head of Campus (0.4 teaching load)
- 1 x part-time Learning Support Teacher (0.8 FTE)
- 5 x full-time classroom Teaching roles
- 1 x full-time Student learning support and well-being officer
- 1 x part-time (0.8) SLSO/paraprofessional subject teacher
- 4 x casual Student Learning Support Officers (SLSOs)
- 2 x part-time Administration staff
- 1 x Business Manager (Terms 1 & 2)
- 1 x Part-time School Counsellor (0.6 FTE, From Term 2)
- 1 x Part-time Facilities Manager

All staff were Australian citizens with no Indigenous heritage.

The retention of staff has significantly improved during 2023. Maintaining a strong and growing team of experienced staff since late 2022 and into 2024 has been, and will be, a key driver of stability, student outcomes and continuous improvement. As a unique, small but growing Special Assistance School, attracting and retaining staff who are the right 'fit' for the School and have the specialist skills and flexibility needed to support students to overcome barriers and re-engage with education will continue to be a challenge.

Despite the Covid pandemic being less onerous in 2023 than prior years, illness amongst staff, related absence, and lack of casuals led to school closure on two days in Term 4 of 2023.

The School contracts consultants and specialists as required to provide services and advice. In 2023 this included a consulting psychologist for wellbeing strategy, indigenous cultural education and a review of regulatory and child protection compliance.

The School formally contracts Macquarie Community College to provide professional and managed services such as accounting and finance, ITC, governance support, marketing, property services.

### **Teaching Staff**

<b>Level of accreditation</b>	<b>Number of teachers</b>
Provisional	<b>0</b>
Proficient	<b>9</b>
Highly Accomplished	<b>0</b>
Lead Teacher	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Number employed over 2023</b>	<b>9</b>

### Teacher Qualifications

Category	Number of Teachers
Teachers having teacher education qualifications from a higher education institution and holding a bachelor’s degree within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) guidelines.	9

## 7. ATTENDANCE

### Student Attendance

Gateway Community High is a school that specifically targets students who may have disengaged from their schooling for commencement in Years 9 and 10.

Average student attendance rates in 2023 showed considerable improvement over 2021 and 2022:

- 77% of enrolled students attended school on average each school day in 2023, an increase of 11% on the 2022 attendance figures.
- 35% of enrolled students attended more than 90% of the time in 2023, an increase of 18% on the 2022 attendance figures.



Source: Huber Social wellbeing survey conducted December 2023

## Management of Non-Attendance

The School utilises a number of proactive strategies to engage students who may be experiencing barriers to regular attendance.

Strategies and actions to address non-attendance include:

- Follow-up by wellbeing staff with students and parents/carers if a student is consistently late, sick, leaving early or non-attending.
- Check-in conversations by wellbeing staff with the student in relation to the circumstances of any unexplained consistent absence upon their return.
- Follow-up with nominated parent/carer of any student who is absent for more than three days without contact with the School.
- A daily SMS system to notify parents of student absence and request school contact.

When a student is facing barriers to school attendance these are taken into consideration when planning the most effective way for them to engage with attending Gateway Community High and in implementing student attendance support strategies.

The Head of Campus or delegate will also reaffirm with the student and their parents/carers the legal ramifications of being absent from school consistently.

The School may develop an Attendance Plan in consultation with a nominated parent/carer, and/or a guardian approved by a youth service (e.g. Department of Communities & Justice or Children and Adolescent Mental Health) for students who have enrolled with, or are developing, poor attendance patterns.

These plans may include:

- Suitable and achievable programs (e.g., student attends partial day or part-time until full time return).
- Monitoring and timely reporting of student absence.
- Student welfare initiatives such as check-ins with designated staff and routine structuring.
- Curriculum or class changes.
- Set review date/s for progressive increase of attendance and success planning.

## 8. RETENTION OF STUDENTS

Given that Gateway Community High was a single Stage 5 school in 2023, and that 2021 was the first year of operation, retention statistics for year-to-year progression are only available for Year 9 2022 to Year 10 in 2023.

Twelve (12) of the fifteen (15) students that completed Year 9 in December 2022 commenced Year 10 in 2023 (80 %).

Given the nature of the school and its cohort not all students that commence their enrolment in any given year complete their full year of studies.

In 2023 six (6) of the students who commenced an enrolment at the School did not complete a full year of enrolment at Gateway Community High – four (4) left during Year 9 and two (2) left during Year 10.

Exits can occur for a range of reasons (change in family circumstances, health and wellbeing, behaviour and engagement). Given the high demand for the limited places available, the School maintains an active

waiting list to ensure that enrolment offers are made as they become available to students that meet our selection criteria.

## 9. POST SCHOOL DESTINATIONS

As part of our vision to offer options for our students, the School lodged an application in 2023 to NESA to extend its program to Stage 6 (Years 11 and 12) from 2024. This application was formally approved by the Minister in 2023 for 2024 commencement.

Eighteen (18) of the thirty-two (32) students who completed their Year 10 studies in 2023, elected to continue on at Gateway Community High and commenced the inaugural Gateway Community High Stage 6 course (Senior One) in 2024. The School offers the HSC program as a compressed curriculum model.

All other students had confirmed placements into specialist alternative high schools, further education or work.

As a sign that our students have actively and purposefully re-engaged in their education it is highly significant that the majority of students who completed their Stage 5 schooling at Gateway Community engaged in further learning – either to commence their formal Stage 6 schooling to complete their HSC, or to commence Vocational Education and Training qualifications.

- 18 continued at Gateway Community High to complete Stage 6.
- 5 enrolled at an alternative arts or sports high school to complete Stage 6.
- 7 are completing VET studies at TAFE.
- 2 are enrolled in an apprenticeship and working.

We applaud each of these students in making the most of their learning opportunities while at Gateway Community High and actively setting a new direction for the next stage of their learning and employment pathways. We are very proud of their achievement in completing their Year 10 schooling and many of the students continue to share their success stories with us.

Programmed lessons and sessions for career-planning, vocational transition and job seeking were included during 2023 including: careers expos, TAFE visits and transition to further training and education pathways. The sessions helped engage students in planning for their future and the next steps after completing their RoSA at Gateway Community High.

## End of Year Celebration Event – 8 December 2023

In December 2023, we were pleased to host a wonderful end of year celebration of the achievements of our Stage 5 students, including the formal graduation of our 32 Year 10 students.

Theresa Collignon, Group CEO and Board Member was our engaging MC with a special guest address from Mr James Ynson, an inspirational individual who shared some life lessons, imparting the value of education, being resilient and overcoming challenges.

Aboriginal Elder Theresa Ardler, clad in a magnificent possum skin cloak was a special guest, having been very involved with programs for the School and students since 2022.

The event featured outstanding musical performances by some of our talented students and a magnificent celebration Haka by some students, their family members and English teacher Tanya. All of whom honoured their Maori heritage.

Two of our students Niyx and Max shared the podium to deliver their reflections about the achievements, challenges and joys of completing their Year 10 and RoSA. Stating that, 'On behalf of all of the students, attending Gateway has had such a positive impact on all of our lives.'(Max)

A highlight was the presentation of a range of achievement and recognitions awards for students from Years 9 and 10, including 2 Long Tan leadership and citizenship awards presented by Defence Force representative Petty Officer Andrew Slater.

Local Member for Epping and former Premier Dominic Perrottet joined us to present the academic achievement awards.

Year 10 graduation certificates were proudly accepted by students in the presence of their understandably proudly emotional families, their fellow students and staff.



## 10. ENROLMENT POLICIES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDENT BODY

Gateway Community High uses Complispace (Ideagen *Policy Connect*) as the source of its policy framework and customises these to our operating context as a small, independent Special Assistance School.

### Enrolment Policies and Procedures

#### *Our Student Enrolment Policy*

<b>Introduction</b>	The governing body of a registered individual school must demonstrate that the school has enrolment and attendance procedures that comply with all relevant laws and are detailed in written documents in a clear and concise manner.
<b>Source of Obligation</b>	<p>The NSW Registration Manual (B7.1) requires the Head of Campus of the School to keep a register, in a form approved by the Minister, of the enrolments of all children at the School.</p> <p>The NSW Registration Manual (B8.2) requires the School to provide a safe and supportive environment by maintaining a student enrolment register.</p>
<b>Student Enrolments</b>	<p>Gateway Community High keeps a register of enrolments of all children at the School in the Student data base.</p> <p>(formerly School Pro, <i>Sentral</i> in use since Term 4 2023)</p>
<b>Information for Register of Enrolments</b>	<p>The register of enrolments records the following information for each student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• name, date of birth and address</li> <li>• the name and contact phone number of parent(s)/guardian(s)</li> <li>• enrolment date of enrolment</li> <li>• leaving date and destination</li> <li>• for students older than six (6) years, pre-enrolment situation or previous school (where relevant)</li> <li>• where the destination of a student below seventeen (17) years of age is unknown, evidence that the NSW Department of Education has been notified of:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the student’s full name</li> <li>○ the student’s date of birth</li> <li>○ the student’s last known address</li> <li>○ the student’s last attendance date</li> <li>○ the student’s possible destination</li> <li>○ parents’/guardians’ full names and contact information</li> <li>○ any known work health and safety risks associated with contacting the parents/guardians or student</li> <li>○ any information that may help locate the student.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



<b>Records of the Register of Enrolments</b>	The register is retained for a period of five years after the last entry is made, and copies of information in the register are stored off-site at regular intervals.
<b>Implementation</b>	The Head of Campus and appointed delegates are responsible for the effective implementation of this Policy.

## Enrolment Procedures 2023

### *Information Required Upon Application to Gateway Community High*

As a school that assists students in a range of circumstances, Gateway Community High requires detailed information about potential students when they are applying to enrol.

Gateway Community High has a very small intake overall and generally has a waiting list.

Term 1 commencement is generally supplemented by rolling intakes throughout the year as spaces become available.

The change to a larger building mid-year in 2023 facilitated two intakes, commencing with 40 Stage 5 students in Semester One 2023, with an increase to 54 by Census Date in Semester Two.

This information collected for enrolment may include:

- Personal details including name, age, address, date of birth (note: proof of identity through birth certificate, passport or other identification is required)
- Parent/guardian/carer contact details
- Current living arrangements
- Emergency contact details
- Referral details where relevant
- Demographic Information such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and employment of parents/carers
- Disability, medical condition(s) and/or medication requirements where applicable
- Assessment/support details including any reports from psychologists, psychiatrists, and/or counsellors
- Previous education details
- Other training or employment information.

This information is gathered through the *Application for Enrolment Form*. No application will be progressed to interview without this application form.

### *Enrolment Procedure*

- All enquirers and referral networks are encouraged to access information on the website, enquire by email or call the school. They are then generally contacted for an initial discussion about the School and invited to attend an information briefing session prior to submitting an application.
- Upon review of an *Application for Enrolment Form*, contact will be made with the Parent/Carer. A suitable interview time may be made for all parties.
- Where information provided is incomplete and/or further information is required in order to provide deeper information about an individual's particular circumstances, staff may follow up with their prior

school and/or professionals involved in the 'team' around the student, including a referral agency or health practitioner, social worker, learning or disability support practitioner.

- The Head of Campus and/or appointed delegate(s) will personally interview each applicant along with their parent/carers. They will consider each applicant's interview responses regarding their ability and willingness to support the Gateway Community High ethos. If the prospective student has not previously attended an in-person information session they will also tour the facilities.
- The Head of Campus and/or appointed delegate reviews all information and makes a decision regarding acceptance for enrolment and their likely start date.
- The Head of Campus or appointed delegate will inform the applicant, in writing and/or by phone, about the outcome of their application and, if successful, a commencement date will then be arranged.
- Students accepted for enrolment will be entered into the student database, including details of their commencement date.
- An Information Pack is sent to the nominated parent/guardian/carer and a student induction process will be followed.

### *Selection Criteria*

Places are strictly limited and demand for places is high.

Being a small community of learners in our special assistance setting we seek to make the opportunity available to young people who:

- Are interested in learning, and willing to put in effort to succeed
- Could benefit from extra support and attention to re-engage in their education
- Will thrive outside a mainstream educational environment
- Are looking for a place of safety and belonging
- May have missed some language, literacy or numeracy fundamentals
- Are looking to build their pathway to future VET or Stage 6 (Years 11/12) studies.

### *Initial and ongoing enrolment*

Enrolment at the School in 2023 was a two-phase process:

- Phase 1 – Initial enrolment at the School for a limited trial period of a minimum two weeks
- Phase 2 – Confirmed enrolment after the student successfully completed the initial enrolment period.

#### *Phase 1 – Initial enrolment trial period*

During the initial enrolment period the School assessed how the student was responding to the School environment in relation to the following criteria for confirmation of enrolment:

- Attendance
- Engagement
- Social interaction
- Attitude towards learning

The School communicates with the student and their parents/carers during the initial enrolment period about how the student is progressing in relation to the criteria for renewal of enrolment as identified above. If the student's enrolment was not confirmed the student's enrolment at the School ceased with the student and family supported in enrolment elsewhere.

### *Phase 2 – Confirmation of enrolment*

After successful completion of the initial enrolment period, the School confirms ongoing enrolment at the School, subject to the student and their parents/carers meeting the School's requirements for continuing enrolment.

Continuing enrolment at the School is subject to the student abiding by the School's Code of Conduct, the terms and conditions of the signed enrolment agreement and values-driven behavioural expectations. Breaches will result in students progressing through the formal discipline process.

### *Cessation of enrolment*

A student's enrolment may cease in the following circumstances:

1. expiry of the initial enrolment period, with no renewal of enrolment offered
2. withdrawal of enrolment by the student and their parents/carers
3. termination of the enrolment by the School on the grounds of discipline or a breach of the School's Code of Conduct.

Where a student's enrolment ceases, the student and their parents/carers are required to inform the School of their post-school destination, that is whether the student has enrolled in education or training at another education provider or is in employment and who the education/training and/or employment is with. Where a student is under the age of 17 and the School has not been informed of their post-school destination, the School is required to report that the student's destination is unknown to the NSW Department of Education.

### *Relevant Forms and documents*

1. Information session slides and FAQs for applicants (on website)
2. Application for enrolment form (on website)
3. Referral Form (optional)
4. Enrolment Agreement
5. Pre-enrolment risk assessment form
6. Interview Guide with response notes
7. Offer letter
8. Confirmation of Enrolment letter

## Characteristics of the Student Cohort

There are a variety of reasons that a young person may choose to pursue their education at Gateway Community High. In general, most students who attend Gateway Community High are young people who, for many and varying reasons, have not thrived in a mainstream school setting, disengaging from their full time learning in early secondary schooling, or even in primary school.

**The Gateway Community High Wellbeing Survey received baseline responses from 73 students since 2021. The following provides some high-level insights into the demographic makeup of students who have participated in the Wellbeing Survey.**

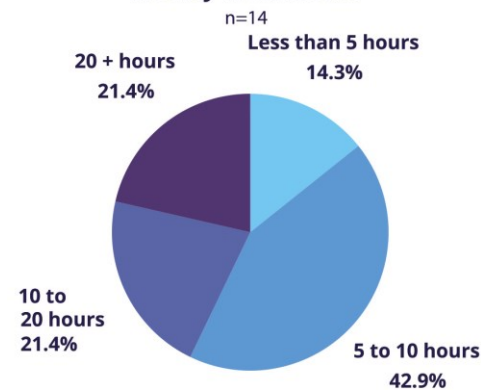
### Hours of Work

20% of respondents reported current employment.

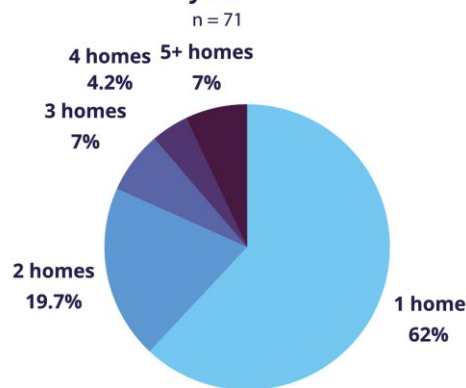
### Accommodation

Almost one-fifth of respondents (18%) had moved homes 2+ times within the past year.

**Students in employment, by number of weekly work hours**



**All responses, by frequency of moves last year**



Source: Huber Social wellbeing survey conducted December 2023

Note: Data analysis includes baseline responses from 73 students 2021-23.

Some students are from families who are genuinely interested in exploring alternative educational models. Some students need a smaller and more personalised setting, having been overwhelmed by the large volume of people and complex logistics of a mainstream school. Some couldn't deal within the competitive mainstream environment or experienced ongoing bullying.

The majority of students in Stage 5 at Gateway Community High have mild to moderate social emotional and/or mental health issues including anxiety and depression. Students often have one or more conditions that benefit from learning support including ASD, ADHD, dyslexia, dyscalculia.

Some students have a learning-related, emotional or psychological challenge, or have experienced trauma. Some didn't feel sufficiently supported or able to make lasting friendships in a mainstream system.

Some students have missed months of school since 2020 because of the impact of Covid disruptions to school opening hours, family employment and finances. Others may have missed school due to health or other personal impacts within their family including family breakdown or change of housing. Some students may have been struggling at school as a result of dealing with physical and/or identity changes of adolescence, gender or sexual identity.

Often it is a combination of complex factors that contribute to a young person electing to enrol at Gateway Community High to re-engage with their learning.

Due to lower than full attendance at school in prior years, many of our students may have some catching up to do in terms of performing at their intellectual and academic potential, or at the pace of their usual age level cohorts.

Our students come from a full range of socio-economic backgrounds and suburbs ranging from the Parramatta/Ryde area, the Hills, upper north shore, and Sydney's western suburbs. We have a diverse range of students from relatively advantaged to disadvantaged and vulnerable families or care situations.



*Source: Huber Social wellbeing survey conducted December 2023*

Some students may have been previously “labelled” as naughty or troubled, exhibiting inappropriate behaviours, swearing, being disrespectful or disruptive and/or lacking the ability to regulate their emotions. This might include disrespecting teachers or not complying with school rules, including uniform, phone usage or punctuality rules.

Some students may, as a result of the above, have been suspended from their previous schools, had attendance issues, and spent time in lunchtime or after school detention or have been on warnings, or a variety of discipline levels.

At Gateway Community High all of these students are working alongside one another and learning to get along, respect differences and learn to operate within our values frameworks so that all can feel able to **Achieve. Belong. Grow.**

## 11. KEY SCHOOL POLICIES

Gateway Community High has adopted the Complispace policy bank and has customised and contextualised these to our unique environment.

All policies were new in our inaugural year (2021) and submitted to NESAs in March 2021. There were again updated in March 2022, with selective review in July 2022 and again in March 2023 with selective reviews as part of our registration/inspection processes.

In keeping with our commitment to continuous improvement during the establishment years of the new School, policies are regularly reviewed and built upon, especially at the level of developing, documenting and implementing procedures.

Key Policies are organised in categories as per the requirements for Registration with particular focus on Safe and Supportive Environment (Child Protection, Student Duty of Care, Bullying, Code of Conduct), Staffing, Curriculum, Attendance, Discipline, Facilities and Property/WHS areas.

Students, parents/carers are made aware of the key points of these policies at varying levels of detail during the pre-enrolment, pre-commencement and post-commencement periods. Staff are made aware of policies through mandatory and additional training and access to the Complispace systems.

All policies are available on request. Key Policies are available on the website. This is updated regularly and at the time of this publication (June 2024) included:

- Bullying Prevention and Intervention
- Complaints Handling Policy
- Gateway Community High Safety and Wellbeing Policy
  - Child Safety and Wellbeing Codes of Conduct
  - Student Code of Conduct
  - Creating and Maintaining a Child-Safe Environment
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Student Discipline Policy and Procedures

## 12. SCHOOL DETERMINED IMPROVEMENT TARGETS

In 2023 the School elected to build on the areas identified in 2022.

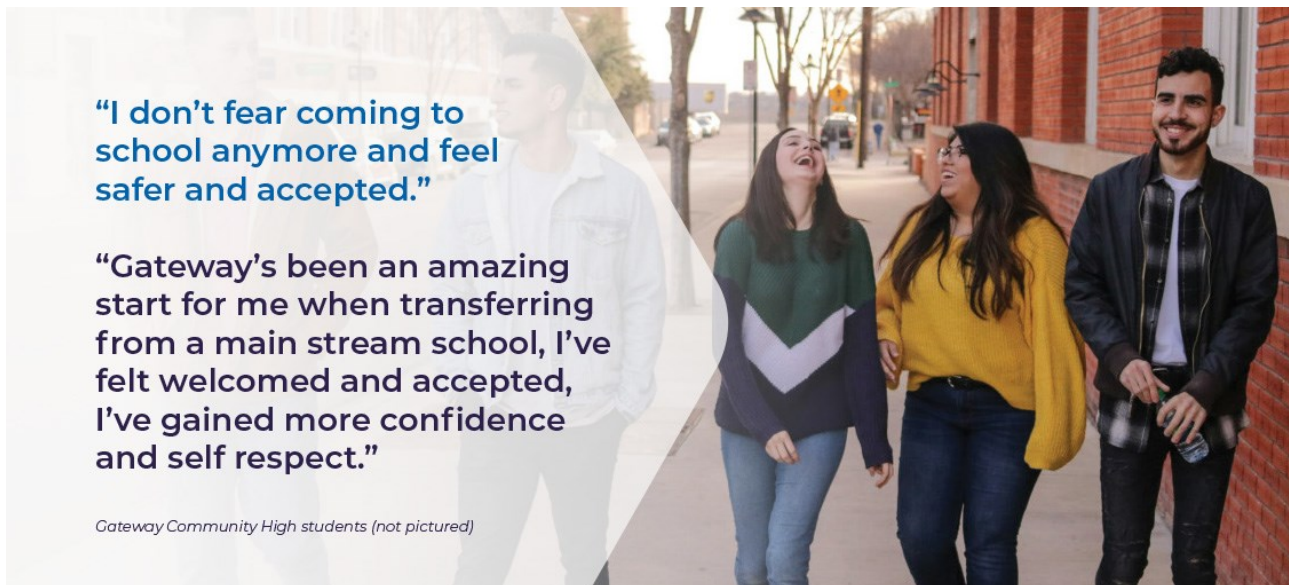
The School Improvement Goals for 2023 were:

- Focus on Student Attendance
- Focus on Wellbeing
- Focus on Quality Teaching and Learning.

### Focus on Attendance

Being a school that specifically targets students that may have missed learning due to lack of attendance in prior years, a primary objective of Gateway Community High is to focus on improving their attendance and active participation.

We aim to encourage and reward attendance in and of itself, as well as active participation and effort in their classroom work, regardless of their diverse starting points and academic goals.



Source: Huber Social wellbeing survey conducted December 2023

Strategies to encourage student attendance in 2023 included:

- Transition Planning for new enrolments:
  - Recognising that a significant number of students who enrol at Gateway Community High have been non-school attenders or undertaking home schooling in the period immediately prior to enrolling with the School, attendance transition plans were implemented as a re-engagement strategy.
  - Attendance transition plans are determined on a case-by-case basis and tailored to the individual student at the same time as the initial Individual Learning Plan (ILP) consultation occurs.
  - Plans are progressive with the end goal being full-time school engagement and attendance.
- Timely and regular conversations and follow up
  - Every day any student who was late or not in attendance for classes was spoken with by key staff.
  - Individual outbound SMS messages were sent to parents/carers of students who were not in attendance.
  - Phone calls were made to parents/carers to discuss reasons for non-attendance of the students without sufficient reason or who had missed three days of school.
  - Follow ups from staff directly with students/families through school email.
  - Meetings and attendance planning with those students not meeting attendance expectations.
- Positive reinforcement and recognition for attendance
  - Personal attention and encouraging words. All students in attendance warmly welcomed, regardless of time of arrival or duration of attendance on any given day. A special welcome back or “we missed you” for the those that had been absent.
  - A system of rewards that celebrated and recognised attendance. A system of merits was a popular and effective way to support good habits. Prizes were given for 10 merits and a certificate and gift voucher for 30 merits. At the end of term and the end of the year further awards were given for students with high attendance.
  - To support positive behaviours, Merits were also awarded for working well in class and for kindness to their peers and staff.

It was gratifying to see our year 10 students demonstrate commitment to ongoing improvement in attendance to achieve their ROSA outcomes in 2023 during their second and final year at the School.



*Source: Huber Social wellbeing survey conducted December 2023*

The major focus on improving attendance was to make lessons and activities engaging and to bring back some joy to the process of learning. This is especially important for those with a negative self-view of their academic performance – against their own or other’s assessment of their potential. Being at school helps our students to calibrate their expectations about their results against their own assessment, or in comparison to others, or compared to prior performance.

Some examples of engaging students in different approaches to learning included:

- Interactive Workshops with Theresa Ardler, indigenous elder, educator and artist.
- Wellbeing Wednesdays.
- Games and fun activities during breaks and after school – Uno, cards, jigsaws, art and other activities shared face to face when on site and “fun/game” sessions.
- Cooking and food preparation/nutrition activities.
- Gardening activities including an onsite vegetable garden and beautifying the outside break areas.
- Specialist sports and PE sessions off-site (local parks, YMCA West Epping, rock climbing, gym).
- Art activities, including colouring, painting, participation in art competitions.
- Interactive sessions and meetings with Police Youth Liaison officers.
- Post-school destination workshops.
- Resume and job interview skills.
- Excursions to: Anzac Memorial, The Australian Museum, BStreet Smart road Safety, Careers Expo, Bobbin Head.
- End of term “reward” and celebration activities including student games day, Ice skating, Treetops and Taronga Zoo.



## Focus on Wellbeing

Without some basic level of wellbeing students are generally not “ready to learn”.

The focus on improvement in student wellbeing in 2023 was very much about building our capacity and capability to understand and engage with the “whole person” to support their learning journey.

Informed by detailed individualised learning plans, and findings from our Huber research results, our approach is to assist students to build awareness of their own wellbeing and behaviours – and to develop strategies to manage and improve their wellbeing as individuals and for the cohort as a whole.

Our investment of time and resourcing into adopting the Berry Street Education Model as a whole-of-school initiative has established a more consistent application of a shared evidence-based approach.

It is a whole of staff effort to ensure that we continue to focus on student wellbeing as a core principle of our approach at Gateway.

Actions include being ever ready to provide a listening ear, personal and learning support and demonstrating and encouraging tolerance and acceptance for all – and especially for those that are not having a good day or week.

The benefit of having such a small cohort of students with new peers in a new learning environment with high staff/student ratios means we are committed to being solutions-focused, and willing to ‘figure it out’ together.

A key element of remaining responsive to the needs of our students is planning the structure of the school day, including our core operating hours and the timetable for each day/week and Term.

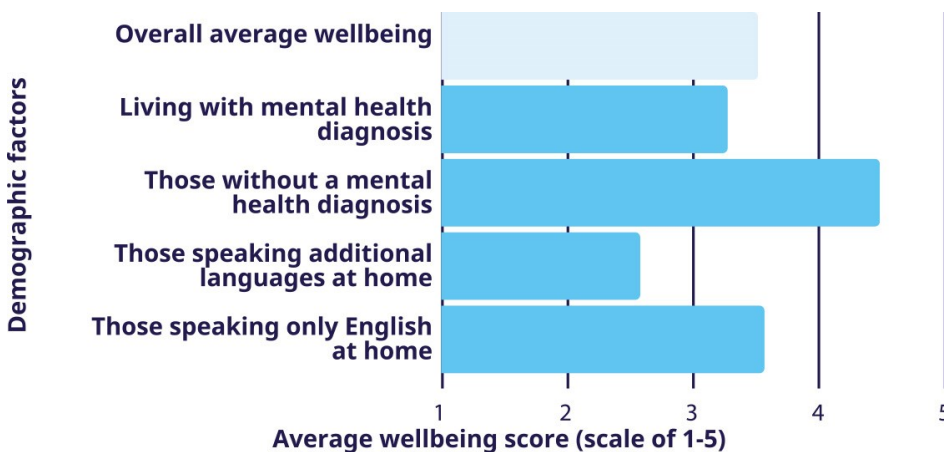
At Gateway Community High we devote significant time to getting to knowing our students, building trust in our small school setting between students as peers and between students and staff. New students may be offered transition-in plans over a period of time and an induction day was held in December 2022 for all new students enrolled for 2023 Term 1 commencement. This was repeated for the Semester 2 intake and again in Term 4 for the 2024 intake.



### Highlights of the 2023 Social Impact Results

- Gateway Community High positively impacted overall student wellbeing (9% increase).
- Environments that promote self-respect emerged as a predictor for student wellbeing.
- Gateway Community High effectively targeted factors that are key to improving overall wellbeing - (stress, self-belief, self-worth).
- Students face enduring challenges around feelings of stress, anxiety, and difficulty knowing who to trust, although qualitative data indicates Gateway is helping.
- Gateway's efforts to strengthen its dataset led to greater rigour in 2023.

The addition of this year's measurement into the data set has resulted in the largest wellbeing shift for Gateway Community High students to date (measured from the start of a young person's time at the School, to the end of the most recent year or when they leave). Findings demonstrate the continuing positive impact Gateway Community High has had on its students' wellbeing since 2021 and show an increasing trend since last year.



*Change in overall wellbeing was found to be statistically significant at  $p < 0.01$ , meaning there is 99% statistical confidence that shift is accurate, rather than due to chance. This is a sizable improvement on last year's statistical confidence of 80%.*

Source: Huber Gateway Community High Social Impact Report 2023

In 2023 we further developed our staffing roles and experience and created a Wellbeing Team led by the Head of Campus who brought a wealth of experience to the role. The School continues to improve its understanding, resourcing, daily practices and outreach to specialist services to have authentic conversations and better support students dealing with mental health conditions including anxiety and depression.

Wellbeing practices in 2023 included:

- Facilitated Home Room groups – including a Circles reflection.
- On-site, part-time School Counsellor.
- Structured wellbeing team and staff feedback.
- Timetabled, wellbeing programs and activities conducted by staff and visitors.
- Fortnightly all-school assemblies, including recognition, merits and dialogue.
- Inclusive themed events for students, families and staff – welcome events, Harmony day, Reconciliation week, Naidoc week, End/start of term gatherings.
- Love Bites program.
- Food basics provided and dedicated student kitchen facilities to encourage healthy eating.
- Ready-to-learn plans, using the Berry Street Educational Model.
- Regulation breaks and individual student check-ins.
- Cool Kids Anxiety Program – group sessions.

To build capability and reach as well as specific enrichment activities we actively engaged with key organisations and other services including:

- AISNSW and NESA
- NSW Departments of Education and Health, Police
- Local clubs (Epping and Carlingford Rotary)
- Theresa Ardler, indigenous elder, educator and artist
- Treetops (Cumberland Forest)
- KYDS
- YMCA Epping, Climbit and Fitness First

A key input to the development of our wellbeing practices is the ongoing Huber longitudinal research study - extracts of the 2023 report are highlighted throughout this report.

In 2023 the School also established a regular meeting forum on wellbeing and better systematised our note taking and record keeping using *Sentral* and confidential registers for risk and critical events.

We continued to develop and document our wellbeing framework and practices to inform our approach to further improvement in wellbeing outcomes in 2023, and to embed them into the future.

Some of our work on the further development of the wellbeing model and our learning support practices were led and supported by specialist consultants including a registered psychologist, and an expert in ILPs, with experience in school settings.

The Board commissioned an external consultant in late 2022 to conduct a complete review and update of our child protection procedures, and further develop our policies and procedures in anticipation of the new legislative regime for Child Safeguarding. The Board also reviewed its risk framework and insurance arrangements. This work was ongoing in 2023.

### Self-worth drives Wellbeing for Gateway Community High Students

Of the 50 factors measured in 2023, 18 were found to have a moderate relationship with overall wellbeing among Gateway Community High students. Of these, the top four factors are:



Source: Huber Gateway Community High Social Impact Report 2023

## Gateway Community High Students Have Greater Resilience

Across all factors measured, three key outcomes saw the greatest shifts: resilience, self-worth and holistic wellness. This page details the largest shifts relating to resilience.



**Hope**  
**+22%**

Believing good things will happen in their future



**Autonomy**  
**+19%**

Feeling one has control over their future



**Self-belief**  
**+18%**

Belief in oneself getting them through hard times



**Being able to overcome difficulties**  
**+17%**

Bouncing back quickly after hard times



**Having self-discipline**  
**+17%**

Doing things that are important, even if they don't feel like it



**Coping in challenging situations**  
**+15%**

I can remain calm when facing difficult situations

**23** New Result in 2023

**PN** Priority need (Low-scoring factor with relationship to wellbeing)

Gateway Community High has clearly had an impact on a range of skills that improve students' resilience for a positive and meaningful life.

*All shifts reported are found to be statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ).*

Source: Huber Gateway Community High Social Impact Report 2023

## Gateway Community High Students Have Increased Sense of Self-Worth

Many of Gateway Community High's students came to Gateway after finding the mainstream education system did not set them up for success. Thanks to Gateway's alternative education model, these students were able to positively reframe their relationship to learning as well as their own identities as students. Gateway's ability to nurture students' sense of self is reflected in the high shift scores below.



**Purpose**  
**+20%**  
 Feeling their life is important



**Environments that promote respect**  
**+19%**  
 Feeling one's opinions are heard and respected



**Pride**  
**+16%**  
 Feeling proud of their life



**Self-love**  
**+15%**  
 Liking oneself

**23** New Result in 2023

**PN** Priority need (Low-scoring factor with relationship to wellbeing)

## Gateway Community High Students Have Increased Holistic Wellness

In addition to empowering students with practical life skills, Gateway Community High upskill their students with the knowledge and skills to improve and maintain one's physical, mental and emotional health. The three highest shifts in holistic wellness are listed below:



**Emotional intelligence**  
**+17%**  
 Having strategies and tools to help manage their emotions



**Enjoyment**  
**+16%**  
 Enjoying life and having fun



**Help-Seeking Behaviour**  
**+14%**  
 Asking for help when they need it

**23** New Result in 2023

Source: Huber Gateway Community High Social Impact Report 2023

## Gateway Community High Students Have Greater Resilience

Across all factors measured, three key outcomes saw the greatest shifts: resilience, self-worth and holistic wellness. This page details the largest shifts relating to resilience.



### Hope

**+22%**

Believing good things will happen in their future



### Autonomy

**+19%**

Feeling one has control over their future



### Self-belief

**+18%**

Belief in oneself getting them through hard times



### Being able to overcome difficulties

**+17%**

Bouncing back quickly after hard times



### Having self-discipline

**+17%**

Doing things that are important, even if they don't feel like it



### Coping in challenging situations

**+15%**

I can remain calm when facing difficult situations

**23** New Result in 2023    **PN** Priority need (Low-scoring factor with relationship to wellbeing)

Gateway Community High has clearly had an impact on a range of skills that improve students' resilience for a positive and meaningful life.

*All shifts reported are found to be statistically significant (p<0.05).*

Source: Huber Gateway Community High Social Impact Report 2023

## Focus on Quality Teaching and Learning

The engagement of a specialist Learning and Support Teacher in 2022, and additional staff positions to support learning has led to significant outcomes, including the development of detailed and regularly updated Individualised Learning Plans (ILPs). The ILPs include comprehensive documentation to support our assessment of student learning support and interventions in accord with the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) and funding requirements.

Apart from some students who commenced in July 2023 with our mid-year intake, almost all of the students enrolled at the time of census data submission were eligible for some form of additional, funded support at significant or substantial level.

Leveraging the information gathered from the process of creating, monitoring and using the ILPs as “living documents” is an ongoing project. Notably this has also been part of an ongoing focus on developing individual and collective skills in differentiated teaching practices.

The School benefited from a Covid-intensive learning grant, through AISNSW, which enabled targeted students to participate in additional small group tutoring, facilitated by our learning support team.

As part of the development of our curriculum and teaching resources all staff spent time on the further development of the quality of teaching and learning. Activities included:

- Review of all scope and sequence and teaching programs.
- A dedicated weekly Teaching and Learning meeting.
- Detailed documentation of our assessment and grading procedures for school reports and the awarding of the ROSA.
- Completion of professional development workshops on teaching and curriculum with NESA and AIS.

A significant amount of work was done with students to ensure the school and classrooms are a place where students have an environment where everyone can feel safe. A sense of safety means that all can be ready to learn and progress their achievements.

This was done proactively and collaboratively with students and staff to describe and document what “walking the talk” of our values means. The output was collaboratively developed and agreed classroom “rules” and non-negotiables, and a program to actively recognise and reward examples of kindness, inclusion and accountability for actions.

## 13. PARENT, STUDENT AND TEACHER SATISFACTION

We work with all feedback proactively whether it be positive or negative as part of our continuous improvement journey.

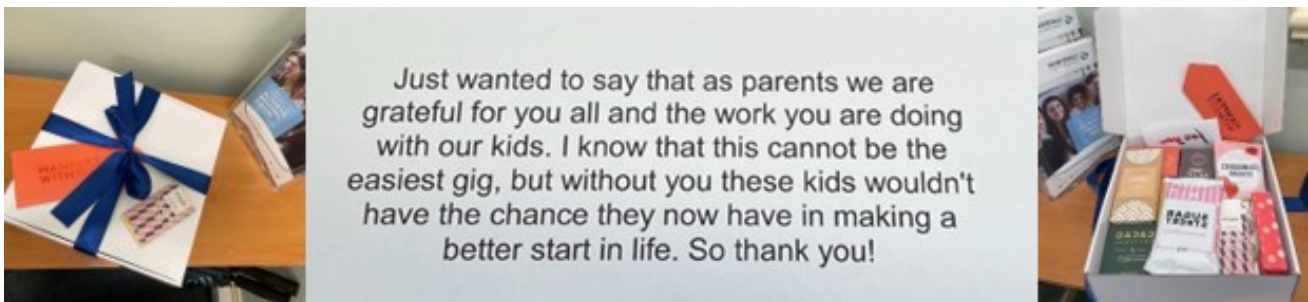
### Parent/Carers Feedback

The School receives many complimentary emails, some delightful thank you gifts and strong words of encouragement and gratitude. These come from parents and carers, our referral network and stakeholders, appreciating the establishment of our affordable and inclusive school, and for being part of a solution for their student.

Of course, not all students and families find that Gateway Community High is the right fit for them. Gateway Community High may also find that we are not the right environment to provide the specific areas

of academic interest, or the intense support and specialist expertise some students require. In these cases, we assist them to identify schools that can better meet their needs, including other high schools, distance learning, special education or behavioural schools.

Given the unique nature of our small and new school, and some of the challenges and barriers students who seek to enrol at Gateway Community High face, we anticipate and work with the prospect of some student turnover. This enables us to do individual or group intakes through the year, from the waiting list.



## Staff Satisfaction

It is pleasing to note that we have stronger staff retention in 2023 than in the prior year and improvement again from 2023 into 2024. Attracting and retaining staff with the specialist skills needed to support and work within our new, independent and unique Special Assistance School environment has been a challenge from the outset, exacerbated by opening and operating through Covid.

Given the critical skills shortage in the school teaching sector in NSW, recruitment for new staff in permanent, acting or casual roles is an ongoing challenge. This is especially true in securing classroom teaching staff with specific subject expertise in a growing but small school in a competitive market for staff. We were fortunate to build our team with talented new staff members including a new Head of Campus. We increased resourcing with more dedicated Student Learning and Support team members, new teaching, administration and wellbeing support staff, plus additional casuals and fixed term contract staff. Happily, we have started and ended 2023 with a full team of continuing and experienced teachers and have been able to add teaching, learning and support roles for further growth, including for the implementation of Stage 6 in 2024.

## Student Satisfaction

Our Huber Social longitudinal, objective research has provided valuable insights into the levels of student satisfaction and the outcomes of our alternative approach to inclusive education.

The survey process provides direct qualitative and quantitative input from students on what is working for them. The full reports for 2023 and prior years can be accessed [here](#), including our impact thesis which is also included in the last page of this report.

MCC Child and Family Services (CaFS) and Macquarie Community College (MCC) are very committed to understanding the outcomes for our students and the broader social impact of how we actualise our Purpose and Vision. The CaFS Board commissioned this measurement of social impact with two distinct goals. An immediate measurement of the School program's impact at the end of each school year and an establishment of a measurement system for tracking social impact year-on-year.




The inaugural 2021 Term 4 survey of students established a baseline of students' wellbeing status, informed us on priority focus areas for students, and allowed for benchmarking of longitudinal Gateway Community High Stage 5 survey data against that of other similar schools in the Huber data sets.

The 2022 surveys were conducted in Terms 1 and 4 for most students. The 2022 data included a cohort of students that completed 2 full years at Gateway Community High and some that commenced later in 2021, as well as our new students that commenced in 2022.

In 2023 with two separate intake points, we did commencement surveys for new students joining us in Semester 1 and Semester 2, and completion surveys for the majority of students that completed their Year 10/RoSA.

This means that we now have a statistically significant volume of data and increasing numbers of paired sets of commencement data to compare for the same student at completion. Additionally for some students we have data from 5 different surveys over time.



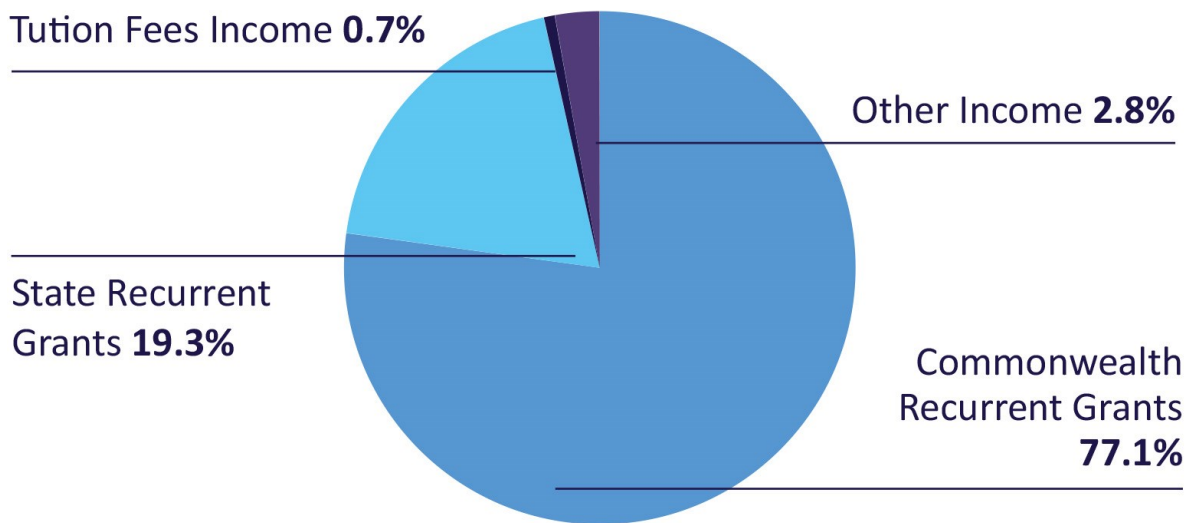
**“It has been good, because I haven’t been afraid to go to school, can attend and manage myself when I am not at my best. Gateway has given me more courage and hope towards attending school more “normally” and gave me the opportunity to make friends, meet new people and experience more “high school” like events. :)”**

*Gateway Community High student (not pictured)*

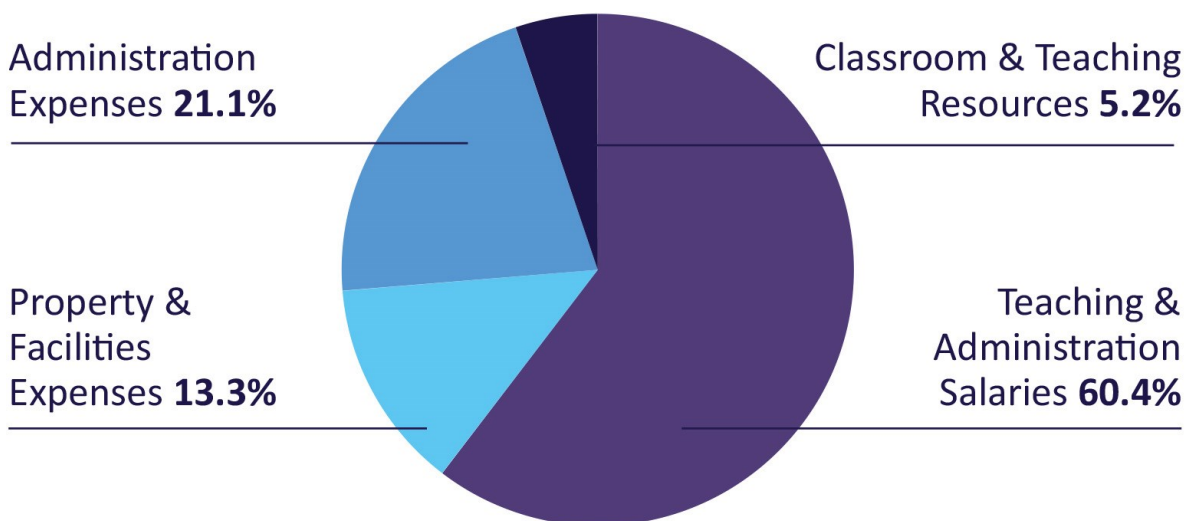
*Source: Huber Social wellbeing survey conducted December 2023*

## 14. SUMMARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION

### Gateway Community High – 2023 Income



### Gateway Community High – 2023 Expenses



# Gateway Community High Impact Thesis

The Gateway Community High Impact Thesis outlines the impact it has on its students' wellbeing. Through measuring each level of impact, Gateway can use a data-driven approach to demonstrate what works and what is needed to maximise impact and outcomes.

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## 1. Impact

Gateway Community High aims to improve the overall wellbeing of young people, so they are in the best position to access the education opportunities they need to achieve their potential.



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## 2. Outcomes

Gateway Community High achieves this impact by building capabilities and providing access to opportunities across the following areas:

- Learning ready
- Work ready
- Life skills
- Safe and stable environment
- Connection
- Resilience
- Self-worth
- Holistic wellness



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## 3. Outputs

Gateway Community High delivers the following outputs:

- Academic performance
- Attendance
- Year 10 completion
- Student retention
- Completion of additional courses or vocational work
- Continued education
- Employment
- Apprenticeships/traineeships
- Interactions with external service providers



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## 4. Activities

The above outputs are achieved through:

- Teaching of ROSA course
- Extracurricular activities
- Development of individual strategies and flexible approaches for each student
- Connections with external service providers



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## 5. Resources

The above activities require:

- Teaching staff who understand the students and are capable in a non-traditional teaching environment
  - Resilience and support staff
  - Educational resources
  - Funding
  - Relationships with external service providers and community members
  - School facilities
-



# GATEWAY COMMUNITY HIGH

An initiative of |  **MACQUARIE**  
Community College

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