



**GÄWA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
ELCHO ISLAND – NORTHERN TERRITORY**

Annual School Report 2011

Vision Statement

The mission of Gäwa Christian School is to be a learning community where God is glorified in everything we do.

GÄWA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL: AIMS

- To inspire and equip this generation of children to express Christ together at school, home and abroad.
- To develop the intellectual potential of each student and help them to reach their full potential using their God given talents, skills and abilities.
- To develop self disciplined, wise, kind and happy students.
- To value and respect each student as a unique person gifted by God.
- To assist students to appreciate their rich cultural heritage.
- To develop and nurture students positive attitude towards themselves and others.
- To provide a supportive and nurturing environment for schooling that translates to enthusiastic students full of hope for their own futures.
- To encourage excellence in our students and in our teachers .
- Parents, grandparents and community:
 - To encourage a genuine fellowship between school and community.
 - To facilitate positive relationships amongst all members of the school community (staff, students, parents and community members and elders).
- To develop a school that meets the specific needs of the community and achieves genuine two way learning.
- To encourage Christian parent direction and involvement in the school.

Principal's Message

Gäwa Christian School is a remote Christian school with an enrolment of approximately 80% Indigenous students and 20% Non-Indigenous students (children of staff members). Situated on the northern tip of Elcho Island the school offers education for Transition – Year 8 students. A Transition – Grade 4 class currently operates and a Grade 3 - Year 8 class. We also have a preschool program running three mornings a week with community helpers and a coordinator. The school is supported by the community who encourage mainstream schooling in conjunction with the teaching of traditional languages and indigenous culture. We have a fluctuating enrolment of approximately 38 students. Enrolments and attendance depends on parents or guardians choosing to live in Gäwa (as opposed to Galiwinku) Other factors include shifting communities, funeral commitments and the capacity to house everyone in the four houses that are in Gäwa.

The Australian Government requires that every school address specific areas in a published report each year. This information is designed to ensure that parents and guardians of the students have an overall picture of the performance of their schools. In highlighting these specific areas we need to also be aware that this information doesn't provide us with a complete picture of the wonderful Christian education offered in our school. For more details of our school and community log onto our website <http://www.gcs.nt.edu.au> .

Lara Hvala
Teaching Principal

School Profile

Our school is an Indigenous school in a remote homeland on Elcho Island. The information below is taken from our AUGUST 2011 CENSUS.

Mayawa Class: Transition – Grade 4
Boys: 11
Girls: 5
TOTAL STUDENTS: 16

Transition: 3 students
Grade 1: 1 students
Grade 2: 5 students
Grade 3: 5 students
Grade 4: 2 students

Damala Class: Grade 3 – Grade 8
Boys: 8
Girls: 13
TOTAL STUDENTS: 21

Grade 2: 2 students
Grade 3: 1 student
Grade 4: 2 students

Grade 5: 7 students
Grade 6: 5 students
Year 7: 3 student
Year 8: 1 students

Teaching and Learning Initiatives

Our students have an engaging and comprehensive curriculum which is based on the NTCF and English is taught as a second language at our school. We run the Accelerated Literacy Program in all our classes in the mornings, we have Yolngu Matha classes for the younger class and follow the Targeting Maths program for the Northern Territory. For devotions our teachers use *Over the Top – Kids at church program* to support their teaching. Each term the children also study a different country around the world in our unit on Communities Around the World. Countries of study throughout 2011 included China, Indonesia, Kenya and Egypt. They enjoy a different science unit, art and health unit each term.

Provision of Special Funding programs

Additional Teacher funding

In 2011, Gäwa Christian School received Commonwealth funding to employ an additional teacher. We had access to funding to employ 3 teachers instead of 2. Due to suitable applicants being hard to find we were only able to operate a three teacher school for term one and term three.

This funding however has been instrumental in seeing students excel in literacy and numeracy, has allowed for specialist reading classes to be conducted during times when three teachers were present and has also funded visiting specialist teachers focused on improving literacy and numeracy.

Closing the Gap

In 2011, Gäwa Christian School has been the recipient of Closing the Gap funding from the Commonwealth Government. This funding has been targeted towards improving teacher quality by up skilling teachers and teacher aides in Accelerated Literacy strategies. In addition this money had allowed students, teachers, aides and Indigenous representatives to participate in the International Transforming Education Conference in Darwin. The students and parents were involved in performing at the opening ceremony and selling art work at the Darwin markets. This event clearly brought the community and staff of Gäwa together to celebrate community and achievements – ultimately celebrating the way Gäwa is closing the gap as a community committed to education.

Engaging Remote Indigenous Students

As part of the Smarter Schools National Partnerships, GCS have undertaken activities to increase the engagement of students and community members within the school. This has always been a challenge in Gäwa due to the remoteness of the school and the fact that most parents live in Galiwinku which is at the opposite end of the island.

Two community members have run a 'play group' program for pre-school aged children and their families members. This program is run in one of the school building and has provided a huge attraction and motivation for community members to connect with the school. Young children are introduced to school-like behaviours and routines and are modelled healthy eating and hygiene practices.

The employment of attendance officers has also ensured that the children are able to get to school every day from outlying homelands. Children and guardians are also picked up by the attendance officer when they are spending the weekend in Galiwinku.

The Principal was supported by the NTCSA in initiating whole-school reform through the development of a school improvement plan and a school self-audit in the areas of 'Finance, Facilities and Resources' and 'Pastoral Care and Wellbeing'.

School leadership and decision-making processes

Gäwa Christian School is part of the eight schools run by NT Christian Schools Association and governed by a board.

Once each term all principals from the eight schools meet at the System office in Darwin to discuss issues related to the leadership, decision making processes and the direction of all our schools. Every meeting involves all principals and executive staff from NTCSA (including the CEO).

The Indigenous schools within the system also meet to discuss common concerns and joys once a term in Darwin.

On a local level our school aims to involve community (parents, guardians and elders) by encouraging Christian parent direction and involvement in the school and in the decision making processes. Informal community meetings and discussions are held with representatives of the community regularly. A representative from NTCSA also visits Gäwa once a term to speak with staff and community members.

The Principal was also involved with; and supported in initiating a whole school reform through the continuation a school improvement plan. This was part of the Engaging Remote Indigenous Students strategy in 2011.

Current conditions of school buildings and facilities

Gäwa Christian School has beautiful buildings, grounds and resources. The school buildings are 1 – 5 years old and are in extremely good condition. The classrooms are well maintained and provide an exceptional learning space for all the children. The resources are also well looked after. Books in the library and classrooms have been added to consistently throughout 2011 by donations from all over Australia. Similarly our class set of texts and AL books have been added due to our Additional Teacher Funding in 2011. These resources are kept in very good condition.

The grounds of our school are landscaped and maintained. The playground needs a new trampoline and replacement swing.

Staff housing consists of one house and a cabin. Currently there is a need for additional teachers housing and plans are underway for existing building to be modified so that they can accommodate a teacher and their family. The Principals house is 8 years old and needs some attention. The teachers cabin is in great condition. All houses have been fitted out with new furniture this year.

The community kitchen facilities have also been maintained to a good standard. A lot of care and time is taken to ensure that our buildings, facilities and grounds are kept to a high standard and looked after. Our students are integral in assisting us in our efforts and enjoy taking pride in their school.

Staffing Information

Teaching Principal – Lara Hvala (full time) Bachelor of Theatre (Production) and BA (Teaching)

Teacher – Jessica Whitby (full time) (Additional Teacher funding) BA (Teaching)

Teachers Aide – Basma Ganalarritji (casual)

Teachers Aide – Jaonne Dhamarrandji (casual)

Language Coordinator – Kathy Guthadjaka (casual – CTG funding)

Maintenance and Planning – Mark Hvala (full time)

Administration and art coordinator – Salome Moes (part time)

Kitchen/Cook – Mamana Bukulatjpi and Eric Garrawurra (casual)

Attendance officers – Colin Baker and Banthay Bukulatjpi (casual – GERIS funding)

Additional information about teachers

One of our teachers remained on staff for 2012 and the second teacher resigned at the end of 2011 (after being on staff for 18 months).

Our teachers had 5 sick days in total between them.

Our teachers have had many opportunities to be involved in Professional development. This year we have had onsite teacher training in literacy. This was held during term 1. In addition teachers have attended PD in Darwin.

Teachers participated in the following professional development throughout 2011.

FOEL – Forum of Educational Leaders (held once a term)

Indigenous Symposium – NTCSA Indigenous schools gathering

Accelerated Literacy workshops

International Transforming Education Conference – Darwin

Reducing Stress – Onsite training with CONNECT counsellor Margaret Lambert

Peacemaking Course – Darwin training by PEACEWISE

All staff participated in the following professional development throughout 2011.

International Transforming Education Conference – Darwin
Introduction to Peacewise – Onsite run by Geoff Bateman and Phoebe van Bentum

Average expenditure for each teacher on Professional Development was \$6269 this year.

Highlights

The students of Gäwa Christian School have participated in many activities during the year which have value add to their general schooling.

In July 2011 the students of the Gäwa Dance Company (made up of student, staff and community members) were invited to perform at the Opening ceremony of the International transforming Education Conference. This was an event attended by over 1000 people from around the world.

In July 2011 the students of Gäwa Christian School were invited to hold a market stall in Darwin at the Darwin Conference Centre. The students sold their art work, jewellery, paintings, prints, calendars, cards and crafts at the stall.

The students have learnt many dances and songs from around the world and performed these during community events and cruise ship visits.

In October 2011 the students of the Gäwa Dance Company were invited to perform at the Opening ceremony and dinner of the NATSIEC (National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Conference) at the Darwin Convention Centre.

Gäwa Christian School hosted a camp onsite for children from Tyndale Christian School (South Australia). This was an opportunity for the children to share their culture and homeland with other students from around Australia.

We have employed an artist who coordinates our art program and also art exhibitions of the children's works.

A duck farm and vegetable gardens have been established in Gäwa. The children are active participants in the running of these areas of the school.

Students continue to participate in junior sea ranger activities. Sailing, boating and fishing continue to be part of everyday life. Cultural afternoons are run by elders and members of the community.

Student Welfare

Students at Gäwa Christian School are always looking out and caring for each other.

Our school is very small but bigger children always take on the

responsibility of supporting and being good role models to the junior students. We have a buddy system in place and the students enjoy working with their buddies each week.

At Gäwa we also have assemblies each term and welcome parents and guardians to attend. The students participate in these assemblies by dancing, telling a story, sharing what they have learnt in their Accelerated Literacy classes, by singing a song or performing a drama piece. They enjoy sharing what they have learnt with each other and for their parents. We also acknowledge wonderful student behaviour, attendance and academic achievement by presenting awards during these assemblies.

Each week we meet for whole school devotions, prayer and time together. This is an important part of our week and a celebration of what God is doing in our school.

Parents and grandparents play an important role in disciplining the children and caring for their well being.

Nurses visit Gäwa two days a month to assess and treat the children for medical issues.

Teaching and Learning: Student Outcomes

Average student attendance – 2011

Our average student attendance is 68%. These figures however do not take into account the many students who come to school over 85% of the school year. Overall attendance was down this year.

Proportion of students meeting national literacy and numeracy benchmarks for their year at 3, 5, 7 and 9

This year none of our Indigenous students reached benchmark. Last year we had 3 students reaching bench mark. Two of these students were non-indigenous and one student was indigenous.

Number of students participating in NAPLAN testing in 2011:

Year 3: 3 students

Year 5: 7 students

Year 7: 2 students

All students improvements at school have however been recorded and mapped. We take great delight in looking at their reading progress in particular. This should always be congratulated.

	Yr 3		Yr 5		Yr 7		Yr 9	
	2010	2011	2010	2011	2010	2011	2010	2011
Reading	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Writing	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Numeracy	75%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Preschools (ENGAGING REMOTE INDIGENOUS STUDENTS)

Gäwa Christian School runs a community playgroup, which does not provide day care. The AMALA YOTHU (mothers and little ones) program is a community run project that caters for preschool aged children and toddlers. The Amala Yothu centre provides a social base for the mothers, fathers and young families within our community.

This year we have struggled to staff our Amala Yothu centre with consistent coordinators. Two community members have however volunteered during term 4 and they will be employed from the beginning of 2012.

The children love attending the centre three mornings a week.

A typical morning will involve singing, painting, outdoor play, cooking, free play, Letterland activities for 3 and 4 year olds, story time, teeth time and fruit time.

We encourage all mums to attend. Bukmak Gululu! Everyone is welcome!

Student Retention

Students move to Marrara Christian School in Darwin when they reach either year 7 or 8 for further studies.

Policy Development and Review

NTCSA System Wide Policies Developed and Reviewed in 2011

Policies, guidelines and supporting documents for the Association are developed within the NTCSA System Office. NTCSA Policy documents inform and sit alongside individual school policies.

NTCSA Policies in existence in 2011

Policy Development Policy

Unpaid Leave Policy

Paid Personal and Carer's Leave Policy

Long Service Leave Policy

Parental Leave Policy

Appraisal – Teaching and Capacity Building Process

Occupational Health and Safety Policy

Child Protection Policy

Mandatory Reporting Policy

Conflict Resolution Policy
Students with a Disability Policy
Fee Billing and Collection Policy
Smoking and NTCSA Schools Policy

(Draft) Library Policy
Teaching of Creation Policy

NTCSA Policies that were developed and approved by the Board in 2011

Conflict Resolution Policy
Students with a Disability Policy
Occupational Health and Safety Policy

NTCSA Policies that were developed during 2011 but were approved by the Board in early 2012

Child Protection Policy
Mandatory Reporting Policy

Existing NTCSA Policies that are currently under review

(Draft) Library Policy
Teaching of Creation Policy
Appraisal – Teaching and Capacity Building Process
Fee Billing and Collection Policy
Smoking and NTCSA Schools Policy
Guideline – Camps and Excursions Duty of Care

Current Board Policies are available to all staff via the NTCSA Intranet. At this moment in time NTCSA policies are not made generally available to the public, though after this current process of policy development and review has concluded appropriate policies will be made available more generally. All policies are made available within the community and to the public on request.

Parent Involvement

We have young parents involved in the kinder, parents employed as teachers aides and cooks and grandparents who are very supportive. It is very clear that students love coming to school and are excited about education. If a child is living in Gawa they will come every day to school.

Parents are encouraged by our school and what we offer their children. This is evident that despite almost all of our parent population living in Galiwinku (1 ½ hours away) they still continue to send their children to Gäwa Christian School. Most children of all ages are living away from their parents in order to attend our school. Most children live with their grandparents onsite. There is a preference and expectation from our parents that their children will attend Gäwa. They are excited about what Gäwa Christian School has to offer.

It is clear that teachers also actively support Gäwa Christian School and are excited about the quality of Christian education that is being offered. The teachers are integral to the life of the students in the classroom and also within the community in general. They also send their own children to the school and enjoy seeing their children thrive.

We would however like to see more consistent parent/elder participation and encouragement in and around what we do at school.

Financial Summary

Private Income \$51982

Recurrent Government Income \$597540

Capital Grants Income \$0

School Self Assessment

In 2011, Gäwa Christian School used the 'School Improvement and Renewal Framework' (SIRF) to complete 2 areas of self assessment. The areas this year were 'FINANCE AND FACILITIES' and 'PASTORAL CARE AND WELL BEING'.

School Self Assessment Commendations

FINANCE AND FACILITIES:

1. Very comprehensive budgeting processes are in place and are managed centrally by the NTCSA Office with input from the Principal.
2. Grant applications and direction of SSNP funding is very closely linked to the needs and priorities of the school.
3. Acquittals are completed in a timely fashion, filed away and copies sent to the finance department at the NTCSA system office.
4. All audit processes are managed in a very comprehensive manner by the NTCSA Finance Team.
5. Principal has held 'planning meeting' with key executive staff from the NTCSA office to discuss future strategies (CEO, Finance Manager, Project Officer).
6. The school is well-resourced and current facilities meet needs now and into the future.
7. Principal tracking attendance of community members in Gäwa in order to better understand enrolment trends.
8. Gäwa Christian School website has been developed in April 2011. This is updated once a month by administration staff who also add links to our newsletter every month.
9. Because of the unique nature of Gäwa being located on the tip of an island, there are many opportunities to interact with nature and to demonstrate particular ways to care for this 'salt water' environment.

PASTORAL CARE AND WELL BEING:

1. Teaching staff (including Yolŋu assistant teachers) meet on Friday afternoon to plan, discuss and feedback to each other.
2. Families that live in Gawa are always involved in the everyday running of the school.
3. 'Amala Yothu' program funded through 'Engaging Remote Indigenous Students under the SSNP provides opportunities for care givers and young children to meet together and be exposed to developmental play activities, school routines and behaviours and good nutrition and hygiene practices.
4. Both junior and senior classes interact regularly. On Fridays all the students work together for "Community and Cultures" and are paired with a buddy to work throughout that lesson
5. All community members (kids and adults alike) are invited to movie night every Friday night.
6. Parents participated and were a part of the dance troupe performing at the International Transforming Education conference.
7. Newsletter is printed once a month. This newsletter is sent out to all our email contacts (over 300). The newsletter is displayed in the classrooms, at the school kitchen, at the Galiwinku airport, Banthula receive a laminated copy to post up at their homeland and other copies are distributed among family in Galiwinku. It is also linked to our school website.

School Self Assessment Recommendations

FINANCE AND FACILITIES:

1. Develop emergency response plan including medical and weather related emergencies (cyclone evacuation).
2. Being to implement NTCSA OH&S Policy and practices, including use of appropriate checklists.
3. Continue to use journals/notes to record presence/absence of community members at Gawa to assist in establishing information about enrolment trends.
4. Continue discussions with community members and NTCSA regarding best use of school facilities. With support from NTCSA, develop a plan to provide a range of opportunities for community members to have input into these discussions.
5. Continue to make use of Christian networks to encourage suitable applicants to fill current teaching vacancies.

6. Ensure adequate documentation of school processes and keep connections with other key parties in order to ensure the AL program continues as a long term program in the school, regardless of staff turn-over.
7. Continue to provide opportunities for school-based induction processes (both pre and post employment) in order to prepare and equip new staff for the unique Gäwa context.
8. Ensure all Gäwa computers have been included in the NTCSA process for renewing machine on a 3 yearly cycle.
9. Finalise a plan to complete Wind Turbine project and purchase a new back-up diesel generator.

PASTORAL CARE AND WELL BEING:

1. Prepare and produce a staff information handbook for new employees.
2. Develop an agreement (visual, oral, use English and Yolŋu Matha) between the school and community members regarding the agreed goals, outcomes and desires for Gäwa Christian School and develop a set of agreed roles and responsibilities for school staff and community members in order to achieve these outcomes.
3. Develop 'portfolios' to provide to parents/care givers as a 'visual record' of some of the work the students are achieving
4. Develop clearer expectations, understandings and defined roles for community and staff members in the area of student discipline.
5. School and key community members to develop plans and policies in key areas (employment, student welfare, teaching of language) that are corporately owned and have shared responsibility between Balanda and Yolŋu.
6. Develop pre and post employment opportunities for new staff to understand the unique Gäwa context and the need for a high degree of flexibility in their appointed role, depending on the specific needs from day-to-day.
7. Develop a process for a visiting Pastor/Minister to provide spiritual nurture and support to school staff.
8. School staff to update First Aid certificates.
9. Investigate options to ensure greater access to Student Services and Medical Specialists for follow up treatment of previously diagnosed students.
10. PD/Mentoring for teachers in planning, programming and teaching from a biblical perspective.

Seek opportunities to access appropriate cross cultural training for new staff members.

Future Priorities

Develop an agreement (visual, oral, use English and Yolŋu Matha) between the school and community members regarding the agreed goals, outcomes and desires for Gāwa Christian School and develop a set of agreed roles and responsibilities for school staff and community members in order to achieve these outcomes.

Develop clearer expectations, understandings and defined roles for community and staff members in the area of student discipline.

Ensure adequate documentation of school processes and keep connections with other key parties in order to ensure the AL program continues as a long term program in the school, regardless of staff turn-over.

Work with NTCSA to develop a practical understanding of the differences between Governance and Operation.

A further two areas of self assessment will be conducted in 2012 using the SIRF document. The areas of assessment will be LEADERSHIP and CHRISTIAN IDENTITY.

The information in this report has been verified and the priorities endorsed by the Chief Executive Officer of NTCSA



**Northern Territory
Christian Schools
Association**

Mrs Lara Huala

Principal

Mr Geoff Bateman

Chief Executive Officer

25 May 2012

Date