



Gäwa Christian School Annual Report 2012

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Vision Statement

The vision statement of NT Christian Schools is, *'We desire to be a Christian community, learning together to live life as God intended, offering hope for the world'.*

The mission of Gäwa Christian School is, *'To be a learning community where God is glorified in everything we do.'*



Principal's Message

Gäwa Christian School is a remote school which serves two indigenous homeland communities on the northern tip of Elcho Island. We are strongly supported by the local community who value a mainstream schooling environment that is culturally relevant and incorporates traditional language and culture.

This year, we have continued to engage with the community to incorporate local knowledge and understanding into the delivery of content that meets both the requirements of the Australian Curriculum, and the learning needs and experience of the children in our care.

Our students enjoy a vibrant and exciting learning environment, with enrolments for 2012 of approximately 40 students. Attendance fluctuates dependent on parents and guardians choosing to live in homeland communities versus the larger township of Galiwin'ku. Factors such as shifting communities, funeral commitments and housing capacities all continue to have an impact. However, we enjoyed more consistent student attendance in the course of 2012. We are always looking for ways to support our community to keep student attendance consistent, as this directly correlates with the learning outcomes for the students in our care.

It has been my great privilege to live and work in the Gäwa community in 2012. The unity and support enjoyed with the homeland communities we serve is a vital aspect of the delivery of culturally relevant education that produces stronger, smarter students.

Karen Fletcher
Teaching Principal

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School Profile

Gawa Christian School is one of the most remote indigenous schools in Australia, located on the northern most tip of Elcho Island, NT. We are one of eight campuses of NT Christian Schools. As a school community we always strive to learn together and offer hope for the future. Gawa Christian School currently provides education to the Indigenous students living in two homelands, Gäwa and Ban'thula.



<i>2012 Student Profile</i>	<i>Mayawa Class T – Y4</i>	<i>Damala Class Y3 - 9</i>	<i>Total</i>
Girls	7	14	21
Boys	13	6	19
% Indigenous Students	85%	95%	90%
Student attendance rate			88%

** Data from DEEWR Census, August 2012*

Non-attendance can be caused by a variety of reasons, including shifting communities, funeral commitments and the availability of adequate housing and carers to provide for students. The staff member responsible for support and community liaison works alongside community members to expedite the return of students and families where possible. In 2012, the rate of consistent student attendance was pleasing.

During 2012, the death of a past student occurred after an ongoing illness. Despite the close proximity of the school to the funeral, and the close ties of many of the students and respective families, disruption to the school program and attendance was not adversely affected.

Staffing Information

All teachers have a minimum of four years training and are registered with the NT Teacher Registration Board, unless otherwise stated below.

There was a changeover in the position of Teaching Principal in July, 2012 with the Hvala family concluding their time in Gäwa after 5 years of service and the Fletcher family commencing.



	<i>Staffing Profile</i>	<i>Qualification if Full-time</i>	<i>Term /FTE</i>
Teaching Principal	Lara Hvala	Bach. Theatre (Production), BA (Teaching)	Jan – July
	Karen Fletcher	Bach. Systems Analysis & Design, Grad Dip Ed (Primary) Grad Dip Christian Education	July - Dec
Full-time Teachers	Matthew Meyerink	Bach. Business Master of Ed	
	Mandy McDonald (Additional Teacher Funded) *3 year trained, exemption from TRB Registration	BA (Teaching)	
Non-teaching staff	Mark Hvala	Site & Maintenance (Jan – July 2012)	1.0
	Stephen Fletcher	Site & Maintenance (Jan – July 2012)	1.0
	Salome Moes	Admin and Creative Arts	0.5
	Basma Ganalarritj	Teachers Aide	1.0
	Natasha Meyerink (Kinder – GERIS funded)	Kinder Coord, Teachers Aide	0.4
	Mamana Bukalatjpi	Kitchen/Cook	0.4
	Eric Garrawurra	Kitchen/Cook Teachers Aide	0.4
	Joanne Dhamarrandji Kathy Guthadjaka (Closing the Gap funded)	Language Consultant	casual casual
	Colin Baker (GERIS funded)	Attendance Officer	casual
	Banthay Bukalatjpi (GERIS funded)	Attendance Officer	casual

<i>Staffing Profile</i>	<i>Total</i>
Total Staff	9
Full-time equivalent Total Staff	6.7
Teaching staff	3
Full-time equivalent teaching staff	3
% Indigenous	0
Non-teaching staff	6
Full-time equivalent non-teaching staff	3.7
% Indigenous	27%



Highlights of the school year

The students of Gäwa Christian School have participated in many activities during the year that have added value and depth to their schooling experience.

The students continue to love developing their skills in the Creative Arts. They have learnt many dances and songs from around the world as part of their study of other cultures. These were performed during community events and cruise ship visits.



As part of their study of Fiji, the students raised money to support the children of Fiji who cannot afford an education. They planned to hold a Fiji-style café, making and selling food and beverages to the community to raise funds. This put their numeracy skills to great use as they calculated sales and change for customers. A total of \$1265 was raised, which is a terrific effort for such a small school community.

In April, students from Gäwa Christian School participated in an interstate camp. This was predominantly funded by donations from other schools and community groups. They visited the Gold Coast and were able to experience many of the wonderful experiences on offer.

Our resident artist continues to coordinate our art program and art exhibitions of the children's works. They continue to be encouraged by the interest in their work and all funds contribute to fundraising efforts to purchase resources for the school and support other school initiatives.

A duck farm and vegetable gardens continued to operate in Gäwa. The children are active participants in the running of these areas of the school.

Later in 2012, we introduced a Leadership Program initiative for our older boys and girls. In conjunction with community members, we have focussed on developing important life and cultural skills to encourage respect and leadership in these growing students. Activities have included healthy eating programs, hunting and spear-making skills, sewing and handicraft skills, and using technology for presentations. We plan to further develop this program in 2013.

Teaching and Learning

Our students have an engaging and comprehensive curriculum based on the NT Curriculum Framework and Australian Curriculum (English and Mathematics). Our indigenous students are taught English as their second language.

We run the Accelerated Literacy Program in our classes, as well as Indigenous Language and Culture incorporating the Yolŋu Matha language. Our Mathematics curriculum is rich and diverse as we make use of a variety of resources.

Students enjoy a variety of Science, Art and Health units throughout the course of the year. We utilise the ICT resources we have in an integrated fashion in our classrooms and have incorporated the Reading Eggs and Mathletics online programs to support the literacy and numeracy curriculum. Each term the children also study a different country around the world in our unit on Communities Around the World. Countries of study throughout 2012 included Brazil, Fiji, Russia and France.



Provision of Special Funding Programs

Additional Teacher funding

In 2012, Gäwa Christian School received Commonwealth funding to employ an additional teacher. This funding has enabled us to operate with 2 teachers in addition to the Teaching Principal position. This funding has been instrumental in seeing students excel in literacy and numeracy, allowing for specialist classes to be conducted and for us to have visiting specialist teachers with a particular focus on improving literacy and numeracy.

Closing the Gap

In 2012, 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. It has enabled the acquisition of resources that particularly focus on improving Literacy and Numeracy outcomes, including various assessment resources such as ACER online testing, as well as Reading Eggs and Mathletics programs.

Engaging Remote Indigenous Students

As part of the Smarter Schools National Partnerships, we 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 Galiwin'ku, 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 family members. This program is run in one of the school buildings 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 healthy eating and hygiene practices are modelled.

The employment of attendance officers has also ensured that the children are able to get to school every day from outlying homelands. The attendance officer also collects children and guardians when they are spending the weekend in Galiwin'ku.

Pastoral Care and 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. Students from both classes meet together each week. The older students are encouraged to take on leadership roles and mentor the younger students during this time.

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.

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 continue to play an important role in disciplining the children and caring for their well being.

Nurses visit Gäwa once a week to assess and treat the children for medical issues. A doctor also visits with the health team at least once a month. Other visiting specialists such as dental, hearing and eye specialists, also visit Gäwa each year.

Student Outcomes

The results for students meeting national literacy and numeracy benchmarks are listed below.

Number of students participating in NAPLAN in 2012 –

Year 3 – 9 students (78% indigenous)

Year 5 – 4 students (75% indigenous)

Year 7 – 4 students (100% indigenous)

Year 9 – 1 student (100% indigenous)

	Yr 3		Yr 5		Yr 7		Yr 9	
	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012
Spelling	0%	88%	0%	0%	0%	0%	-	0%
Reading	0%	86%	0%	0%	0%	0%	-	0%
Writing	0%	88%	0%	0%	0%	0%	-	0%
Numeracy	0%	57%	0%	0%	0%	0%	-	0%

Our indigenous students continue to struggle with the process of NAPLAN. With English as their second language, they find it difficult to demonstrate their skills and understandings in tests that rely heavily on functional English skills.

Despite these challenges, we continue to celebrate and record their improvements and achievements in literacy and numeracy as witnessed and assessed in the classroom environment.

Parents and community

We have young parents involved in the kinder, parents employed as teachers aides and cooks as well as 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 Gäwa they will come every day to school.

Parents are encouraged by what our school has to 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, instead living with their grandparents or other family members onsite.

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.

Together we are partnering together to integrate the cultural context of Gäwa into the life of the school. We are constantly exploring ways to more actively involve parents and elders in the everyday life of the school. This is an area that we plan to direct significant focus to as we move into 2013.



Finance and facilities

Income received by Gäwa Christian School in the 2012 year is listed below.

The school also received benefit under the Smarter Schools National Partnership (SSNP). Details of the application of the Commonwealth SSNP funds can be found in the 2013 School Improvement Plan published on the school website.

(<http://www.gcs.nt.edu.au/index.cfm?fuseaction=page&p=40>)



Private Income \$51, 376

Recurrent Government Income \$659, 727

Capital Grants \$0

During 2012, an unused dormitory was modified to provide housing for a staff family.

There are no capital improvements planned for the next 12 months.

Gäwa Christian School has beautiful buildings, grounds and resources. The school buildings are 3–7 years old and are in 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 consistently throughout 2012 by donations from schools and community organisations all over Australia. Similarly our class set of texts and AL books have been increased 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 mat.

Staff housing consists of one house, a cabin and a modified dormitory. The Principal's house is 10 years old and is in need of some attention. The teachers cabin is in good condition but requires painting of the raw steel structure in the next 12 months. This is to protect it from rust caused by sea spray. The modified dormitory needs some work to the additional walls to ensure that it remains watertight over the wet season.

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. Our students are integral in assisting us in our efforts and enjoy taking pride in their school.

School self-assessment

The Principal was supported by NT Christian Schools in continuing the process of a school improvement plan and a school self-audit in the area of 'Christian Identity'.

SIRF commendations

Some strengths that were identified during the 'Christian Identify' self-assessment process were; community worship times and fellowship dinners, celebrations of Christian festivals with the community, daily staff devotions using a systematic approach to scripture and the implementation of the

NT Christian Schools 'metanarrative' in order to support teaching and programming from a biblical perspective.

SIRF recommendations

Recommendations arising out of the self-assessment process include; developing school-based induction processes in order to ensure new staff are familiar with the vision and mission of the school; investigating fundraising and outreach opportunities to support the Galiwinku community, revise school enrolment procedures to ensure the Christian perspective of the school is clearly explained and to investigate the possibility of a visiting pastor to provide spiritual input to school staff.

Future priorities

The School Improvement and Renewal Framework review areas for 2013 are Leadership and Community & Culture.



Endorsement

Please sign and return

Karen Fletcher *21st May, 2013*

Colin Baker *22nd May, 2013*

Geoff Bateman, Chief Executive Officer

