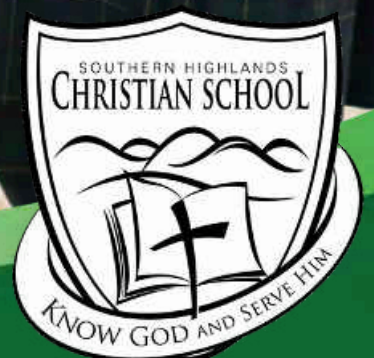


SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT 2023



Ph: (02) 4861 1781 | Email: office@shcs.nsw.edu.au | Website: www.shcs.nsw.edu.au
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Operated by Southern Highlands Christian School Association Ltd ABN 15 719 722 342

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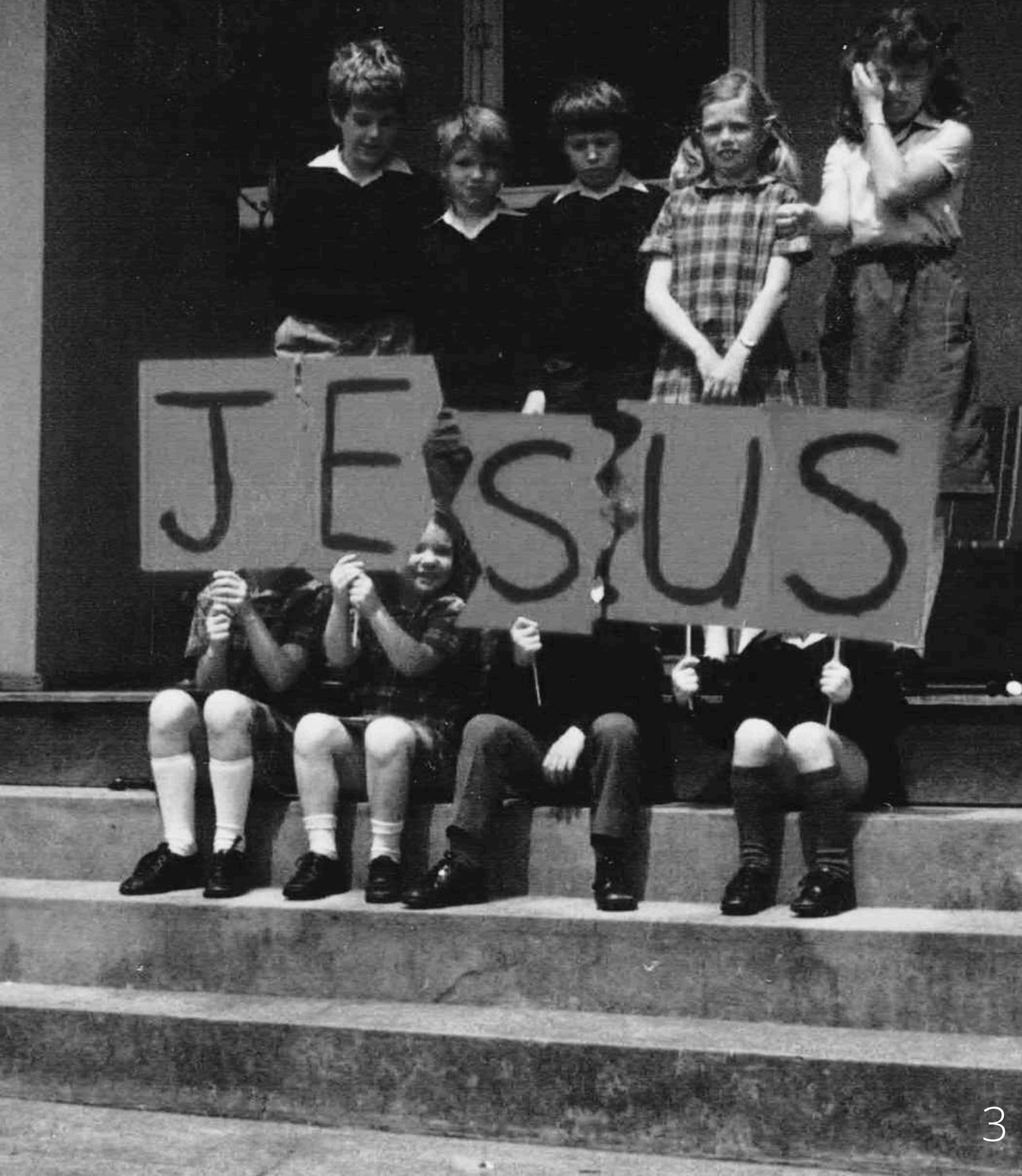
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KNOWING GOD AND SERVING HIM FOR 40 YEARS



CONTEXT



WHO WE ARE

Southern Highlands Christian School is a learning community dedicated to providing quality Christian Education for the whole child since 1983. Located in a semi-rural setting in Bowral NSW, the school is committed to developing all aspects of a child including the academic, social, spiritual, physical, creative, emotional and cultural domains. Each student is provided with wonderful opportunities for character development through our Outdoor Education program, Leadership, Mission and Service programs, including trips to outback NSW and overseas to Vanuatu. Parents are warmly encouraged to partner in their child's education, through formal and informal programs. A full range of academic subjects are available and are taught from a distinctly Christian perspective. Each child is considered as unique. Our committed and professional staff provide effective pastoral care in partnership with families. As a Prep to 12 school of 439 students, we are able to provide individual attention for all students. This also means that families can become an integral part of the School community as their child completes their whole education at the one site. Our growing reputation is based upon the quality of our graduates who continue to make outstanding contributions to society.



EXECUTIVE TEAM



Meg Story
Principal



Robert Burgess
Head of Junior School



Bruce Barker
Head of High School



Geoff Stedman
Business Manager



Deborah Brake
Director of Curriculum

STUDENT LEADERSHIP



Remo Banchetti
School Captain



Ashleigh Williams
School Captain



Hamish Riley
Junior School
Captain



Layla Mullan
Junior School Captain

REFLECTIONS ON 40 YEARS OF SHCS

In Matthew 7:24-26, Jesus said everyone who hears his words and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. Then he went on to say everyone who hears his words and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.

We are here today, 40 years on from when the founders turned the first mound of soil, listening for God's guidance to build a school for Christian families to gather their children and start teaching through the lens of Jesus, putting him first in all that is taught. How blessed are we here today! Jade and I came to the School late in 2006 for our interview with Will Gardner, the then principal. It was in a demountable in the middle of our now carpark. Will, as he did for many families, made us feel at home instantly. Will asked if it was okay to pray for our family knowing we had 3 young children making the move with us from the northern beaches of Sydney. He wasn't concerned if we decided to join the SHCS family or go somewhere else. His main concern was that we were reminded that Jesus was coming with us and would be protecting us. We knew straight away this was where we were meant to spend the next season of our lives for our kids.



17 years on, I never thought I would be writing the Chairman's report to celebrate our 40th birthday. It has been an honour serving on our Board for over a decade and being Chairman for the past 4 years and I have shared many meetings with some wonderful friends on the Board. We have seen principals and teachers come and go, all sharing in the journey along the way. The Board is so thrilled to be working closely with our new Principal Mrs Meg Story. Meg has proven already to be leading our school in a godly manner. It's clear that first and foremost the students are on her heart. It is so exciting that in the second half of this year we will begin construction on a new junior school building to complement what we built a few years ago. Our student numbers are at an all-time high which is such a blessing. Of course, it is the Board's hope and prayer that the Gospel be shared with every family that enters through our front gates. The teachers of SHCS are a testament to their chosen career path. I ask all of you to be continually praying for guidance in all they teach. Most importantly, I ask for God's protection of our students throughout this year of celebration. They are a credit to all your families for what you are pouring into their lives. Together, with the relationships formed at school, we can all share in the growing of their makeup as godly young men and women.



Chris Barr, 2023 Board Chair



PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

After completing my first full year as Principal, it's great to look back at what I've learned and to look forward to what's to come in 2024.

2023 was one of my most challenging years yet, filled with lots of new people, responsibilities and 'firsts'. I am so grateful to God for the staff, students and parents at SHCS and the opportunities we had in 2023 to trust in Him through difficult times and to celebrate together through joyful times. What I was reminded of time and again is that God is good, that He is very interested in walking alongside us through the small and big things in life and that when we call on Him, He will give us all that we need to do the things He has planned for us. Some of the highlights of 2023 for me were:

- Getting to know our students. From Prep through to Year 12 I have been so blessed by the ways our students have shared their lives with me and welcomed me into this community.
- 40th birthday celebration - a time to reflect on God's kindness and provision in our school over the past 40 years. The faithfulness and courage of our pioneering families has left an indelible mark on our school, the legacy of which is still felt today.
- Visiting outdoor ed camps and seeing our students working together to overcome challenges and care for one another well.

We took some time this year to explore how we can develop and protect culture at SHCS. We asked hard and good questions around who we want our students to be, what values we want to hold fast to and what areas we need to grow in. This is exciting work!

Out of this, we identified 5 school values that will give us a framework for how we learn and grow here at SHCS. These are, Christian character, Learning, Excellence, Respect and community. We have already been encouraging our students to learn these values and are looking into creative and meaningful ways to embed these values into the way we do school life.

We also spent time working on the leadership structure of the teaching staff with the view to focus on strengthening our academic development of our staff and students. As such, next year we will be welcoming some new people in key leadership roles to complement a really stable foundation of incredible staff who daily blow me away with their capacity, willingness to serve and passion for investing in our students and their learning journey. It is a privilege to lead this group of professional and godly people.

Meg Story, Principal



CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

Being like Jesus by growing in wisdom, helping others, and growing in faith.

1

LEARNING

Loving to learn and think in creative ways, with teamwork.

2

EXCELLENCE

Trying your hardest in school, sports, friendships and faith.

3

RESPECT

Being kind with our words, understanding others' feelings, and making everyone feel valued and safe.

4

COMMUNITY

Working together to make a friendly and supportive place where we feel included.

5

REGISTRAR'S REPORT

Renee Broadbent



SHCS celebrated its 40th Birthday with a party and Open Day, and it was a resounding success. School tours received overwhelmingly positive feedback from prospective families with guests impressed by our facilities, the welcoming atmosphere, and the strong sense of community that defines our school. Additionally, the Year 7 orientation taster day was very well attended, reflecting the growing interest in our programs and the vibrant, supportive environment we offer. With increasing enrolment numbers, our school continues to flourish as a wonderful community where students thrive academically, emotionally and spiritually.

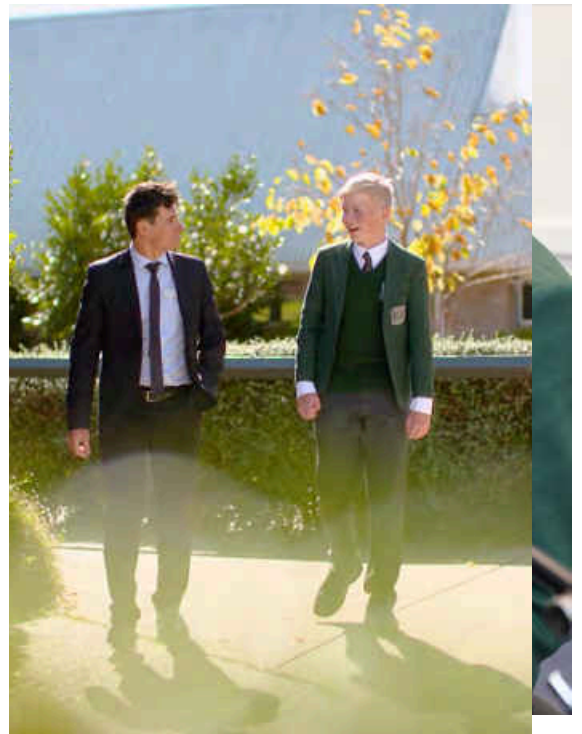
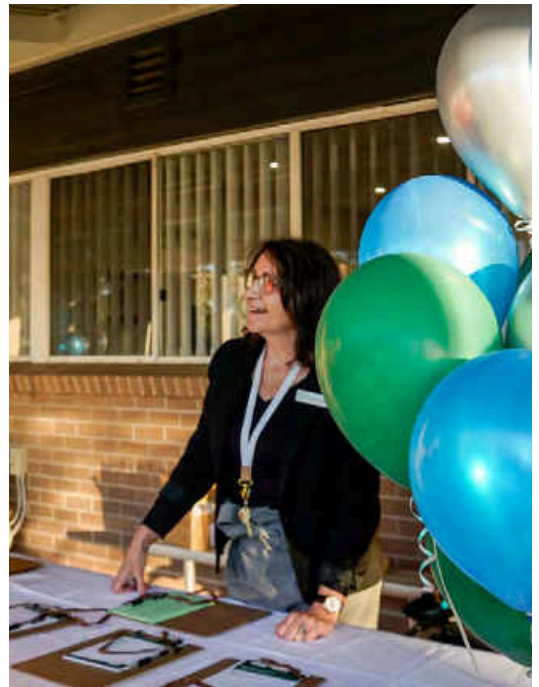
STUDENT POPULATION

414 STUDENTS K-12

49% BOYS, 51% GIRLS

25 PREP STUDENTS

12 JUNIOR SCHOOL CLASSES





**TEACHING
& LEARNING
EXPERIENCES:
JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Number of Classes: 12

RFF

Throughout 2023, SHCS utilised release from face-to-face (RFF) classes to offer specialised learning in music, drama, sport and library. These dedicated RFF classes allowed students to explore their interests and talents beyond classroom learning.

Creation Week

Each year, SHCS hosts Creation Week, a celebration of God's creation and the many ways we can care for it. In 2023, our School launched Creation Week in partnership with Compassion Australia. This unique initiative provided students with a valuable opportunity to reflect on the diverse experiences of people around the world, particularly those affected by natural disasters.

Creation Week Highlights:

Crazy Shoes and Socks Day

To symbolise walking in someone else's shoes.

Ration Challenge:

Eating rations similar to those provided to victims of natural disasters in emergency accommodation.

To take part in these activities, each student brought a gold coin donation. This contribution supported Compassion Australia's efforts and helped fund further educational experiences.

Objective:

The goal of this event was to instil a sense of compassion and gratitude in our students, encouraging them to appreciate their own circumstances while understanding the plight of others.





**TEACHING
& LEARNING:
EXPERIENCES:
HIGH SCHOOL**

HIGH SCHOOL SUBJECT OFFERINGS

STAGE 5 ELECTIVES:

- Drama,
- Music,
- Visual Arts and Photographic & Digital Media,
- Design & Technology,
- Food Technology,
- Commerce,
- Japanese,
- Physical Activity and Sports Studies.

STAGE 6 SUBJECTS:

- English Standard, English Advanced,
- English Extension 1 and 2
- Mathematics Standard, Mathematics,
- Mathematics Extension 1 and 2
- Visual Arts, Drama, Music 1
- Business Studies, Legal Studies,
- Ancient and Modern History
- Biology, Physics, Chemistry
- Engineering Studies
- PDHPE
- Design and Technology
- Biblical Studies

Students in Stages 5 and 6 were able to choose from a range of TAFE and online courses through Distance Education providers to provide specialised and personal subject choices outside the normal scope offered in schools. These students have been supported by a teacher who provides regular input and supervision to them in these courses.



RETURNING TO MISSION IN VANUATU

Every year the Year 11 cohort embarks on a mission trip to Vanuatu to visit Pastor Isaac, his family, and the surrounding local communities. The mission's objectives are to provide students with an opportunity to experience the impact of missional work, foster a globally-minded perspective, expose them to different cultures and the challenges of poverty, and set a standard of kindness and generosity in a world often characterised by selfishness. "As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace." 1 Peter 4:10.

Can you imagine it? 100+ people crammed into a tiny church with a thatched roof and woven walls; holding hands, dancing and singing about being in the family of God in the sweltering heat. All of us with nothing in common, yet covered by the love of our God. Nothing unifies a group quite like this! Across oceans and time zones, a group of Year 11 students experience a new perspective, discovering their biblical identity and responding with urgency, to share the good news with those lost for hope. This is the story of my travels to Vanuatu as a student, some years ago.

At SHCS, we understand that a standard of kindness and generosity is almost extinct in the world our children live in. We would only pray that after finishing schooling here at SHCS, our students would know what it is to be humble and charitable. We aren't aiming to raise overseas missionaries. Rather, that we would foster in our young people what it means to live a missional life in their local spheres. Carrying with them the empathy and love that is demonstrated through the person of Jesus. I'm reminded of the words of Isaiah 52:7, where it is said; How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who bring good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns!"

As a staff member and a youth pastor, I had the privilege of partnering with our current Year 11 cohort of young leaders, to help raise this generation of missional and globally minded people. During our time of preparation for take-off, we were so blessed. With the contributions from our school community through the Bush Dance, partnered with local sporting clubs and churches, our suitcases were well stocked, and our team encouraged.

Year 11 had been hard at work practising songs and skits and understanding the importance of sharing the gospel. In discussions with our little missionaries, I observed waves of nerves and excitement, accompanied by feelings of being under qualified. But what a wonderful and humble place to be! May we all take heart in this year's message from Romans 8:38-39 "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." and may God use eclectic group of young people all for His glory!

Lilli Hessenberger, Receptionist



MARKETING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community Events

SHCS hosts approximately two community events and multiple internal events annually, fostering connections within the SHCS community and inviting the wider community to experience the school's culture and facilities. The highlight of 2023 was the 40th Birthday celebration, which honoured 40 years of Christian education while showcasing the school to potential future families. This milestone event attracted around 700 guests and students to the formal assembly and approximately 800 guests to the subsequent celebration. The festivities included rides, food, a tour, carnival games, and a fireworks finale.

Other key events in 2023 included:

Community Bush Dance - Mission Fundraiser

Mother's Day, Father's Day, and Grandparent's Day Celebrations

Night of Rock - High School Event

Prep, Kindy, and Year 7 Orientation Days

Prep-Year 2 Nativity Play - Junior School CAPA

Music Concerts

And more...

Marketing

In 2023, SHCS adopted several new advertising strategies to achieve broader reach while maintaining a lower budget. With a focus on digital media platforms, we engaged in Facebook advertising. This strategy proved highly effective, specifically with the recruitment of leadership positions.

2023 Facebook Ad Statistics:

Total spend: \$2,326.33

Impressions: 230,624

Other successful media placements included:

Cinema ads during school holidays

Radio ads

Newspaper features in education editions

Additionally, we invested in a high-quality video production to narrate the school's 40 years of history and highlight its current offering. This footage was used across multiple platforms, including cinema ads, Facebook ads, and the website homepage.

PRIORITY AREAS



1.

Christian Perspectives

- Returned to Vanuatu for Year 11 mission trip after a 4 year hiatus due to Covid19
- Partnership with Compassion Australia
- Outback Mission for Year 10 to Wellington Christian School
- Quizworx visit to Junior School
- Patricia Weerakoon seminar for parents and students on sexuality from a Christian perspective
- Homeless mission in Sydney

2.

Teaching and Learning

- All teaching staff attended CEN State conference
- Partnership with St Phillips Teaching School for trainee teachers
- Offering Masters degrees to teaching staff to upskill

3.

Community

- A survey was completed about satisfaction for students, staff and parents
- Partnered with Anglicare and we now have dedicated onsite counsellors
- Riding with the disabled
- Community service at Wingecarribee Adult Day Care Centre
- Tulip Time music festival

4.

Facilities and Resources

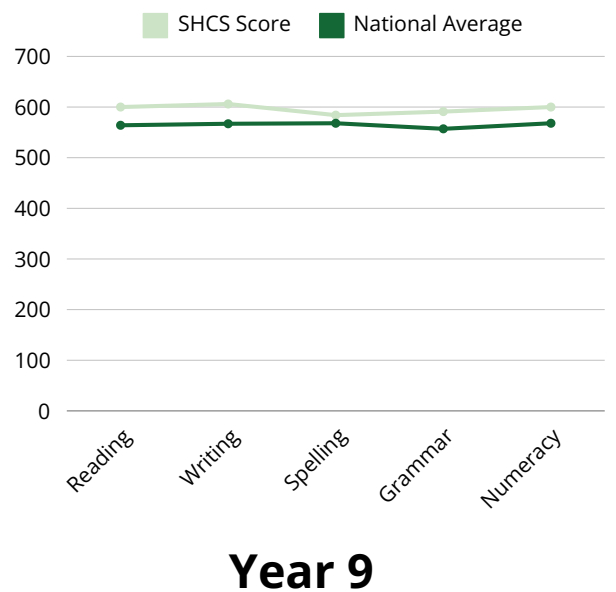
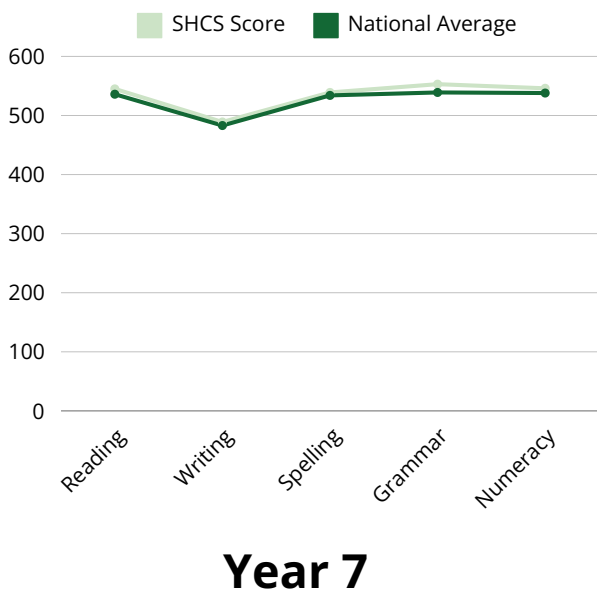
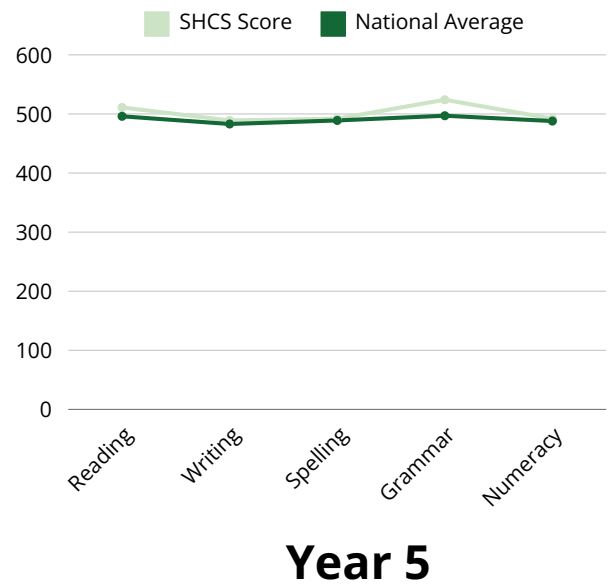
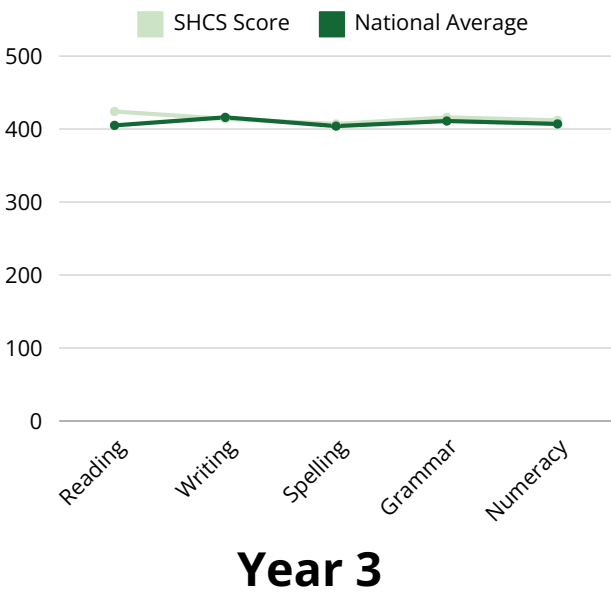
- Year 12 common room
- Prep renovation
- Demountable - 3 new classrooms
- Podcasting studio
- New printers
- Bike trailer for mountain biking
- New school bus



OUTCOMES & RESULTS

NAPLAN

In March 2023, SHCS students completed NAPLAN tests online, except for Year 3 Writing, which students completed on paper. NAPLAN participation at SHCS in 2023 was 100% against a nationwide participation rate of 95%.



SHCS's average results are close to the national averages for students from similar socio-economic backgrounds in all domains and grades. SHCS students performed stronger, on average, than all Australian students, in Year 3 Reading, Year 5 Grammar and Punctuation and Year 9 in all domains.

Note: It is not possible to compare 2023 NAPLAN results with data from previous years. In 2023 ACARA introduced a new grading system of four achievement descriptors to replace the system it had employed from 2008-2022. ACARA advises schools that 2023 results are therefore not directly comparable to results from previous years.

Higher School Certificate Results

In 2023 Year 12 students at SHCS studied 19 HSC courses, spanning the humanities, sciences, mathematics, technological and applied studies and creative arts. Students achieved four Band 6 or E4 results (generally results over 90 per cent) and 32 Band 5 results (generally over 80 per cent). Many students achieved their personal best.

	2023	
	SHCS	State
Ancient History	77.00	71.44
Biology	71.00	73.3
Business Studies	71.75	73.77
Chemistry	65.05	74.13
Design and Tech.	68.00	77.16
Drama	79.92	81.12
Engineering Stud.	-	-
English Advanced	82.54	81.73
English Ext. 1	43.83	42.17
English Ext. 2	41.92	40.07
English Standard	71.19	70.12
Food Technology	74.73	72.9
Legal Studies	72.03	75.27
Mathematics Adv.	61.04	78.04
Mathematics Ext. 1	55.00	77.78
Mathematics Ext. 2	-	-
Mathematics Std. 2	64.13	71.76
Modern History	69.27	72.78
Music 1	83.43	82.09
PDHPE	65.55	72.98
Physics	-	-
Visual Arts	81.83	81.49

Post School Destinations

Twenty-seven students graduated Year 12 at SHCS in 2023. All of them (100%) met the requirements to receive their Higher School Certificate and an ATAR. One student (2.7%) undertook a Vocational Education and Training (VET) Course with an external provider. An additional student in Year 11 studied a HSC-level VET subject in 2023.

SHCS's Year 12 graduates from the Class of 2023 engaged in a variety of work, training and tertiary education pathways following their completion of school. At least a dozen students accepted early entry offers to university courses including in Pre-Medicine, Primary Education, Social Science, Engineering, Creative Arts and Social Work; others have accepted post-ATAR offers and/or deferred study for a year to work and travel.

For students who do not wish to complete their HSC and to instead pursue an alternative pathway in work, education or training, the Record of School Achievement (RoSA) represents an important qualification. It records a student's completion of all courses in Years 7-9 and the grades they achieved in Years 10 and 11.

The above numbers reflect the number of SHCS students who left school in 2023 before completing their HSC and are eligible to receive a RoSA. Year 11: 1, Year 12:2



ATTENDANCE

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

The Principal of SHCS maintains a register, in a form approved by the Minister, of the enrolments and daily attendances of all children at the school, which includes information for each student as required by Section 3.8 of the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) Registered and Accredited Individual Non-government Schools (NSW) Manual.

Attendance records are created by a digital attendance roll that teachers mark at the beginning of each day and at appropriate points throughout the day. Parents are notified via SMS if their child is absent at the beginning of the day. This data is stored in SHCS's Student Information System, TASS, and can be used to inform pastoral care.

Students who leave during the day (considered a 'partial absence') and students who arrive late are monitored by staff on reception and this data is included in the school's attendance record and communicated to parents on reports each semester. Student absence and variation to attendance is recorded using the Minister's codes.

Parents are requested to explain their child's absence and have the opportunity to do so via the school's learning management system, Ark.

In an effort to support attendance rates of all students, in 2024 the SHCS executive will be leading a review of relevant policies and developing school-wide procedures to ensure that student attendance data is monitored and intervention strategies to improve unsatisfactory attendance of students are implemented using research-based practices.

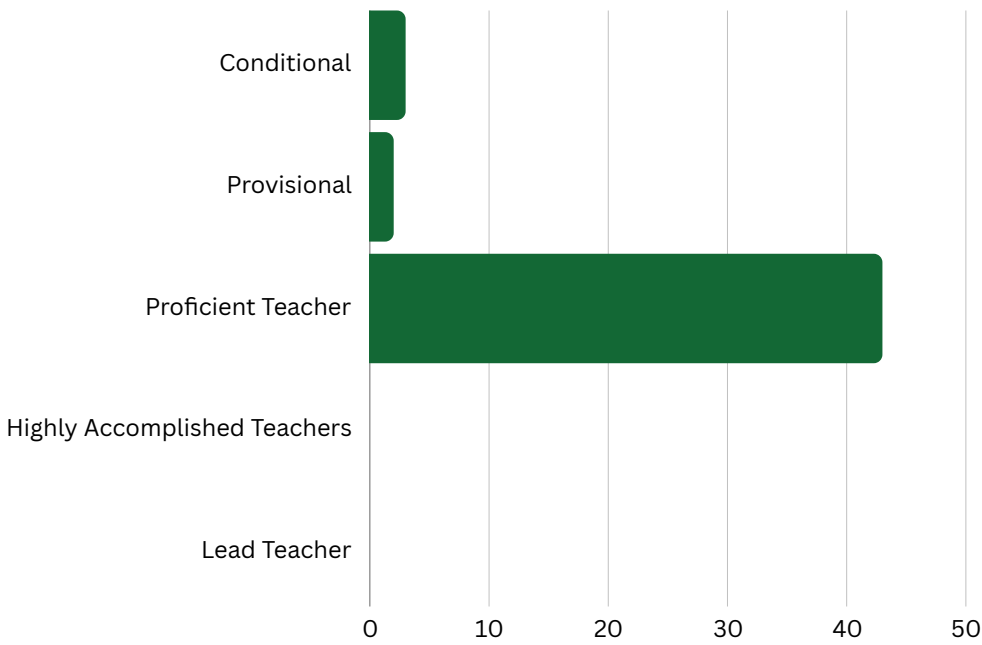
PREP 94%	YEAR 4: 90%	YEAR 8: 86%
KINDERGARTEN 91%	YEAR 5: 90%	YEAR 9: 85%
YEAR 1: 90%	YEAR 6: 88%	YEAR 10: 76%
YEAR 2 :91%	YEAR 7: 85%	YEAR 11: 77%
YEAR 3: 88%	SCHOOL AVERAGE: 87%	YEAR 12: 82%



STAFFING

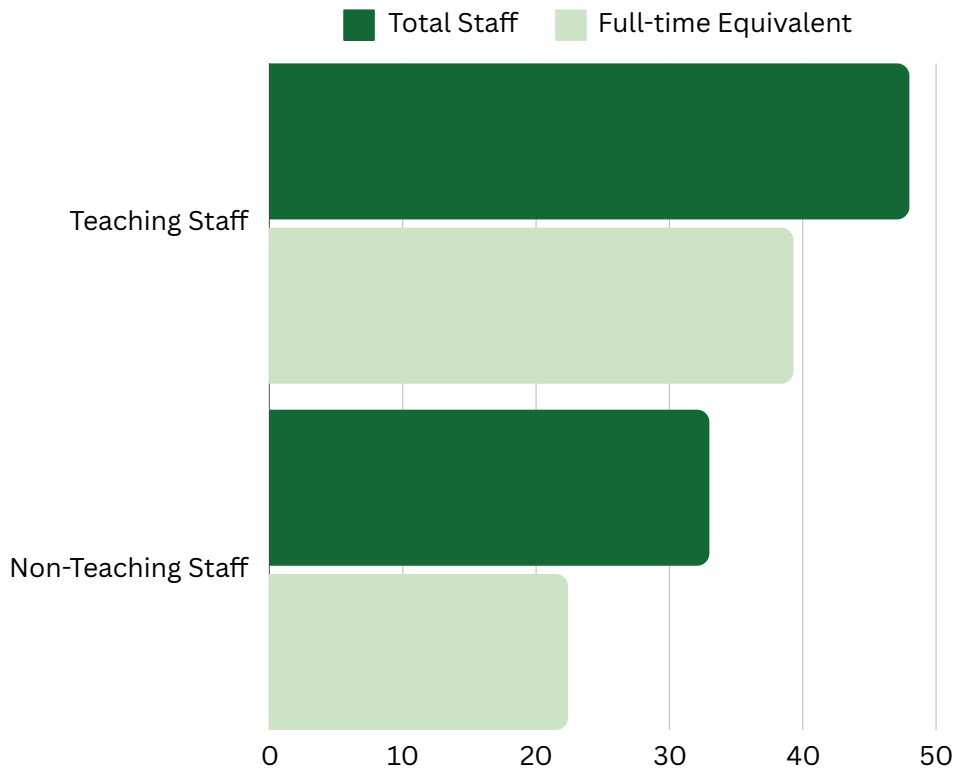


TEACHER ACCREDITATION NUMBERS



We don't have any staff members who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and warmly welcome applications from First Nations teachers and other staff.

WORKFORCE COMPOSITION



SCHOOL POLICIES

The following school policies are publicly available on our website:

- Enrolment policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Discipline policy
- Complaints Policy
- Whistleblower Policy





STAKEHOLDER SATISFACTION

In 2023 a voluntary survey of our Parents/Carers and High School students was conducted by an external provider – Christian Education National. The following is a summary of those results:

Positives:

- The school is reflecting the mission and vision by integrating biblical understandings into the curriculum and promoting its spiritual life. Students are being encouraged in their faith and leaders and teachers are seen as good role models for the Christian faith.
- Overall, communication from the school is seen as very good. Parents feel welcome and affirmed and see themselves as partners with the school.
- Parents are positive about the general facilities and 'built form' of the school and the way the school property is maintained.
- The new Principal is well regarded and supported by the bulk of the parents. Her modelling of the Christian character of the school, her commitment to the vision, her positivity in the school and her integrity and fairness are affirmed by the parent body.
- The Board is well regarded by the parent body.

Areas for growth:

- A better student learning culture with more attention to differentiated teaching and learning; the setting of higher academic standards and expectations; better support for those students at both ends of the academic spectrum; public recognition of student achievement
- Improved transition arrangements from Years 6-7 and, most importantly, much more effective career advice for Secondary students
- A shift in the behavioural culture in the High School
- A review of our bullying procedures to ensure that they are clearly understood and applied by staff and students. Work done around actively building a culture against bullying throughout the school.
- An improved range of co-curricular options
- More investment in technological support for learning
- Professional development opportunities for our secondary staff
- A review of our IT communication and learning platforms to improve its usability

The feedback from our High School student community tells us:

Positives:

Students have high aspirations for their learning. Our students are seeking higher standards in the classroom and are wanting a respectful, positive learning culture.

Students see their teachers as good Christian role models and they are knowledgeable in their subject areas.

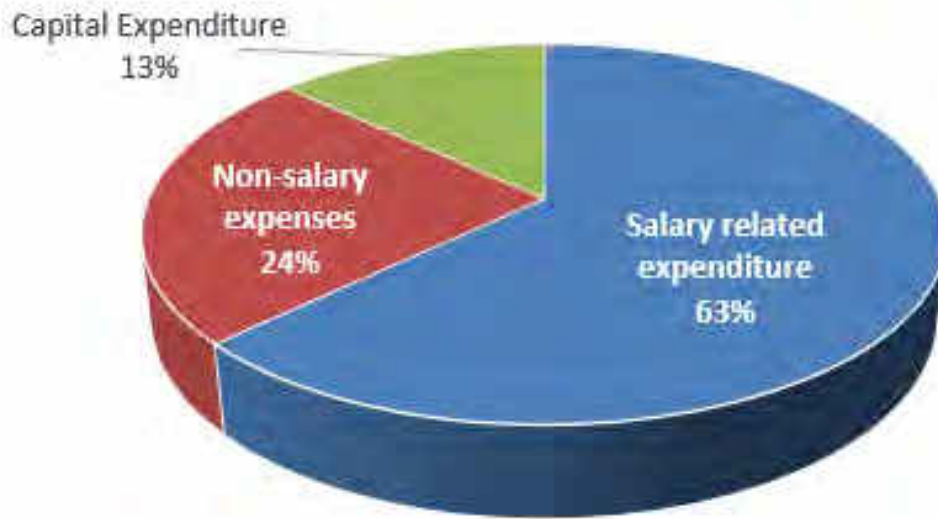
Areas for growth:

- Behavioural issues
- Bullying - We need to review our Bullying policy and its procedures and spend time ensuring that everyone understands it and developing a culture that actively fights against bullying.
- Students would like more variety of teaching styles that address different learning needs of students.
- Development of leadership opportunities through all years in High School. While there are leadership opportunities in Senior years, more opportunities for our younger years is desired.
- Better access to sporting and other co-curricular opportunities.

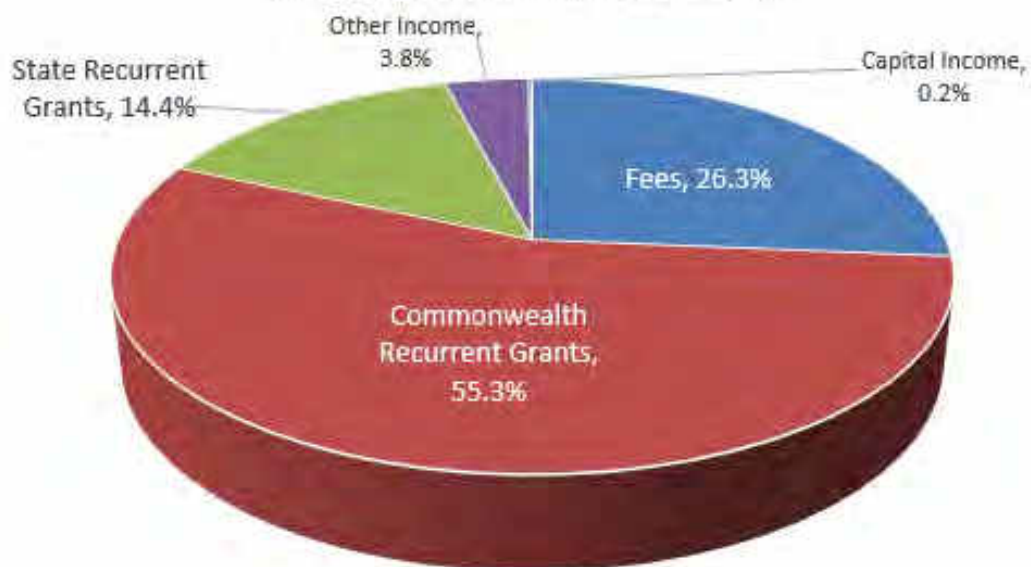


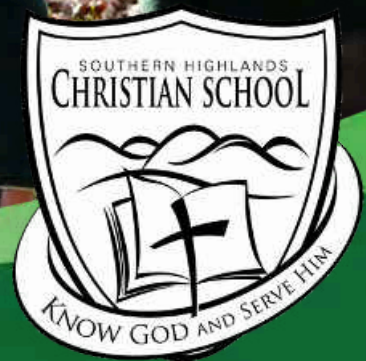
FINANCIALS

Recurrent and Capital Expenditure



Recurrent and Capital Income





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