

Macleay Vocational College

1 - 13 Reginald Ward St, South Kempsey, NSW, 2440

Established in 2001, the Macleay Vocational College (MVC) is part of the Macleay Valley Workplace Learning Centre Inc., a not-for-profit education and training provider. MVC provides a comprehensive education with a strong vocational focus, for students in Years 9 to 12 (14 years of age onwards). Students gain recognised NSW credentials such as the Record of School Achievement (ROSA) and Higher School Certificate (HSC). In 2013, 90 students enrolled at the College, 37 female and 53 male students. 80% of students are Indigenous. The student population includes those who have experienced difficulties in traditional education settings (isolated, bullied, suspended or expelled from school or chronic truancy) and/or are exiting Juvenile Detention.

How this program works

Values of *love, respect, community, tolerance, responsibility and forgiveness*, underpin MVC's *caring community*, providing a positive learning and work environment. Committed to equity in education and the belief that all students can learn and achieve, MVC educates *the whole person* attending to academic, physical, social, emotional and moral development. Students are supported to *develop a sense of belonging, pride, personal identity and cultural awareness*, to become lifelong learners, *resilient, tolerant and confident participants in society* and achieve their *full potential*. A merits and rewards system and counselling service encourages students to take responsibility for their own behaviour. Parents and carers are encouraged to take part in College decision making processes.

MVC provides a Year 9 and 10 program for students 'at risk' of not achieving a basic high school education and a Year 11 and 12 Senior College where students study for their HSC or ROSA. The program operates daily from 9.10am to 3.00pm. HSC/ROSA students attend between 2 and 5 days per week. The program offers mandatory Board of Studies NSW courses, as well as *music, arts, cultural links with community and Elders, Dhanggati language, Vocational Education and Training (VET), Work Placement*, a variety of *interest electives and sports*. Literacy and Numeracy programs focus on *writing and finances for living*. Small classes enable *individualised and flexible* learning.

Outcomes

Positive outcomes, indicating the success of this program, include: *making a difference to a young person's life*, student attendance and re-engagement with education, growth in personal development and social and cultural awareness, academic attainment and positive transitions.

Credentialed attainment: In 2012, 8 students sat for the NSW Higher School Certificate in 7 courses with 100% of candidates in Visual Arts achieving a Band 3 or higher. Two accelerated Year 11 students completed HSC Human Services; one of whom obtained the VET Certificate III.

Destinations and pathways: Include employment, traineeships and continued studies at MVC, other schools, university and TAFE. Consistently 85% of MVC graduates are in employment or further education within 12 months.

Engagement and participation in learning: In 2012, 70% of Year 9 students completed external examinations, 7 of the 8 Year 12's participated in vocational training and all students achieved a Statement of Attainment for complete modules. Over 50% of Year 11 completed VET modules.

Health and well-being: Research with students and teachers illustrates positive impacts as students are no longer getting in trouble with the police and display an increase in self-confidence (2008).

Civic/community participation: Beginning as an attempt to combat cruelty to animals, students breed and show Sebright chickens and have won a number of prizes around Australia. Students participate in NAIDOC Week, the local ANZAC service, Landcare and 'Waste Into Art' environmental projects, Deadly Days and One Deadly Step Health Program community events and assist with Salvation Army and Red Cross appeals and a preschool reading program.

Productive partnerships: Over 25 local businesses provide training placements for students. MVC works closely with NSW and Community Health to provide mentoring, and programs in mental health, sexual health, drugs and alcohol and relationships such as Love Bites.

External recognition: The retired MVC Principal (2011) was awarded a Fellowship of the Australian College of Educators and a teacher received an ACE award (2012). The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations cited MVC as an exemplar in *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage Annual Report (2011)*. In 2013 MVC was awarded a Telstra Community grant.

Wider influence: In 2009, the school published a case study in the academic book *Making Schools Different* demonstrating how pedagogy can be done differently in practice.

Why this program is successful

Feedback from parents, staff and students suggests: *Students develop a safe place and sense of belonging; teachers care about the students, get to know and mentor them and respect their background, maintaining links with students' family/carers; students feel comfortable asking for help.* A 2008 research report found that *the approach to discipline, help provided for learning, positive culture, responsibility and ownership, curriculum and relevance* contributed to students' success and that *small class sizes, mutual support, clear boundaries* supported students and staff.

Want to know more?

<http://www.learningchoices.org.au/programs/547/Macleay-Vocational-College.php>

<http://www.mvwlc.nsw.edu.au/>

Sources of information

Macleay Vocational College (2013) Student Handbook.

Macleay Vocational College (2013) Website.

Macleay Vocational College (2011) Annual Report.

Macleay Vocational College (2002-2009) Magazine.

My School (2013) Website – Macleay Vocational College

<http://www.myschool.edu.au/SchoolProfile/Index/69507/MacleayVocationalCollege/43715/2012>

Te Riele, K. (2008) Negotiating Risk and Hope. Alternative Education for Marginalised Youth.

Extended Research Report for Macleay Vocational College. June 2008. UTS ECRG-funded project.

Please note, where possible and appropriate, we have adopted the language and terminology used by the program sources (*italic fonts*) and referred to the most recent publically available information.

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