



**ALESCO**  
*Learning Centre Illawarra*

## **Annual Report 2013**



**Alesco: from the Latin, to grow or mature**

*For young people, aged 15-18 years, who are ready to take responsibility for themselves, their learning and their future, in a safe and supportive environment for change*

50-56 Auburn Street  
PO Box 1472  
Wollongong NSW 2500  
P: (02) 4226 1622  
F: (02) 4226 1156  
E: [alesco@weaillawarra.com.au](mailto:alesco@weaillawarra.com.au)  
[www.alescoillawarra.nsw.edu.au](http://www.alescoillawarra.nsw.edu.au)

Alesco Learning Centre Illawarra operates  
under the auspices of WEA Illawarra  
ABN 14 062 944 950  
NSW BOSTES School Number: 78007  
Commonwealth DoE School Number: 29085

This report is prepared by Alesco Learning Centre Illawarra to meet educational and financial reporting requirements for the 2013 reporting year, in accordance with the Commonwealth Government's *Schools Assistance Regulations 2009* and the NSW Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards requirements for Registered and Accredited individual non-government schools.

Alesco Learning Centre Illawarra would like to thank

- The Australian Government Department of Education
- The NSW Department of Education and Communities
- The Association of Independent Schools NSW
- The Board of Directors and staff of WEA Illawarra
- The staff and students of Alesco Learning Centre Illawarra

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## From the WEA Illawarra Board of Directors

I am absolutely delighted on behalf of the WEA Illawarra Board of Directors to present the third annual report for Alesco Learning Centre Illawarra.

One of the most inspirational events in the Alesco calendar is the graduation ceremony, a time to celebrate the students' achievements. I attended the 2013 ceremony with Board members and once again felt very proud of Alesco's efforts in assisting our community's young people reach their potential and improve their employment prospects.



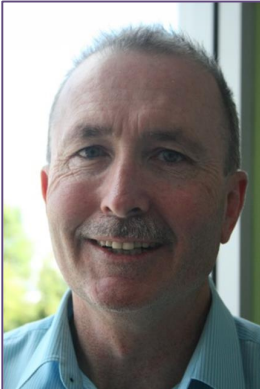
The ongoing success of the program was evident when the keynote speaker, Daniel Butters, a former student, retold his story of determination through multiple setbacks to create a better future for himself. What an inspirational story and a great role model to the graduating cohort! Every student, their home support and staff are to be congratulated and commended for their dedication, efforts and achievements.

Alesco's supportive and flexible learning environment has clearly assisted students to maximise their success, and expansion into Year 11 will commence in 2014.

On behalf of the WEA Board of Directors, I thank the dedicated team at Alesco Learning Centre and look forward to an exciting and inspirational 2014.

*Stephannie Jonovska*  
*Chairperson*  
*WEA Illawarra Board*

## Principal's Message



A graduation ceremony is always inspiring. It's a time when we can celebrate achievements and encourage each other to keep working towards our goals, fuelled by our success so far. The 2013 Alesco Learning Centre Illawarra graduation was indeed such an occasion, but this year there was even more cause for pride and joy, as we not only celebrated the achievements of the young people who successfully completed the Year 10 program, but welcomed back Daniel Butters as the event's special guest speaker.

Daniel graduated from Alesco in 2012 after transferring from his local public school at a time when he had all but given up on finishing his education. He shared his story of hard work and determination to create a future for himself, despite numerous setbacks before, during and after his time at Alesco. At age 16, Daniel secured work in a Commonwealth Government position in Wollongong. He originally wanted to train as a pastry chef after graduating from Alesco, but was not able to secure an apprenticeship. He didn't let that stop him from trying other avenues for employment, and he is now hoping to work in hotel management, or even open his own business in the future. For the staff of Alesco Illawarra, that Daniel now has confidence in his abilities and believes there are options for his future, is the greatest reward for the long hours and multiple challenges of running a school for young people with barriers to completing their education. Daniel's story is just one among many from young people who have been assisted by Alesco Learning Centre Illawarra to reach their potential, improve their employment prospects and contribute positively to their local communities.

Since its inception in 2011, demand for places has steadily increased. A total of 47 students were enrolled at some point during the 2013 school year, a 20% increase on 2012 enrolment numbers. Significantly, 30% of the students who remained enrolled until the end of the school year were of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, our highest number of Indigenous student enrolments since commencing. Accordingly, our staff team was joined by an Indigenous Teachers' Aide who provided individual learning support and assisted with other areas of engagement in the learning program.

I would like to acknowledge the extremely valuable contribution each member of staff has made towards creating a supportive and inclusive learning community and helping individual students achieve their potential. A significant achievement of the team, under the direction of Lead Teacher, was receiving initial registration and accreditation for Year 11 and 12, commencing in 2014. This will provide further opportunity for us to help students complete their high school education and move into future education, employment or training.

*Greg Fisher*  
*Principal*

# Vision, Mission and Philosophy

## Context

Alesco Learning Centre Illawarra is a non-denominational independent school registered with the NSW Department of Education and Communities for Years 9 and 10, and accredited by the NSW Board of Studies to deliver Stage 5 courses. Alesco Illawarra offers young people aged between 15 and 18 years an alternative education option. Students who enrol at Alesco Illawarra typically face barriers to completing their education in mainstream school settings, including mental health issues, learning difficulties, social disadvantage and behavioural issues.



Alesco Illawarra operates under the auspices of WEA Illawarra. WEA Illawarra is a not-for-profit organisation that is part of the Adult and Community Education sector and has a vision to build strong communities through individuals achieving their potential. As a community college with a broad social inclusion agenda, Alesco Illawarra supports the achievement of WEA's vision and mission.

## Alesco Illawarra Vision

Alesco Illawarra will provide a safe, respectful and inclusive environment in which young people can explore learning, develop their potential, and be well equipped to meet the challenges of education, work and life in the 21st Century.

## Mission Statement

Alesco Illawarra strives to provide young people who have not found success in traditional secondary education models, an opportunity to learn, grow and achieve success in a smaller, more informal and supportive learning environment.

We do this:

- Through the provision of exemplary teaching and learning programs which encourage critical thinking skills, enabling students to hypothesize, pose questions, investigate issues and develop solutions.
- Through the provision of well qualified staff who are committed to the vision of Alesco Illawarra.
- Through the development of strong links with student support networks in the community including parents and carers.
- Through the development of a connected learning community that enables students to access their educational programs 24/7.
- By creating a culture of respect that focuses on equity and social justice.

## Philosophy

### ***Inclusion***

The philosophy of Alesco Illawarra is inclusive education. Every child has a fundamental right to education, and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning.

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Inclusive schools are those 'which include everybody, celebrate differences, support learning, and respond to individual needs'\*. This inclusive orientation is the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all.

Alesco Learning Centre Illawarra strives to achieve educational systems and programs designed and implemented to take into account the unique characteristics and needs of every young person. To further enhance this learning, staff work collaboratively with agencies within the wider community to provide opportunities to enhance student wellbeing.

The aim is to meet the challenge of 'Education For All'.\*

\* (UNESCO, 1994, *The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education*, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, Paris.

### **Values**

At Alesco Illawarra we believe in the core values of

**Respect for Self**

**Respect for Others**

**Respect for Community**

Our core values are reflected in the management and operation of the school and participation of students in the learning program. The student welfare plan, code of conduct and discipline framework focus on these values to ensure that our learning environment is positive and supportive.

Students of Alesco Illawarra have identified some of the core actions that help us demonstrate our core values, and have included these in our "Circle of Respect":

**A**cceptance  
**L**earning  
**E**mpathy  
**S**afety  
**C**ommitment  
**O**pportunity



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### ***Relationships and Personal Growth***

We aim to create positive relationships with our students so we can help them to move forward with their education. Breaking down barriers between students and teachers creates an environment in which young people feel comfortable learning.



Our job is to help young people believe in themselves and to realise that they can shape their future and choose what it will be, regardless of what has come before. We seek to provide opportunities for each young person to:

- grow as a person,
- learn how to form positive interpersonal relationships,
- enhance their desire to learn for learning's sake,
- progress in their knowledge and skills.

We attempt to accept young people as they are, and however they choose to express themselves, within a framework of mutual respect.

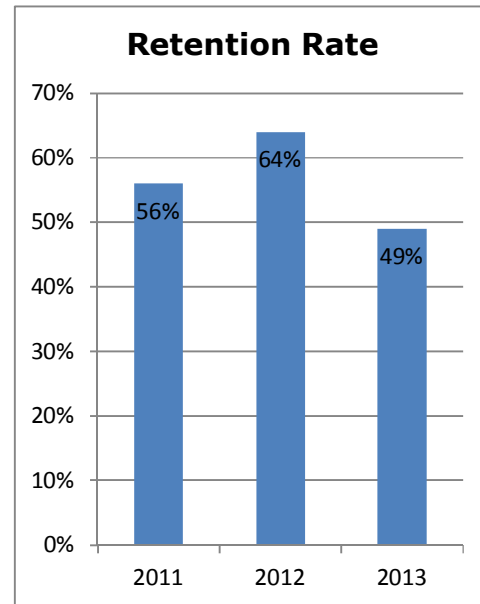
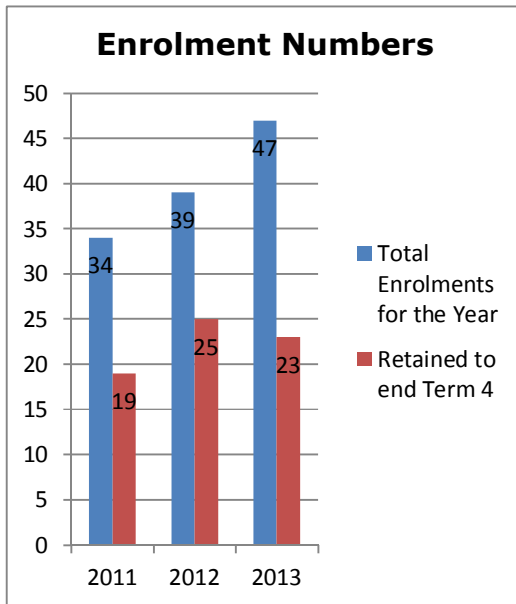
We seek to provide learning opportunities for young people which prove their capabilities and help them reach their potential, in an environment that is designed specifically for their inclusion.



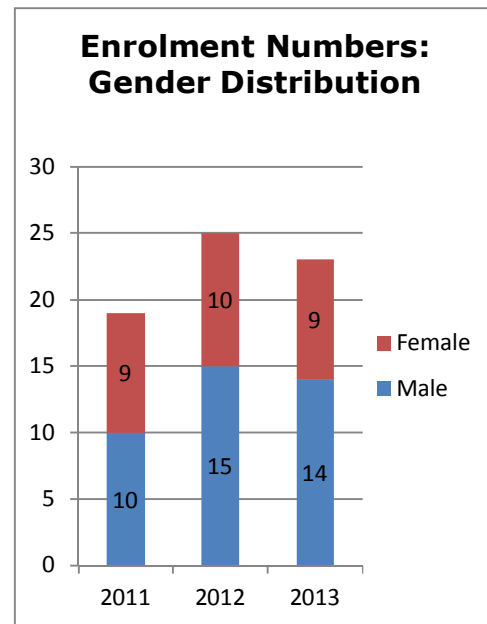
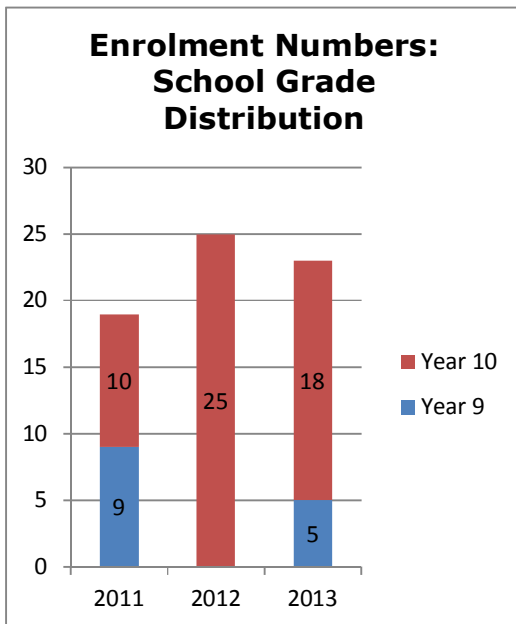
A Year 10 student receives the Australian Defence Force Long Tan Award for Leadership and Teamwork at Graduation 2013

## Characteristics of the Student Body

Throughout 2013 Alesco Illawarra enrolled a total of 47 students in the Stage 5 program. Twenty-three (23) students maintained their enrolment until the end of Term 4, representing a 49% retention rate. Each year, Alesco Illawarra takes on a new cohort of students and the barriers each student faces in completing their education will impact differently on their desire and capacity to complete the school year.



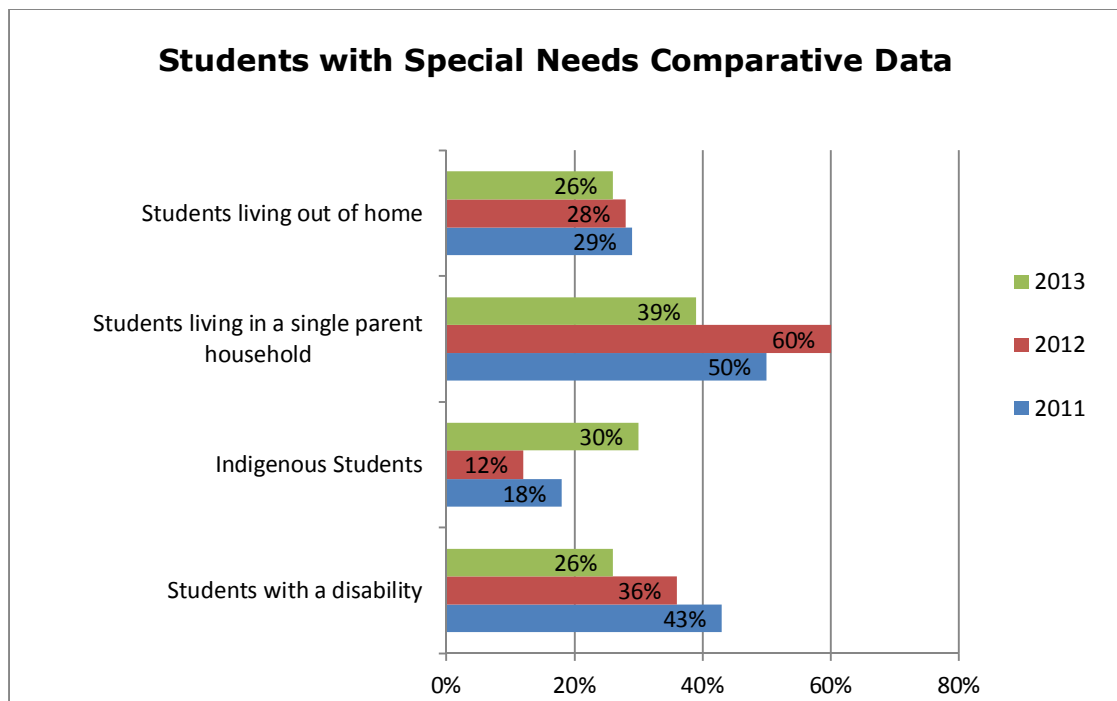
The following charts indicate the distribution of students who remained enrolled to the end of Term 4 in 2013 in school grades and by gender.



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Of the 23 students enrolled until the end of the 2013 school year:

- 26% had a disability which impacted on their learning and were supported by the Commonwealth Government National Partnerships Program with targeted literacy, numeracy and special needs funding administered through the NSW Association of Independent Schools
- 30% identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- 39% were living in single parent households
- 26% of students either live with a family member other than their parent, a family friend, independently, in out of home care, a youth refuge or other supported accommodation situation because they are no longer able to live at home.



The NSW Minister for Education has granted Alesco Learning Centre Illawarra status as a Special Assistance School. This recognises that the school primarily enrolls students with social, emotional or behavioural difficulties.

# Student Performance

## NAPLAN

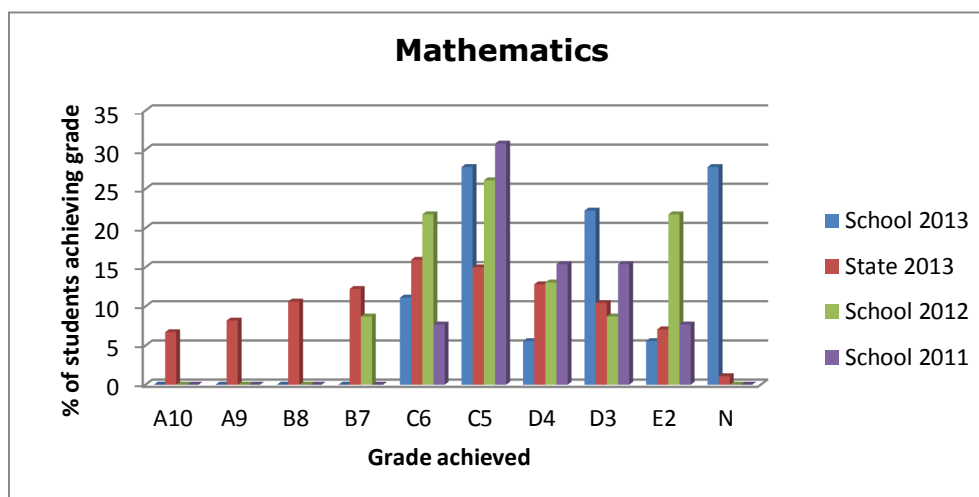
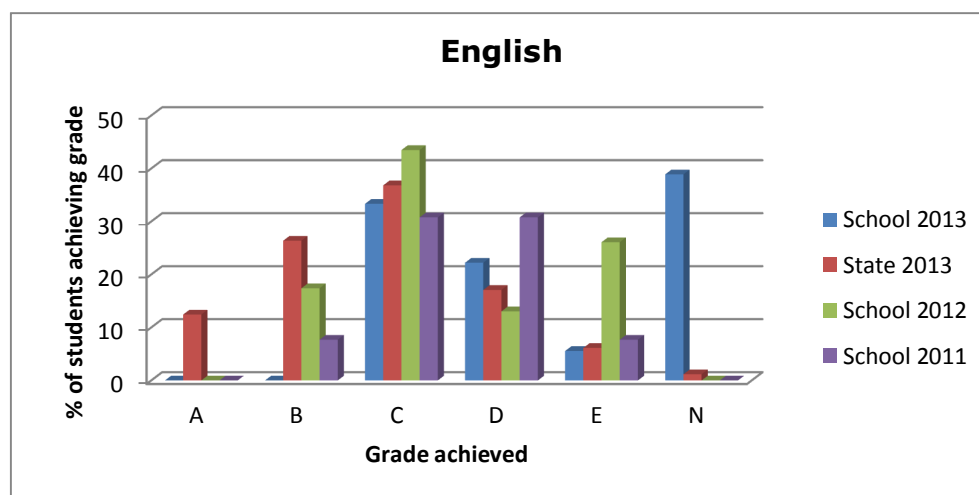
In 2013 Alesco Illawarra only took year 9 enrolments from Term 3 onwards, therefore there were no students enrolled at the time of the NAPLAN tests.

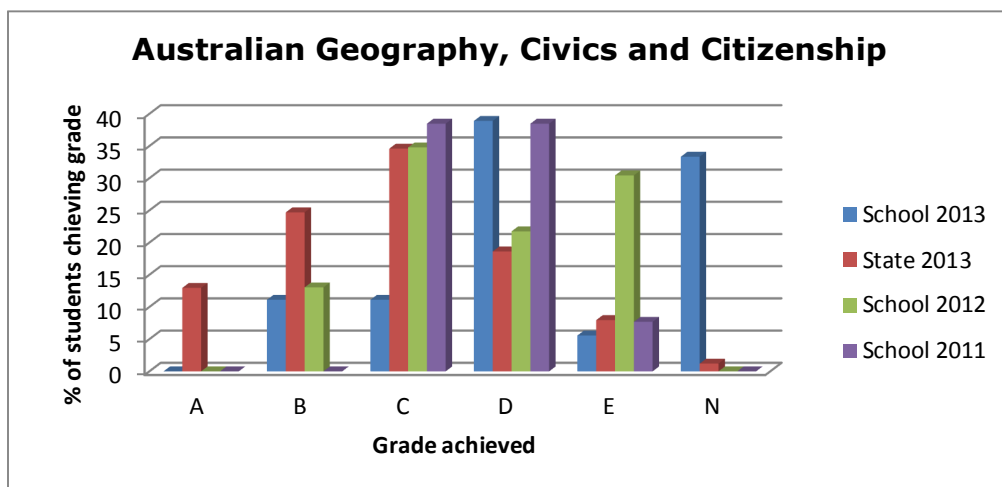
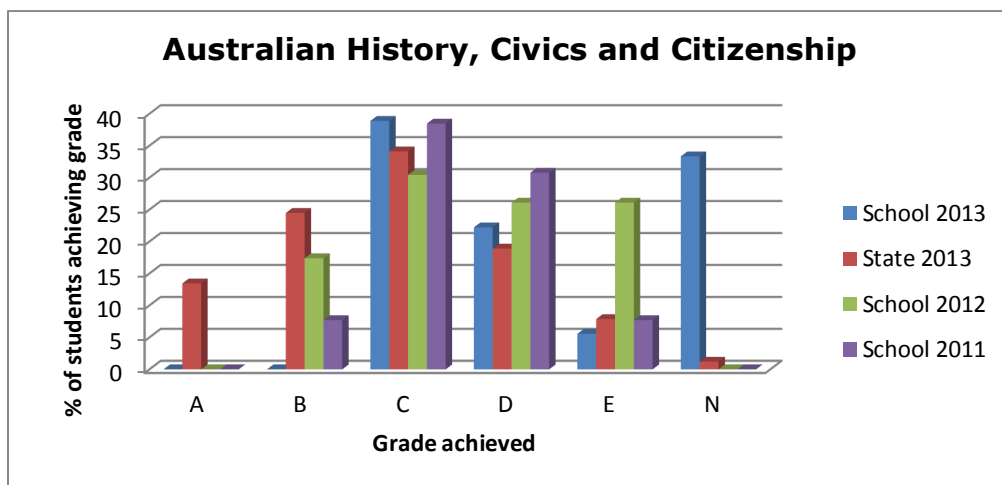
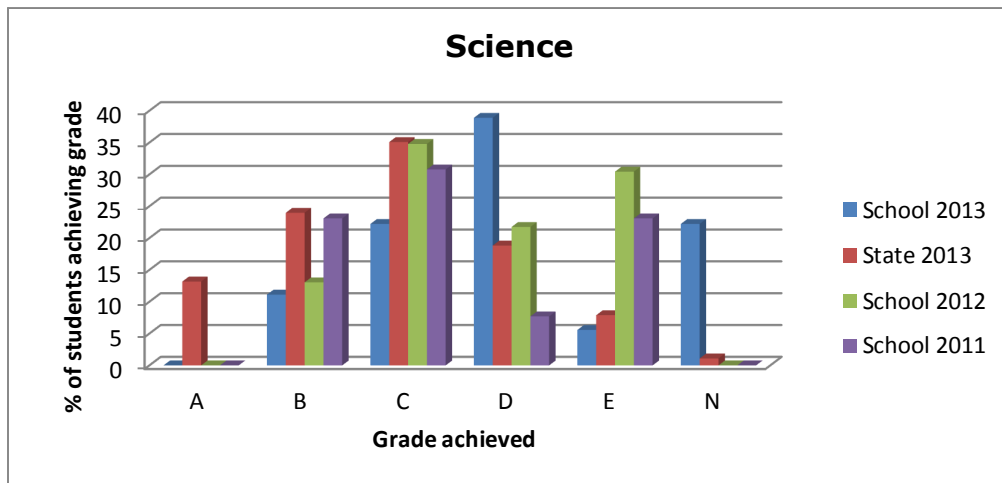
## Year 10

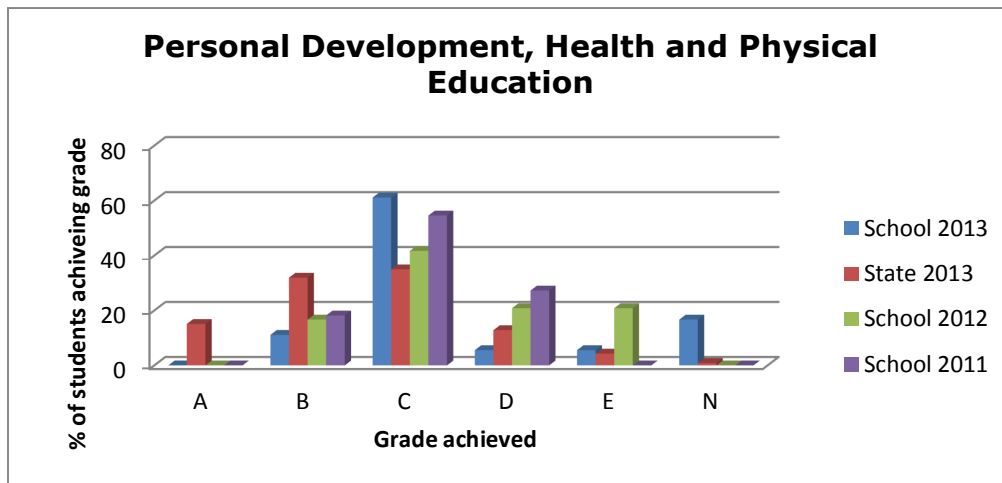
Of the 18 students enrolled in Year 10 at the completion of the 2013 school year, 10 students graduated having completed the Alesco Illawarra program and were eligible to receive their Record of School Achievement (RoSA).

## Course Results

The following charts show Year 10 results in each mandatory Key Learning Area, compared to results achieved by all students in NSW in 2013 and the school's Year 10 results in the previous two years. Each year, Alesco Illawarra takes on a new cohort of Year 10 students and the barriers that each student faces in completing their education will impact differently on their course results.

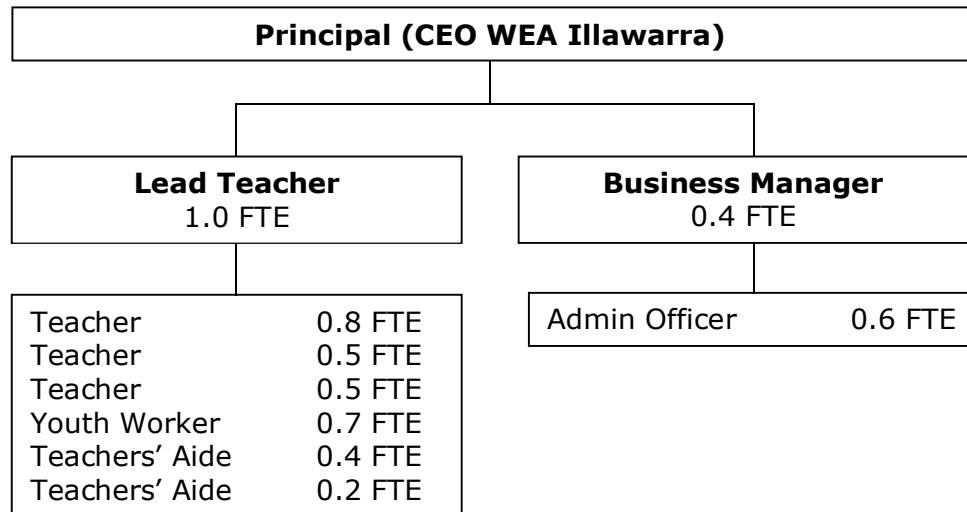






Former student Daniel Butters (left) inspires others as guest speaker at Graduation 2013

## Workforce Composition



There was one member of staff who identified as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent.

## Teaching Standards

All teaching staff met the professional requirements for teaching in NSW according to the following categories:

Category	Number of Teachers
(i) Teachers having teacher education qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) guidelines	3
(ii) Teachers having a bachelor degree from a higher education institution within Australia or one recognised within the AEI-NOOSR guidelines but lack formal teacher education qualifications	1
(iii) Teachers not having qualifications as described in (i) or (ii) but having relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate knowledge relevant to the teaching context.	0

## Professional Learning

Alesco Illawarra staff participated in the following professional development sessions in 2013:

	Teachers	Support Staff
Network Meetings – Special Education/support	1	2
Generation Next Conference	3	2
Curriculum – Implementing New Syllabus – Maths / Science / History	3	
CPR update	3	2
Student Wellbeing	4	2
Differentiating the curriculum	2	
Leadership and Governance	1	
Assessment and Reporting	4	2

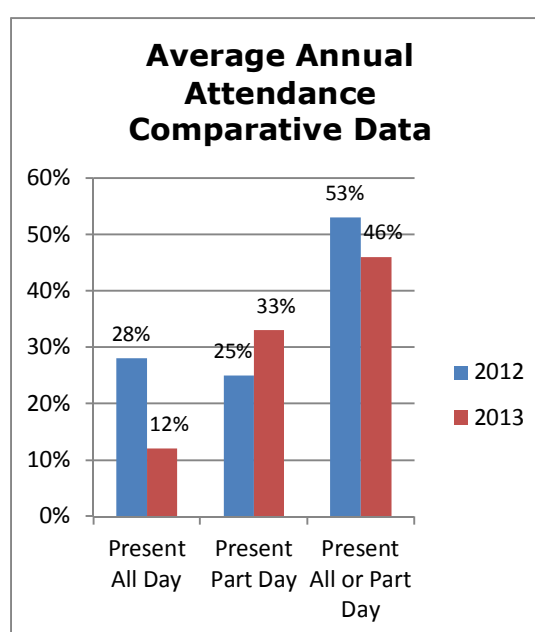
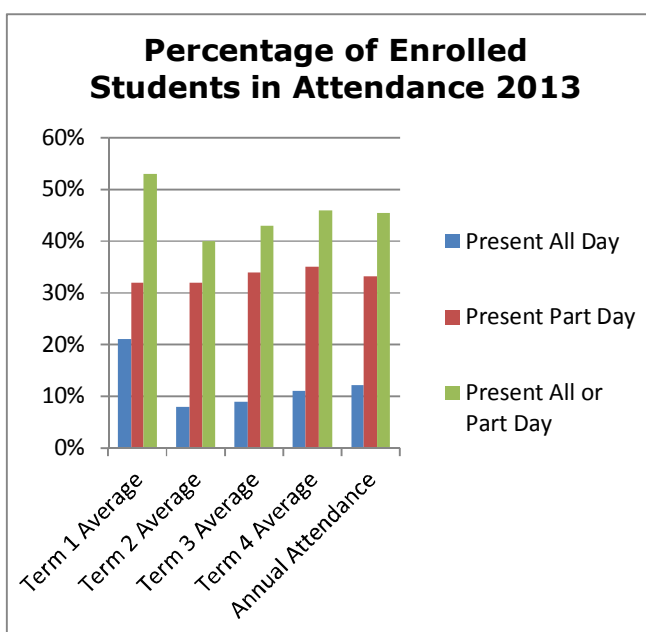
Staff also attended conferences organised by the Association of Independent Schools NSW (AISNSW):  
 Embedding Inclusion in Whole School Practice  
 Embracing Change: Strengthening Wellbeing K- 12

# Student Attendance

Average attendance rates for students at Alesco Illawarra were generally low. A significant number of students faced personal, socioeconomic, and other barriers to completing their education. This was reflected in the attendance rates.

Average attendance rates in 2013 are detailed as follows:

	<b>Present All Day</b>	<b>Present Part Day</b>	<b>Present All or Part Day</b>
Term 1 Average	21%	32%	53%
Term 2 Average	8%	32%	40%
Term 3 Average	9%	34%	43%
Term 4 Average	11%	35%	46%
<b>Average Annual Attendance 2013</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>46%</b>



Alesco Illawarra remains committed to working with students, parents/carers and other support people to improve student attendance. Individual consideration is given to each student and their particular circumstances. Strategies include attendance agreements with students, negotiated flexibility in attendance where a student can demonstrate a satisfactory work completion rate, support meetings with parents/carers and other service providers involved in the care of the young person, and exemptions from attendance where medical or mental health problems are present.

## Post-School Destinations

Destination of students enrolled in Year 10 as at Term 4 in 2013 (n = 18)

Destination	Number of Students
Enrolled in year 11 at another high school or TAFE	1
Undertaking other education, training, apprenticeship or traineeship	1
Employed full-time, part-time or seeking employment	3
Re-enrolled at Alesco in 2014 to undertake year 10 again	4
Re-enrolled at Alesco in 2014 to undertake year 11	7
Participating in programs offered by other services	2



Alesco student (2nd from right) secures apprenticeship with Illawarra Toyota with support from Essential Employment and Training

# Enrolment Policies

<b>Policy No: 1.5</b>	<b>Enrolment Policy</b>
<b>Version</b>	<b>2.1</b>
<b>Created</b>	<b>30 November 2010</b>
<b>Reviewed</b>	<b>29 July 2013</b>
<b>Reviewed</b>	<b>3 December 2013</b>
<b>Next Review Date</b>	<b>3 December 2015</b>

Alesco Learning Centre Illawarra is a school specifically designed to help young people with barriers to education, or who are at risk of not completing their education, to re-engage with learning.

The school aims to provide learning opportunities for young people eligible to complete Stages 5 and 6 and are unable to complete their education within the traditional school environment.

The selection process for Alesco Learning Centre Illawarra explores the following key areas to determine suitability for our program:

- Learning difficulties/disabilities
- Behavioural and/or social and emotional difficulties/disabilities
- Financial disadvantage and /or social isolation
- Previous academic performance and disconnection with learning
- Indigenous, cultural and linguistic background
- Desire to overcome past difficulties and move on to future education, employment or training.

Alesco Illawarra caters for students whose behaviour or health support needs can be managed within the school's facilities and staff to student ratio. The school is best suited to students who can operate within the adult learning environment and can take responsibility for themselves, their learning and their actions.

Students applying to attend Alesco Illawarra must complete the appropriate application form and submit all required documentation prior to interview. A student's acceptance into the program is dependent on their presentation at interview and their demonstrated ability to work within the policies and philosophy of Alesco Learning Centre Illawarra. All students, parents /carers are required to sign an enrolment contract prior to commencing classes.

All students who are enrolled at Alesco Learning Centre Illawarra will be required to undergo a literacy and numeracy assessment, if the teaching staff deems it necessary. This may be conducted prior to enrolment if required.

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<b>Policy No: 1.6</b>	<b>Information required upon application to Alesco Learning Centre Illawarra</b>
<b>Version</b>	<b>1.1</b>
<b>Created</b>	<b>30 November 2010</b>
<b>Reviewed</b>	<b>July 2013</b>
<b>Next Review Date</b>	<b>July 2015</b>
<b>Related Documents</b>	<b>Alesco Learning Centre Illawarra Application for Enrolment</b> <b>1.13 POL Register of Alesco student enrolments</b>

Due to the nature of the target group attending Alesco Learning Centre Illawarra and the school's intended focus, Alesco Learning Centre Illawarra requires specific information regarding the student's history when applying to enrol.

This information includes but is not limited to:

- Personal details: name, age, address, DOB etc; (including proof of identity either through birth certificate or photo ID which includes a birth date)
- Parent/guardian contact details, if aged under 18 at time of application
- Current living arrangements
- Emergency contact details
- Details of the referring service provider (if applicable)
- Assessment and service provider support details (including any reports or letters of support from psychologists, psychiatrists, counsellors)
- Demographic information: ATSI identification, cultural/linguistic background, disability
- For students born overseas, information regarding arrival date, citizenship or residency status and visa number and class
- Medical conditions and medication (if applicable)
- Previous education details (including most recent school reports)
- Other training or employment information.

This information will be gathered through the *Application for Enrolment* form. No student will be accepted without a completed application form. No application will be processed without all of the essential supporting documentation being provided with the application.

## Other School Policies

### Student Welfare

Alesco Illawarra seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment which:

- supports the social and emotional wellbeing of students
- encourages academic achievement
- minimises risk of harm.

The following policies are in place to support student welfare and are available on the Alesco Illawarra intranet or on request from the school.

### Child Protection

Policy	2.1	Protecting and supporting children and young people
Policy	2.2	Role of staff in care and protection of children and young people
Policy	2.3	Mandatory reporting responsibilities of Alesco Learning Centre Illawarra staff
Policy	2.4	Working with Children Checks
Policy	2.5	Harm relating to the actions of a student, trainee or apprentice
Policy	2.6	Harm relating to the actions of a staff member

### General Welfare, Security and Safety

Policy	1.11	Corporal punishment
Policy	1.14	Visitors to the Centre
Policy	1.15	Request for police assistance
Policy	1.18	Student excursions
Policy	1.21	Duty of care
Policy	3.8	Student supervision
Policy	3.9	Students travelling in staff vehicles
Policy	6.1	Welfare policy
Policy	6.2	Notification of concern for student welfare
Policy	6.3	Referral to support services
Policy	6.4	Accepting referral to support services
Policy	6.5	Students leaving premises
Policy	6.6	Anti-Bullying policy

Child Protection policies were amended in 2013 to incorporate the introduction of the *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012* and procedures updated with reference to the new Working with Children Check system.

### Anti-Bullying

Alesco Learning Centre Illawarra is committed to providing all students with a caring, supportive and safe learning environment, helping to promote personal growth and excellence by developing confidence and self-esteem.

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Bullying is an anti-social behaviour that is unacceptable and is not tolerated at the Learning Centre. Every student has the right to expect that he or she will be free from bullying and harassment, both inside and outside the classroom.

Alesco Learning Centre Illawarra has a Welfare and Anti-Bullying Plan which gives clear information regarding bullying and whole school strategies to prevent bullying and intervene effectively if bullying occurs. It addresses all forms of bullying and harassment, including cyber bullying. The plan has a strong focus on responsibility, respect and resilience and incorporates all members of the school community.

The Anti-Bullying Policy and Welfare and Anti-Bullying Plan are available on the school intranet and on request from the school.

## **Discipline**

Students are required to abide by the Alesco Illawarra Student Code of Conduct and follow the directions of teachers and other people with authority delegated by Alesco Illawarra. Where disciplinary action is required, consequences vary according to the nature of the breach of discipline, as outlined in the Discipline Framework.

All disciplinary action is undertaken in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness as outlined in the Procedural Fairness policy.

Alesco Learning Centre Illawarra does not permit corporal punishment of students attending the school under any circumstances. The school and its staff are also not permitted to use corporal punishment regardless of whether the parent or caregiver has requested or given permission to do so. The school does not condone the use of corporal punishment by a parent or caregiver to reinforce any discipline actions implemented by the school or any disciplinary decision by a parent or caregiver.

The following policies are in place to support student discipline and are available on the Alesco Illawarra intranet or on request from the school.

Policy	1.11	Corporal punishment
Policy	1.17	Procedural fairness
Policy	5.2	Student discipline
Policy	5.4	Student dress standard
Policy	5.5	Student code of conduct
Policy	5.6	Student rights and responsibilities

## **Complaints and Grievances**

Alesco Illawarra views complaints, as well as compliments and other constructive feedback as a way of creating opportunities for the school to improve its services and prevent future problems.

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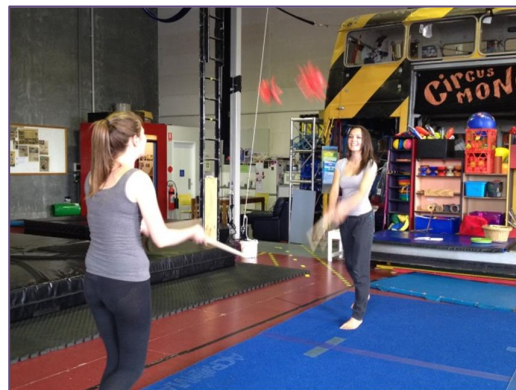
A suggestion or complaint can be lodged by any person who is a user or potential user of Alesco Learning Centre Illawarra services including a student, a parent/guardian or carer or other community member. The suggestion or complaint can be about any aspect of the service provided or not provided, the behaviour or decisions of other staff, or about workplace practices, policies or procedures.

All complaints and grievances will be handled fairly by the appropriate people within the organisation in a timely and confidential manner

The following policies and procedures are in place in relation to complaints and grievances and are available on the Alesco Illawarra intranet or on request from the school.

Policy	1.10	Complaints and grievances received by the school
Procedure	1.10	Management of complaints National School Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Program
Form	1.10	Complaints form
Policy	1.17	Procedural fairness

Policies and procedures in this area were reviewed in 2013 with updates made to procedures regarding specific complaints under the National School Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Program and updating of the Complaints Form.



Circus Monoxide Workshop

## School Improvement Targets

Students and their Learning	
Priorities for 2013	Achievements
Literacy and Numeracy	Literacy and numeracy strategies were highlighted as a key to ensuring the success of Alesco students. Strategies to improve levels were implemented into the learning program. Students were assessed on enrolment and individual programs were implemented to support literacy and numeracy.
Information and Communications Technology (ICT)	Integration of ICT into classrooms with explicit teaching to enhance computer literacy. Teacher led training in using ICT to enhance student outcomes particularly in the area of Assessment.
Respect and Participation (RAP) program	<p>Funding for a Student Wellbeing program enabled the school to work with a local psychologist to commence the development of a wellbeing program that underpins the school's positive behaviour support program. Staff attended a training day and students were introduced to the concept by the visiting psychologist. This will continue into 2014.</p> <p>A number of staff also attended conferences with a focus on student wellbeing</p>

Pedagogy	
Priorities for 2013	Achievements
Australian Curriculum – Year 9 and 10	Staff attended professional development by AIS to support the development of programs in line with the BOS requirements for the Australian Curriculum.
Stage 6	<p>Initial Registration and Accreditation for Stage 6. Year 11 cohort to commence Term 1 2014. The school now offers an ATAR and Non ATAR pathway for Stage 6 over a three year period.</p> <p>Final accreditation and inspection is scheduled for 2014.</p>
Assessment	<p>Visiting AIS consultants and staff led professional development on summative and formative assessment as well as the development of rigorous assessment that reflects the course outcomes.</p> <p>Staff attended Special Education Conference and Universal Design for Learning Masterclass led by Joy Zabala.</p>

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<b>Human Resources, Leadership and Management</b>	
<b>Priorities for 2013</b>	<b>Achievements</b>
Staff wellbeing	Staff identified the overall wellbeing of themselves as a crucial element of staff retention. Acknowledgement of the stresses on staff resulted in a number of professional development days being put aside to support staff in their own wellbeing. The most successful of these was a day with a visiting psychologist on Mindfulness.
Enhancing school capacity	Lead teacher completed a Newly Appointed Principal's program and Empowering Local Schools.

<b>Parent and Community Partnerships</b>	
<b>Priorities for 2013</b>	<b>Achievements</b>
Develop relationships with support organisations for young people	<p>Youth Workers attended network meetings in Illawarra area.</p> <p>Liaison with Southern Youth and Family Services, Illawarra Housing, Headspace, South East Sydney and Illawarra Area Health and other local services that support young people and their families giving a greater understanding of the services provided and opening discussion on flexible ways in which students can be supported.</p> <p>Worked closely with Principals and Home School Liaison Officers to develop a better understanding of the role of the school in supporting students with emotional and social issues.</p>

<b>Resources, Finances and Facilities</b>	
<b>Priorities for 2013</b>	<b>Achievements</b>
Facilities	<p>Application for funding to improve existing facilities with a view to increasing student intake for Stage 6.</p> <p>Continued discussion focusing on the need to provide a break out area for students.</p>
Resources	Curriculum resources purchased for Stage 6.

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School Improvement Targets 2014	
Area	Priorities
Students and their Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of explicit and meaningful feedback to all students</li> <li>• Review of Individual Education Plan to include collection of data relating to student history.</li> <li>• Student Wellbeing program</li> <li>• Explicit focus on school culture</li> </ul>
Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of Australian curriculum – Yr 10</li> <li>• Improvement of academic outcomes</li> <li>• Diversifying the curriculum and meeting student needs</li> <li>• Evaluation of programs</li> </ul>
Human Resources, Leadership and Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of National School Improvement tool to identify and prioritise school improvement</li> <li>• Development of succession plan and facilitation of training for identified personnel</li> <li>• Collection and analysis of data relating to student outcomes including student performance, student destination and stakeholder perceptions</li> <li>• Preparation for Nationally Consistent Data Collection for students with disabilities</li> <li>• Staff Wellbeing</li> </ul>
Parent and Community Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular reporting to parents through newsletter and community functions.</li> <li>• Development of sustainable partnerships with community groups.</li> </ul>
Resources, Finances and Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance ICT facilities of school</li> <li>• Source funding opportunities to support programs such as mentoring, wellbeing and excursions.</li> <li>• Upgrade of facilities through government grants.</li> </ul>

# Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility

The nature of Alesco Illawarra means that each year there is a new cohort of students entering the school with only a small number returning. As a consequence of this, programs which promote respect and responsibility are an inherent part of the program.

During 2013 the school continued to develop and refine the programs implemented in 2012 as it was clearly evident that the Positive Behaviour Support program was a key factor in the success experienced by students.

The following programs acknowledge the positive behaviours of students and engage them in learning the skills to become more responsible and respectful citizens.

## **Respect and Participation (RaP) Program**

Respect and participation were identified as two key elements in moving towards success at Alesco Illawarra. Many students demonstrated a lack of respect towards themselves and others and this impacted on their ability to engage positively in a learning environment.



The key concepts of Respect and Participation were developed in consultation with students in Term 1 and then were explicitly taught throughout the year. Student achievements were acknowledged by a simple star chart, coffee reward and letters to parents/carers. During Term 4, students who consistently demonstrated an understanding of the program through positive engagement were taken on an excursion. In 2013 this excursion was to Sydney for the Youth Eco Summit held at Sydney Olympic Park. Seven students were eligible to attend and thoroughly enjoyed the day.

By keeping rewards small and consistent, staff were able to reward students frequently for small steps. This proved to be highly successful.

Further development of the RaP program took place throughout the year with staff beginning to write a pastoral program to be implemented in 2014.

## **Student of the Week**

Each week a student is acknowledged for a positive action they have taken during the week. The student receives a certificate and a letter of acknowledgement sent to their parent/carer. Students who receive more than five Student of the Week awards in the year receive a gift voucher at Graduation.

## **Restorative Justice**

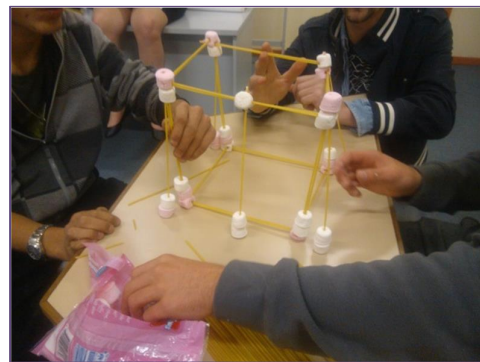
Restorative Justice principles are used to resolve conflict whenever possible at Alesco Illawarra. By using these principles, students are encouraged to listen to each person's stories, develop empathy for others and take responsibility for their own actions.

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Students were taught these principles at the commencement of Term 1 and encouraged to apply them when resolving their own conflicts.

### **Drug and Alcohol Program**

Students engaged in a drug and alcohol education program, developed in consultation with the Youth Drug and Alcohol Service and Alesco Illawarra PDHPE teacher. This program encouraged students to act responsibly and be respectful of others.



Students participate in a wide range of activities to develop their skills

## Other Programs and Partnerships

### **National Partnerships for School Improvement**

The Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations provided a number of grants for independent schools, administered through the Association of Independent Schools NSW. Alesco Learning Centre Illawarra received funding to support the following programs in 2013:

- Literacy and Numeracy. Funding was used to support the improvement of student literacy and numeracy levels. Intensive support was provided for students with identified needs as well as small group programs.
- Special Assistance Schools Funding for Students with Disabilities. Funding was used to employ a part-time Youth Support Worker and casual Teachers' Aide.
- Empowering Local Schools. Funding was used to support the growth and development of Alesco Illawarra through leadership development, performance review systems for teaching and non-teaching staff and improved staff recruitment, selection, induction and retention strategies.
- Student Wellbeing Grant. Funding was used to commence the development of a program to underpin the Positive Behaviour Support program within the school. The school worked with a local psychologist to develop a program with a focus on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and Mindfulness. This is to be written into the pastoral program that is implemented weekly, with further sessions being conducted by trained facilitators.

### **National School Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Program**

In 2013 Alesco Illawarra was able to employ the services of a qualified and experienced part-time Youth Support Worker for two days per week, with funding from the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations under the National School Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Program. The Youth Support Worker worked with teaching staff to provide individual support for students, focusing on social and emotional wellbeing.

### **Breakfast Program**

This program, kindly supported by Collegians Football Club through the ClubGRANTS scheme, enabled students who had come to school without breakfast the opportunity to develop healthy eating habits each morning. Students were encouraged to have something to eat prior to coming into class and throughout the year students cooked breakfasts and lunches as part of a healthy eating program.

### **Thanks to the following**

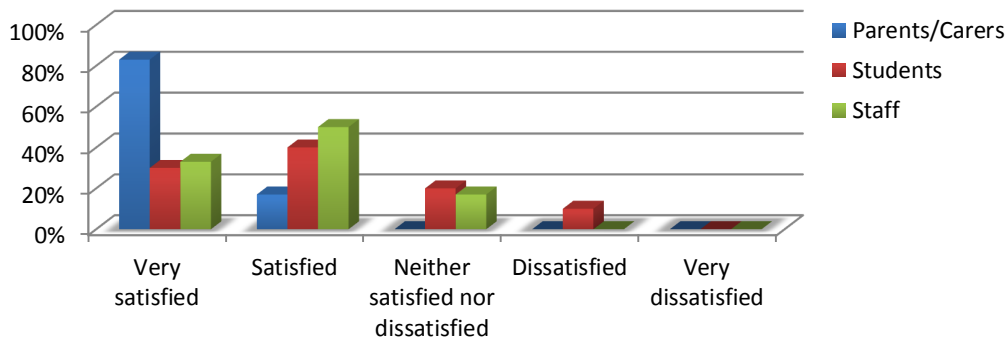
Alesco Illawarra also worked closely with the following organisations:

- headspace Illawarra
- Southern Youth and Family Services
- Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District Youth Drug and Alcohol Service
- Wollongong Youth Centre
- Essential Employment and Training
- Connexions
- Illawarra Youth Housing
- Barnardos

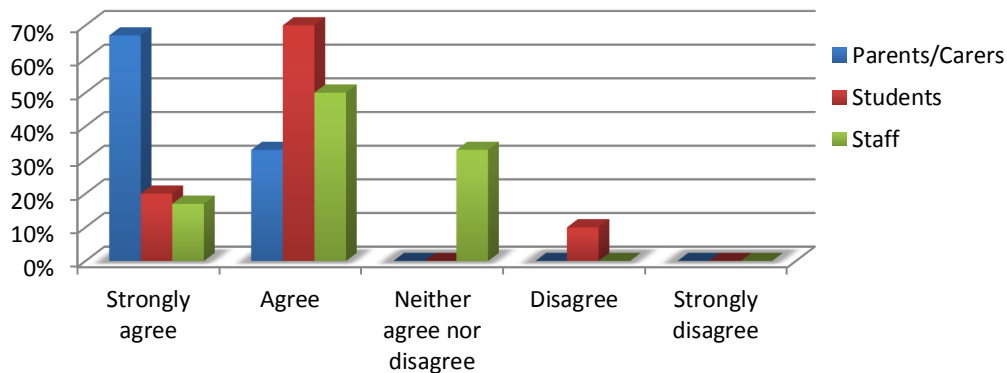
# Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction

In 2013 Alesco Illawarra parents/carers, students and staff participated in satisfaction surveys. Responses to some of the questions are detailed in the charts below.

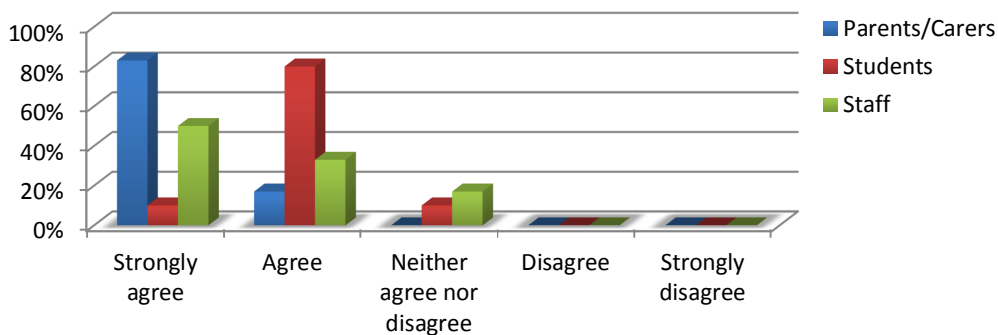
**How satisfied are you with your overall experience of Alesco Illawarra?**



**Teachers at this school motivate students to learn**



**Teachers at this school provide students with useful feedback about their school work**



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## **Parent Feedback**

*"I could not ask for anything more from Alesco. The staff are wonderful. My child is very happy to attend school every day. She feels comfortable and confident at school."*

*"My child is attending school most days and comes home with positive ideas and future prospects, including to finish year 11 and 12. Before he went to Alesco he had two terms of near zero attendance and was on the verge of dropping out in year 9. Big improvements!"*

## **Student Feedback**

*"It's well managed and a safe learning environment."*

*"It's a good environment, it's better than a normal high school ... we have our own kitchen. If students have no food they provide us with toast etc .."*

*"The teachers are helpful ... the kids are alright and the teachers genuinely care about you."*

## **Staff Feedback**

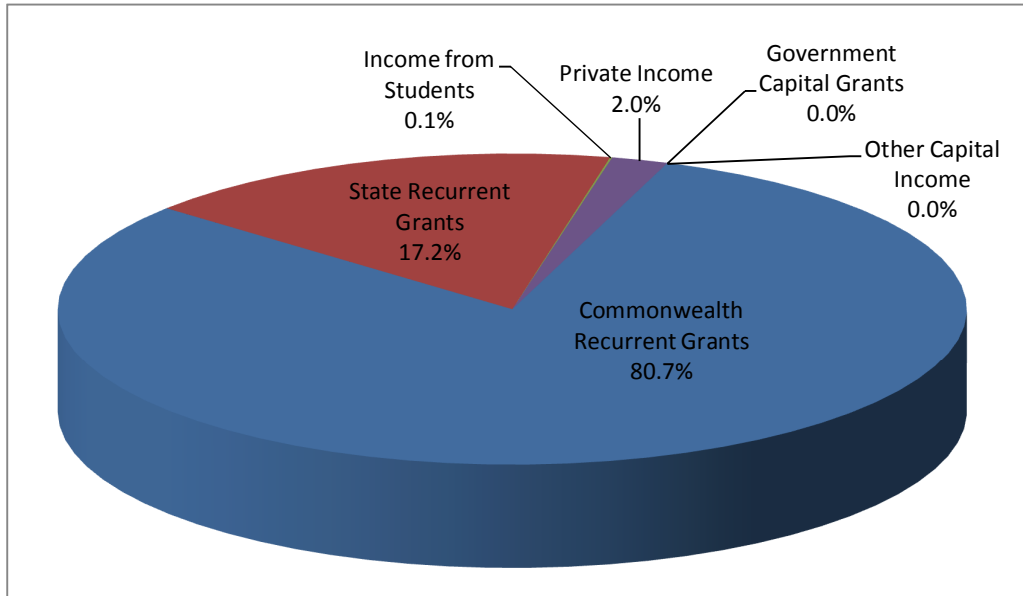
*"All staff get along and work well together. All staff support each other to provide the students with the opportunity to progress with their education."*

*"I feel supported by the Alesco team. We often need to discuss ongoing concerns and we are able to voice them in a supportive way and environment."*

*"I feel supported in the team environment, using alternative and motivational programs, instructions and experiences. We remain flexible to cater for challenges and celebrate successes together."*

# Summary Financial Information

**Chart 1: Recurrent and Capital Income 2013**



**Chart 2: Recurrent and Capital Expenditure 2013**

