



INFORMATION BOOKLET 2019

Alesco: from the Latin, to grow or mature

For young people who are ready to take responsibility for themselves, their learning and their future, in a safe and supportive environment for change

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Alesco Illawarra operates under
the auspices of WEA Illawarra
ABN 14 062 944 950
NESA School Number 78007
Aust Govt DET School Number 29085

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Student and Parent/Carer Feedback on their experience of Alesco

"Supportive teachers, say what you need to hear not what you want to hear."

"Space to calm down and relax."

"Teachers give you more help."

"Alesco helped me through a difficult time in my life. Not sure where I would be if I hadn't come here. I would for sure not be graduating Year 12."

"I as a parent think Alesco is a great organisation in helping kids that have dropped out of school and a great staff that the kids respect. It's wonderful. Good job!"



"We have witnessed gradual but dramatic improvements in our child's attitude to the importance of learning and taking responsibility for his various life choices. We know that he feels safe at his school and is willing to openly discuss private matters with school staff and accept advice that is offered to him with appropriate explanation."

"When you are unhappy there are pets here to make you laugh."

"When I first came to Alesco I was a mess; I lacked confidence, I didn't have many friends, I had no idea what I wanted to do with my life, I hated school and my mental health was at its absolute worst. I'm a new person now; I enjoy going to school, I have a job, I can handle my mental health, I have a lovely group of friends, I've finally got my life back on track again."



SCHOOL INFORMATION

Alesco Illawarra is a registered and accredited non-denominational, independent school, specifically designed for the inclusion of young people who would flourish with the right support in an alternative school environment. We have been operating since 2011.

We can offer you an alternative education option if you are eligible for enrolment in Stage 5 or Stage 6 (years 9 to 12), believe you are unsuited to continuing your education in a traditional school or at TAFE, but you are ready and willing to take control of your own learning and your future.

Alesco Illawarra offers you exactly the same curriculum for year 9 and 10 mandatory subjects as you would study in a mainstream school and the opportunity to complete your Higher School Certificate. The difference, however, is in how we deliver education.

Smaller class sizes (maximum 15 per class) will allow you a greater opportunity to identify your strengths and work to improve the areas in which you lack confidence.

At Alesco we have a strong focus on student wellbeing, offering students access to experienced youth workers and learning support staff to help students identify and work toward personal goals. Alesco also employs an experienced mental health nurse to help young people negotiate and manage any known or emerging mental health issues and connect young people with health and wellbeing services in our community.



Alesco Illawarra provides an opportunity to learn in an environment that is based on adult learning principles. In return for higher levels of **self-responsibility**, you can enjoy some **greater freedoms**. Choice, independence, mutual respect and accountability all have a significant role to play.



Alesco Illawarra provides a safe environment for students that may feel disconnected from mainstream school as a result of different factors. These may include;

- Environmental factors such as the structure of large schools, large class sizes and difficulties gaining the right support from teachers.
- Personal factors such as social anxiety, depression, other mental health issues, complex challenges within the family home, trauma, and victims of bullying.

Some Vital Differences

- Every student attends because they have a desire to make a difference to their future. We do not accept students who feel “forced” to be here.
- Every student has the opportunity to make choices about their role as a student.
- Additional support is provided to every student through an individualised education plan.
- Students and teachers are on a first name basis.
- Smaller class/school size means we get to know you as an individual.
- There are no school uniforms, school bells or school assemblies.
- We work with you in preparing a plan for your transition to the next step in your education, training or employment journey.

**The significant key is
EMPOWERMENT**

COURSES ON OFFER

Stage 5 - Wollongong and Nowra Campus

At our Wollongong and Nowra Campuses, our Stage 5 program is a full year program beginning in February each year. Like students in other schools, you will participate in learning activities and assessment tasks which help you to achieve the NESA outcomes for each of the mandatory Stage 5 key learning areas. In order to enrol in the Stage 5 program, you must be able to demonstrate that you have attempted all previous years of high school.



To ensure your successful engagement and completion of the Stage 5 program, staff will sit with you and develop an individual learning profile. This profile will help us identify your personal learning style, needs and goals. Then, in consultation with you, we will develop strategies to support you to complete school work and design any special requirements and support you need to complete assessments, focussing on your strengths.

Throughout the year, we will regularly review with you your personal education, training or employment goals and discuss your pathway to get there. You will leave our school with your Record of School Achievement (RoSA) along with a clear plan for your next steps, depending on your stated goals. You will have the opportunity to continue with us in Wollongong, another local high school or TAFE to complete your Higher School Certificate if that's one of your goals. As we are co-located with a Registered Training Organisation and Community College (WEA Illawarra) you may also have access to a range of accredited vocational training and other non-accredited courses as part of your education plan.

Stage 6 - Wollongong Campus Only

Alesco Illawarra is registered and accredited for Years 11 and 12 at our Wollongong Campus, and we offer a limited range of Preliminary and Higher School Certificate (HSC) courses. This includes access to a number of Vocational Education & Training (VET) courses.

With our support you will have the opportunity to complete your HSC in a timeframe that is manageable for you. Please contact us for more information about our Stage 6 program and to determine whether Alesco Illawarra is the right place for you to work towards your HSC.

Student Re-engagement Centres Stage 5

Our Stage 5 re-engagement centres are currently located at Lake Illawarra, Vincentia and Bowral. These centres provide an education re-engagement program with reduced student contact hours for young people in Years 9 and 10.

At these centres we offer a non-accredited program. Students study some of the mandatory NESA subjects and complete some course outcomes, but these studies do not contribute to the RoSA. The objective is to prepare students to transfer to either our Wollongong or Nowra Campus or another school when they are ready to attend regularly for normal school hours and have indicated their desire and commitment to work towards achieving their RoSA. We can also assist with preparation for vocational training courses or employment if that is your goal.



CURRICULUM

At Alesco Illawarra we have the ability to tailor your learning program to your capabilities. We are registered and accredited to offer either general curriculum subjects, Life Skills courses or a combination of both programs, depending on your needs.

In **Stage 5** we offer the NESA mandatory subjects of

- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- Geography
- History
- PDHPE

Please contact Alesco Illawarra to discuss your **Stage 6** course options.

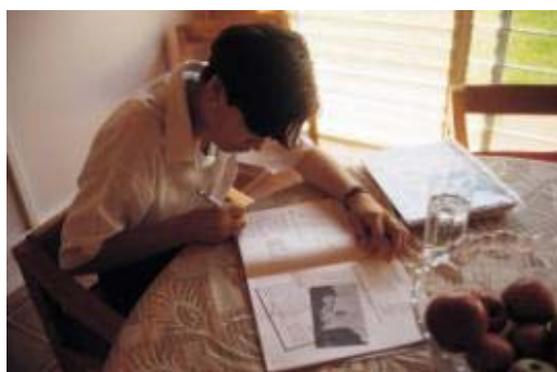
UNIVERSITY PATHWAY

Alesco Illawarra is able to provide direct access to a bridging program run by WEA Illawarra in partnership with the University of Wollongong for those students with aspirations to gain a University Degree. Students are not required to have completed the HSC nor have attained an ATAR to access this program.



HOURS OF OPERATION

School hours at our Wollongong and Nowra Campuses are generally between 9.00am to 3.00pm Monday to Friday for all year levels. However, school hours and timetable are confirmed at the start of each school year and term. At our Re-Engagement Centres student contact hours are shorter with some additional flexibility to cater for programs such as work experience or other student needs. The campus teacher will discuss attendance expectations with each student on acceptance of enrolment.



SCHOOL FEES

Alesco Illawarra does not charge fees for enrolment and tuition in subjects offered directly by the school. Some special school activities or enrolment in courses that are delivered by external providers (eg, TAFE, distance education) may attract fees. Information about any such fees will be provided prior to a student undertaking any of these options.



TERM DATES

Alesco Illawarra terms generally correspond to NSW public school term dates. There are some variations, including start and end of the school year, orientation week, assessment dates and graduation etc. All school term dates will be confirmed if you are successful in gaining a place and your enrolment is finalised.

You will be notified of pupil free days, staff development days or school excursions throughout the year as they arise. Alesco Illawarra always provides written information when the regular school hours are disrupted.



CAMPUS INFORMATION

Wollongong Campus (main administration)

Shared space with WEA Illawarra
Community College
50-58 Auburn Street
Wollongong NSW 2500
Ph: 02 4226 1622
Fax: 02 4226 1156
E-mail: alesco@weaillawarra.com.au
www.alescoillawarra.nsw.edu.au



Lake South Campus (Stage 5 Only)

Co-located with Lake Illawarra
PCYC
Ph: 0435 870 388

Bowral Campus (Stage 5 Only)

Co-located with Highlands Youth
Hub, Loseby Park
Ph: 0431 159 579

Nowra Campus (Stage 5 Only)

Co-located with Nowra PCYC
Ph: 0401 812 256

Vincentia Campus (Stage 5 Only)

1 St George Avenue Vincentia
Ph: 0431 185 804

School Leadership Team

Principal:
David Fuller

Leader of Teaching and Learning:
Andrea Garner

Wellbeing Manger
(Illawarra/Southern Highlands):
Monique Piper

Wellbeing Manger (Shoalhaven):
Carolyn LoPinto

Stage 6 Coordinator:
Sandra Abarcia

Stage 5 Coordinator
(Illawarra/Southern Highlands):
Ray Burgess

Stage 5 Coordinator (Shoalhaven):
Bec Kate

Business Manager:
Louisa Raft

Each campus has a range of teaching and learning support staff to meet student education and wellbeing needs



**Success relies on an
individual's desire to
make it happen**

HOW TO APPLY

All enrolments are taken via an *Application for Enrolment* form and an interview process. Contact Alesco Illawarra if you would like an Application for Enrolment Form to be sent to you or visit www.alescoillawarra.nsw.edu.au.

After we receive your application form, you will join the list of students waiting for intake. All applicants are offered an opportunity to attend an interview. Approximate schedule for intake each year is:

End of October	Applications open for enrolment in Year 9, 10 or 11 program in the following year
November - December	First round interviews for all applicants
Term 1	Second round interviews for applicants (if places still available)
Last 4 weeks of Term 2	Applications and interviews for Year 9 and Year 10 program if places have become available

Students will not be enrolled at Alesco Illawarra without attending an interview. You are welcome to bring a parent/carer or other support person with you to the interview, however it is you we are most interested in talking with.

We will ask questions about your previous schooling and why you want to attend Alesco Illawarra. We will ask about any relevant medical history and behavioural and learning challenges. We may also ask about your support networks or peer networks.

You will have the best chance of gaining a position in the school if you participate in the interview with:

- an openness and willingness to embrace change
- some ideas about your goals and plans for the future.

Please be aware that an interview is not a guarantee of enrolment.

Priority is given to applicants who can demonstrate they are able to take responsibility for themselves and their learning. As we are a Special Assistance School, we will also assess a student's needs in the following areas and give priority to those students for whom we believe we can adequately meet those needs through our program:

- Literacy, numeracy, language and communication skills
- Mental health diagnosis
- Learning or behavioural difficulties
- Intellectual or physical disability
- Aboriginality, cultural and linguistic background
- Financial or social disadvantage or isolation

Please note, it is essential for you to submit evidence of your age, previous studies at school, immunisation records, plus any documents you have which tell us more about any of the needs you have in the areas mentioned above.

If you do not submit this information, we may not be able to assess your suitability for enrolment at Alesco Illawarra

**It's not about your history ...
it's about how much you want a future!**



You can't go back and
change the beginning,
but you can start
where you are and
change the ending