




# NOVO

EDUCATION SPACE



-  NEW DIRECTION
-  SKILLS TO GET THERE
-  CARE ALONG THE WAY



## ANNUAL REPORT 2023



Novo Education Space acknowledges the traditional owners of the lands on which we work and learn. We pay our respects to all First Nations peoples and their elders past and present. We value their continuing cultures and connection to land, water and sea. We are committed to creating safe and welcoming learning centres for First Nations youth to flourish and grow as future community leaders.

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This report is prepared by Novo Education Space to meet educational and financial reporting requirements for the 2023 reporting year, in accordance with the Australian Government's Australian Education Regulations 2013 and the NSW Education Standards Authority requirements for Registered and Accredited individual non-government schools under the Education Act 1990.

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# Table of Contents

From the WEA Illawarra Board of Directors .....	2
Principal's Message .....	3
The Novo Education Space Way .....	4
Characteristics of the Student Body .....	6
Reflection on Teaching and Learning .....	9
Campus Reports .....	11
Novo Education Space Nowra .....	11
Novo Education Space Vincentia .....	13
Novo Education Space Wollongong .....	15
Student Outcomes and Results .....	18
Workforce Composition .....	19
Teacher Accreditation .....	19
Student Attendance .....	20
School Policies .....	22
Stakeholder Satisfaction .....	22
Summary Financial Information .....	25

# From the WEA Illawarra Board of Directors



I am pleased to present the 2023 Annual Report for Novo Education Space on behalf of the Board of WEA Illawarra, the governing body of the school.

WEA Illawarra is a registered charity which has been providing lifelong education opportunities and vocational training services for 110 years. Through our Community College, we assist adult learners with foundation skills in language, literacy, numeracy and digital competencies, and our Registered Training Organisation provides nationally recognised training and qualifications in a range of industry and work skills. Novo Education Space is our learning vehicle for young people in years 9 to 12 who need

an innovative, flexible and trauma-sensitive approach to school education to build their skills and prepare them to move into further education, training or employment.

Throughout 2023, we continued to see Novo Education Space students engage in our learning communities in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven regions. Novo Education Space provides a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for our young people to learn and grow, and it is always inspiring to see their progress celebrated at our recognition events held at all our campuses at the end of the year.

In late 2023 we commenced the search for a new CEO of WEA Illawarra and Principal of Novo Education Space. David Fuller commenced pre-retirement leave from this role on 29 February 2024. The Board thanks David for his services and contributions to the school and Community College since he began in the role in May 2014.

The Board has also announced the appointment of Natasha Osmond-Dreyer as David's replacement. Natasha has experience in education, finance, risk, technology, leading people, and a deep commitment to lifelong learning.

In December 2023, the Board of WEA Illawarra adopted a new strategic plan for the whole organisation for the period 2024-2027, renewing our vision for the organisation, clarifying our purpose and agreeing on the values which drive the work we do. You can find a summary of the strategic plan in the pages following.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank the dedicated team at Novo Education Space for their commitment to the organisation's vision, purpose and values and their continued support and belief in our students.

**Ross Crapis**  
**Chairperson**  
**WEA Illawarra Board**

# Principal's Message



2023 was a year of solid maturation for Novo Education Space, with a focus on wellbeing, the embedding of good practice and reflection on the effectiveness of our efforts. As a team we undertook targeted professional development on wellbeing and a deeper understanding of trauma informed practice which has impacted on our professional practice and our expectations of each other.

Our whole community of students, families and carers, staff, and our many external partners provided detailed feedback on the performance of Novo Education Space via a comprehensive stakeholder engagement exercise which was undertaken in 2023. I want to thank you all for this feedback

which has helped us to reflect on our performance and to develop our strategic plan for greater impact over the next three years.

I'm very proud of what was achieved in 2023 and the way that the team came together to face the various challenges and explore opportunities for personal growth. I especially want to thank the dedicated Novo Education Space team them for their outstanding commitment to their students and for their many selfless acts throughout 2023.

On a personal note, this will be my last Principal's Annual Report as I will be retiring early in 2024. It has been a great honour and a privilege to be the Principal of this school for the last 10 years and to see the school develop a culture of deep caring for each other and innovative professional excellence. I sincerely thank the many people involved in helping to nurture and develop this school and for their enduring custodianship of a bright future.

Lastly, I want to acknowledge the efforts of our Board of Directors who champion quality governance and generously contribute their time, skills and unwavering support and encouragement to all those who work and learn at Novo Education Space.

**David Fuller**  
**CEO WEA Illawarra**  
**Principal Novo Education Space**



# The Novo Education Space Way

## Context

Novo Education Space is an independent Special Assistance School registered with the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for Years 9 to 12. Novo Education Space is operated by WEA Illawarra. WEA Illawarra is a registered charity and Public Benevolent Institution which has been providing community-based, lifelong learning opportunities for over 100 years. WEA Illawarra also operates an adult Community College and Registered Training Organisation. Through our programs, we deliver education and training centred on learner goals, needs and interests, and we work with youth and adult learners with diverse backgrounds and needs to enhance social and economic inclusion and participation. Novo Education Space has campuses in Wollongong, Nowra and Vincentia, NSW.

## Charter

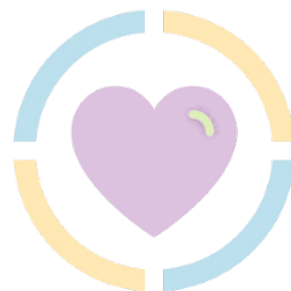
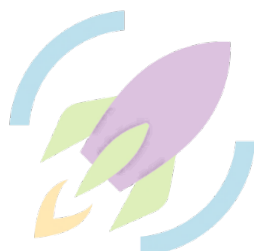
Our school strives to lift up young people, developing in them renewed hope, self-worth, autonomy and optimism. Our job is to help young people believe in themselves and to realise that they can shape their future and choose what it will be, regardless of what has come before. We acknowledge that staff, students and caregivers are all on a learning journey together and we work hard to make sure nobody gets left behind. We are committed to shaping the lives of young people so that they flourish and are positive contributors to their communities.

### Our **School Culture** is characterised by:

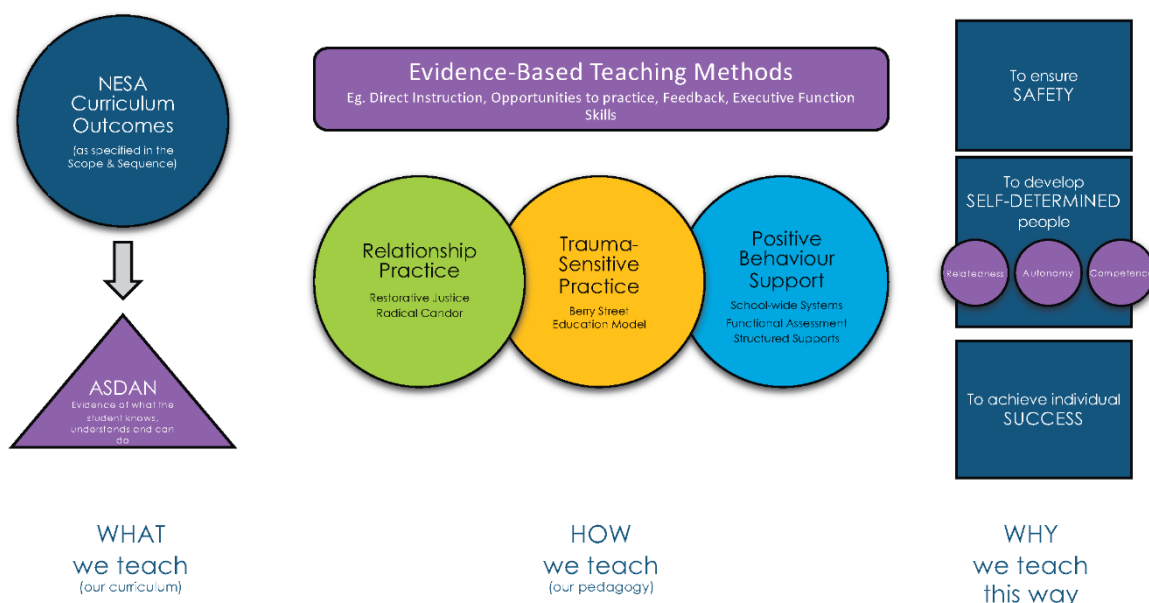
- Belonging
- Kindness
- Patience
- Courage
- Trust
- Responsibility
- Acceptance and forgiveness
- Respect for self and others
- Championing growth
- Unconditional positive regard for each member of the school community
- Recognition and celebration of everyone's giftedness
- High expectations and no excuses

### Our **Learning and Teaching Practice** is characterised by:

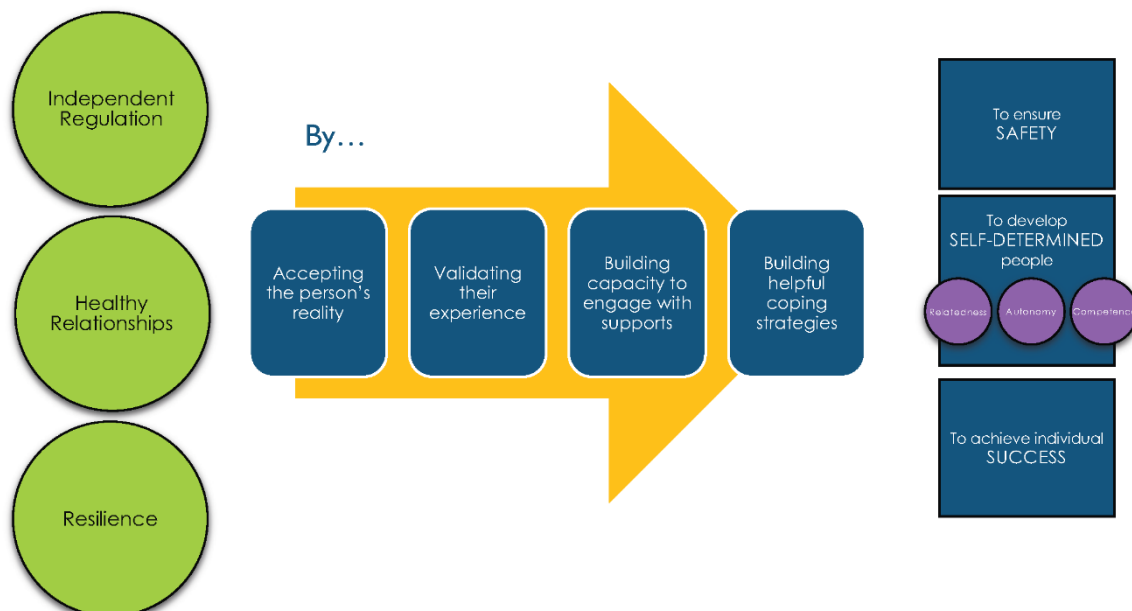
- The quality delivery of the NSW Curriculum
- Specialised strategies for healing, growth and achievement
- Belief that every student can learn, progress and succeed
- A shared commitment to growth mindset and life-long learning
- Student-centred and engaging learning experiences
- An active student voice
- Practice that is evidence-based and reflective of current research
- Being well prepared
- Innovation and continuous improvement
- Flexibility, adaptability and agility



# Teaching & Learning the **NOVO** Way



## We want to develop...



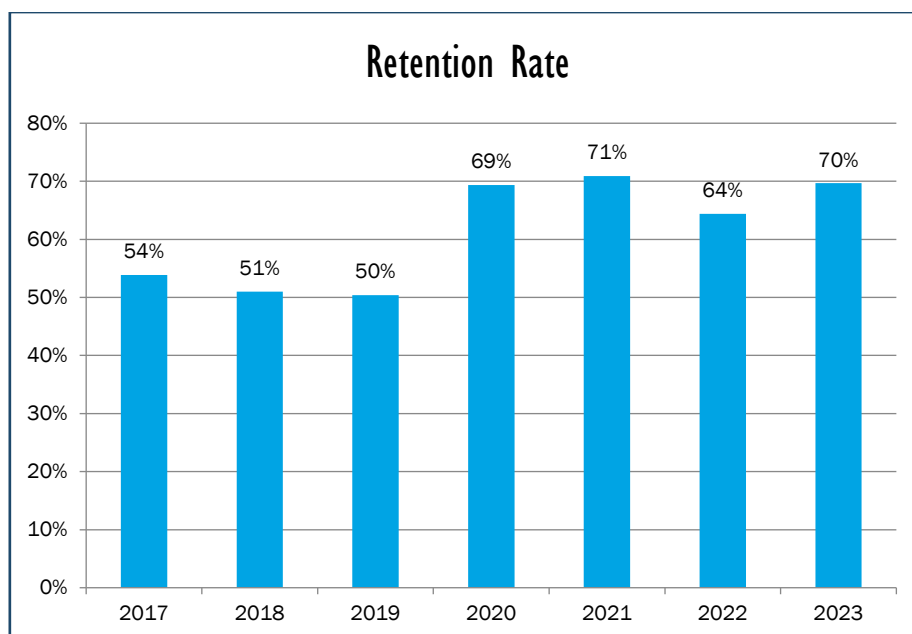
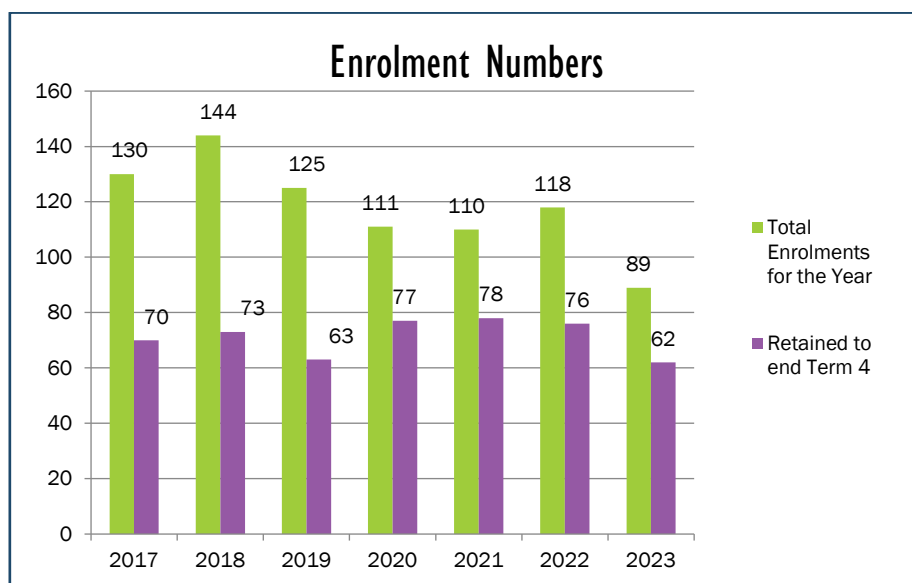
# Wellbeing the **NOVO** Way

# Characteristics of the Student Body

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

Throughout 2023 Novo Education Space enrolled a total of 89 students across Years 9, 10, 11 and 12 at our three campuses. Sixty-two (62) students maintained their enrolment until the end of Term 4, representing a **70% retention rate**.

Each year, Novo Education Space takes on a new cohort of students and the challenges each student faces in completing their education will impact differently on their motivation and capacity to complete the school year. In the senior school (Years 11 and 12) there is always a proportion of students who will leave school prior to completing their education as opportunities arise for further training and/or employment in line with their stated goals for their future.

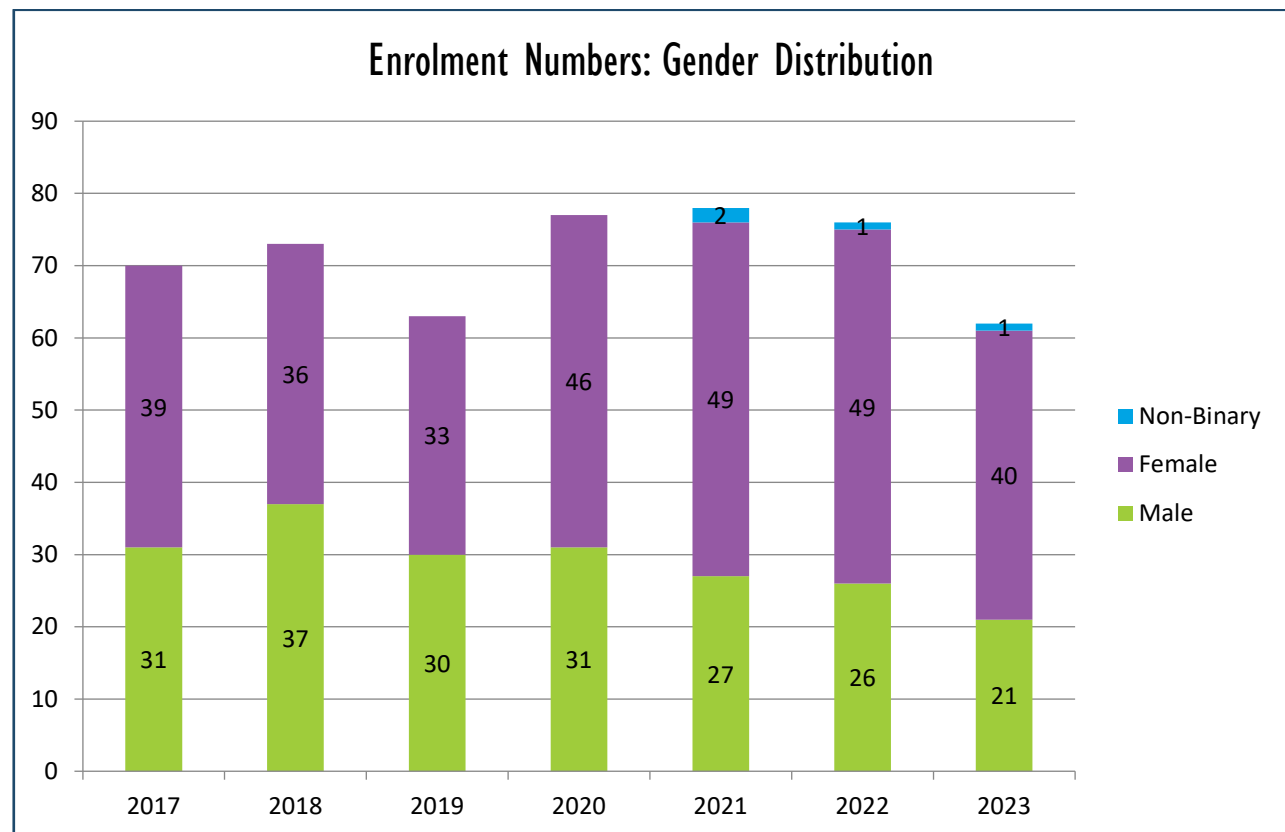
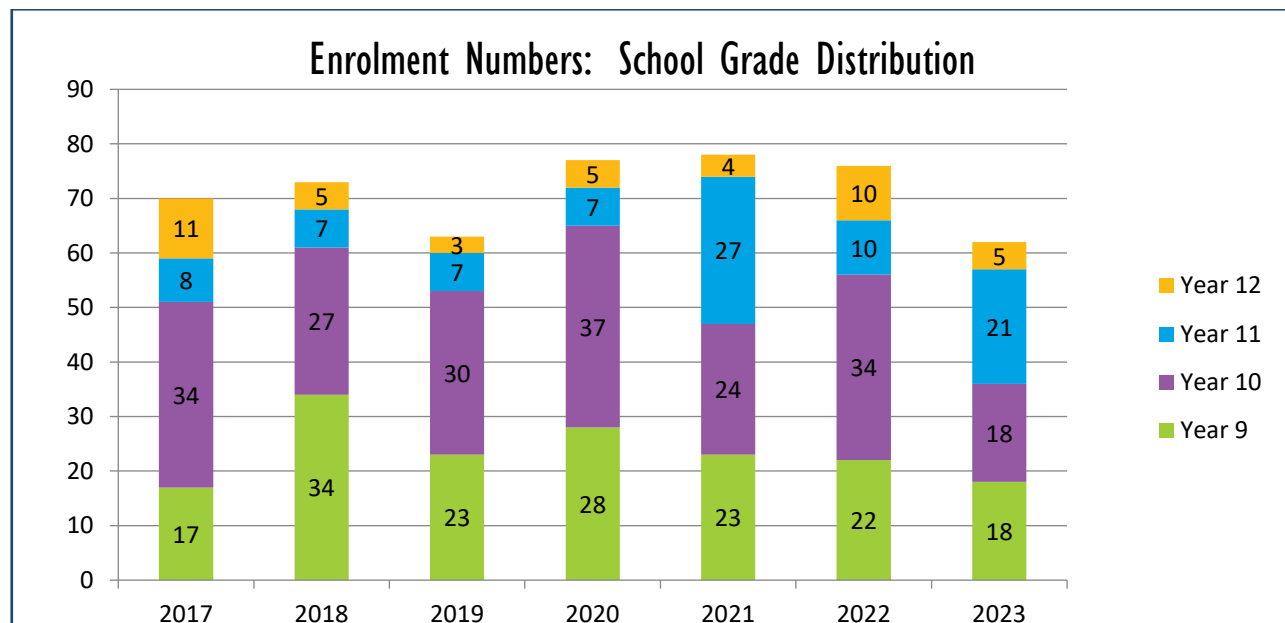




Of the 62 students enrolled at the end of Term 4 in 2023, 5 students completed their Year 12 schooling and 50 students re-enrolled to continue their schooling with Novo Education Space in 2024 as follows:

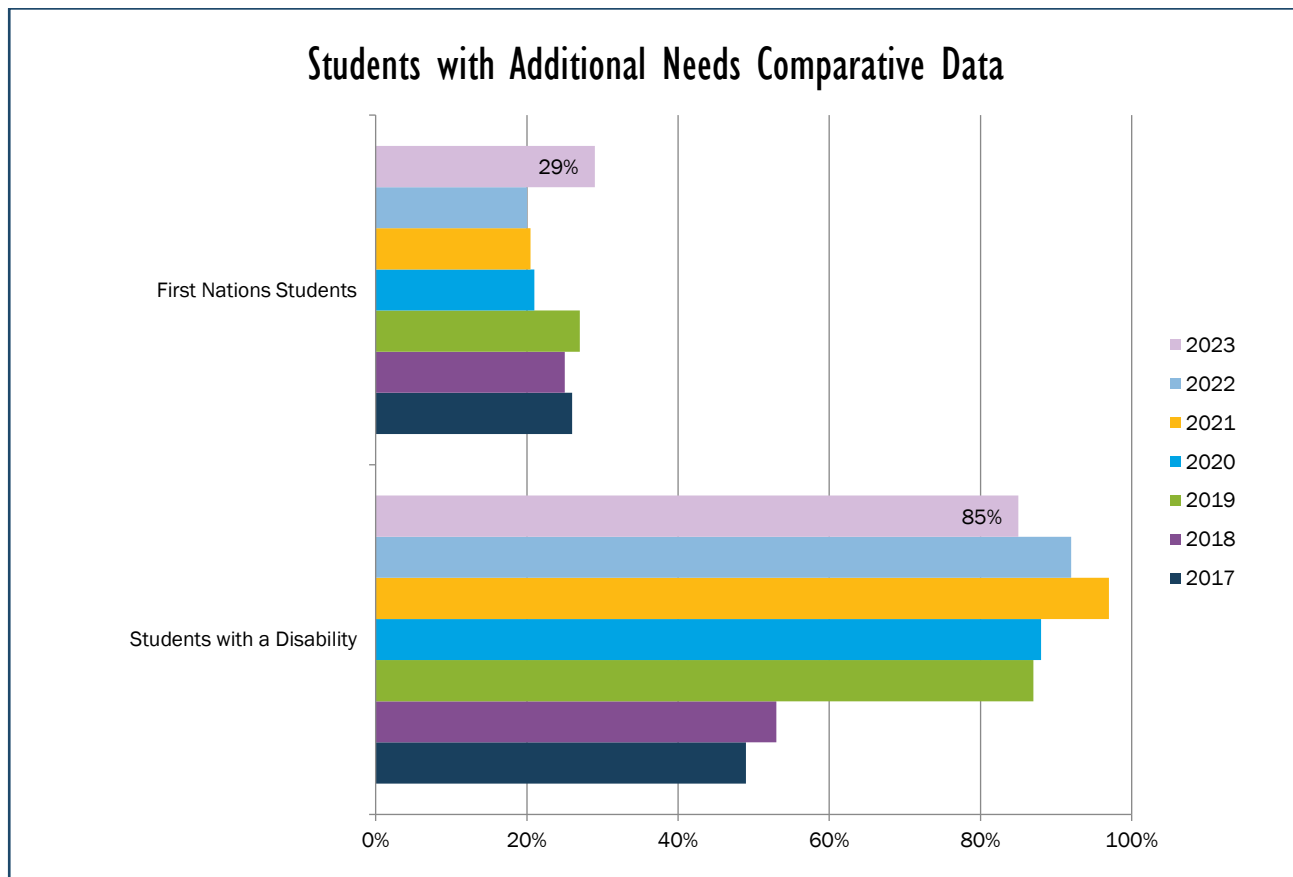
	Number of Students
Year 9 students returning for Year 10	14
Year 10 students returning for Year 11	16
Year 11 students returning for Year 12	20
<b>Total number of students returning to Novo in 2023</b>	<b>50 (81%)</b>

The following charts indicate the distribution of students who remained enrolled to the end of Term 4 in school grades and by gender, over the last seven years of Novo Education Space's operation.



Of the 62 students enrolled until the end of the 2023 school year:

- 29% identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.
- 85% had a disability which impacted on their learning and for which supplementary, substantial or extensive adjustments were required to enable them to participate in their education along with their peers.



*"My child feels very well supported. I feel staff are very approachable and value my child's wellbeing...Overall, extremely happy. Best decision was to move my child to Novo."*

- 2023 Parent/Carer Survey Respondent

# Reflection on Teaching and Learning

2023 has been an exceptional year for the Teaching and Learning Team at Novo. We commenced the year with two clear areas of focus: Becoming *'Well Professionals'* who are *'On the Same Page'*. Within these areas of focus, we worked with staff to develop individual wellbeing plans, examined the vital and complex roles we hold as professionals in the alternative education community, and launched a new set of Active Role Descriptions, matched with stages of development, to support staff in being able to recognise and celebrate their current practice, and set goals for further growth.



I am pleased to report that five students from three different campuses received ASDAN Bronze Awards in 2023. A Bronze Award involves a student evidencing six credits of work (at least 60 hours of learning) in multiple learning areas, presented in a portfolio. To meet the requirements of an award, a student's ASDAN portfolio also needs to demonstrate their skills in improving learning, working with others, problem solving, communication, numeracy and use of technology. A further 24 students were awarded ASDAN micro-credential credits. Notably, this was our second round of undertaking external portfolio moderation with the ASDAN Head Office in the UK, with now only one final external moderation to take place before Novo will be accredited for three years to undertake our own moderation process for ASDAN Awards.

Four students received their Year 12 completion certificates in 2023, a considerable achievement for those students and their families. With eight students having commenced Year 12 in 2023, retention of students in Year 12 remains an area of focus for us. To this end, we launched a project in December which included the appointment of a Transition and Pathways Project Officer, as well as commencing a process to assess and renew our parameters for Year 12 completion, with more to be done on this throughout 2024.

During March and May we undertook whole school staff professional learning in the Berry Street Education Model (BSEM) training in trauma-informed practice. Trauma-informed practice sits at the core of The Novo Way pedagogy. Through the domains of Body, Stamina, Engagement, Character and Relationship, staff learned both the theoretical underpinnings, and practical applications, of a wide range of strategies to support students who have experienced trauma. Following the training, each Campus Coordinator developed with their team an implementation plan showing how each element of domain and practice of BSEM would be implemented at the campus over a period of 12 months. Early data has shown the positive impact of this training and our enhanced practice with students, with significant reductions in behaviour incidents and more active learning engagement at each of our campuses. Further, our BSEM learning gave us pause to review the school timetable and whether we were providing the most consistent, predictable routine for students each day. We took a decision to move all campuses to a three learning block model which has reduced the number of transitions students need to make each day, and offered prolonged opportunities for stamina building and deeper learning engagement.

Our Nowra Campus Coordinator, Clea Westenberg, led the implementation of bksb (Basic Key Skills Builder) literacy and numeracy assessment for all students through the middle part of the year. Using bksb forms part of our ongoing commitment to data-driven practice to improve learning outcomes for all students. In 2023, all students completed the initial bksb assessments, which provided teachers and students with information about learning gaps that exist in these two vital areas of learning, and also a levelled result according to the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF). Our two target goals for bksb are that all students will leave Novo with an 'exit level 3 or better' result (which is a basic entry requirement for TAFE and further learning institutions), and all students will have made measurable 'value add' learning gains during their time with us. In 2024, we will set up a system of reporting bksb results and progress to families, develop data walls at every campus to enable staff to make daily use of the data, and increase our use of the skill building teaching and learning activities with the bksb suite.

We piloted vertical streaming of classes at some campuses to assess the potential of programming for student learning across stages, and test the evidence base of the positive socio-emotional outcomes of vertical streaming for our context. Following the pilot, we took a decision to move all campuses to vertically streamed classes by 2025. To support this, the Teaching & Learning team undertook considerable work in our Community of Practice sessions updating our programs to cater for cross-stage learning and include outcomes for both Stage 5 and 6 learners.

It's an exciting time to be in the Teaching and Learning Team at Novo! We look forward to continuing our work in 2024.

**Kim Brady**  
Leader of Teaching and Learning



*"Everything is different here, learning wise. I feel that Novo Education Space is a good school to be at rather than mainstream, especially since I was struggling in school. Since being at Novo I have made friends easily and gotten along with my teachers."*

- 2023 Student Survey Respondent

# Campus Reports

## Novo Education Space Nowra

2023 was a year of change, milestones and achievements for the Nowra campus. We said goodbye to some team members, welcomed new faces (both staff and students), and set and accomplished some key developmental goals around teaching, learning, and wellbeing. Key areas included:



**Identifying learning and growth:** By implementing the use of a psychologically sound diagnostic literacy and numeracy tool, known as bksb (Basic Key Skills Builder), we were able to begin building a comprehensive learner profile of our students. The primary aim of bksb is to assess learners' current skill levels in key areas such as literacy and numeracy and then provide personalised learning resources, and targeted learning opportunities, to foster growth. A key benefit of this program is that students have first-hand access to their results, supporting genuine opportunity to view and track progress in real time. Additionally, students are able to review and reflect on their areas of strength, whilst having a clear outline of the next steps in their learning.

**Deeper, more meaningful learning opportunities:** The timetable was changed to provide more opportunity for students to deepen their engagement with learning. We moved from multiple 45 minute sessions to three Learning Blocks per day, where students could deep dive into subject areas, enter a flow state of learning, and develop mental stamina.

**Setting new goals and objectives:** Staff doubled down on trauma-informed practices by working deeply with the Berry Street Education Model (BSEM) approach to teaching and learning. This included refining what Novo was already doing well, whilst developing and implementing a robust timeline of deeper core practices within the teaching and learning environment.

**Consistent, predictable routines:** Consistent, predictable routines provided structure and stability in the classroom, and involved consistent timing, sequencing, and expectations, which helped our students anticipate what would happen next whilst feeling a sense of security, safety, and control.

**Strengths-based approaches to teaching and learning:** Staff ensured to identify and build upon student's strengths and capabilities. By focusing on what students can do, and using these strengths as the core tenet of all interactions with students, staff helped foster a sense of competence and confidence in student ability.

**Building positive relationships:** Positive, supportive relationships continued to be at the heart of Nowra's practice. Staff prioritised building connections with students, their families and carers based on trust,



respect, and unconditional positive regard. These relationships provided a foundation for learning and growth, helping students feel safe and valued in the classroom.

**Social and emotional learning (SEL):** Adding social and emotional learning to the timetable ensured our young people had ample opportunity to engage in the development of social and emotional skills alongside academic content. Through explicit instruction and modelling, students learnt essential skills such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.



**Community partnerships:** Collaboration with families, caregivers, and community organisations remained central to the Novo Way. By involving the broader community in the educational process, and ensuring meaningful experiential learning opportunities were scheduled, staff provided comprehensive support to students both inside and outside the classroom.

Wrapping up the year with a wonderful celebration of student success at our annual Celebration of Achievement was the icing on the cake. Every student deservedly received a worthy acknowledgement of their individual success, and we welcomed seven students into the Year 12 cohort. Hearing first-hand accounts of Novo life from some of our presenting students really hit home what a unique and valuable learning opportunity Novo provides.

In summary, growth and development of staff and students were at the core of Nowra's practice in 2023. By prioritising consistent, predictable routines, personalised learning, social and emotional learning, professional development, assessment and feedback, and a commitment to excellence, Novo Nowra finished the year proud of fostering a safe, inclusive, and productive learning environment.

**Clea Westenberg**  
Campus Coordinator





## Novo Education Space Vincentia

### The Novo Way

2023 saw Vincentia Campus continue to support students and their families to engage with education in a supported and inclusive environment. This year students and staff worked to further embed 'The Novo Way' and in particular, focus on the implementation of the Berry Street Educational Model of trauma sensitive teaching and learning. Student achievement and success was seen in so many areas of school and community life and it was fantastic to see the growth and development of students' skills, capabilities, and knowledge.

### Professional Learning

Staff were given the enriching opportunity to complete (or repeat) their Berry Street Education Model (BSEM) training over four days of face-to-face learning. After completing this training, staff were then given the challenge to deeply embed this learning in our daily practices. This long-term project assisted staff and Campus Coordinators to focus on the evidence-based learning that we undertook and to apply it to the classroom and the wider campus for the benefit of our students. The outcomes have been highly beneficial with students and staff finding many ways in which to increase their understanding of themselves and their interactions with others.

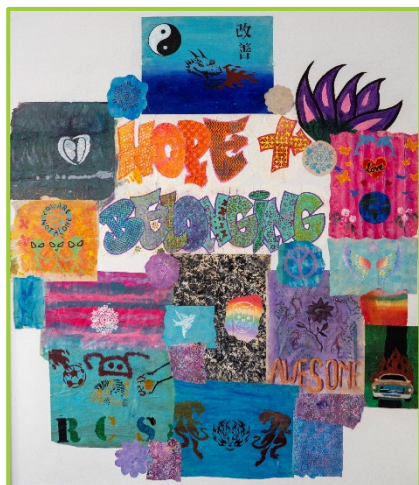
One main focus at Vincentia campus that we kept returning to was CPR (Consistent, Predictable, Routines). This began to guide all of our practices as we measured the decisions we made and the activities we took part in around whether or not they were supporting students in being consistent, predictable, and part of the routines we were developing at the campus. This helped staff to keep questioning and adapting our choices to assist students and ensure a productive and safe classroom.

Alongside our BSEM training we also kept up with our Relationship Practice skills, working together as staff across campuses and also within campus teams to work in the 'With' box as much as possible. To extend this further into the community we held a parent afternoon tea as a way of educating our parents on the model we are teaching to the students. This was a very beneficial session with all parents who attended requesting copies of the resources we shared to develop their relationship practices within their own homes and lives.

### Cultural Engagement

Connections with local First Nations staff at Vincentia High School continued to strengthen as we worked to transition students and their families from previous school environments to Novo. We encouraged these continued connections with invitations to meetings and significant events and welcomed these significant people into the school community to assist in ensuring our students' cultural connections can continue while in the Novo Education Space environment.

First Nations students also had the opportunity to work with the Woolyungah Indigenous Centre from the University of Wollongong to engage in sessions regarding transition pathways once students complete their schooling.



### Teaching and Learning - ASDAN

In 2023 the knowledge and understanding about the ASDAN program was deepened and expanded upon by staff and students. The evidence of learning is becoming easier for both students and teachers to collect and display. Students also became more knowledgeable about running their own ASDAN portfolio, and requesting to complete their own challenges and modules to further individualise their work for their chosen pathway.

Here are two examples of challenges that students worked on this year.

- The Stage 6 students completed seaweed classification, where they learnt about the different types of seaweed, then went to the beach to find samples. They then took photos and produced technical drawings and watercolour paintings of the different

samples. This allowed students to meet learning outcomes in their Marine Studies subject while achieving ASDAN challenges in the Science Short Course.

- Students worked on achieving a credit in the Expressive Arts module as they created mosaics in different forms, using different textiles. This was then connected to Sport, Lifestyle and Recreation Studies outcomes for Stage 6 as students explored leisure activities they had not tried before and to Visual Design for Stage 5 in the production of artwork or design. This is a great example of the flexibility we can have with cross-curricular integration and teaching the NESA outcomes through the tool of ASDAN.

### **Student Supports - Roadmaps**

During 2023 Vincentia Campus staff were trained in completing 'roadmaps' with students who were experiencing ongoing disruption to their learning which required additional support from the school team. This process allowed staff and families to work even closer together to map out steps for the student, staff and family to take together to reach the goal of returning to school in a safe and productive way. This allowed staff to increase their learning and development around the student's diagnosis or the issues the student was experiencing. It also enabled families and students to have clarity about the supports the school was working on to achieve success with the students. Learning this process was difficult and required support from the Leader of Wellbeing and the Leader of Teaching and Learning but was pivotal to providing the correct support for these students, their families and also for the staff working closely with them.

We also increased our support of our students by strengthening our connections with their external health and wellbeing providers, such as psychologists, specialist educators, physical therapists, mental health units and occupational therapists.

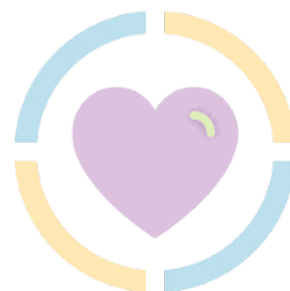
### **Community Engagement**

Our engagement with the local community in terms of work experience did not progress as far as was planned during 2023 due to some disruptions in our staffing throughout the year. We had fewer students complete work experience as a result of this. However, the four students who went on work experience found it beneficial as they were able to clearly see whether the chosen work environment suited them or not. In many cases this year, it was more of the not! This is a great outcome though, as these young people now know not to follow this learning pathway and can look at the many other options open to them. We were also able to engage students with the Childcare work readiness program through the Regional Industry Educational Partnerships (RIEP) program.

Several students completed an introduction to coding course which then led on to one student completing a more advanced course, which she was highly successful in.

Other forms of community engagement included a visit to the University of Wollongong, Shoalhaven campus for a tour and information session, indoor and outdoor rock-climbing excursions, team games session with Nowra campus and lawn bowls and ten-pin bowling excursions. We engaged with a local art therapist, Robbi, who came and assisted students to complete a wall mural on campus to end our Hope and Belonging unit in Term 4. This ended the year on an inclusive, creative, and collaborative high.

**Bec Kate**  
**Campus Coordinator**



# Novo Education Space Wollongong

## Term 1

We welcomed five new students in Term 1 and they settled in well by connecting with their mentor groups. Our Wellbeing lessons provided opportunities to update Ready to Learn plans and share how we can best support each other to be successful at school in and outside of the curriculum.

Two of our Yr12 students received their ASDAN Bronze awards which we celebrated together with a wonderful morning tea to recognise their curriculum progress. Staff recognised the importance of community events that provide us with opportunities to share ideas and actively listen to our students. We organised a 'listening lunch' to focus on psychological and physical safety which the students planned and created with our team. Students were able to express themselves while thinking deeply about the concept of safety at school.



Living Books returned to work with us this term to complete workshops where real people, known as 'books', share their life stories and experiences. Our students engaged in conversations with the 'books' to see the world in new ways and challenge stereotypes. They shared positive feedback about the sessions including: "To think about others and stand up, we are weird and wonderful" and "That people can bounce back from hard stuff.". We celebrated the students' engagement at our Harmony Day feast this week by making links between the themes of the projects while enjoying a wide range of dishes including Sri Lankan curry, English rock cakes and Serbian cheese cake.

Term 1 was completed with our final Southern Youth and Family Services 'Resourceful Adolescent' workshop, Dress for Success excursion, NSW Legal Aid 'Consent' presentation and WEA Digital Mentor training before we headed out for our recognition staff vs students cricket and Easter egg hunt at the beach.

## Term 2

Our Mentor groups focused how on the values of empathy and compassion to be able to welcome twelve new students to our campus and support each other to successfully complete Semester 1. A range of curriculum projects provided students with opportunities to evidence our individual papermaking skills while also learning how to create collaborative 3D Maths structures. We thoroughly enjoyed working with guest instructors from NSW Legal Aid as well as the Woolyungah Indigenous Centre to engage with the 'My Future Matters' program and UOW Reconciliation Week event. The Illawarra Careers Expo, local Fire Station visit, ITeC Trade Readiness Program and Skills & Thrills UOW workshops provided students with further opportunities to shape their individual learning journey goals.

Students from both stage groups embraced extra-curricular activities to complete a ten week 'Introduction to Coding' course and impressed the course leaders by demonstrating skills they have developed outside of school. Yr9 and 10 students visited the Botanic Gardens to collect our school plant donation that we are using to update our planters and kitchen garden around the campus. We



explored sensory and edible options with the horticulture team to select species that will appeal to our students and provide ingredients for our cooking lessons.

The dryer Winter conditions this year have been perfect for launching our cycling excursions along the Blue Mile and at the Bulli Park bike track where students have extended themselves to trial mountain biking. Two students also completed the WEA 'Introduction to Bike Maintenance' course which will help us maintain our fleet of school bikes moving forward as well as providing evidence for ASDAN Sport &



Leisure challenges. Next semester, we are looking forward to our students taking their next steps to complete advanced coding qualifications, the GRIT program at the PCYC and work experience with Wollongong Council while they submit Semester 1 portfolio evidence to achieve ASDAN credits and certificates.

### Term 3

Students considered the benefits and challenges of diverse groups and ideas in different contexts with their Mentor groups this term. Wellbeing lesson discussions and tasks led us to update our campus expectations to develop our understanding of being ready to learn, respectful to each other and safe in our community. Eden, Purple Room SLSO, supported our students to publish an infographic that everyone engaged with across the campus. Morning circles have been established to provide daily opportunities for us to focus on our values in our Mentor groups by looking more deeply at the expectations we have for each other.



This term we prioritised campus sessions to support our students to complete their curriculum outcomes and focus on collecting the evidence they need for their ASDAN portfolio challenges. Women's World Cup fever was embraced by both staff and students leading to a wonderful Matildas display. A Football NSW coach led a Mini Roos coaching certificate session which all students participated in and five completed to achieve their qualification. Science and Book Week opportunities were also maximised with Erin, Nowra campus teacher, leading 'Elephant Toothpaste' workshops and the whole community excelling in their fancy dress efforts to promote their favourite stories.

The Wellbeing team developed our students understanding of healthy relationships and resilience with their Preventure workshops. Eight Stage 5 students were able to combine the workshops with the PCYC GRIT ten-week program as evidence towards a wellbeing ASDAN Short Course credit. Our students also completed 'Create with Code', Agent C 'Fake News' and 'Resume Writing' weekly workshops to achieve their Information Technology, Beliefs & Values and World of Work challenges. We enjoyed celebrating the efforts of our SLSOs for Teacher's Aide Week to acknowledge the incredible support Eden, Jamie and Kate provide for our students and teachers every day.

### Term 4

Our theme for this term, "Hope & Belonging," guided our approach to creating a nurturing environment for students to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. We focused on building a sense of community and support by embedding Afternoon Circles; where students and staff come together at the end of each day to highlight a success and explain their thinking. These circles provide a space for sharing thoughts, experiences, and reflections, creating bonds that extend beyond the classroom. The emphasis on open communication promoted a culture of empathy, understanding, and mutual support.

Health and well-being took centre stage as our Stage 5 students embarked on a Gym Induction at the PCYC. This initiative not only promoted physical fitness but also instilled the importance of a healthy lifestyle. The PCYC provided an ideal setting for our students to discover the benefits of exercise and learn habits that contribute to their overall well-being. Safety on the road is a paramount concern, and our Stage 6 students engaged in the RYDA Road Safety Workshops to equip themselves with essential skills and knowledge. These workshops, conducted in collaboration with road safety experts, addressed critical topics such as decision-making, and the impact of distractions.

October, recognised as Mental Health Month, provided our students with the opportunity to visit a local art exhibition at Flourish that showcased a range of work, conveying messages of resilience, self-care, and the importance of seeking support. Our students were able to learn about how art can help people to break the stigma surrounding mental health by working with one of the artists, Bree, an alumni Novo student, to understand her work and journey through life. Ensuring the well-being of our students remains a top priority, and the Save A Mate Wellbeing Workshops played a crucial role in building awareness and resilience. These workshops provided practical tools and strategies for supporting peers who may be facing challenges.

UOW and the Woolyungah Indigenous Centre continued to provide opportunities for our students. This term the My Future Matters workshops focused on empowering students through discussions on identity, aspirations, and the significance of their cultural heritage. By providing a platform for dialogue and learning, we strived to create an inclusive environment where every student feels valued and understood. Our students also concluded their Digital Mentor training and eagerly stepped into roles as volunteers, providing invaluable tech support to our senior community members. This intergenerational initiative not only bridged the digital divide but also fostered connections between different age groups. The joy of sharing knowledge and the gratitude expressed by our seniors highlighted the positive impact of this program.

Seniors from our local community also completed photoshoots and interviews this term led by our students to capture memories and share their stories. The volunteers took centre stage in a unique and heartwarming initiative that focused on blending the art of photography with the power of storytelling. Students completed tasks to present photo essays that not only showcased the personalities and aspirations of our seniors but also celebrated the diversity and richness of their experiences. Our students presented their final pieces to the seniors at our Celebration of Achievement where we reflected on the progress we have made both within and outside of the classroom. The collective efforts of our students, staff, and the wider Novo community is inspirational, and together, we are nurturing an environment where hope thrives, and a sense of belonging flourishes.

**Oliver Naylor**  
Campus Coordinator



# Student Outcomes and Results

## NAPLAN

Novo Education Space Year 9 student outcomes in standardised national literacy and numeracy testing can be found on the My School website (<http://www.myschool.edu.au>). No students participated in the NAPLAN tests in 2023.



## Senior Secondary Outcomes

Novo Education Space is a registration only school. In 2023, students in Years 9 to 12 were not entered for the NESA credentials of Record of School Achievement (RoSA) or the Higher School Certificate (HSC) and therefore reporting of RoSA or HSC results is not applicable for the school.

## ASDAN Awards

Students at Novo Education Space study and work towards NESA curriculum outcomes in Stage 5 and Stage 6 courses. In addition, students develop portfolios of work to gain credits towards Bronze, Silver or Gold Awards through the International Accreditation body, ASDAN (<https://www.asdan.org.uk/>). Students can also complete short courses and earn other micro-credentials. This alternate program is designed to develop real-world skills through the completion of challenges that relate to individual student interests and life goals identified in their Individual Learning Profile.

To achieve an ASDAN Bronze Award, students must complete six credits equating to approximately 60 hours of work. The credentials are cumulative, so a further six credits (total 120 hours work) will achieve a Silver Award, and another six credits (total 180 hours work) will achieve a Gold Award.

Students are required to plan and review their work at key points, explaining how they have developed their skills in six areas:

- Ability to learn
- Teamwork
- Problem-solving
- IT skills
- Literacy
- Numeracy

2023 Outcomes	Number of Students
ASDAN Bronze Award	5
ASDAN micro-credential credits	24
Completion of Year 12 Certificate	4

We congratulate all the students who have made progress towards their school completion through the opportunities provided at Novo Education Space. It should be noted that many Novo Education Space students progressing into Year 11 or 12 are the first in their immediate family to have done so. In the context of Novo Education Space as a Special Assistance School, regardless of any Awards achieved, the learning growth of our students is our priority for celebration.

## Vocational Education and Training (VET)

In 2023, no Year 11 or Year 12 students undertook Vocational Education and Training qualifications.

The cost of VET courses for students still enrolled at school is prohibitive for most families, as our students, because they are not undertaking the HSC, are ineligible to receive any subsidies towards course costs.

In 2023, Novo Education Space lobbied the NSW Government for changes to this policy of exclusion of our students from having the option to participate in valuable training which would equip them for future employment in line with their goals. We were successful in gaining subsidies for our students to enrol in external VET courses in 2024.



## Post-School Destinations

A total of 12 students left Novo Education Space at the end of 2023, including 5 Year 12 students. Intended destinations of these students were:

Destination	Number of Students
Relocated out of area, enrolled at another school	1
Enrolled at another school in local area	1
Undertaking Vocational Education and Training	2
Employment or seeking employment	6
Unknown destination	2

## Workforce Composition

Novo Education Space employed the following full-time and part-time temporary or ongoing staff in 2023:

Category	Number of Staff	Full-Time Equivalent
Teaching	14	11.7
Non-Teaching	18	12.7

No members of staff identified as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

## Teacher Accreditation

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

Level of Accreditation	Number of Teachers
Conditional	2
Provisional	2
Proficient Teacher	10
Highly Accomplished (voluntary accreditation)	0
Lead Teacher (voluntary accreditation)	0
<b>Total number of teachers</b>	<b>16</b>

*"I feel satisfied with my workload and have opportunities to learn and grow in my position. I feel valued and appreciated in my role."*

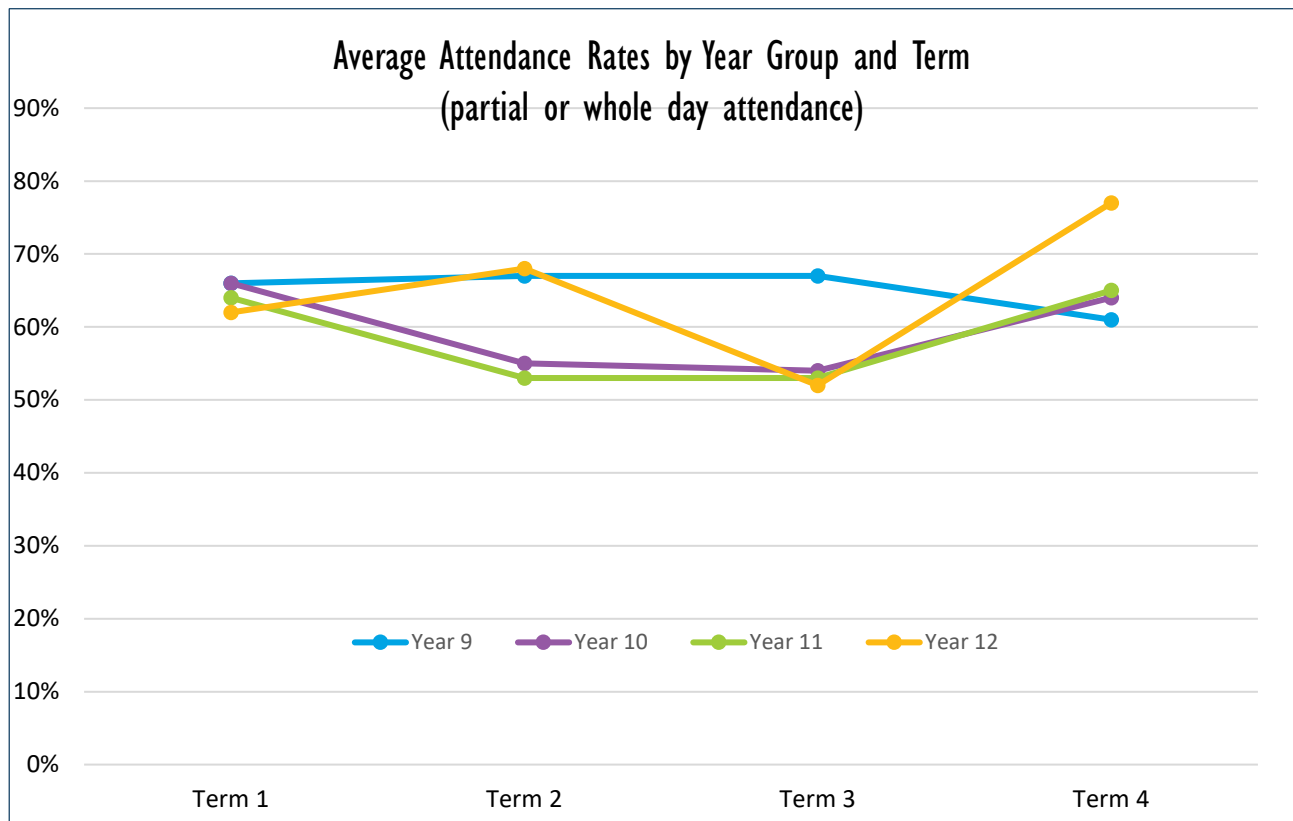
- 2023 Staff Survey Respondent

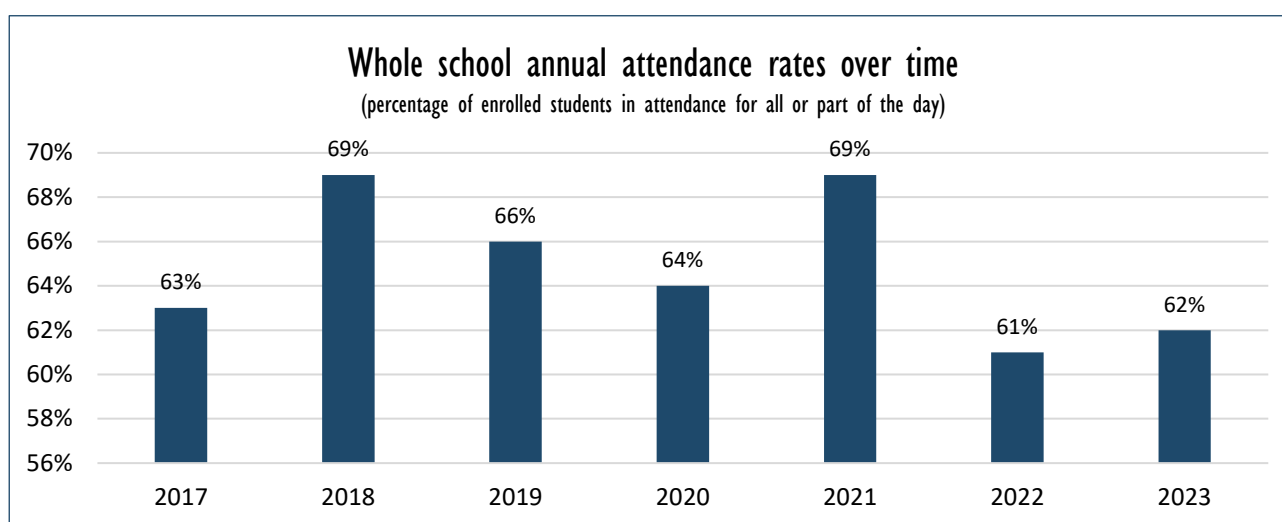
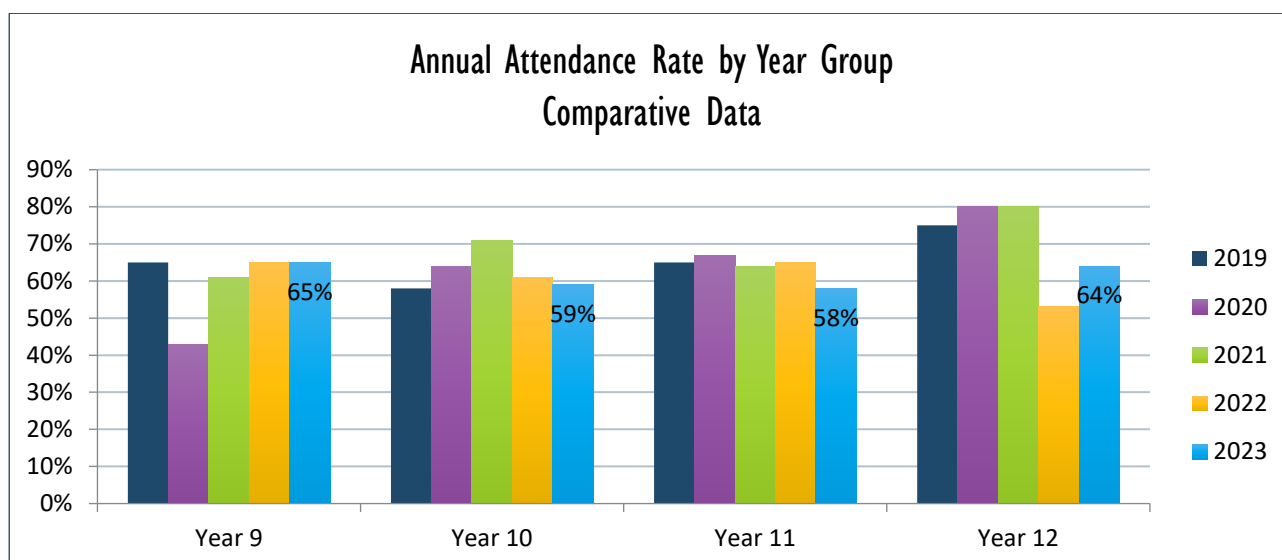
# Student Attendance

Average attendance across the school overall remained low in 2023 at 62%. This reflects the challenging trend apparent in education since the Covid-19 pandemic, with increasing rates of school refusal in the community. There is variation in attendance rates between the Year groups and from term to term, with Year 10 and Year 11 attendance across all terms presenting the biggest challenges.

Attendance rates in 2023 are detailed as follows:

	Present for part or all of the day			
Year Group	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
Year 9	66%	67%	67%	61%
Year 10	66%	55%	54%	64%
Year 11	64%	53%	53%	65%
Year 12	62%	68%	52%	77%





A significant number of students face personal, health and wellbeing, socioeconomic, and other barriers to completing their education. It should be noted that prior to attending Novo Education Space many students were not attending school at all and it is an achievement for many that they are establishing a regular pattern of attendance, even if this is, at times, only partial attendance on any given school day.

Novo Education Space 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. We formulate a comprehensive plan for students who are struggling with regular attendance, which is managed by the Campus Coordinator and the student's allocated Wellbeing Officer in conjunction with the student's Home Room Team. Strategies include home visits, attendance agreements with students, negotiated flexibility in attendance supplemented by work that can be completed at home, support meetings with parents/carers and other service providers involved in the care of the young person with individual goal setting around attendance, and exemptions from attendance for specified periods where medical or mental health problems are persistent or have an ongoing impact.

Information on the school's attendance rates can also be found at the My School website:

<https://www.myschool.edu.au/>

# School Policies

The following school policies are available on the school website:

[Enrolment Policy](#)

[Child Safety Policy](#)

[Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy](#)

[Student Behaviour Management Policy](#)

[Complaints and Grievances Policy](#)

## Stakeholder Satisfaction

Throughout 2023, WEA Illawarra undertook an in-depth stakeholder engagement project, spending time with Community College general staff, VET Trainers and Assessors, Leisure Skills tutors, students, and organisations in the community who refer students for training. We also consulted with Novo Education Space teaching and non-teaching staff, students across our three campuses, parents and caregivers and community organisations referring young people to Novo. The Board of Directors and senior management staff also participated. The stakeholder engagement sessions were facilitated by Nicole Dyson and Jen Buchanan from education innovation organisation, [Future Anything](#).

All participants shared their insights into the strengths and weaknesses of our organisation and the opportunities and potential threats facing us in the education and training sectors.

From a wealth of contributions and great ideas, three broad themes emerged from the consultations, that presented us with opportunities to continually improve in the short and long term. They were:

- Working to make WEA Illawarra an employer of choice, addressing staff attrition and improving staff retention rates.
- Working to make WEA Illawarra an educational provider of choice with an innovative and progressive approach to teaching and learning that holds learners at the centre of what we do.
- Building awareness of WEA Illawarra – our Community College and our School – in the broader community, in order to create strong strategic partnerships and increase numbers of learners given the opportunity to work towards their education and training goals with us.

The information gathered through this and other planning processes over the last 12 months helped to inform the development of a new Strategic Plan for the next three years, which was adopted by the Board at its meeting in December 2023. The CEO and staff will be working on detailed objectives and key results sitting under this plan.

The consultation process helped us clarify and articulate our vision, purpose and values which drive the work of WEA Illawarra.

**Vision:** Connected and thriving communities of lifelong learners  
**Purpose:** Empowerment through learner-centred education and training  
**Values:** Integrity, Inclusion, Collaboration, Innovation

The Board is pleased to share our summary Strategic Plan on a page for the period 2024-2026.

# Strategic Plan

2024 - 2026



## Vision

Connected and thriving communities of lifelong learners

## Purpose

Empowerment through learner-centred education and training

## Values

Integrity, Inclusion, Collaboration, Innovation

### Excellence in Teaching and Learning

- Build a strong culture of deep learning using innovative, engaging, evidence-informed pedagogy.
- Design and deliver education and training centred on learner goals, needs and interests.
- Build high-performing individuals and teams through collaboration within and outside of the organisation.
- Lead innovation in the education and training sectors, actively sharing knowledge and professional practice.

### Positive Culture for Learning

- Equip learners, their supporters and staff with the tools to maintain and enhance wellbeing.
- Embed trauma-responsive practices into our culture, systems and daily operations.
- Integrate First Nations knowledge, culture and perspectives into our systems, daily operations and teaching and learning.
- Intentionally design our environments to optimise learning
- Ensure the wellbeing of learners, supporters and staff by promoting physical, psychological and cultural safety

### Community Engagement and Partnerships

- Develop a First Nations Student Success Program in collaboration with First Nations communities.
- Collaborate with community organisations and local industry to design and deliver education and training experiences.
- Develop partnerships which expand our reach and provide mutual benefit for WEA Illawarra and partners working with people of diverse backgrounds and needs.
- Strengthen our profile as a trusted, innovative and responsive education and training provider.

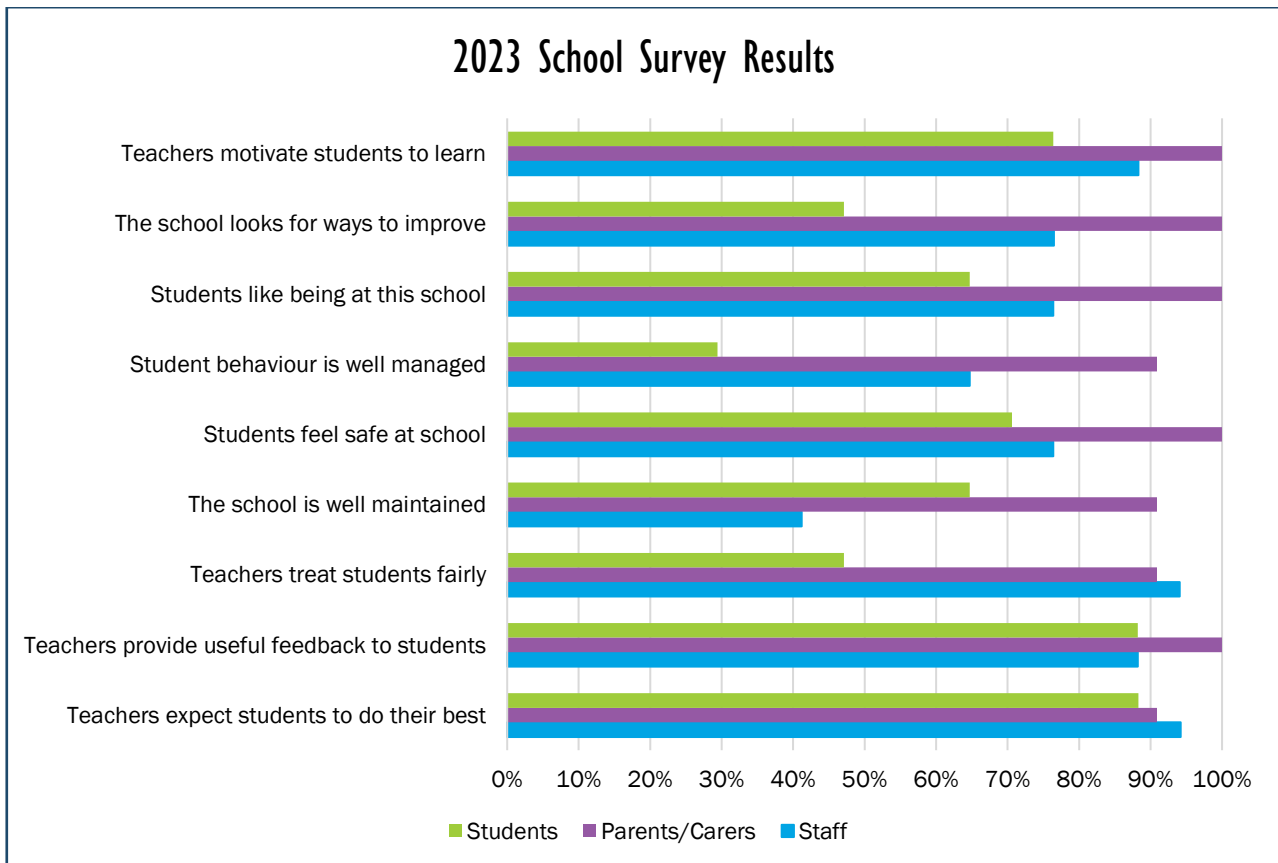
### Agile and Sustainable Organisation

- Implement a workforce strategy to attract, develop, acknowledge, reward and retain quality staff who align with our vision, purpose and values.
- Implement continuous improvement processes using data and evidence to inform our decisions
- Investigate and action new service opportunities which respond to changing community needs.
- Apply excellent governance and management practices to ensure an impactful organisation with a sustainable future.

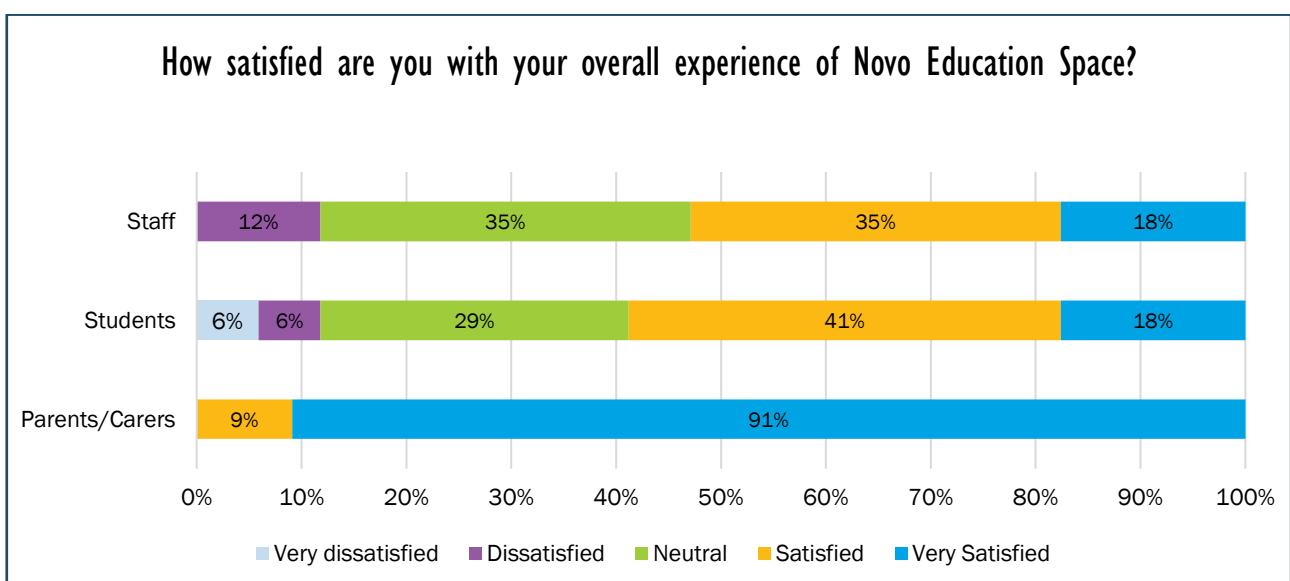


In addition to the stakeholder engagement project, in 2023 Novo Education Space students, parents/caregivers and staff participated in satisfaction surveys. Surveys were completed by 17 students, 11 parents/caregivers and 17 staff.

This chart shows the percentage of respondents to the surveys who either agreed or strongly agreed with the following survey statements.



The following chart indicates student, parent/carer and staff overall satisfaction with their experience of Novo Education Space.





# Summary Financial Information

Chart 1: Recurrent and Capital Income 2023

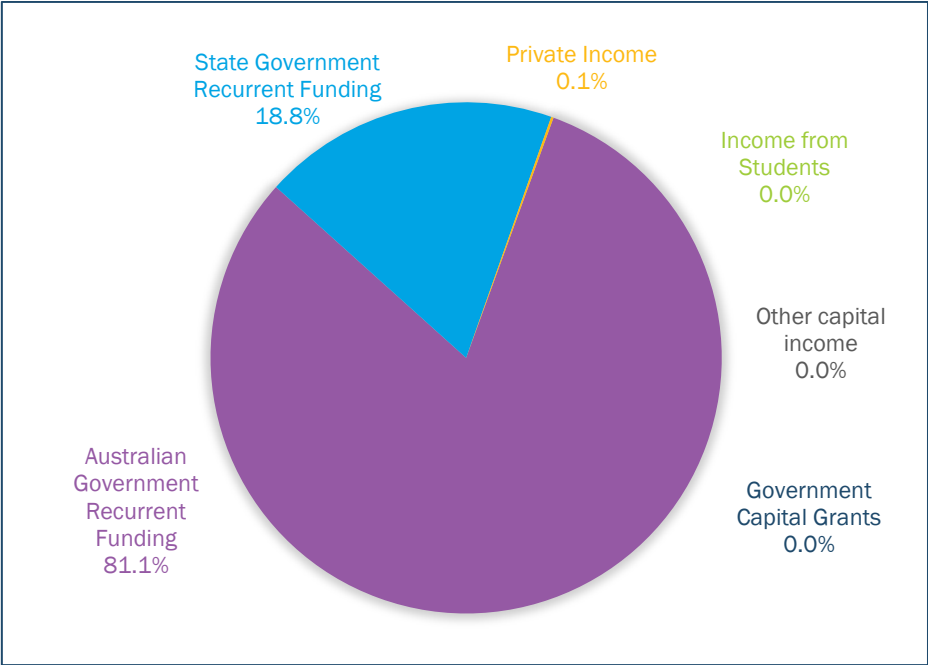
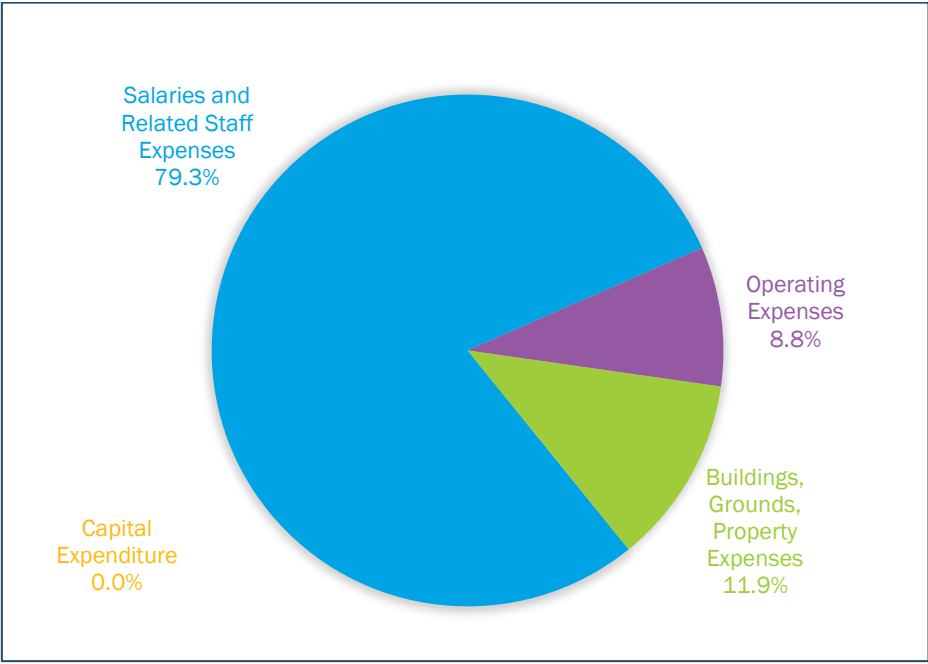


Chart 2: Recurrent and Capital Expenditure 2023





YOU CAN'T GO BACK AND CHANGE  
THE BEGINNING, BUT YOU CAN  
START WHERE YOU ARE AND  
CHANGE THE ENDING