

Impact Report 2018

**WE BELIEVE ALL
AUSTRALIAN
CHILDREN DESERVE
A GREAT
EDUCATION.**

*Pictured is a student from Smithfield Public School in Sydney's south-west.

Thank you.

Because of the generosity of our donors, Schools Plus has been able to direct almost \$7 million to disadvantaged Australian schools during the past three years.

This Impact Report - our second - tells how we've connected with more than 1,000 schools and 646 donors across Australia to help more than 80,000 students reach their potential.

It includes data which reflects the need demonstrated by schools, as well as our response since we started working with schools in April 2015. It also gives us the chance to reveal the considerable impact these donated funds are having, by sharing stories about the lives of those who study, work, educate and lead in schools we've supported.

We continue to be highly selective about the types of initiatives we fund, backing projects which promise long-term impact, as well as those which create change in the broader school community.

The generosity of spirit shown by Schools Plus supporters from all walks of life continues to inspire our whole team. And I'm proud to watch as more and more of our supporters choose to make recurrent gifts to schools, after seeing the results of their philanthropy first-hand.

Our amazing Pioneers - some of the nation's most distinguished business leaders and philanthropists - continue to show great personal commitment and enthusiasm for the work we are doing. Their ongoing leadership means we can support more and more transformative projects in schools right across Australia, as well as co-lead the annual Commonwealth Bank Teaching Awards. Our doors are always open to new Pioneers - do get in touch if you'd like to learn more.

There are many modern-day social issues which draw our attention, but to me education is the basis for our response to others. Every child deserves a quality education, regardless of their background; it's a must for a promising and secure future and a stable life. Thank you for helping us close the education gap.

ROSEMARY CONN, CEO



About Schools Plus

Changing the education landscape

Schools Plus is a national charity. We were formed after the Review of Funding for Schooling (the 'Gonski Report') called for a much stronger focus on philanthropy in education.

We help close the education gap caused by disadvantage, by connecting Australian schools in need with donors who know the value of a great education. Carefully targeted funding allows schools and teachers to give students extra support, or to trial new ways to improve learning.

Responding to need

Our support is directed to Australian schools that sit below 1000 on the national Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA). We make a determined effort to support schools at the lower end of this ICSEA scale because they're most in need.

How we support schools

High-impact initiatives

Through our Smart Giving (national) and Fair Education (NSW and Queensland) programs, donors support major projects that align with schools' strategic plans and address issues that hold students back. To select and shape these programs, we draw on independent experts and offer expert coaching to schools.

Community fundraising

Schools use our crowdfunding platform to run fundraising drives in their networks. Donors can also nominate schools to support – for individuals, this is often the school they attended or their children attend; for businesses, a school in their community.

Commonwealth Bank Teaching Awards

Our annual Teaching Awards, in partnership with CBA, celebrate great teaching and school leadership. Recipients take part in a 12-month Fellowship which includes professional development, opportunities to develop and influence teaching practice, and funding for a major project at the Fellow's school.

The need

Over 4,600 schools in need

The number of Australian schools that meet Schools Plus' criteria for disadvantage by sitting below 1000 on the national Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA).

Over \$24 million requested

The total amount of funding schools have requested since April 2015, across Government, Catholic and Independent sectors.

Over 1,000 schools connected with

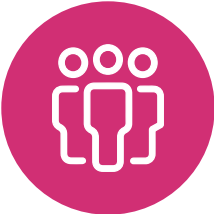
The number of schools we've connected with since April 2015. That's 22% of eligible schools.

Our support



Over 330 projects

The number of projects we've supported financially since April 2015.



Over 80,000 students

The number of students our funded projects have benefited.



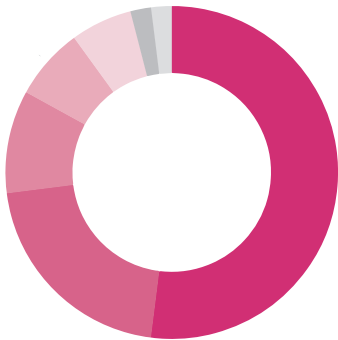
Over \$6.7 million

The amount we've added to the Australian school system through donations to school projects.

Breakdown by state

% of projects funded

- NSW 52%
- VIC 21%
- QLD 10%
- WA 7%
- SA 6%
- NT 2%
- TAS 2%

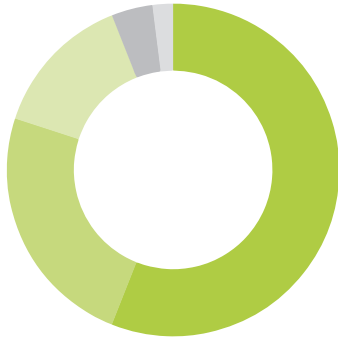


State breakdown of schools which have received funding support since April 2015. The NSW figure is high because to date NSW has been the only state open to the Fair Education Program.

Breakdown by location

% of projects funded

- Major cities 56%
- Inner regional 24%
- Outer regional 14%
- Remote 4%
- Very remote 2%



Location breakdown of schools we've funded since April 2015. This contrasts with the breakdown of eligible schools, which is 37% cities and 63% regional and remote. We will continue to focus on building awareness and capacity in regional and remote schools.

Making the biggest difference

Schools Plus has developed several approaches to maximise the impact of every dollar donated to schools. Our team adds value to the financial support schools receive by working closely with principals and teachers to amplify the benefit for students, staff and school communities.



Selecting

Schools Plus takes a rigorous approach to selecting the projects we match with donors. Independent experts help us assess funding submissions, to ensure projects are well-designed, backed by research, have measurable outcomes and are likely to succeed. We look for key indicators of success, such as a clear link between the project and the school's long-term strategy, strong buy-in from the school leadership team and the inclusion of training and/or teacher release time to ensure staff have the skills, confidence and time to implement projects fully.



Coaching

We have trialled a coaching program to develop school leaders' capacity to design, deliver and evaluate strategic projects. Our panel of expert coaches (former principals and education department directors) has been working with the leadership teams at schools in our NSW Fair Education Program. We are now seeking to expand the coaching program following its initial success - one principal described it as the 'most liberating' experience of his career.



Evaluating

In 2018, we are introducing a revamped evaluation framework for projects supported through Schools Plus. This sophisticated new framework will help schools plan and articulate their strategies for change and track their projects' impact on student outcomes by measuring change in key areas such as teaching and learning, school leadership and parent/ community engagement. It will also provide us with better insight into our impact on the education system.



Connecting

Like teachers, we believe in life-long learning! So we are developing ways to connect the schools we support, so they can share experiences and learn from each other. These include creating the Teaching Fellowship for Commonwealth Bank Teaching Award recipients; building Google Communities for schools conducting similar projects; holding conferences and webinars; and regularly communicating through emails and newsletters. We also connect many schools with their donors - for business supporters, this can lead to rewarding opportunities for staff engagement.

Smithfield Public School in Sydney's south-west is one of the schools supported by our Pioneers in Philanthropy. Its 'Schools as Community Hubs' program is having a significant impact on the community's at-risk families including new arrivals, parents of students with disabilities, and those from low socio-economic backgrounds.

JODI HARRIS, DEPUTY PRINCIPAL OF SMITHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOL

"Our school's cultural diversity is one of its strengths, with 84% of students from non-English speaking backgrounds and the largest groups being Vietnamese, Arabic, Chinese and Samoan.

During the past few years, our school has welcomed an increasing number of new arrivals' students, many from war-torn countries including Syria. Some students start school having experienced significant trauma, and many have not had any prior school experience. These students require significant support to bring their academic skills in line with Australian peers. It is our moral imperative to support these students and their families to successfully transition to Australia, so they can become effective community members.

Research shows that community engagement improves student outcomes. In light of this, the 'Schools as Community Hubs' program was launched with the aim of developing trusting relationships with at-risk families including new arrivals (particularly isolated mums), parents of students with disabilities, and families from low socio-economic backgrounds.

We do this in a variety of ways. Some of these include: coordinating support playgroups and parenting workshops; connecting parents with external support

agencies such as TAFE and Settlement Services International; organising early intervention support; and offering parents English lessons and pre-employment programs. We do all of this on school grounds, which encourages families to feel confident and connected to the school, our educators and each other.

With the funding from the Pioneers in Philanthropy, we've been able to share Smithfield Public's community engagement model with four other schools in Sydney's south-west: Bonnyrigg High, Passfield Park Public, Nuwarra Public and St Helens Park Public.

The schools involved in our hub program are celebrating a dramatic increase in parent participation as well as improved connections with external agencies. Students' sense of belonging has increased which in turn has improved student engagement and learning outcomes. One student reported that knowing her mum was learning at school (through organised workshops), encouraged her to try harder in class.

The opportunity to work with influential people like Nick and John B Fairfax excited our team and encouraged them to dream big. Knowing that the Pioneers value what we are passionate about, enough to support our initiative financially, validated our efforts. It's heart-warming to know that there are organisations and individuals willing to give back to schools and support our endeavour to develop successful global citizens."

NICK FAIRFAX, A MEMBER OF SCHOOLS PLUS' PIONEERS IN PHILANTHROPY

"Education and its potential to make a difference in the lives of disadvantaged children is hugely important. A good education is still one of the tickets to a better life, especially if you are disadvantaged in any way.

My dad (John B Fairfax) and I were thrilled when David Gonski invited us to become Pioneers in Philanthropy back in 2016. For us, philanthropy that improves educational opportunities for Australian students was a 'no-brainer', and Schools Plus' idea of connecting donors with schools in need made sense.

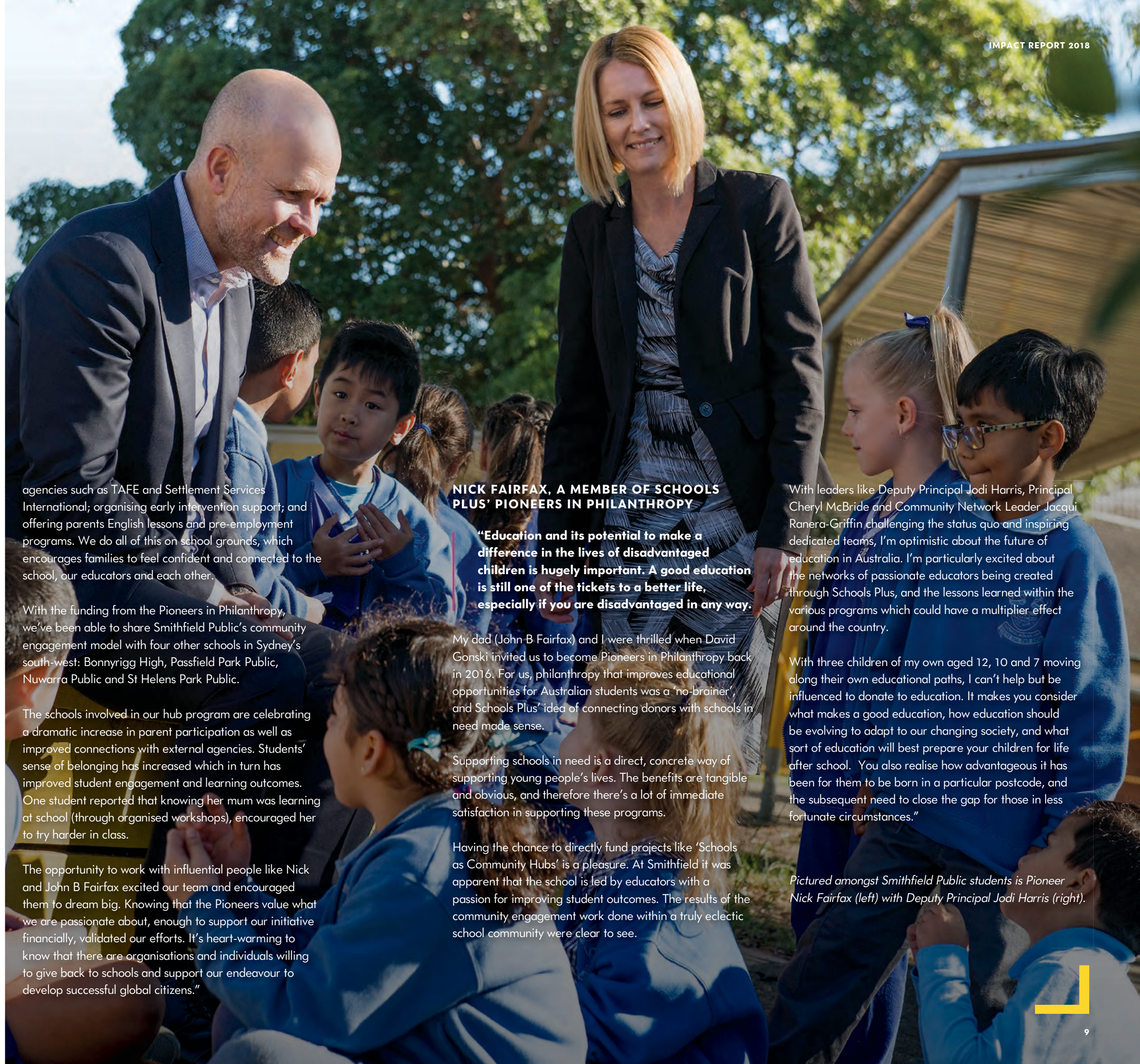
Supporting schools in need is a direct, concrete way of supporting young people's lives. The benefits are tangible and obvious, and therefore there's a lot of immediate satisfaction in supporting these programs.

Having the chance to directly fund projects like 'Schools as Community Hubs' is a pleasure. At Smithfield it was apparent that the school is led by educators with a passion for improving student outcomes. The results of the community engagement work done within a truly eclectic school community were clear to see.

With leaders like Deputy Principal Jodi Harris, Principal Cheryl McBride and Community Network Leader Jacqui Ranera-Griffin challenging the status quo and inspiring dedicated teams, I'm optimistic about the future of education in Australia. I'm particularly excited about the networks of passionate educators being created through Schools Plus, and the lessons learned within the various programs which could have a multiplier effect around the country.

With three children of my own aged 12, 10 and 7 moving along their own educational paths, I can't help but be influenced to donate to education. It makes you consider what makes a good education, how education should be evolving to adapt to our changing society, and what sort of education will best prepare your children for life after school. You also realise how advantageous it has been for them to be born in a particular postcode, and the subsequent need to close the gap for those in less fortunate circumstances."

Pictured amongst Smithfield Public students is Pioneer Nick Fairfax (left) with Deputy Principal Jodi Harris (right).





At Seaford Primary School in Victoria, the ‘Building Resilience, Building Our Future’ project is helping students develop the foundations of resilience – gratitude, empathy and mindfulness. Through our Smart Giving program, Schools Plus connected the school with The Barr Family Foundation.

MICHAEL BARR, THE BARR FAMILY FOUNDATION

“I’ve always considered the curriculum of a school to be a series of ‘teachable moments’ which can occur anywhere in the school day.

By donating to Seaford Primary’s ‘Building Resilience, Building Our Future’ project, we’re giving students tools to increase their resilience and their overall mental health. As a result, they are going to respond better to the teachable moments, whenever they occur.

As a former teacher myself, I know from first-hand experience that education is not just about literacy, numeracy and outdoor activities. Governments do what they can, but the size of the educational funding pie is finite. Extra programs that go towards addressing disadvantage need support from the philanthropic sector, something The Barr Family Foundation is happy to provide.

Our Foundation has as a strategic funding goal to assist children and their families who are disadvantaged in some way. We fund a variety of programs in health, disability, family therapy and research. Schools Plus have become an important partner for The Barr Family Foundation’s funding in the education sector, as our values are closely aligned.”

Pictured on facing page is donor Michael Barr (top left) and Principal Michael Browne (top right) with Seaford Primary students.

MICHAEL BROWNE, PRINCIPAL AT SEAFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL

“Giving students tools to build their resilience is giving them a gift for life. Research tells us that a lack of resilience has the single largest impact on poor mental health, particularly anxiety and depression.

These days in many schools, students struggle with low self-esteem, some have learning and developmental delays, and some come from backgrounds of domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse, testing each child’s mental health - Seaford is no different. Boosting the resilience of our students is a key focus for us.

All classes in our school are now implementing our Resilience Project, using online resources as well as individual student journals. We have Mindfulness in Action, Yoga to Go and Tools for Transition being rolled out, and empathy and gratitude are promoted in informal conversations with children every chance we get.

Having the backing of donors such as The Barr Family Foundation means an awful lot. Our students are becoming more and more engaged as the project goes on, and they are ready to learn each and every day in their classrooms, as at the beginning of each session all classes begin with a brief mindfulness activity.

In the yard they are more inclusive in their play, particularly in starting and implementing student led clubs at lunchtime, and there are many examples each day of children ‘playing like there are no winners’.”

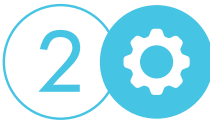
What strategies are schools using to get better outcomes for students?

An analysis of the 483 funding submissions received by Schools Plus between April 2015 and March 2018 shows these are the key strategies schools want to pursue. All strategies have an overriding purpose: to strategically improve the learning and life outcomes of students.



Bringing in contemporary teaching practices

- Project-based learning
- Coaching of teaching practice
- Outdoor learning spaces



Exposing students to STEM opportunities to develop future-focused skills

- Coding and robotics
- Tech as an enabler
- STEM learning hubs



Projects targeting wellbeing

- Whole-school wellbeing programs
- Positive education
- Mindfulness and resilience



Increasing parent engagement

- Skills workshops
- Schools as community hubs
- Transition support



Introducing co-curricular programs

- Student leadership programs
- Cultural awareness
- Arts-based programs



Supporting students' literacy and numeracy skills

- Targeted support programs focused on building these life-long skills



Providing targeted additional support for students

- After-school clubs
- Tech as an enabler
- Transition-to-work programs

What are schools spending funds on to support their strategies?

- | | |
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| 1. Additional time for teachers and support staff in the classroom | 6. Technology to modernise teaching practice and student learning |
| 2. Time for teachers to plan or participate in professional learning out of the classroom | 7. Materials or resources to complement teaching strategies |
| 3. Programs delivered by external trainers and consultants | 8. Workshops, licences and subscriptions for learning programs |
| 4. Equipment or furniture upgrades to support learning | 9. Student activities run by school such as excursions and incursions |
| 5. Courses and activities to support teacher professional development | 10. Transport and travel to participate in learning outside of school |



Schools Plus has partnered with Google to support STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) education in Australian schools. In early 2018, the partnership was launched at Perth's Balga Senior High School.

In Perth's northern suburbs, a little learning revolution is underway.

Every week, nearly 300 students from Balga Senior High School and its two feeder primary schools are taking part in coding lessons and robotics clubs in an exciting program supported by tech giant Google Australia.

Just six months in, the schools' technology focus is showing signs of being the key to re-engaging students and building their skills so they can be the innovators of the future, says Norbert Samuels, who heads Balga's Science and Technologies Department.

"It's building resilience in some of the students who were disengaged. They're not giving up the first time they hit a hurdle, they are trying to think up ways to overcome the issues," Norbert says.

"Once they realise it isn't just in STEM that this applies, their learning journey becomes a lot smoother."

Google has committed not just funding to support this project, but the expertise and time of its staff, including making engineers available for mentoring students through the robotics program or careers sessions, and facilitating professional development opportunities for teachers.

"We've long been supporters of computer science and STEM education in Australia," said Sally-Ann Williams, Engineering Community & Outreach Manager, Google Australia.

"Future innovations and inventions in Australia will come from students gaining skills in computer science today, and blending that with other disciplines to solve challenges the world faces now and in the future, so we're thrilled to be able to help Balga Senior High's STEM and robotics program."

The program has two main elements. With Google's support, Balga SHS has fast-tracked the engagement of students from North Balga and Warriapendi primary schools in the high school's Robotics Club and new STEM centre. Its staff and students are also training the local primary school teachers to introduce robotics at their schools.

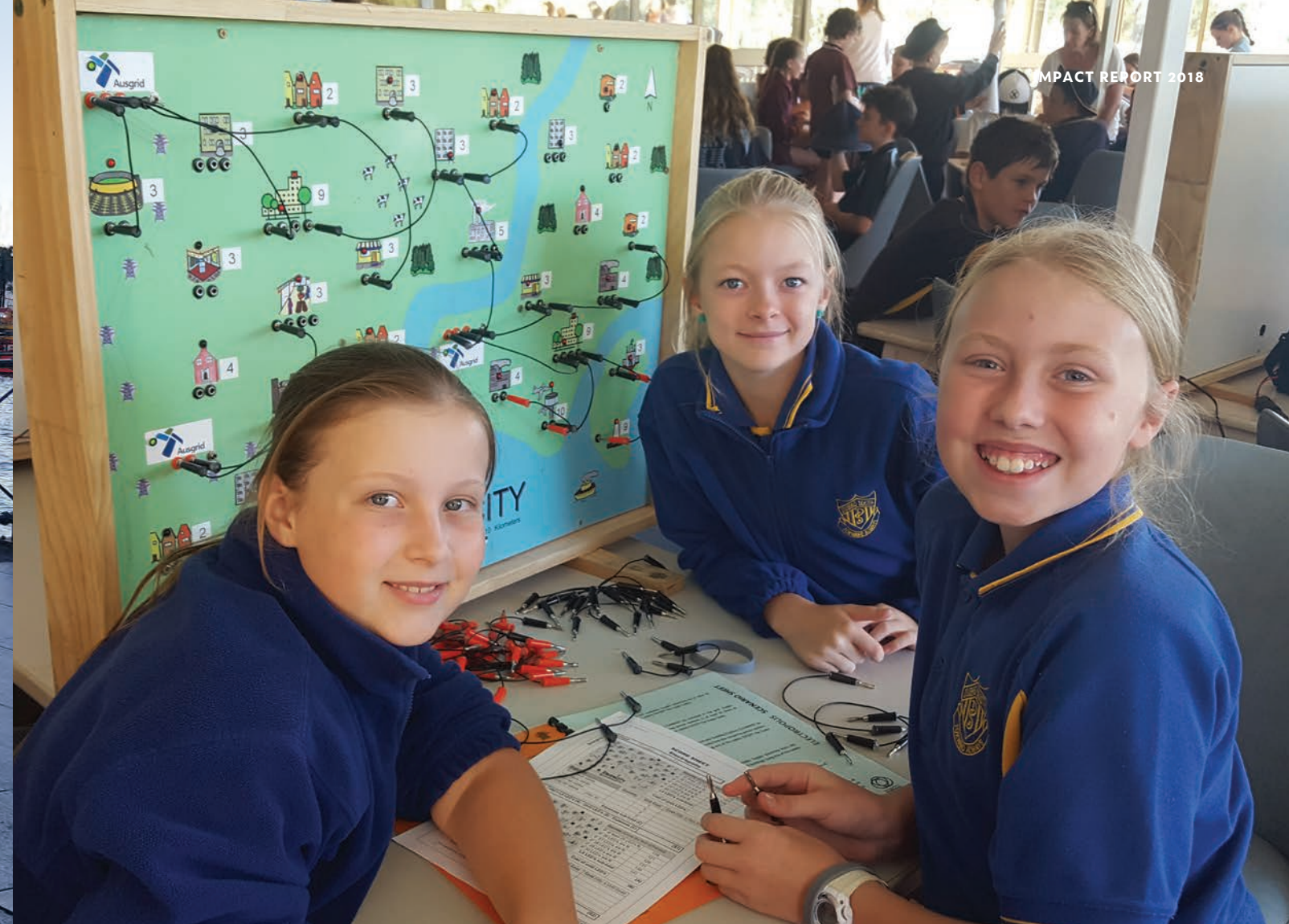
The second element is the high school's plan to upskill its teachers and introduce two hours a week of STEM education, starting with its Year 7 and 8 students but expanding to all year levels over time.

Principal Mark Carton said the project was crucial to prepare Balga students for their future careers.

"I need students in our classes to be able to be exposed to the technologies and the processes and the problem-solving techniques using those 21st-century resources," he said.



Schools Plus is helping alumni reconnect with their former primary and secondary schools, making it easy for them to offer career guidance, mentorship and tax-deductible donations. One former student tells what moved him to donate to his old school.



Andrew Jackson's office view over Circular Quay to the Sydney Harbour Bridge is one of the best in the city, and it's a far cry from the rugged rural scenery of his youth.

Although he's now principal at a highly successful investment management firm, Andrew spent his formative years in Dubbo NSW, best known as being the home of Taronga Western Plains Zoo.

Andrew recalls his time at Dubbo South Public School fondly, spotlighting three excellent teachers in particular - Mrs Cooper, Mrs Lunny and Mrs May.

Now with three children of his own - Jess, 9, Tom, 11, and Nick, 13 - the value of quality

education is front-and-centre for Andrew and his wife Jen, so much so that Andrew was moved to donate to his former school.

"My family is chock-a-block full of public school teachers, including my wife, parents and grandparents," Andrew says.

"I read about the Schools Plus idea in the media and thought it made a lot of sense; making tax-deductible donations to public schools should be made easy.

"Country public schools are full of brilliant kids who can contribute a lot to Australian society, and hopefully programs such as the one I've backed at Dubbo South can motivate more of these kids to pursue further study."

Andrew's \$50,000 donation to Dubbo South has been used to introduce a range of STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and maths) learning initiatives. These have included weekly hands-on, project-based activities for students, professional development for teachers, and the purchase of resources including touch screen laptops, engineering materials and robotics/coding kits.

Within just one year, the STEAM focus has had a major impact on lifting student engagement and attendance. There's also been a marked reduction in student behaviour issues, especially on those afternoons when STEAM rotations are taking place.

Year 5/6 teacher Lisa Lunn said she saw positive changes in her students' behaviour from the moment STEAM was brought into her classroom, particularly for boys.

"I think students have responded so positively because they're not just taught about a problem and then shown how to solve it, they are actually involved in the process," Lisa said.

"Students are given opportunities to design, build, test and re-design if necessary, fostering resilience and critical thinking."

Lisa highlighted one Year 5 boy's dramatic shift in behaviour following the introduction of the STEAM program.

"There was a significant drop in the number of 'major behaviour referrals' for this boy, from more than 70 in 2016 to just three in 2017," Lisa explained.

"His suspension rate and absences fell, and he's showing growth in his NAPLAN results."

And it seems Andrew's hope that the program would result in more kids pursuing further study is already being realised.

"Aspirations have been heightened and students' expectations of themselves have grown immensely, with students already having discussions about university and higher education degrees," Lisa said.

"Students have gained a greater understanding of the importance of STEAM and are realising that science, technology, engineering and mathematics will play an important role in their adult life and future careers."

Pictured on facing page is Andrew Jackson back in his school days at Dubbo South (bottom left) and today near his Sydney office (top left). And (pictured above) Dubbo South Public students involved in the STEAM learning backed by Andrew.

Together, we can help close the education gap.



Schools Plus

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