Barker College

NSW Indigenous Campuses

2025 Annual Report

Ngarralingayil Barker

Darkinjung Barker

Barker College

Honor Non Honores

Mission

An Anglican community inspiring
every learner
every experience
every day

Vision

To be a leader in Christian education
that is characterised by a global vision
that inspires hope

Values

Commitment
Compassion
Courage
Integrity
Respect

We acknowledge the Dharug, Darkinjung, Wonnarua and Yolŋu peoples who are the traditional custodians of the land on which Barker College, Darkinjung Barker, Ngarralingayil Barker and Dhupuma Barker stand. We pay respect to the Elders past, present and emerging of the Dharug, Darkinjung, Wonnarua and Yolŋu nations and extend that respect to other Indigenous people within the Barker College community.

About Darkinjung Barker and Ngarralingayil Barker

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Darkinjung Barker and Ngarralingayil Barker are communities where cultural sensitivity and pastoral care occupy a prominent place, one in which the building of relationships and connections is a priority. Barker College has developed a reputation for supporting each student in a personal and caring way and this is a priority for Darkinjung and Ngarralingayil Barker. A number of measures are in place to ensure a smooth transition to school for all students.

The development of strong foundational skills in literacy and numeracy, and the celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and identity, is paramount to successful learning and is the cornerstone of our educational programs at Darkinjung Barker and Ngarralingayil Barker. Each campus aims to provide students with an engaging and appropriate curriculum that will assist them to progress in their development and to reach their potential in all activities that they undertake. It is our hope that students will become inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

Every other Wednesday, students from Darkinjung Barker and Ngarralingayil Barker have the opportunity to interact with their peers from the Barker Hornsby campus. They attend classes such as Robotics, Drama, Swimming and Music. These excursions add to the rich learning experience for all students.

Ngarralingayil students visit both Darkinjung Barker every other week for key learning and connection opportunities.

Throughout 2025, interest in enrolment at Darkinjung continued to build, with strong expressions of interest for the 2026 School year. The School's commitment to inclusive education, particularly a focus on Indigenous culture and community partnerships is a key factor.

During the year, Year 12 Prefects on the Indigenous Committee organised games on Darkinjung visit days at lunch to facilitate connection between Indigenous campuses and Hornsby students. The program has been a great success. Both campuses supported Indigenous Languages Week coming together at Darkinjung to engage in activities that highlighted Indigenous languages helping to foster a deeper appreciation for the cultural contributions of Indigenous communities.

Ms Susanna Matters and Ms Alex Cook (Junior School teachers Gifted and Talented and Library Integrator, respectively) visited each campus each term with a focus on literacy and identifying strengths within

the students. They provide differentiated literacy support to Ngarralingayil and Darkinjung students, who have benefited by participating in the Premier's Reading Challenge, exploring rich literature to understand important concepts in the new K-6 English syllabus such as genre and characterisation. In addition, a learning support teacher 3 days a week across both campuses has provided additional support to students with learning needs.

Priority areas for improvement identified for 2026 include:

- Work in conjunction with other Schools/ organisations to replicate the model (or similar) that has been implemented at Barker's Indigenous schools.
- Continue to close performance and achievement gaps in numeracy and literacy. Create a consistency with the implementation of the Good to Great Schools program in Literacy across each of the campuses. Supplement Good to great with other recognised phonemic awareness programs for early literacy development. ie Heggarty's, Mini-lit.
- Continue to provide appropriate learning, behavioural and well-being support to students beyond the classroom. Engage specialists in learning support to work alongside classroom teachers. Further consolidate access to counselling services to work with students, families and external agencies.
- Continue to build on attendance rates of students aiming for consistency at 90% for all students.
- Further develop opportunities between Barker College and Darkinjung Barker and to increase awareness of Indigenous culture.
- Establish opportunities for Indigenous educators to work within the programs at our schools. This could be through university partnerships providing practicum experience for trainee teachers, targeted employment programs for graduating teachers, training pathways for aboriginal community members to train as teacher assistants (co-teachers) or to upskill from a teacher assistant to a Primary school teacher.
- Build engagement of parents and community within the School.

Report from the Head of Barker College

Throughout 2025, Indigenous education across Barker College continued to strengthen in depth, reach and impact.

Darkinjung Barker and Ngarralingayil Barker remained central to the School's commitment to educational equity, reconciliation and the flourishing of First Nations children and young people. Across the year, there was a strong sense of momentum, reflected in student growth, expanded community partnerships, enriched cultural engagement and a growing integration between campuses.

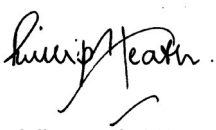
Staffing stability and leadership were key factors in 2025. Under the leadership of Tom Spencer as Director of Aboriginal Campuses NSW, teams across both campuses demonstrated strong collaboration, shared purpose and deep care for students and families. Teaching teams were further strengthened through the presence of additional teachers, learning support staff and interns, many of whom are themselves aspiring educators studying primary teaching at university. This deliberate emphasis on developing future Aboriginal and allied educators continues to build workforce capacity and sustainability.

Student enrolments at Darkinjung Barker continued to grow during 2025, reflecting increasing confidence from families and the community. While Ngarralingayil Barker remained smaller in size, purposeful efforts were made to strengthen visibility, engagement and transitions, including open days and strengthened connections across the Lower Hunter region.

In late 2025, the School, in close consultation with families and local Indigenous communities, made the considered decision to transition the small cohort of students from Ngarralingayil Barker to the Darkinjung Barker campus for the commencement of the 2026 year. Despite ongoing efforts, enrolments at Wollombi had remained modest, and it became increasingly clear that bringing students together would provide enhanced opportunities for peer connection with other Aboriginal children, as well as enabling the consolidation of teaching expertise and learning resources. This approach was guided by a strong focus on what would best support students'

educational, cultural and social outcomes. Careful planning and collaborative engagement ensured the transition was managed sensitively and respectfully, with all five Ngarralingayil students moving to Darkinjung Barker for 2026. Daily transport was arranged to support continuity and wellbeing, contributing to a smooth and positive transition for students and families.

Our students continue to thrive in a nurturing, culturally rich environment. They feel safe, supported, and happy at school, which positively impacts their engagement and learning outcomes. In these small school settings, where relationships are central and culture is celebrated, our students are growing in confidence, developing socially and emotionally, and making the most of every opportunity.



Phillip Heath AM
Head of Barker College
Head of Darkinjung Barker
Head of Ngarralingayil Barker

Report from the Head of Barker College Junior School

Academic care remained a core focus across the year. Significant investment in learning support continued to yield positive outcomes, particularly in literacy.

Structured intervention programs, including MacqLit and Spelling Mastery, were embedded consistently across classes, supported by diagnostic assessment and individual learning plans. Collaboration between classroom teachers, learning support staff and families ensured targeted support for students with additional learning needs. By the end of the year, data reflected strong growth across reading fluency, accuracy, spelling and comprehension for the vast majority of students. While results were encouraging, the School remained clear-eyed in identifying future priorities, particularly in writing, comprehension and numeracy confidence.

Student wellbeing and health continued to be supported through a holistic approach. Vision and hearing screenings, allied health partnerships, and the implementation of a multidisciplinary Early Links program enabled early identification of learning and developmental needs. This work was complemented by strong pastoral care, consistency of relationships, and active collaboration with families. The safe, relational environment of both campuses remained foundational to engagement and learning.

Limitations around physical space at Yarramalong remained an ongoing challenge; however, progress toward additional facilities and a new demountable provided optimism for future capacity growth. The new demountable was installed in the December holidays at the end of 2025.

Students' experiences beyond the classroom were a defining feature of 2025. Cultural learning remained embedded and visible, with regular programs delivered by local Aboriginal cultural educators and mentoring organisations. Students participated confidently in performances, language learning, ceremony and on-country experiences, developing pride in identity and connection to culture. Cross-campus connections deepened through regular visits between Darkinjung, Ngarralingayil and Hornsby, enabling shared learning in robotics, sport, music, drama, chapel and leadership programs. These experiences supported smooth transitions, particularly for students preparing for secondary education.

Participation in major events such as NAIDOC Week, Reconciliation Week, the Waratah Project, the Garma Youth Forum and community cultural celebrations

enriched student learning and broadened horizons. Indigenous students across Barker College demonstrated leadership through performances, acknowledgements of Country, public speaking and representation at local, regional and national events. Robotics, sport and leadership camps provided additional avenues for confidence-building, teamwork and aspiration.

Community engagement strengthened significantly across 2025. Relationships with Aboriginal Land Councils, elders, early learning centres, schools, health services and cultural organisations continued to expand. Families were increasingly visible and involved in school events, cultural celebrations, fundraising activities and advisory groups. The formation of parent and guardian networks further strengthened partnership and voice. The School remained present and responsive during times of celebration and times of grief, reinforcing trust and relational connection.

At the Hornsby campus, Indigenous education continued to evolve within a more distributed pastoral and academic care model. Indigenous students were supported through established school structures, while specialist guidance ensured cultural identity, learning goals and wellbeing needs remained central. Staff professional learning, mentoring programs and whole-school events reinforced Barker College's commitment to reconciliation and the celebration of First Nations excellence across all campuses.

By the conclusion of 2025, the Indigenous education programs across Barker College reflected a mature and growing model, one grounded in relationships, cultural respect, educational rigour and shared responsibility. While challenges remain, particularly in capacity and complexity of need, the year was marked by meaningful progress, strong outcomes, and a clear sense of direction. The School looks ahead with confidence, committed to continuing this important work in partnership with students, families and community.

Martin Lubrano
Head of Junior School

Student Outcomes

Standardised National Literacy Numeracy Testing (NAPLAN)

In 2025, students in Years 3 and 5 participated in the national Numeracy and Literacy Assessments, known as NAPLAN. NAPLAN assess individual student achievement in areas of literacy and numeracy. The overall literacy component of the NAPLAN includes areas of reading, writing, spelling and language conventions. The writing component of the NAPLAN is an assessment of a student's writing ability, encompassing aspects of text structuring, grammar, spelling and punctuation.

Students in Years 3 and 5 are tested in reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation, and numeracy.

Student Outcomes

Standardised National Literacy and Numeracy Testing

The School's average was above, or close to when compared to results of 'Students with similar background'.

More information can be found on the My Schools website www.myschool.edu.au/school/52353/naplan/results#resultsovertime

Darkingjung and Ngarralingayil students have achieved pleasing results, with many students achieving at the Strong proficiency level in various domains, indicating Sound performance by national standards.

	% **Strong and Exceeding**	
Domain	Year 3	Year 5
Grammar and Punctuation	40	38
Numeracy	40	25
Reading	80	63
Spelling	80	25

NAPLAN online reading, numeracy and conventions of language use a tailored test design. The tests automatically adapt to a student's test performance and ask questions that match the student's achievement level.

	% **Strong and Exceeding**	
Domain	Year 3	Year 5
Grammar and Punctuation	0	0
Numeracy	0	0
Reading	40	13
Spelling	60	7

Year 3 Summary

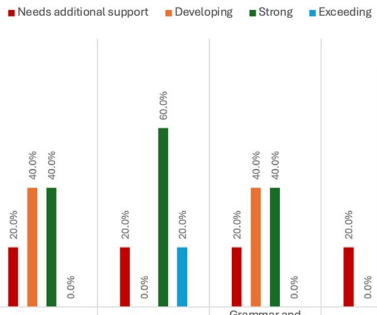
- Strongest results seen in Reading and Spelling.
- Possible areas of development are in Numeracy — especially in the area of student confidence.

Year 5 Summary

- The strongest result is seen in Reading and Spelling domains.
- Possible areas of development are in Numeracy and Punctuation & Grammar.

Year 3 2025 at Darkinjung is a cohort of 5 students at Darkinjung Barker. A preliminary analysis of results and item achievement shows that Reading is the strongest domain, with 4 of the 5 students achieving at the highest 2 proficiency levels. Numeracy would be the area of highest concern, with 3 of the 5 students achieving at the lower 2 proficiency levels.

Darkinjung Year 3 2025 NAPLAN Proficiency %

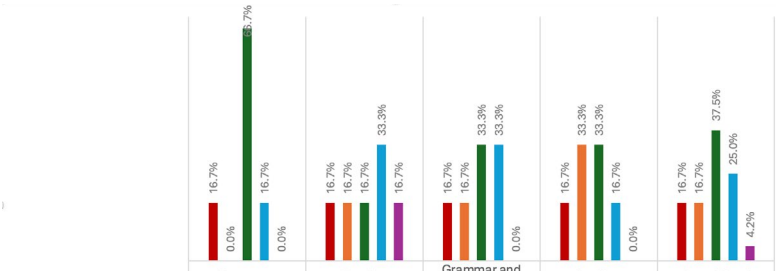


	Numeracy	Reading	Grammar and Punctuation	Spelling	Grand Total
Needs additional support	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%
Developing	40.0%	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%	20.0%
Strong	40.0%	60.0%	40.0%	80.0%	55.0%
Exceeding	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.0%

Looking at the breakdown by Gender, in Year 3, 2025, 3 students are female and 2 of students are male. With such small numbers, differences between the genders are not statistically significant.

Year 5 2025 at Darkinjung is a cohort of 6 students. The strongest result is seen in the Reading domain, with 50% of students achieving at the Strong and Exceeding levels. Numeracy is the domain of most concern, with a larger number of non-attempted answers than in the other domains. Grammar and Punctuation is similarly concerning, with more 3 of the 5 participating students achieving at the lower 2 proficiency levels.

Darkinjung Year 3 2025 NAPLAN Proficiency %



	Numeracy	Reading	Grammar and Punctuation	Spelling	Grand Total
Withdrawn	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%
Needs additional support	0.0%	16.7%	16.7%	33.3%	16.7%
Developing	66.7%	16.7%	33.3%	33.3%	37.5%
Strong	16.7%	33.3%	33.3%	16.7%	25.0%
Exceeding	0.0%	16.7%	0.0%	0.0%	4.2%

Year 5, 2025, is 50% female and 50% male. Once again, no signifiant differences between the genders can be seen from such small sample size.

Teacher Accreditation

The level of accreditation of the four teaching staff in 2025 was Proficient Teacher.

Throughout the year teaching staff have opportunities to participate in a range of NESA endorsed professional learning. There are whole school professional learning days at the beginning and end of each term. To support their teaching and learning accreditation, additional professional learning, workshops and conferences of choice are available to attend. Access to online platforms for professional learning is also available to all staff and has been successfully utilised.

Across the year, staff engaged in significant professional learning, including assessment workshops, First Aid training, disability and NCCD moderation, Aboriginal perspectives in new syllabuses, and national and international Indigenous education conferences. These experiences enriched classroom practice and strengthened culturally responsive pedagogy.

Both campuses have access to the Hornsby Learning Support Team and the counselling team and through consultation, information, training, and guidance are able to assist the students with appropriate curriculum and wellbeing support.

Workforce Composition

School Staff	Number of Staff
Teaching Staff	5
Professional Services Staff	2

School staff in 2025 were approximately 90% female and 10% male. Staff ranged in age from their early 20s to mid 50s and were primarily from an Indigenous background.

Student Attendance

Darkinjung Barker

	Semester 1	Term 3	Average
K	92.35%	93.64%	93.00%
1	89.79%	88.94%	89.37%
2	90.43%	97.87%	94.15%
3	85.80%	84.40%	85.10%
4	91.22%	87.23%	89.23%
5	84.75%	89.01%	86.88%
6	89.89%	79.79%	84.84%

Ngarralingayil Barker

	Semester 1	Term 3	Average
K	N/A	N/A	N/A
1	95.21%	80.85%	88.03%
2	100.00%	89.36%	94.68%
3	N/A	N/A	N/A
4	N/A	N/A	N/A
5	84.57%	77.66%	81.12%
6	N/A	N/A	N/A

Management of Non-Attendance

As part of the duty of care of Darkinjung Barker and Ngarralingayil Barker to its students, the School maintains processes to ensure it is aware of the daily attendance of each student. All students travel to and from the respective schools by buses. The dedicated student buses arrive at each of the schools by 8.15am and collect students at the end of the school day at 3pm.

Parents are asked to email the school to notify a student absence. Teachers contact parents at recess if a student is absent and no notification has been received.

School Policies

The following school policies are publicly available on the School's website here: https://www.barker.college/about-barker/indigenous-education

- Child Protection Policy Darkinjung
- Anti-Bullying Policy Darkinjung
- Discipline Policy Darkinjung
- Complaints Policy Darkinjung

These policies are also made available in electronic or hard copy form on request.

Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction

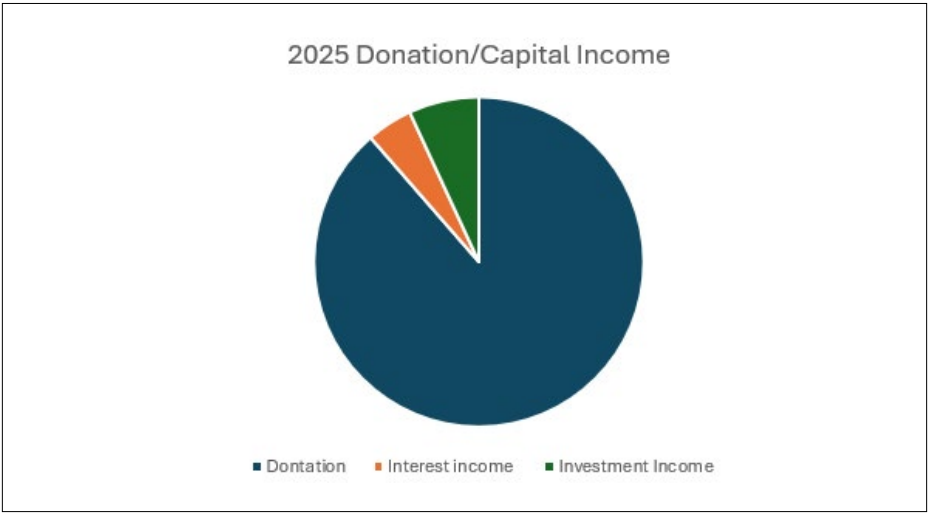
Each campus is committed to listening to the views and expectations from its key stakeholders and throughout the year, regular community meetings are held with families where there is opportunity to provide feedback from parents to teaching staff.

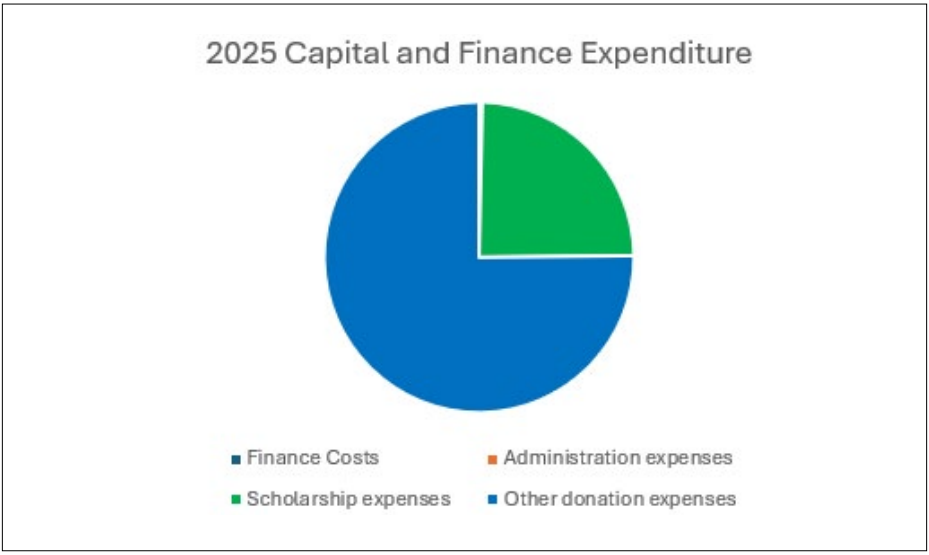
Regular consultation with the Darkinjung Aboriginal Land Council also allows parents a further opportunity to provide feedback.

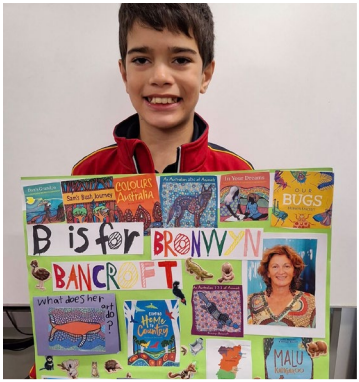
Financial Information

Recurrent/Capital Income

The relevant financial statements for Barker College's Indigenous Campuses is a consolidated set of statements as lodged by Barker College. Barker Barang is a registered DGR.






B is for
BRONWYN
BANCROFT
BUGS
MALU

you
only
here
me
they
we
said
little

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