Marri Mittigar

Marri Mittigar
2025 Annual Report

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 Marri Mittigar

Marri Mittigar is Barker College's coeducational special assistance school that provides an inclusive education, where academic success and personal growth are goals in tandem.

It integrates therapeutic support with a rigorous and trauma-informed curriculum to help students thrive while securely anchored in their own cultural heritage and identity. In line with this, the curriculum at Marri Mittigar includes first-language lessons so that the students can remain connected to their cultural identity.

Meaning "Many Friends" in Darug, the language of First Nations Australians on whose lands the School stands, Marri Mittigar opened in May 2024. It is a response to the need to provide educational environments where refugee students feel safe, seen and supported.

Marri Mittigar students participate in a range of co-curricular activities that sit beside what takes place in the classroom, enriching their Australian schooling experience.

At Marri Mittigar, teachers are culturally responsive. They integrate students' native languages alongside English as a language of instruction to enhance learning. This inclusive approach breaks down language barriers, fostering deeper understanding and academic success for all students. The goal is to engage the students with the curriculum in a way that addresses their social and emotional needs and celebrates their strengths in linguistic diversity and cultural pride in the classroom.

The enrolment process is a clearly defined student entry process, where the student's and family's legal and refugee status is prioritised, including students who are in Out of Home Care or unaccompanied minors.

In 2025 Marri Mittigar was recognised by *The Educator* as a 5-Star Innovative School.

For more information about Marri Mittigar, please visit marrimittigar.nsw.edu.au

From the Head Barker College

Opened in April 2024, Marri Mittigar is a school for children of refugee experience, founded on a research-grounded pedagogy and the conviction that no child should have to surrender who they are to belong.

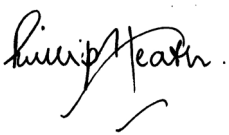
Drawing on published research in translanguaging, trauma-informed practice and culturally responsive education, the School has, in just two years, grown from 21 to 30 students, seen 12 students successfully transition into mainstream schooling, and received national recognition for innovation.

In its first full year, Marri Mittigar has become a strong, connected and richly diverse community, with students representing countries including Afghanistan, Ukraine, Iran and Venezuela. Central to its model is the nurturing of first language and culture, with students spending part of each week immersed in their heritage languages, strengthening literacy and identity.

The School is characterised by a deep sense of unity in diversity, supported by a highly engaged Barker community. Families, students and volunteers contribute an average of 58 hours of support each week, alongside practical, relational and spiritual care. Increasingly, families themselves are stepping into leadership contributing their skills, leading initiatives and strengthening the life of the School.

A broad co-curricular offering, partnerships such as the Real Madrid social sports program, and visits from international guests, have enriched student experience. The School's unique K - 10 structure fosters connection across age groups, enabling siblings to remain together and providing leadership opportunities for older students.

Underpinning this work is a distinctive architecture: research-informed practice, wraparound care, a lived faith, and a deliberate transfer of leadership from founders to families. Despite challenges, Marri Mittigar continues to build momentum as a place of belonging, dignity and hope.



Phillip Heath AM
Head of Marri Mittiagar
Head of Barker College

Report from Head of Campus

Marri Mittigar completed its second year of operation in 2025 with an enrolment of 30 students and 12 subsequently placed into mainstream schooling.

At Marri Mittigar, all our students come with a refugee experience. This brings unique challenges that impact their learning in Australia. Our students and their families have fled the dangers of war or persecution, and our students come from an experience where they have been forcibly displaced from their home, family, and friends. This leaves indelible social-emotional challenges that impact their ability to achieve in an academic setting in a new country. Many of them have failed to thrive in mainstream schools. Marri Mittigar seeks to provide an education for them in a safe, nurturing environment so that they can return to mainstream schooling and succeed in their education and in society, with their first language valued and maintained.

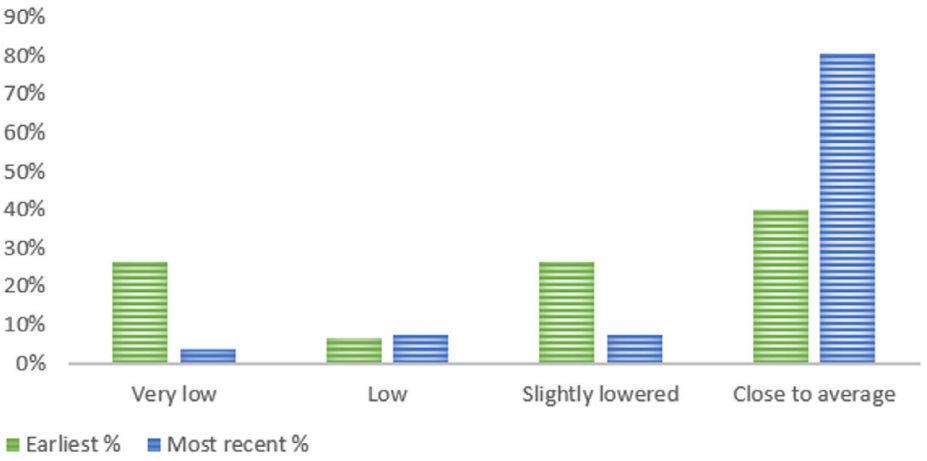
Students are offered a range of cocurricular activities and sports as well as a rich curriculum. They have a vegetable garden that they cultivate and have the opportunity to enter robotics competitions. Football and swimming are two of the students' favourite sports.

In 2025, a new website was launched which contains information about the school for enrolments, information for parents on available services, policies and notice of events.

The School provides support for the whole family with material needs sourced, parent forums provided on a range of topics such as the Australian Financial System, responsible use of technology, health services such as eye-testing, a termly paediatric clinic and a trauma-informed psychologist on staff. The school psychologist conducts regularly the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) to monitor emotional growth. There has been great improvement over the year.

The graph on the following page, highlights the development and improvement of the students from the beginning of 2025 compared to the end of the year.

Julia West
Head of Campus, Marri Mittigar



Student Outcomes

As teaching staff get to know the students and their families, they assess and document if a student is exhibiting evidence of a social/emotional or cognitive disability. Classroom adjustments are made to build an individual plan of academic care for each student in consultation with their parents and caregivers. The social, emotional and cognitive impact on a student's overall classroom and functional learning experience over time is continually assessed, with their learning adjusted according to the needs of each student.

The School's model of classroom care includes promoting healthy adaptive strategies in the classroom and in extracurricular activities and partnering closely with any health professionals involved in the student's care. If a healthcare team has not yet been established, the School will promote the journey to diagnosis, if appropriate, in partnership with the parents and primary caregivers.

Assessment Overview

As recently arrived students experiencing trauma, students will work towards syllabus outcomes relevant for their stage of learning. These will be identified on an ongoing basis through collaborative curriculum planning by their teachers. All tasks will be made accessible to students depending on their proficiency in English using valid and reliable assessment strategies. Advice from the EAL/D learning progression and ESL scales will assist teachers to plan appropriate support, including differentiated instruction and assessment. A range of low-stakes opportunities will be given in the form of checkpoints to demonstrate achievement of outcomes. Alternative assessment strategies may be needed and additional assessment judgements during teaching and learning.

Assessment guides and informs the ongoing teaching and learning so that student progress is closely monitored and evaluated and any adjustments to the program made.

In addition to the NAPLAN and the SDQ, children do YARC as required, PAT reading and mathematics twice a year to measure growth, Initialit screeners and cumulative reviews in the form of cold and hot writes for English and pre and post assessments for Maths.

There are also low-stakes assessment tasks in the Key Learning Areas at the end of each term.

In Years 7 and 8, differentiated tasks are given in Maths, English, Science, Technology Mandatory, History, (Termly) PDH/PE, Language, Visual Arts and Music (Semester).

Adjustments to assessments may be needed for some students. For example:

- Extra time in tasks
- Rescheduled tasks or individual supervision for some assessment tasks
- Scaffolded instructions
- Use of a L1 speaking aid to explain some questions
- Key words or phrases highlighted
- Simplified questions
- Some answers given orally rather than in written form
- Scaffolded structured responses for an extended response
- Dictionaries in L1
- Being able to do a visual representation

2025 NAPLAN results

Year 3

Numeracy	Student 1	Strong
	Student 2	Strong
	Student 3	Absent
	Student 4	Developing
Grammar and Punctuation	Student 1	Exceeding
Reading	Student 1	Exceeding
Spelling	Student 1	Strong

Year 5

Numeracy	Student 1	Strong
	Student 2	Developing
Grammar and Punctuation	Student 1	Exceeding
Reading	Student 1	Exceeding
Spelling	Student 1	Exceeding

Year 7

Numeracy	Student 1	Strong
	Student 2	Strong
	Student 3	Developing

Workforce Composition

Teaching Staff	Professional Services Staff
Headcount: 4 Actual FTE: 2.43	Headcount: 1 Actual FTE: 0.72

Student Attendance and Management of Non-Attendance

Attendance over the year was on average at 90.21%, up from 87%. Mostly the attendance was excellent with students attending even when sick. Many missed so much school that they realise the value of it.

There have never been more than 32 children in the School at any one time. If a child is absent, the parent/carer texts the Head of Campus with a reason before 9am. The Head of Campus takes the roll every day and enters the reason for absence.

If a parent/carer does not text or email, the Head of Campus follows up with a text or phone call to ascertain the reason for absence.

Challenges during the year included two Afghan orphans in out of home care who were school refusers and had a partial attendance plan. Their carers attempted to get them to school each day, normally arriving at school by 11am, where these students would then stay for the rest of the day.

Measures were put in place to improve attendance but there was no significant improvement, including counselling from STARTTS at school. Both students moved to a special assistance school closer to home at the end of the year.

Marri Mittigar Policies

Anti-Bullying Policy
Enrolment Policy
Child Protection Policy
Complaint (Students & Parents) Policy
Discipline Policy
Student Attendance Policy
Student Charter (Code of Conduct)
Privacy Policy
Promoting Positive Behaviours Framework

These policies are also made available to parents and carers upon enrolment in electronic or hard copy form on request.

Stakeholder Satisfaction

Marri Mittigar is committed to listening to the views and expectations from key stakeholders to continually improve the educational experience offered to the students.

Various communications and presentations for the parent community throughout 2025 provided opportunities for parents to respond to the School. Each term there was a morning tea with the Headmaster in which the parents were able to discuss any concerns or offer feedback, negative or positive. There was also a termly parent forum on topics such as screen addiction, understanding the Australian health system.

Parent and teacher interviews occurred at the end of each term and parents were in constant communication with the staff of the School. Most come each day to drop off and pick up students and staff are readily available to meet with families.

A Microsoft Forms anonymous survey was given to the 15 families with five responding. Teachers were given a five-star rating, the facilities only 3 or 4 stars. Comments included: *What I really like about Marri Mittigar is its warm and supportive community. The teachers genuinely care about the students, and the focus is not only on academics but also on building confidence, independence, and character*.

Other things that parents valued were the psychological support and friends they have made amongst the parent body. One parent asked for the School to continue to Year 12.

Students were also given the opportunity to complete a survey with the following results -

Twenty students completed the survey and most of the complaints were to do with the facilities for playing soccer and insects in the girls' bathrooms. Two students reported relational difficulties with older students, which teachers quickly addressed and responded to. Overall satisfaction and satisfaction with teachers averaged at 4 and a half stars out of 5 (up half a star on last year).

Staff Professional Development

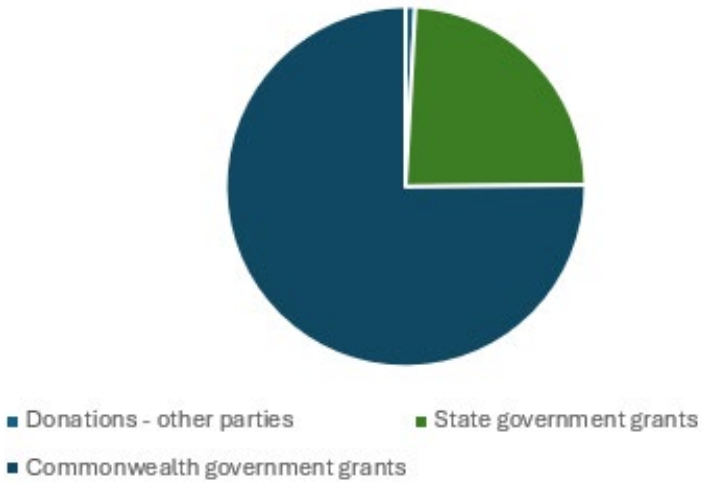
Staff meet each week with an agenda that they can add to, and the psychologist runs a session each term on staff wellbeing and self-care.

Other staff professional development during the year included:

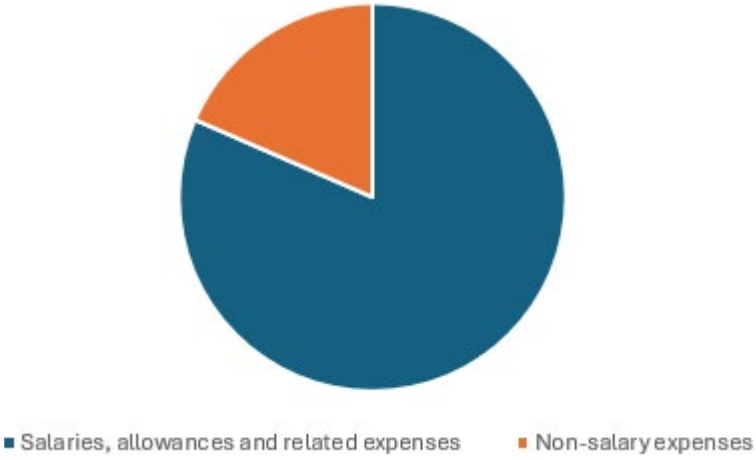
- *Child protection in the context of refugee trauma and resettlement* presented by Rafik Tanious from STARTTS
- Internal AI conference on use of Cogniti
- Erina Wilkey (MM Psychologist) attended STARTTS Conference: Refugee trauma recovery in resettlement
- *Leading in Small Schools and Special Assistance Schools (AIS)* - Julia West (Head of Campus)
- *Assessing and diagnosing specific learning disorders* - Erina Wilkey, MM Psychologist
- Internal AI conference on establishing AI tutors for Maths in Stage 4
- Internal PD run by Erina Wilkey on strengths. Working Genius used as a tool
- K-2 teacher Initialit training
- Teacher's Aide: Multilit training

Financial Information

2025 Recurrent/Donation Income



2025 Recurrent/Capital Expenditure



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