



**Barker**  
College

**NSW Indigenous Campuses**  
2024 Year in Review

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



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 2024, interest in enrolment at Darkinjung continued to build, with strong expressions of interest for the 2025 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 provided 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.

In October, Darkinjung Barker hosted a regional Robotics qualifying event, where one team qualified for the National VEX Robotics Competition in December.

Priority areas for improvement identified for 2025 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, Darkinjung Barker and Ngarralingayil Barker 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



**Darkinjung Barker and Ngarralingayil Barker continue to be integral to the Barker College community, proudly reflecting the School's commitment to reconciliation and educational equity.**

In 2024, both campuses remain responsive to the unique needs of their respective communities. We continue to witness the growth of our students as confident individuals, deeply connected to their Aboriginal heritage and identity, and enthusiastic about their learning journey.

Jamie Shackleton returned as the Director of Aboriginal Campuses NSW in Term 2 replacing Mandy Shaw. The classroom teachers have been supported by a new Learning Support teacher, Rory Janssens. This has strengthened our ability to cater for the diverse range of learning needs across multi age classrooms. The Year 13 internship program remains a valuable asset, providing meaningful support in classrooms and contributing to the holistic development of our students.

We are privileged to work in partnership with the Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council and Kiray Putjung Aboriginal Corporation as well as senior elders from the Wonarua nation. The wisdom and guidance of local Elders continue to be foundational to the success of our schools, enriching the cultural knowledge and understanding of our students and shaping the next generation of community leaders.

Student attendance remains strong, with both campuses maintaining an average attendance rate of around 90%—a positive indicator within the broader context of Indigenous education in Australia. Enrolments in 2024 started with 24 students at Darkinjung and 13 at Ngarralingayil. The numbers at Ngarralingayil dropped away during the year due to some family relocation as well as struggles with care arrangements, whilst at Darkinjung Barker the numbers remained steady before an increase across the second half of the year, with further increases for 2025.



At the end of 2024, one Year 6 student from Darkinjung transitioned to high school at Barker College, Hornsby campus. She follows in the footsteps of an older sibling.

A key focus remains the employment and development of Aboriginal educators. Across both campuses during 2024, we are proud to have two Aboriginal teachers and an Aboriginal teachers' aide. Their presence in the classroom has been invaluable, particularly in embedding Indigenous perspectives into the curriculum.

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



The academic programs provide the children with the foundation skills necessary for successful learning and the children are all showing the appropriate levels of development and improvement.

The two campuses have continued to engage with Good to Great Schools literacy programs and they are progressing positively. The eight cycles of School practice provide a systematic way to drive continuous school improvement with a focus on professional development for teachers, data driven improvement for students, peer collegiality amongst teachers and community engagement. Support is provided through each stage of the program by the School Partnership Manager, School Partnership Coordinator and the Teaching Coach. There has been a greater focus on data collection and tracking performance. This has allowed us to more specifically identify areas for growth and plan strategies around individual student improvement.

The addition of the learning support teacher in 2024 has provided the opportunity for targeted practice to improve literacy and numeracy skills, and better track student learning. Individual learning plans have been developed for those students requiring more targeted and individual support. Class teachers and parents have been involved in consultation, development and review of the Individual plans.

Teachers from Hornsby regularly visit campuses to provide learning experiences in Christian Studies and Music. The students engage positively with these programs. The Barker Junior School G&T Coordinator and Library Integrator also visited each campus a couple of times per term with a focus on literacy and identifying strengths within the students. The children this year had the opportunity to complete the Premier's Reading Challenge.

The students at both campuses benefited from the Books in Homes program which provided them with nine new books each year that they choose from a selection of 48 books three times each year. The School library receives one copy of all 146 titles each year as well. This program has been sponsored by staff members from the Hornsby campus.





Reflecting on the academic progress at both campuses:

### **Darkinjung**

- All grades saw growth across literacy (phonic knowledge, fluency, accuracy, decoding, comprehension and spelling) except for Foundation
- Significant growth across Year 2-6 in comprehension and fluency
- Learning support has been targeted for reading. Identified students receive explicit phonics instruction, word drills, fluency passages and reading aloud, three times per week 1:1 with a student intern or Learning Support Coordinator
- Year 2-6 students have improved in their Spelling. Year 3-6 students receive Spelling Mastery intervention twice per week
- Areas to focus on: foundation grade (Kindergarten) — phonemic segmentation and letter naming fluency. Across the school - Reading Accuracy

### **Ngarralingayil**

- Significant growth in foundation (Kindergarten) across every area of literacy — letter naming, phonics, fluency, non-sense word reading and word reading
- Year 4 — growth from February to November in fluency and accuracy and growth in spelling
- Spelling Mastery is run daily by the Teachers' Aide
- Individualised literacy program has been executed in Term 3 and 4 targeting student needs
- Focus areas: Foundation continue to focus on blending and decoding and comprehension for all students

The students are also engaged in wonderful learning experiences beyond the classroom. Culture and heritage programs are central to the foundation for learning. The children regularly embark on excursions to broaden their experience and deepen their understanding. Culture and Heritage officers from the Darkinjung Land Council as well as a representative of Dhinewan Mentoring provided culture programs at the campus on a regular basis. In addition, traditional Wonnaruah language (Ngarralingayil Barker) and Darkinyung and Wiradjuri language (Darkinjung Barker) are being incorporated into teaching and learning programs.

Students from both campuses in Years 3 — 6 attended a student camp at Lake Macquarie providing an opportunity for fun, outdoor education and personal growth experiences. The camp aimed to boost student engagement and social skills, complementing the school's focus on personal development.

Children represented the School at key community events including marching with veterans at Anzac Day, Remembrance Day services, participating in cultural celebrations, dancing at NAIDOC week assemblies at the Hornsby campus and other significant Aboriginal organisation community events.

Robotics continued to be a wonderful addition to the programs at both NSW campuses. Both campuses have visits from Robotics staff from the Hornsby campus on a fortnightly basis. In addition, the Darkinjung

children visit the Carden Ave Robotics Centre on their visit to the Hornsby campus on each alternate fortnight. The Darkinjung School hosted the VEX Robotics Regional Championships with teams from other schools attending. This event was a qualifying tournament for the State Championships held in Sydney. A team from Darkinjung qualified for the National Championships in Sydney in December.

Connection across campus continued to be a highly valued initiative. The children from Darkinjung attended Hornsby each fortnight and the children from Ngarralingayil attended once or twice per term. The children joined in the Barker Junior School Cross Country Championships and Athletics Championships at Hornsby.

Additional opportunities were provided in 2024 to support local community events, including the Yarramalong Artisan Markets, The Yarramalong Spring Fair and the National Heritage Festival where the theme was Shared Stories.

We are proud of all that our Indigenous schools are achieving and the benefits that are occurring for all of our school community.



**Martin Lubrano**  
*Head of Junior School*





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