

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDENT BODY

2.1 School Context

Macarthur is a co-educational independent Transition to Year 12 Christian school located in the semi-rural area of Cobbitty, near Camden. It has a record of excellent HSC results and a high percentage of students entering university each year. The surroundings of the school are rapidly changing with a number of new residential developments under way within a five-kilometre radius of the school.

Macarthur has two mottos, 'Through Christ Alone' which emphasises the Christian heritage of the School and 'Enter to Learn, Go out to Serve' which is the practical manifestation of the values Macarthur encourages within students. Macarthur is well established, commencing in 1984, offering excellent facilities and opportunities for students to develop their academic, musical, sporting, community responsibility and leadership skills in a safe and caring environment. The School is outward-looking and has a strong international focus with Sister Schools in Hungary and Japan and is part of the Asia Education Foundation's Bridge programme, fostering ties with Indonesia. The School adheres to traditional values as contained in and expressed throughout the Bible and has a proven track record of strong academic success for learners across the academic spectrum.

The teachers are highly qualified and experienced, many recognised leaders in their field of expertise. Providing opportunities for students to 'grow their learning' and value-add throughout their time at the School is the driving force behind the School's desire to constantly improve the focus on teaching and learning. To better focus on the needs of students Macarthur is divided into a Junior School (Transition - Year 4), Middle School (Year 5 - Year 9) and Senior School (Year 10 - Year 12), each led by a Head of School who provides a close link with families. The Heads of School, together with the Dean of Studies, monitor student progress through a range of academic assessment and testing. These tests include CMIT-SENA 1 and CELF-4 in Kindergarten, PAT Maths (Years 1-7), YARC Comprehension and SA Spelling Test. To complement the NAPLAN testing in Years 3, 5, 7, and 9, the School employs Academic Assessment Services Pty Ltd to conduct testing for students in Years 4, 6, 8 and 10. The latter of these includes a Career Assessment.

The purpose built and extensive facilities available are designed specifically for the developmental learning and social needs of the students across the School, with Transition and Kindergarten being specifically set apart and fenced for the youngest learners. Macarthur students have a record of excellent HSC results with an exceptionally high percentage of students entering university each year. Academic and pastoral care is a strong feature of the School. Year 7 and 12 Year advisers along with Heads of House provide students in Years 5-12 with additional academic and pastoral care. The development of Christian values and attitudes is encouraged through a comprehensive pastoral care programme and the availability of a wide range of voluntary Christian activities. Student community service and outreach opportunities locally, nationally and internationally are available. The School continues to introduce young students of the Year 6 cohort to the concept of mission and service to others through a North Queensland Outreach trip. Year 11 students can take part in the Thailand Outreach, in which they have the experience of working with children from a different culture and who are significantly underprivileged. The House system develops a sense of community and is the basis for sporting and other competitions. The focus in recent years on building a strong House spirit among students and staff has been very successful.

Opportunities for academic extension are also available. The GATEway (Gifted and Talented Education) programme in Year 5 and 6 and the Honours Programme in Year 7 and 8 provide a fast-paced, challenging learning environment for academically capable and gifted students. Year 8

students with a talent in one or more subject can participate in the Aristotle Programme which fosters critical and creative thinking and research skills. Year 9 and 10 gifted students can join the Socrates Programme, which often links them with former students and university mentors. Mathematically gifted students have the opportunity to be accelerated in Year 9 with the aim of completing the HSC for Mathematics when they are in Year 11. Students with musical ability are encouraged to participate in one of the many music ensembles on offer. The Orchestra, String Orchestra, Preparatory Orchestra, Stage Band, Concert Band, Preparatory Band, Choir and Vocal Ensemble are just some of the performance groups available. Instrumental string and band programmes are included in the curriculum from Year 4 to Year 6 and the peripatetic music programme is extensive. The School believes that the introduction of music training at a very young age is beneficial in the intellectual development of children.

The School also operates a very active Learning Support Programme catering for the needs of students who have experienced early learning difficulties in Literacy and Numeracy. In K-6, this is overseen by the Heads of School and the Co-ordinator of Learning and Literacy K-6. In 7-12, this is overseen by the Dean of Studies and Co-ordinator of Learning and Literacy 7-12. Teachers' aides also support the students with their literacy and numeracy needs. Staff are also provided with strategies to differentiate learning tasks. Students with disabilities are assessed by the learning support team and in some cases, in consultation with parents, educational plans are devised so these students can access the curriculum.

Macarthur offers an unparalleled diversity of sporting, co-curricular and Outdoor Education opportunities for students in the southwest of Sydney. Providing opportunities for students to have experiences in areas where they might not have initially realised an interest and talent is central to the School's co-curricular, sporting and Outdoor Education programmes. The broad range of sporting experiences has led some students to gain State and National representative honours. Team and individual sports are provided from Year 3 onwards including in Swimming, Cross Country, Athletics, Soccer, Basketball, AFL, Rugby, Hockey, Netball, Cricket, Volleyball, Snowsports, Equestrian and Rowing competitions. There are a wide range of other activities available covering adventure, school and community service as well as academic interest areas. The Agricultural Show Team, Community Service Teams, Debating, Public Speaking, Musicals, GATEway 8, Robotics, Model making, Movie making, Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, Bible Study groups, Crusaders, and many other activities are among the opportunities available. There are international History, Art, Music and Indonesian study tours which help deepen student learning. Students are encouraged to compete in State, national and international competitions such as the ICAS tests for English, Mathematics and Computing, Language World Championships, Australian Maths Olympiade, Australian History Competition and the Young Scientist competitions.

Student achievement across school life is recognised through the awards system with Middle School and Senior School students awarded Colours acknowledging success, which appear on the School Blazer. There are many opportunities for training in student leadership in the Middle School and Senior School. School Prefects, House Captains, as well as a range of activity Captains are highly sought after leadership positions. Those who demonstrate leadership in the various musical ensembles, sporting pursuits or other activities are recognised formally as student leaders and are encouraged to foster School and House spirit in that area of activity. In the Middle School, the appointment of Middle School Prefects provides leadership opportunities for students to begin refining their leadership skills, while students in Year 6 have an opportunity to be Student Leaders and activity monitors, assisting K-6 students.

Parents who enrol their children at Macarthur are generally aspirational and are seeking the best educational outcomes possible for their children. Conscious of this, the School seeks to tap the interest and enthusiasm of the parent body, as well as those associated with the school in a myriad of other ways, to create a learning environment that will enhance opportunities for personal growth and future prospects. Active parent groups, known as Women at Macarthur (W@M) and Men at Macarthur (M@M) have successfully operated bringing parents together at a number of social occasions, while at the same time contributing both financially and in kind

towards improvements in the school amenities. Whilst we request community support we also give back to our community through Sponsorship. The School sponsored a number of community events including the Harrington Park Community Christmas Carols, Camden Show and Camden Show Ball. In recent years the School commenced a Community Partner Programme. Five businesses are offered the opportunity to connect with the School for a minimum period of 12 months. These businesses provide financial assistance to the School. These companies are acknowledged both in print and verbally at major School events. The School has maintained the five current companies for the past 5 years and nurture these relationships throughout the year.

2.2.Characteristics of the Student Body

Outlined in the table below is information regarding the population profile of the school in 2017 (with the previous year of 2016 shown in brackets)

Gender distribution

	Boys	Girls	Totals
K-6	160 [145]	150 [148]	310 [293]
7-12	255 [221]	231 [268]	486 [489]
Totals	415 [366]	381 [416]	796 [782]

This table shows a 1.8% increase in enrolments for 2017 (5.8% increase in K-6, 0.6% decrease in 7-12), following on from the 5.7% increase in 2016. The totals show a 52:48 ratio between boys and girls in the whole school, which is different to the 47:53 ratio in 2016 and previous years where there has been a higher ration of girls.

Other aspects of the student body

	Diagnosed Disability	Language other than English	Indigenous
K-12	3.3 [3.5%]	24% [19%]	1% [1%]

Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA)

The ICSEA for Macarthur Anglican School, as shown on the My School website at <http://myschool.edu.au> is 1110. This is three points lower than 2016 but the same as the Index in 2015. From the My School website, the percentage of school families in each socio-educational quartile have varied only slightly from the previous year with a slightly higher proportion in the second quarter and a slightly lower percentage in the top quarter. The socio-educational quartiles for 2017, with equivalent figures for 2016 in brackets, are as follows:

School ICSEA Value (with previous year shown in brackets)

Bottom Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter	Top Quarter
5 [5]	17 [13]	30 [30]	49 [52]

MCEETYA Employment Groups

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 8	Group 9
41% [38%]	29% [30%]	14% [16%]	5% [5%]	8% [8%]	3% [3%]

From the school's database, the percentages of parents in the employment groups, as disclosed in the MCEETYA data collection, follow the trend above. The above table suggests that the students come from socio-educational backgrounds that could be described as generally middle to upper middle and high levels.

Anecdotal Information

Database information also shows that the families from which the students come include parents who may generally be described by the terms 'professional', 'white collar employee', 'self-employed' or 'managerial'. Some families could be described as quite wealthy and a number of students are fortunate to have experienced overseas family holidays. The dress, general health and wellbeing of the student body indicates that they come from homes where parents show pride and care for their children. There are also several students who come from families where parents make a very significant sacrifice for their children to attend Macarthur and who in many cases are supported by the school through its scheme of scholarship and bursarial assistance. Through its

pastoral care programme, members of staff become aware that several families experience difficult emotional and relational issues, as one would expect to find in any community.

The students themselves generally have aspirations to participate in the opportunities provided by the school, to complete Year 12, then to progress to university. Apart from their studies, many students are involved in various sporting and community activities outside of the school, with some competing in competitions at national and even international level. A number of students have participated in cultural and leadership activities locally, nationally and internationally. There is a strong desire to be involved in community service activities, by helping with fund-raising appeals, by upholding the school's support of Anglicare, Varee Christian School in Chiang Mai, Thailand, the African Aids Foundation and by personal involvement in activities such as the School's Community Service group, which operates after school hours.

For further information about Macarthur Anglican School available on the My School website, go to: <http://www.myschool.edu.au>