



THE  
McDONALD  
COLLEGE



Annual Report **2024**

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# Theme 1

## A Message from Key School Bodies

## Message from the Chair of the College Council

The College Council worked closely in collaboration with the College Principal to ensure that the Values and Mission of the College were upheld, and above all our Vision *to be the best performance centred school* is at the centre of every decision taken by our governing body.

2024 marked the 40th Anniversary of the College having been established in 1984. At the celebration of this milestone I recognise our founding Principal, Margaret Markham whose dream it was to create The McDonald College, a school, where students could follow their performance dreams and thrive under a rigorous academic regime.

Our 2024 HSC results were outstanding placing us at 83rd in the State. I congratulate our Dux, Mollie Rytmeister, who achieved an ATAR of 98.55 and came 2nd in the State for 2 Unit Dance.

The Class of '24 received thirty-seven (37) practical work nominations with four (4) works being selected for exhibition. In addition, we had thirty-eight (38) High Achievers – Band 6 subject results.

Our students continue to uphold the philosophy of the College with pride and determination – that of integrating their academic studies and performance achievements whilst following their passions with commitment and determination.

The College Council met eleven times during 2024 and remains focussed on sustainability and continual upgrade to our teaching facilities whilst projecting into the future. The students are at the centre of all decisions made. Meetings were a mix of in person and online.

I thank my fellow Directors for their ongoing commitment to quality governance and to their support for the ethos of the College.

The Council appreciates the outstanding educational practices of our teaching staff and the support provided by non-teaching staff. I acknowledge with thanks the dedication to the College by the Principal, Maxine Kohler and the Executive Management Team.

Antoinette Colbran  
Chair of the College Council

## Message from the Principal

Riding the waves of success, we continue the momentum of a rigorous education combined with industry-based performance learning opportunities and elite tennis training.

I am incredibly grateful to all involved in helping the College reach our 40th anniversary in 2024. Over those 40 years, we have grown from a community of 78 ballet students from Years 7, 8, 9 and 11 to a student body that embraces a rigorous academic education from Kindergarten to Year 12 and performance streams that include dance, classical ballet, acting, music, musical theatre, technical production and elite tennis.

I celebrate our teaching and non-teaching staff who support each other and equally care for and nurture our students.

To complement our staff, it is crucial that parents believe in and support our aims and are true partners at every turn in their child's journey through to Year 12. Carnivals, camps, performances including sporting tournaments are all part of a child's pathway to academic graduation and are a valued part of our educational program.

We continue to improve our facilities and infrastructure and thank our Parents and Friends Association for the part they play in assisting with funds to support the development of our facilities.

Using the P & F funds raised at the 2023 Principal's Dinner, we were able to complete Stage 2 of our Canteen refurbishment. This entailed a pleasing face lift of the servery area. Stage 3 will be the replacement of the flooring planned for 2025.

Our 2023 Wellbeing Team recommended to the College Executive that the length of the College Day be reconsidered. This resulted in the shortening of the secondary school day and has had a profoundly positive impact on staff and student wellbeing,

To name just a few College highlights, our students were involved in:

- A Chorus Line
- The Nutcracker
- Noises Off
- High Performance Season
- UTR Tennis tournaments
- Interschool debating

- Eisteddfods (with many 1st place awards)
- Multiple Acting performances
- Multiple Music showcases
- Winners of the National bestreetsmart Film Competition (Year 10)

Individual highlights included:

- Ayumi Ito, 2024 Australian Junior Tennis Masters Championship
- Louis Alexiou, 1st Junior Boys Ballet for Youth America Grand Prix
- Harry Forsyth, winner of U/18 Australian Tennis Cup  
1st CIS 800 metre (without training)
- Matilda Casey (as Annie), Skylah McMaha, Nina Gallas, Bianca Pappa  
accepted roles in Annie the Musical in 2025
- Sarah Wheatley, Siofra McAweeney, Charlize Portes-Green and Charlotte Rota  
accepted position in international ballet finishing schools.

I recognise and thank our entire staff, for their readiness to adapt and to adopt whilst creating opportunities and a safe and healthy environment where our students want to belong.

M. P. Kohler, M.Ed.  
Principal

## Message from College Captain and Student Representative Body

In 2024 the student leadership body comprised of:

- College Captain
- College Vice Captain
- Sports Captain
- Senior Prefects (from Year 11 and Year 12)
- Secondary - House Captains, Vice Captains, and Tennis Captain
- Junior School – Captain and Vice-Captain from Years 6
- Junior School – House Captains and Vice-Captains from Years 5 - 6
- Junior School - Student Representative Council

One of the highlights of our year was the annual Prefects' Concert, an incredible showcase of student talent. We raised funds for the not-for-profit organisation, 'Heart on my Sleeve' whose mission is 'the path to mental wellbeing begins when you stop pretending everything is fine.'

Staff, students and their families generously donated to our Christmas Hamper Appeal for the Exodus Foundation. Other small fund-raising drives were held throughout the course of the year.

Throughout the year our senior leaders and I were fortunate enough to be invited to various leadership events, including the Youth Leadership Academy Australia's conference where I was asked to share my experience and insights as a student leader.

The leadership opportunities provided at the College are truly remarkable, and I genuinely encourage any student who is considering pursuing a leadership role to go for it! I feel privileged to have led such a special school full of passionate, talented, inspiring students, but also to have equally learnt so much from the experience as well.

Emma King  
2024 College Captain

## Contextual Information about the College and Characteristics of the Student Body

### College Motto

Striving for excellence and quality in performance.

### Our Vision

To be the best performance centred school.

### College Mission

To nurture individual journeys in a creative and inclusive learning community that values intellectual inquiry and ethical decision-making.

### College Values

- Humility
- Honour
- Passion
- Commitment
- Appreciation

### Wellbeing Statement

Balancing social, physical, cognitive and mental health in a diverse and caring community.

### Inspiring the Individual Learning Journey

Learning at The McDonald College is garnered by each student's passion and commitment to succeed whilst having fun. From Kindergarten to Year 12, students work at their academic level in conjunction with our daily performance program. Depending on the year level, creativity and personal fulfilment is nurtured through the following performance genres for up to 2 hours per day in conjunction with our rigorous academic program:

- Acting
- Classical Ballet
- Commercial Dance

- Senior Contemporary Dance (in partnership with Sydney Dance Company)
- Music
- Musical Theatre
- Tennis (in partnership with Voyager Tennis Academy)
- Technical Production

Our performance program is an integral part of our College life providing personal fulfilment, skill development, resilience, confidence and leadership capabilities. A comprehensive performing arts program is also available after school hours to College students as well as the broader community.

### **Our Partnership Program**

Our original philosophy of keeping all options open for students beyond school, is as applicable today as it was in 1984 when the College was established. Our broad curriculum supports the changing areas of interest and application of our students during their school journey through to the HSC.

Focusing on choice and opportunity, the College has embarked upon a program of partnerships with industry specialists providing networking opportunities during the school years, and more importantly, beyond school. Aimed at enriching our student's creativity and intellect, our established partnerships include:

- Sydney Dance Company
- Voyager Tennis Academy

We are particularly proud of our student's achievements, integrating elite performance with a rigorous academic education. Our academic achievements in external examinations such as NAPLAN and the HSC are consistently above the State average and are often achieved in tandem with students' professional performance and sporting commitments.

### **School website**

[www.mcdonald.nsw.edu.au](http://www.mcdonald.nsw.edu.au)

### **School statement from My School website and Characteristics of the Student Body**

Please visit <https://myschool.edu.au/school/43802>



## Theme 2

# Outcomes and Results

## Standardised Testing

### NAPLAN results 2024

Performance for the NAPLAN is documented on the My School website: [www.myschool.edu.au/school/43802](http://www.myschool.edu.au/school/43802)

### Senior Secondary Outcomes (student achievement)

#### Records of School Achievement

Records of School Achievement are awarded to students who do not complete Stage 6 studies and qualify for the Higher School Certificate for reasons such as entering the workforce or engaging in vocational studies.

In 2024, only one student was granted a Record of School Achievement. The student was in Year 11. 100% of Year 12 students achieved a Higher School Certificate.

#### Higher School Certificate

Approximately 80,166 students sat for the Higher School Certificate in 2024. At The McDonald College, 40 students from Year 12 sat the Higher School Certificate examinations.

- 20 different courses offered to students at The McDonald College
- Students scored ABOVE the state averages for Bands 4-6 in many courses

Subject	School (Bands 4-6)	State (Bands 4- 6)
Biology	92%	70%
Business Studies	91%	64%
Dance	100%	78%
Design and Technology	88%	77%
Drama	95%	92%
English Standard	75%	66%
English Advanced	100%	97%
Legal Studies	100%	70%
Mathematics Standard	57%	59%
Mathematics Advanced	60%	77%
Modern History	67%	71%
Music 1	100%	90%

	College Average (Bands E4, E3)	State Average (Bands E4,E3)
Extension 1 English	100%	95%
Extension 1 Mathematics	33%	80%

Distance Education Courses studied: 2 unit French Beginners, 2 unit Chinese Beginners.

### 2019-2024 Comparison of HSC results

Improvements occurred in many subjects. Most subjects scored very similar averages when compared to 2019 -2024 showing that the high standard is maintained at the College from year to year.

The following lists some of The McDonald College averages to support the above statement:

	2024 Bands 4, 5, 6	2023 Bands 4, 5, 6	2023 Bands 4, 5, 6	2022 Bands 4, 5, 6	2021 Bands 4, 5, 6	2020 Bands 4, 5, 6	2019 Bands 4, 5, 6
Business Studies	91%	100%	63%	72%	100%	72%	72%
Dance	100%	100%	100%	85%	100%	86%	86%
Legal Studies	100%	75%	100%	80%	86%	90%	90%
Drama	95%	100%	100%	100%	80%	75%	75%
English Advanced	95%	95%	89%	100%	100%	100%	100%
English Extension 2	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
English Standard	75%	48%	71%	77%	69%	75%	75%
Maths Extension 2	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Music 1	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

## Senior Secondary Outcomes

Senior secondary outcomes are documented on the My School website [www.myschool.edu.au](http://www.myschool.edu.au)

## Post School Destinations

Most students who left school at the end of Year 12, following completion of their secondary education, progressed to University, TAFE, professional performing arts engagements, or further performance training including tennis at a pre-professional level. University offers made to the Class of '24 included but not limited to:

Course title	Institution
B Media	UNSW
B Laws	Macquarie University
B Arts	Macquarie University University of Notre Dame
B Sport & Ex Sc	University of Technology Sydney
B Education (EarlyChld&Pri)	University of Newcastle
B Teach (E Child Ed)	Macquarie University
B Arts/B Education (Secondary)	Macquarie University
B Music	University of Sydney
B Eng Sys (Hons) (Mech Eng)	Southern Cross University
B Applied Finance	Macquarie University
Intensive Program	Macquarie University
B Comm (SocPolSc)	University of Technology Sydney
B Economics	UNSW
B Fine Arts/B Eng (Hons)	UNSW
B Musical Theatre	NYU Tisch
B Musical Theatre	WAAPA



# Theme 3

## Staffing

None of our staff members have identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, but we strongly encourage applications from First Nations teachers and staff.

Workforce composition and teacher numbers as per the My School website [www.myschool.edu.au](http://www.myschool.edu.au)

### School Staff

Teaching Staff	33
Full-time equivalent teaching staff	28.5
Non-teaching staff	29
Full-time equivalent non-teaching staff	22

### Teaching Accreditation

Level of Accreditation	Number of Teachers
Pre-2004 teachers (accreditation not required in 2018)	0
Conditional	0
Provisional	2
Proficient Teacher	34
Total number of teachers	36



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# Theme 4

## Attendance

## Student Attendance Rates

For the whole College student attendance rates please refer to the College's data on the My Schools website [www.myschool.edu.au](http://www.myschool.edu.au)

### 2024 Student Attendance Rate

Year	Attendance
YK	81.8%
Y01	84.2%
Y02	88.6%
Y03	85.7%
Y04	93.0%
Y05	91.2%
Y06	90.8%
Y07	91.5%
Y08	94.5%
Y09	91.7%
Y10	89.4%
Y11	90.5%
Y12	92.7%
Average	89.7%

## Management of Non-Attendance

The College keeps a register of the daily attendance of all students at the College and electronic record is maintained on the Student Management System - TASS.

The College has implemented the following systems and procedures to follow up on unexplained absences:

- Where an absence has not been explained by 9.30am a text message is sent to the student's parents/guardians notifying them of the absence and requesting them to immediately contact the College.
- Where the absence remains unexplained the matter will be reported to the Deputy Principal for possible investigation and follow up.
- Where parents/guardians repeatedly fail to inform the College of absences the Office Administrator will contact them directly to seek an explanation and to remind them of their obligation to report absences.
- All information in relation to unsatisfactory attendance is recorded on students' files and information with respect to attendance is provided in each student's College Report.

## Unsatisfactory Attendance Intervention Strategies

The College has implemented the following strategies to improve unsatisfactory attendance and student engagement in school and learning:

- The College encourages parents/guardians to understand their obligations to ensure their child attends College, and to not condone absences for unauthorised reasons such as birthdays, shopping and other leisure activities.
- Regular meetings are conducted between the Principal, Deputy Principal and senior staff, as appropriate, to coordinate responses to student absences.
- Students with persistently low attendance will be monitored, and personalised strategies will be considered to increase their attendance and/or engage them in continuing education programs. For students requiring more intensive support, one-on-one meetings and alternative arrangements may be organised in consultation with parents/guardians.
- Where frequent absences are explained as being due to illness, the College will request medical certificates for the absences and will consult with parents/guardians regarding the health care needs of the student.
- All required reports will be made to the Department of Community Justice Child Protection Helpline where there are unsatisfactorily explained concerns for the Child's safety and wellbeing in relation to Student's attendance.



# Theme 5

## College Policies

Everyone at The McDonald College has the legal obligation not to discriminate against, or harass for any unlawful reason, or bully for any reason any employee, agent, contractor, supplier, volunteer, parent, student or visitor.

The College expects all staff members to treat each other and other people with whom they come into contact as representatives of the College with respect and courtesy.

The College seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment to support the mental, physical and emotional wellbeing of students and staff.

The following College policies are publicly available on our website:

**[www.mcdonald.nsw.edu.au/policies-and-procedures](http://www.mcdonald.nsw.edu.au/policies-and-procedures)**

- Enrolment Policy
- Child Safe Policy
- Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy
- Student Discipline Policy
- Complaints Handling Policy



# Theme 6

## Stakeholder Satisfaction

We work with staff, students and parents on a values-rich respect, responsibility and right choice platform. College staff promote the five main College values:

- Humility
- Honour
- Appreciation
- Passion and
- Commitment.

Student and staff wellbeing is central to our educational mission and our well-being program promotes a culture of respect, responsibility, and positive student behaviour through a range of targeted and age-appropriate initiatives.

Students are afforded multiple survey opportunities to provide feedback on the level of student satisfaction fostering a sense of belonging that can help to promote a feeling of self-worth and assist students to become resilient learners.

Some student survey comments include:

- The teachers are always putting in 100% effort and go beyond what is required to make sure we are supported.
- I enjoy that are our teachers are always willing to help us.
- The teachers supporting me as an INDIVIDUAL has been really good. I think that the issue of academic assessments during performance seasons can be further improved. It is definitely not bad, and I am very glad that the school has been so supportive in our wish to improve it.
- You challenge me if I need to be challenged. You are supportive.

Staff feedback has revealed a high degree of satisfaction confirmed by a relatively low level of staff turnover. Staff turnover is predominantly pre-empted by relocation or personal matters.

Staff say:

- We take pride in being part of an educational environment where we genuinely feel we can make a difference in the lives of young people. The College actively encourages each of us to go the extra mile in supporting students and their families. Not just in an educational sense, but also from a wellbeing viewpoint.
- Secondary staff wellbeing has improved significantly with the implementation of the new timetable, allowing departments more time in the afternoons to collaborate, and for staff to attend to time-consuming administrative tasks.
- Staff tend to stay at the College for many years because they feel seen and heard. Our Principal and Deputy maintain an open-door policy and are always willing to listen to concerns or ideas, and implement as needed.

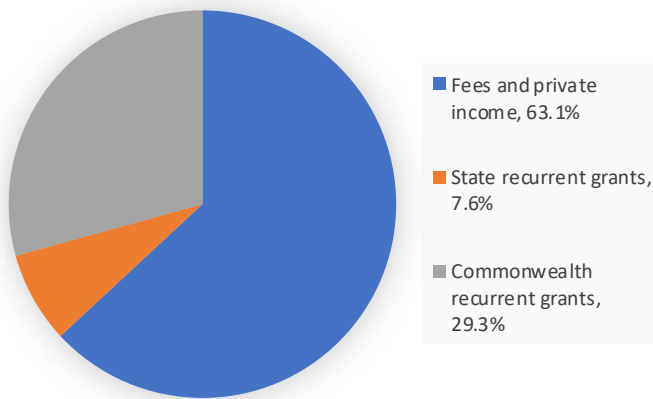


# Theme 7

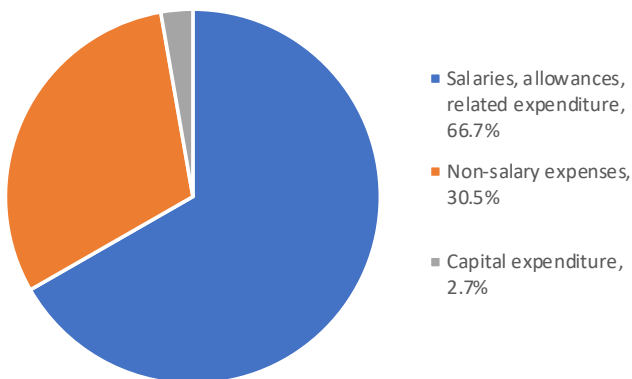
## Summary of Financial Information

These pie charts provide graphic representation of income and expenditure. The College's finances are managed by the Executive Finance Committee of the College Council which includes, but not limited to, the Chairperson, and Treasurer of the College Council and the Principal and Business Manager. This committee meets each month and reports monthly to the College Council.

**(a) TABLE 8 - Graphic 1:  
recurrent/capital income represented  
by pie chart - INCOME**



**(a) TABLE 8 - Graphic 2:  
recurrent/capital expenditure  
represented by pie chart -  
EXPENDITURE**





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