



Lake Tuggeranong College

# External Validation Panel Report 2007



## Contents

Introduction .....	1
School context .....	2
Values .....	2
Learning and teaching domain.....	3
Description of school statement .....	3
Evidence cited and its validation .....	3
Commendations .....	5
Recommendations .....	5
Student environment domain .....	7
Description of school statement .....	7
Evidence cited and its validation .....	7
Commendations .....	8
Recommendations .....	8
Leadership and management domain.....	9
Description of school statement .....	9
Evidence cited and its validation .....	9
Commendations .....	10
Recommendations .....	10
Community involvement domain.....	11
Evidence cited and its validation .....	12
Commendations .....	12
Recommendations .....	12
Concluding statement .....	13
Statement of validation .....	14
Panel members and professional positions .....	15



## Introduction

Since the early nineties, government schools in the ACT have undertaken a review of operations in compliance with the Education Act applicable at that time. The *ACT Education Act 2004*, Section 24 continues to require the review of the operations of government schools at least every five years.

The School Improvement Framework calls for schools to set challenging standards and goals and document the growth toward their achievement. To evaluate the school's process of self assessment of performance, the School Improvement Framework included the establishment of a rigorous, normative protocol for external validation of each school every three years.

The self assessment of performance in all aspects of schooling and the external validation process are intended to help the school determine and gauge its progress toward meeting departmental goals, assessing the quality of its programs, its staff, curriculum, students and administration, and assessing the school's performance and its contribution to the advancement of the Department's overall mission.

## **School context**

Lake Tuggeranong College is a government senior secondary college, which opened in 1989 in the Tuggeranong Valley. It provides comprehensive post compulsory education and training opportunities for a diverse range of students so that they will be well prepared to contribute to society and become life long learners.

There are currently 876 students and approximately 70 full time equivalent staff. It is an excellent educational institution that works to engage, enthuse, empower and extend its students.

The curriculum provides a wide selection of courses to meet the needs of all students, whether they are aiming for higher education, industry training or employment. The College Board and the ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies approve all college courses.

### **School vision and goals**

Lake Tuggeranong College is a community working together, providing a stimulating, caring and supportive environment enabling students to strive for excellence through a wide range of high quality learning experiences.

### **Values Slogan**

Committed to Quality.

### **School Values**

The Lake Tuggeranong College community values:

- A unity of purpose
- A strong client focus
- High expectations of staff performance
- Student commitment to learning and achieving one's 'personal best'
- Productive community partnerships
- Diversity and Choice
- Open communication and collaborative decision making
- Social justice and equity – a place for everyone
- A safe and stimulating environment conducive to good teaching and learning
- Student independence and self sufficiency by the end of Year 12

## Learning and Teaching domain

### Description of school statement

Lake Tuggeranong College offers students a wide range of Tertiary, Accredited, Registered and Vocational courses and units within seven faculties. A significant and growing number of students study undertake an Australian School Based Apprenticeship. There is also an option for work experience placements. Students also have many opportunities to participate in a wide range of co-curricular activities, particularly in the Arts and inter-college sport.

The College provides learning programs for students with special needs, students at risk and students in need of literacy and numeracy support.

To facilitate the transition from high school to college, Lake Tuggeranong College have implemented a range of strategies that cover the academic as well as the pastoral care needs of students. The Student Development Program is a key component of the Semester 1 program for all year 11 students.

The College provides information and advice about post-school options including employment and training programs as well as course and academic counselling advice.

There has been a focus on developing quality assessment tasks that incorporate high order thinking skills as part of the college's aim to embed best practice in teaching and learning. To complement this, the college offers an R unit in critical thinking and problem-solving skills as well as a research skills program run by the teacher-librarians.

The college has provided on-going professional learning opportunities for teachers to support contemporary quality teaching practice. Staff have embraced new technologies in their teaching.

### Evidence cited and its validation

#### Objectives and Evidence

1. To improve the Student Development program with an emphasis on the pastoral care component and transition pathways into further education, training or employment.

#### Evidence presented

Amendments have been made to the Student Development program since its inception to take account of feedback from students and staff. This was evident in the booklets available on G Drive.

There have been changes to the structure of the Student Support team and facilities to better meet students' pastoral as well as academic needs. The re-location of key staff to a central area has been beneficial to students' access to support, particularly with the increasing numbers of students in the college doing Australian School Based Apprenticeships.

- The college has effective processes for liaising with feeder high schools. The English and Mathematics faculties have specific programs for high school students to develop students' awareness of college courses and key skills in these areas.

#### 2. Develop and embed best practice in assessment and reporting across the entire college community:

##### Evidence presented

- Processes are in place to ensure quality assessment tasks include Higher Order Thinking Skills and open ended questioning. Staff are provided with professional learning to develop these strategies.
- Australian Scaling Test results are monitored on a faculty and college basis to identify trends that will inform curriculum offerings and support programs.
- All Year 11 students participate in an educational program on plagiarism through the Student Development Course.
- In some faculties, results from system testing are used to inform planning.
- Staff participate in professional learning related to assessment and reporting and through the Brindabella Collegiate they are working to share best practice across these colleges on a faculty as well as college level.

#### 3. To expand curriculum choices for students undertaking an accredited program of study, including students with special needs, students at risk and students with low levels of literacy and numeracy.

##### Evidence presented

- An Accredited Sports Science course has been written.
- Registered units have been developed in Mathematics to cater for students who are unable to cope with the Mathematics – General (A) course.
- Accredited Work and Society course has been promoted as a desirable course option offering pathways to a range of students.
- The Work and Society course has also been written under the Modified framework as evidenced by course documentation.

- There has been a significant number of Modified courses written to meet student needs.
- A large number of students are undertaking Australian School Based Apprenticeships as part of their educational program (106 currently).
- The employment of an adult literacy teacher to provide assistance to students with low literacy.

#### 4. Explore curriculum or training programs that address the Employability Skills Framework

##### Evidence presented

- The introduction of new courses in the Business and Social Science Faculty that incorporate vocational components and address the Employability Skills Framework.
- There are seven Vocational courses on offer which all incorporate elements from the Employability Skills Framework.

### Commendations

1. The college offers extensive curriculum choices, particularly for students seeking Accredited and Vocational courses. The college's commitment to provide students with multiple pathways including access to Australian National University College as well as Australian School Based Apprenticeships is to be commended.
2. The college is to be commended on the Student Development Program that supports students' transition to college.
3. The quality of the vocational and Registered Training Organisation documentation and processes are outstanding.
4. The college is to be commended for the way in which it is supporting the learning and pastoral needs of special needs students.
5. The college is to be commended for the provision of additional programs such as those that assist in Australian Scaling Test preparation, Critical Thinking and problem-solving skill development and Mathematics tutorials.
6. The college is to be commended for utilising new technologies such as Clickview, Interactive Whiteboards and MyClasses.
7. The college is to be commended for its participation in the Brindabella collegiate that provides opportunities for staff to share best practice and processes on a faculty as well as a college level.

### Recommendations

1. That the college continue to monitor student data to inform curriculum development and support programs.
2. That the college promotes more actively programs that attract and engage academically gifted students.
3. That all staff continue to integrate the use of new technologies in teaching and learning.

4. That the college explore ways of using more extensively system data such as Australian Capital Territory Assessment Program and high school information such as Student Pathways and transition surveys to inform course selection advice and assist in early intervention to address literacy and numeracy needs.
5. That the college evaluate the effectiveness of current assessment practices to ensure that high order thinking skills are integrated into all assessment items.

## Student environment domain

### Description of school statement

The college presents as an attractive learning environment with a strong sense of tradition and pride. There are several recently developed skill centres, for example, in Business Administration, Community Services, Multimedia, and the Gary Matheson Centre for flexible learning programs.

The college offers a range of programs to support students of all abilities to achieve a Year 12 Certificate. All Year 11 students undertake a student development program that introduces students to college life as well as to specific programs such as how to avoid plagiarism, research skills and resilience skills. It also covers the production of an individual student pathway plan and provides insights into different learning styles.

In addition to their course teachers, students are able to access staff for:

- Academic advice and studies support
- Careers advice
- Australian School Based Apprenticeships advice and support in placement
- Personal crisis advice
- Counselling
- Australian National University College support.

Lake Tuggeranong College was the first college in the Australian Capital Territory to engage the services of a chaplain and this position is now funded through Federal government funding.

### Evidence cited and its validation

#### Objective and Evidence

*To provide a college environment where all learning is valued and students are able to reach their potential.*

#### Evidence presented

- The college is a very aesthetically pleasing and well maintained environment. Faculties are well resourced and there is ready access to a wide range of community and business resources.
- There is an active Student Representative Council to enable students to participate in college decision-making and leadership.
- Extension programs are offered in English and Mathematics for high school students to facilitate a smooth transition for them into college.
- There is a high level of support available to students in need of academic or personal support from the Student Support team.
- Students have access to Careers advice through advisors, information sessions and on-line resources such as Careers Builder.

- Students participating in external programs such as Australian School Based Apprenticeships are given access to support from college staff.
- A positive learning environment is encouraged through activities such as the health expo, arts festivals and well-being programs. Students are also provided with access to a chaplain as well as a counsellor, Year Coordinators and the Student Advisor.
- Student achievements are recognised within and outside the college through the school newsletter, community newspapers, graduation ceremonies, display boards and at school assemblies.
- The college places value on learning undertaken outside of as well as within the formal curriculum. There are structures in place to give recognition to this where appropriate.

## **Commendations**

1. The staff of the college are clearly committed to supporting all students in their learning and personal development.
2. There have been clear changes implemented in response to the learning and pastoral needs of the increasing numbers of special needs students enrolled at the college.
3. The college is commended for the variety of Accredited and Registered courses in place that engage and allow students to achieve and feel valued.
4. The revised structure of the student support team is to be commended for providing a welcoming and accessible place for students.
5. The college is to be commended on promoting the achievements of its students in a range of activities.
6. The college is commended for providing high quality support to students undertaking work placements through vocational courses or work experience.

## **Recommendations**

1. To evaluate the success of the re-structure and re-location of the student support team and careers teams.
2. To make more extensive use of information such as exit surveys to inform future development in student support services and curriculum.
3. To review and improve, where necessary, student access to computers (for example, in the library).
4. To monitor the workloads and time allowances for members of the student support team.
5. To review the two year tenure process of year coordinator positions to address concerns about the loss of corporate knowledge.

## Leadership and management domain

### Description of school statement

At Lake Tuggeranong College the school leadership team comprises a Principal, two Deputy Principals, a Registrar and ten Executive Teachers.

The school has a number of active committees which support decision-making. These include:

- A school finance committee that prioritises resource management, reports to the School Board.
- An educational programs committee that oversees Board of Senior Secondary Studies assessment, reporting and moderation processes and implementation.
- A professional development committee that supports ongoing learning for teachers.
- An Information Communication Technology committee that supports the Information Technology infrastructure, resource development and pedagogy.
- A quality teaching and learning committee that oversees and supports projects that improve the delivery of teaching and learning.
- The assessment committee that is concerned with best practice, evidence-based data collection, implementation of Board of Senior Secondary Studies requirements and applying these consistently across faculties.
- A school improvement committee that leads the quality assurance process, based on reliable data.

Other groups that inform decision-making include:

- Staff, Faculty, Executive and Collegiate meetings
- Parents and Citizens Meetings

### Evidence cited and its validation

1. To re-engineer Lake Tuggeranong College's Executive structure to comply with current leadership models and school improvement domains.

Evidence presented

- Redefined executive roles and responsibilities by re-structuring School Leader C positions including creating two new faculties.
- Established four executive teams that are aligned to the school improvement domains.

2. Increase Level 1 participation and involvement with all tasks within the school, particularly in committees that pertain to school improvement domains.

Evidence presented:

- No evidence was available to support this objective. Anecdotal evidence suggested that changes as a result of the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement have led to this situation.

3. Design and implement an administration organisation structure as an adjunct to the Executive structure.

Evidence presented:

- With the executive re-structure administration staff have been assigned to clearly defined positions in student support.

## **Commendations**

1. The Brindabella Collegiate common time table allows for executive staff to meet at designated times.
2. Lake Tuggeranong College have set up procedures for dealing with succession planning in key roles, particularly in the student records area.

## **Recommendations**

1. To improve ownership of decision - making within the college, it is recommended that more full Staff Meetings may be required.
2. That while some faculties have strong links with local high schools, there does not seem to be a college-wide focus on this. It is recommended that this be further explored and documented.
3. It is recommended that there be a person with a more clearly defined role to coordinate the whole of the transition from high school process.
4. It is recommended that there is an evaluation of the revised executive structure that is aligned with the School Improvement Domains.
5. To review the allocation and number of line allowances for year level coordinators in relation to other line allowances offered in the college.
6. To define more clearly the professional role that classroom teachers as emerging leaders in a school should play in undertaking college-wide tasks.
7. That the executive maintains a close watch on curriculum offerings to ensure that all faculties are offering courses that meet the needs of the school's clientele.

# Community involvement domain

## Description of school statement

Staff and students are extensively involved in community-based programs. The college's interactions with the community include partnerships with external organisations, many of which are accessed to the advantage of student learning and pathways options.

The college communicates with parents/carers via a monthly newsletter. The college has a structure to communicate with parents/carers about students' academic progress, pastoral care issues and attendance.

A productive relationship exists between the school leadership team and the School Board and Parents and Citizens. The Board and the Parents and Citizens meetings overlap which allows parents to contribute to either meeting. Student representatives are also important contributors to these meetings and they also work to support the school through organising fundraising activities such as trivia nights.

The college celebrates success through achieving recognition in newsletters, announcements at assembly and articles in the local "Chronicle", graduation ceremonies and through the nomination of students for particular awards (e.g. VET Excellence Awards, scholarships and other grants).

Lake Tuggeranong College has established extensive links with the community that have been developed and enhanced throughout the college's existence. Some examples include:-

- Involvement with the Tuggeranong Community Arts and families festival in production for live theatre course; strong connections with Tuggeranong Arts Council via competitions involving photography, arts and graphic design students; establishment of a rowing program in partnership with the rowing club; environment programs;
- The development of a "Transition to work" program for Special Needs students by collaborating with appropriate outside agencies e.g. Disabilities Australian Capital Territory;
- A 3D animation course links with the Academy of Interactive Entertainment;
- The Rotary and Lions' Clubs (Tuggeranong) have supported individual students financially.
- Through the college's language department students studying children's literature have participated in the story-telling sessions at both the Tuggeranong Town Centre Library and local child-care centres.

## Evidence cited and its validation

*Improve links with more parents, private providers, Business Tuggeranong and the Canberra Institute of Technology*

### Evidence presented

- Links with external Registered Training Organisations through Australian School Based Apprenticeships, work experience placements (e.g. an automotive vocational course has developed a relationship with south side car dealerships to link in with apprenticeship training programs at the college).
- A number of former students are actively involved in current programs such as Flight, the Arts, Physical Education and Outdoor Education and Careers.

## Commendations

1. The Arts faculty is commended for their continued involvement within the wider community.
2. The number of students participating in Australian School Based Apprenticeships with college support structures in place to help students is to be commended.
3. The Work and Society course which has established links with students' work placements is to be commended.

## Recommendations

1. Due to the changed work conditions for staff we feel it would be beneficial to give more time allowance to the student services area to help improvement with communication with parents.
2. That the college review its marketing strategies to ensure it promotes opportunities available to extend students who are academically strong.
3. That the college analyses feedback from parents as to how to encourage greater parent participation in Parent-Teacher Nights.

.

## Concluding statement

Lake Tuggeranong College is a vibrant learning community committed to supporting its students and to playing a key role within the local community. It has a friendly and welcoming atmosphere and there is strong evidence that the college is meeting the diverse needs of its students. Of particular note is the work being done to support students with special needs and students undertaking vocational training.

The panel was very impressed with the physical environment and the resources available to staff and students. The sharing of some resources with the local community, in particular the joint library facility, is a great asset for the staff and students.

The panel was most impressed with the use of new technologies such as Clickview and the interactive whiteboards. The college is sharing with other members of the Brindabella Collegiate its knowledge of how Clickview can be incorporated into teaching; one example of the benefits of a collegiate model.

While a number of key staff were unavailable to meet with the panel due to being seconded to other positions, every attempt was made by other staff within the college to provide the evidence sought by the Validation team. We thank the staff for this support.

## Statement of validation

The External Validation Panel for Lake Tuggeranong College thank the Principal, Executive, teaching and administrative staff for the support it received over the three days of our visit.

The panel members examined all materials provided during the visit, spoke with teachers and a parent representative.

The members of the panel are pleased to validate the work that Lake Tuggeranong College is doing in providing a quality education environment for the students of their school.

The External Validation Panel completed the Validation process at Lake Tuggeranong College on 24 August 2007.

## Panel members and professional positions

Robin Morrell  
Deputy Principal, Melrose High  
School  
Signature

---

Helen Grant  
Principal, Canberra High School  
Signature

---

Rita Daniels  
Principal, MacKillop Catholic  
College  
Signature

---

Sue Boettcher  
SLC and IB Coordinator  
Narrabundah College  
Signature

---