



# ***CUNNAMULLA STATE SCHOOL***

## ***INNOVATIVE WAYS OF BUILDING CONFIDENCE AND CAPACITY IN INDIGENOUS STUDENTS***

**SHOWCASE 2005**

# 2005 Showcase Awards for Excellence in Schools Submission Form

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- Submission required in hard AND electronic copy
- Maximum FIVE pages of submission information and TEN pages of appendixes
- Minimum font size of 11 points
- Multimedia material OPTIONAL
- For further details see Guidelines Section 3.2 – How to Enter

**Title of submission:** Innovative Ways of Building Confidence and Capacity in Indigenous Students

**School/s:** Cunnamulla State School

**District:** Roma

**Area:** (See Section 4.1.1 of the Guidelines for details)

**Key Contact Person:**

*Name* Mr Chris Jewell

*Phone number* 4655 1266

*Mobile phone number*

*Email address* cjewe3@eq.edu.au

Please nominate (✓ or x) the Showcase category your project is to be entered into.  
(See Section 1.2 of the guidelines for more information.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Showcase Award for Excellence in the Early Phase of Learning
<input type="checkbox"/>	Showcase Award for Excellence in the Middle Phase of Learning
<input type="checkbox"/>	Showcase Award for Excellence in the Senior Phase of Learning
<input type="checkbox"/>	Showcase Award for Excellence in Inclusive Education
<input type="checkbox"/>	Showcase Award for Excellence in Leadership
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Showcase Award for Excellence in Innovation

**OPTIONAL multimedia items:** (For further information see Guidelines Appendix I)

If included, please nominate (✓) the file type

**PowerPoint presentation**  
Media Player file

**N.B. Multimedia items are not required electronically. A maximum of TWO items are to be supplied on ONE compact disc with the hard copy.**

**Submission overview:** (60–80 words only; please use simple language suitable for public relations and media use)

Over the last five years, the aim of Cunnamulla State School has been to change the culture of defeat in the school and improve the image of the school in the wider community.

The focus at Cunnamulla State School has been to convince teachers of the importance of building strong caring relationships with their students. There has been an emphasis on the need to bring real-life learning experiences into their classrooms that make use of the local context as much as possible. Teachers have been challenged to be truly accountable for the outcomes of their students and examine these outcomes with a view to understanding the real reasons behind student performance and adjust their teaching strategies accordingly. They have been asked to ensure that every student in their classes has a clear understanding of the challenges facing them and the opportunity to succeed in meeting those challenges at an appropriate level.

Mutual respect is the basis for all interactions at Cunnamulla State School.

We have worked to build confidence in our students through implementing a range of innovative programs, putting our students and their work on display at every available opportunity, production of a very professional full-colour glossy 12 page prospectus and participating in all major functions within the community.

As a result, the image of Cunnamulla State School in the community has improved, to a point where some of our most vocal critics have become our most ardent supporters. Our school numbers have steadily increased and our school has become a place where students, staff, parents and members of the community want to be.

**Description:** (A detailed description of the submission including the school's contribution to quality outcomes and continuous improvement for students)

Pages 2 - 3

**Connection to QSE – 2010, Destination 2010 and/or Education and Training Reforms for the Future:**

PAGE 1

**Outcomes:** (A description of the quality and continuously improved outcomes that have been achieved, including an explanation of how the outcomes are a result of the described practice)

Pages 4 – 5 & Appendices

**Evidence:** (Evidence supporting the achievement of the claimed outcomes including any performance measures used, See Section 3.3)

**Other documentation:** (Other documentation that describes the significance of the achieved outcomes. These items should be presented as an appendix.)

The following Appendix items MUST be included –

- a signed supporting statement from the principal
- a signed supporting statement from the parents and citizens' association

A statement from any other person or organisation with an interest in the submission is optional.

**Personnel involved in the project (names and roles):**

See Appendix J

**ENTERING YOUR SUBMISSION**

- 1. Ensure you have enclosed all compulsory information by completing the Entrants' Checklist in Appendix C.**
- 2. Ensure the principal signs this submission form.**
- 3. Forward your submission to your District Coordinator by 4 April 2005.**

SIGNATURE/S OF PRINCIPAL/S

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_

***To be completed by the Executive Director (Schools) after completion of the checklist:***

I support this submission and its entry in the Showcase Awards for Excellence in Schools 2005. This submission meets the requirements set out in the Executive Director's Checklist.

**Signature of Executive Director (Schools)**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_

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*A description of the Schools' contribution to quality outcomes and continuous improvement for students*

Pages 2 - 3

## **Outcomes Achieved and Evidence**

*A description of the quality and continuously improved outcomes that have been achieved. Explain how the outcomes are a result of the described practice.*

Pages 4 - 5                      and                      Appendices

## **Other Documents**

Statement from Cunnamulla Principal 2005 – see Appendix A  
Statement from Cunnamulla P & C President 2005 and ASSPA Committee – see Appendix B  
Comments from students/teachers/principals on MAD tour – see Appendix C  
Comments from students/teachers/parents on OSCAH – see Appendix D  
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## **Personnel Involved in the project**

See Appendix J

## **Supplementary multimedia material**

See CD for Powerpoint

## OVERVIEW



Over the last five years, the aim of Cunnamulla State School has been to change the culture of defeat in the school and improve the image of the school in the wider community.

The focus at Cunnamulla State School has been to convince teachers of the importance of building strong caring relationships with their students. There has been an emphasis on the need to bring real-life learning experiences into their classrooms that make use of the local context as much as possible. Teachers have been challenged to be truly accountable for the outcomes of their students and examine these outcomes with a view to understanding the real reasons behind student performance and adjust their teaching strategies accordingly. They have been asked to ensure that every student in their classes has a clear understanding of the challenges facing them and the opportunity to succeed in meeting those challenges at an appropriate level.

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As a result, the image of Cunnamulla State School in the community has improved, to a point where some of our most vocal critics have become our most ardent supporters. Our school numbers have steadily increased and our school has become a place where students, staff, parents and members of the community want to be.

## CONNECTION TO QSE-2010, DESTINATION 2010 and ETRF

At Cunnamulla State School we *provide high quality education that assists all Queenslanders to love learning, develop judgement and a sense of responsibility, understand the past and prepare to embrace the future. We equip young people for the future to enable them to contribute to a socially, economically and culturally vibrant society.* '2010 Queensland State Education'

Cunnamulla State School is committed to the values of: **Excellence, Inclusiveness, Participation, Safety and Accountability.**

Our priorities, as identified in our School Annual Report and Operational Plan (SAROP), are to:

- Continue to focus on **the improvement in literacy and numeracy skills** across all year levels, with the added focus on years 3 – 7;
- Continue **to provide more options and flexibility for young people** through further engagement of secondary students in practical futures orientated Vocational Education, work placement traineeships and apprenticeships.

# DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE SUBMISSION



Cunnamulla State School serves a community of 1500 residents with a very low socio-economic base. Most of our parents and guardians are supported by welfare payments. Our school has had a very negative image in the past due to behaviour management issues, safety issues both in the school and town, absenteeism, a large dropout rate from Year 4 on (resulting in poor outcomes for indigenous students in particular) and student's poor self image and confidence resulting in a lack of ambition and belief in their ability to succeed. Our aim over the past four years has been to change the culture of defeat in our school and improve the image of Cunnamulla State School in the wider community.

We believe we have begun to make positive changes in our school's culture through the use of innovative strategies outlined below.

## Cultural / Confidence building strategies

### MAD TOUR

A Music, Art and Drama program has been introduced over the last four years. This program has improved student confidence and self esteem. One of the highlights of this program is a MAD (Music Art and Drama) tour group, which travels to "local" schools in the District (within a radius of 450km) and conducts performances in music, drama and the arts. They also take a huge display of student Artwork with them. This has proved to be a very popular program with small and large schools in our cluster area and has had a huge impact on the self-image of our students. Our MAD tour operated again last year and visited schools at Yowah (150km away), Eulo (60km) and Thargomindah (200km.) and Wyandra (100km) and Charleville (200km) over a one-week period. (See Appendix E for more comments)

Beverly Mitchell – Yr. 11 student – "At first we were really shy but then we were proud when we saw how the other schools liked our show. It was great."

Neil Spencer – Art Teacher and organiser – "It's fantastic to see the students grow in confidence as they do each show. They come back much more willing to have a go at anything you put in front of them."

### EISTEDDFODS

As a result of the confidence and self-esteem this program has developed in our students they have participated in the Charleville Eisteddfod representing our school for the first time ever in 2002. In 2003 twenty-eight students participated in the Eisteddfod and fifteen students won awards for their performances. In 2004 we had 44 students participating in the Eisteddfod with 28 of them receiving awards.

### SCHOOL SPORT

Cunnamulla State School has won the local District Primary Athletics Carnival for the past three years in a row after a gap of twenty-three years. This is also an example of the confidence in their own ability that our students have developed. We continue to have students selected in district and regional sporting teams.

### OUR SCHOOL CARES ABOUT HEALTH (OSCAH)

Part of our success may also be attributed to the successful healthy eating 'Our School Cares About Health' (OSCAH) program and the "Nutrition Program" offered by the School. For example soft drink is now banned at our school and students are rewarded for bringing healthy food to school for lunch and morning tea. Our students have won a number of major awards sponsored by Brisbane Markets for

healthy eating. We are also implementing a mid-morning healthy snack program for all our Primary students that will be provided by our school but prepared by parents at school. (See Appendix E for more comments)

Wendy McKellar – CEC and Program Coordinator with Marg McLaren Year 1 teacher – “Teachers and students are really enthusiastic about the healthy eating program and we have plenty of parents coming along to help prepare the food each day.”

### **Junior Paroo Shire Council initiative**

Cunnamulla State School also instigated the formation of the Junior Paroo Shire Council (operating for four years now). The Mayor was approached with the concept of a Junior Shire Council being formed involving four students from Cunnamulla State School (two from Yr. 11&12 and two from Yr. 6&7) and two representatives from the Sacred Heart Primary School in Cunnamulla and one representative from Eulo, Yowah, Wyandra and School of Distance Education students in our Shire and he accepted the idea. The Junior Shire Council attends the main council meeting once per month and presents projects for consideration by council from the perspective of the youth of the Shire. They have been successful in having the shire build a \$40,000.00 Skate Park, provide extra garden areas in the main street, beautification projects in Eulo and Yowah and were given the right of approval of the successful designs. (See Appendix D for more student and teacher quotes)

Ian Tonkin – Mayor Paroo Shire Council – “Whenever I go away to State or regional conferences I always talk about how successful our junior council is. I believe we are one of the few Shire Councils in Queensland working with students in this way.”

### **ETRF - Vocational Education and Training (VET)**

An Agricultural program has been built up over the last three years and is offered throughout the secondary school and upper Primary classes and 70 students are enrolled in this program. These students are involved in the full range of Agricultural activities including shearing, marking, spraying, feeding and handling the school sheep flock, growing irrigated fodder crops, market garden crops, hydroponics, manufacturing stock feeders which were sold to the community, rebuilding an old TE20 Tractor and manufacturing portable yards.

A full range of vocational subjects is offered to secondary students including Industry skills, Hospitality skills, Literacy, Numeracy, Computer Studies and Business Studies. We have a very strong **School based Apprenticeship and Traineeship program** with 18 students currently involved and a number of others accessing work placements. We are also an ETRF trial school and have developed our own Youth Achievement Plan, Year ten tracking documents etc. (See Appendix F)

Daniel Simpson – Mechanical Traineeship Paroo Shire Council – “If it wasn’t for this traineeship I wouldn’t have stayed at school. I’m learning heaps and hope I can get a full time job next year.”

Part of our ETRF program has meant that we have been able to offer our students a range of short TAFE courses in their senior years. These courses include – Basic Mechanics, Weapons Safety, Knife Sharpening, Macropod Harvesting, Basic Horticulture, Chainsaw Operation and tree felling and so on. These courses provide students with immediate and practical successes in their educational program and this encourages them to stay on at school. (See Appendix G)

A vertical timetable has been implemented across the middle school and outcomes based “levels of learning” have been introduced. This program enables students to progress at their own level in each of the KLA's without the "branding" that often occurs with alternate class groupings.

### **New Cunnamulla State School Prospectus**

A new quality School prospectus has been developed and widely circulated in our community and at district level. This has had a very positive effect on the way our school is viewed by our community.

## Absenteeism

A whole school approach to reducing unexplained absenteeism in both Primary and High School areas using a weekly class reward system similar to Cherbourg State School's approach was introduced in Term 4, 2004.

# OUTCOMES ACHIEVED and EVIDENCE



## School Leadership Awards

Cunnamulla State School was also recognised at the November 2003 Launch of the Partners for Success School Information Kit and Executive Summary by being named as one of only three "**Schools of Excellence in Indigenous Education**" in Queensland and Principal, Chris Jewell was also named, as a founding member of the **High Achieving Principal's Network** to support new administrators in schools with a high indigenous populations.

In our school was also recognised at the Qld Arts Council awards with an "**Excellence in the Arts**" - Innovators Trophy 2003.

Our school was one of 23 schools nation-wide to win a **National Dare to Lead – Taking it on Excellence in Indigenous Leadership award** at the end of 2004 for innovative practices, increased retention rates and greatly improved educational outcomes.

## Student Awards

Toni Wharton, a Year 11 student at Cunnamulla (P-12) State School, has been selected to take part in the National Schools Constitutional Convention, to be held at Old Parliament House, Canberra from March 16–18. She will be among 125 Year 11 and 12 students from all over Australia who will spend three days exploring the topic *Executive Power: its role and responsibility in the Australian system*.

Toni was one of our star performers in the Drama production for the MAD tour last year. I'm sure this was one of the things that gave her the confidence to speak at the Queensland Parliament house and be selected to travel to Canberra. Up until this trip Toni had never flown on an aircraft, been in a lift or been to Brisbane. (See Appendix G Media Statement)

## ETRF - Vocational Education and Training (VET)

### **Short Courses**

During 2004, the following ETRF Grants funded short courses were offered to the 36 Year 10- 12 students currently attending Cunnamulla State School.

Chainsaw	33% students participated – 100% of these completed the Module successfully
Weapons Licence	39% students participated – 100% of these completed the Module successfully
Knife Sharpening	36% students participated – 100% of these completed the Module successfully
Automotive	42% students participated – 100% of these completed the Module successfully
Macropod Harvesting	50% students participated – 100% of these completed the Module successfully
Rural Motorbike	25% students participated – 100% of these completed the Module successfully

Over **61%** of the 36 students in Years 10 – 12 participated in at least one short course and completed the module successfully. For more information, please refer to Appendix H.

## **School-based Apprenticeships/Traineeships (SATs)**

In 2004, **47%** of the 19 students in Years 11 – 12 have commenced or are currently participating in SATs. The three Year 12 students have all converted their school-based traineeship(SBT) to full-time traineeship in 2005.

In 2005, **56%** of the 27 students in Years 11 – 12 have commenced or are currently participating in SATs.

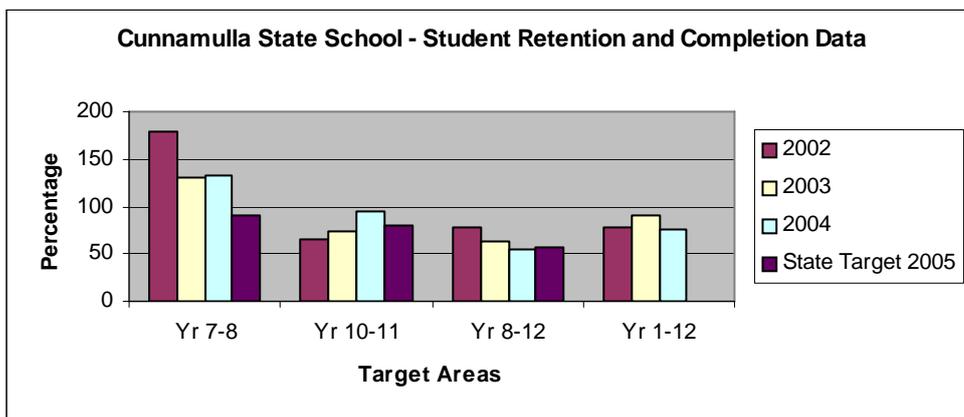
**Four Education to Employment Scholarships awarded to our Year 10 students.**

Five Year 10 students from Cunnamulla State School applied for Education to Employment Scholarships and four were accepted in a statewide process. Applicants were chosen on a written application and telephone interview. The interview panel made a point of ringing back to say how impressed they were with the confidence and attitude of our students who applied.

**Partners for Success**

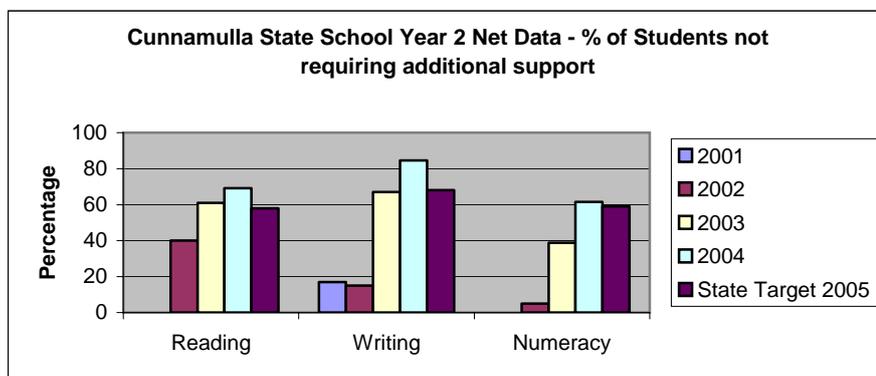
**Retention**

Our school has increased the retention of students in Years 11 – 12 from a total of 5 students in 2000, to 31 students in 2003 and 26 students in 2004 and 28 in 2005. 94% of the students who were in Year 10 in 2004 continued on to Year 11 this year. Seventy percent of the current students in Years 11 and 12 are indigenous students.



**Literacy / Numeracy**

Our school 'Net' results show that the number students not requiring additional support in Year 2 has increased significantly over the past four years. Due to implementation of Literacy and Numeracy initiatives, tutoring program, Reading Recovery and staff professional development – contextual based learning focus, relationship building, Cunnamulla State School in 2004 was above the State target. Results are as follows:



**Absenteeism**

The results of the weekly class reward system have been excellent with unexplained absences being reduced by approximately 20% across the school. Most classes are averaging better than 10% unexplained absences.

**Learning and Development**

Seventeen percent of the School Grant funds in the budget was expended on a range of Learning and Development opportunities for staff in 2004. Inservice in the priority areas of Behaviour Management, ICTs, Productive Pedagogies, the Learning Place and Aboriginal Learning Styles was conducted.

2004 has been a great year for our school. I am really pleased with the continued growth in the confidence, commitment and enthusiasm of our students and the continued outstanding efforts of our staff and community. The shared vision coupled with outstanding results to-date provide Cunnamulla State School with the strong foundation to ensure that the strategies that have been collaboratively developed and implemented into the culture of the school and community will continue to enhance the current and future learning needs for all students.



# Cunnamulla State School

***P – 12 and Special Education Campus***

***ABN: 50 127 180 153***

17 Francis Street  
PO Box 74  
Cunnamulla Q 4490  
Phone: 07 4655 1266  
Fax: 07 4655 2031

18 March 2005

To whom it may concern,

In my time as Principal, Cunnamulla State School, our aim as a school over the past four years has been to change the culture of defeat in our school and image of our school in the wider community.

I have attempted to achieve this through promoting to teachers the importance of building strong caring relationships with their students. I have emphasized the need to bring real-life learning experiences into their classrooms that make use of the local context as much as possible. I have challenged teachers to be truly accountable for the outcomes of their students and examine these outcomes with a view to understanding the real reasons behind student performance and adjust their teaching strategies accordingly. Teachers have been asked to ensure that every student in their classes has a clear understanding of the challenges facing them and the opportunity to succeed in meeting those challenges at an appropriate level.

I have insisted on mutual respect as the basis for all interactions in our school. Our behaviour management is based on providing clear, consistent choices and allowing students to accept the consequences of their actions. Teachers are encouraged to never be confrontational, never to use sarcasm as a discipline tool, never to back a student into a corner and to always focus on the positive behaviours every student is capable of producing.

We have worked to build confidence in our students through innovative programs like our Music, Art and Drama (MAD) tour, putting our students and their work on show at every available opportunity eg Education Week displays including "live" lessons in the park, students reading to older residents, hospitality students catering with morning teas for the public, animal displays from our Agriculture students and student work on display in virtually every shop in the main street. We also participate in all major functions in the community from floats in the Opal Festival Parade to marching in the ANZAC parade. We have also produced a very professional full colour, glossy 12 page prospectus which gives simple but clear descriptions of the programs running at our school.

As a result, the image of Cunnamulla State School in the community has changed from extremely negative attitudes to a point where some of our most vocal critics have become our most ardent supporters. Our school numbers have steadily increased and our policy of putting students and their achievements on display has paid dividends. I have also made a point of being heavily involved in community activities and am currently involved in the Cunnamulla Against Drugs committee, Chairperson of the Inter-Agency Group, Vice-President of the Lion's Club, President of the Pony Club and Vice-President of the Diggers Race Club.

I strongly endorse this application for Showcase recognition.

Yours faithfully

Chris Jewell



All communication to be addressed to the Principal

# Cunnamulla State School

***P – 12 and Special Education Campus***

***ABN: 50 127 180 153***

Principal: Chris Jewell      Deputy Principal: Karen Campbell  
Head of Department (Secondary): Douglas Maxwell

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31.03.2005

## **Cunnamulla State School's Community Involvement.**

Cunnamulla State School's involvement with the community over the past three years has been extensive.

Most Primary classes have an information night for parents as well as the normal parent/teacher nights to discuss reports. The school has also involved local artists in teaching students traditional art, Emu egg decoration and dance. We have also had local community members demonstrate how to shoe our school horse, shearing, crutching, drenching and marking our school sheep and local mechanics working with our students to rebuild an old school tractor for use on the school farm.

Cunnamulla State School students also often bring the school into the community by putting on Art, Manual Arts (where students actually work on their projects while community members watch) and Gymnastic displays etc. in the town park. They also put on displays for the whole of Education week with lots of students work in shop windows, Primary students reading to people from the old peoples home, students reciting poetry and reading stories, sheep from the school farm on display in the park, hospitality students catering for visitors to the displays.

Our school also participates in community events such as the local show with major display entry and individual entries in a large number of sections and the Opal festival Parade with floats from the Pre-school, Primary and High School sections of our school. Our school also supported the successful Grog Free Sport Program and Youth Interagency Programs in our town. We also have four students on the Junior Paroo Shire Council who meet with the main Shire Council once per term to put ideas to them to improve things for young people in Cunnamulla.

With the support of the Principal and the school P&C Association, the ASSPA committee has organized very well attended "Meet the Teachers" evenings at the start of each year and NAIDOC week celebrations designed to bring the community into the school.

We believe this interaction with the community has given our students a great deal of confidence in themselves and made our community more proud of our school.

We would like to congratulate the Principal, Mr Chris Jewell on the many successes that Cunnamulla State School has experienced under his leadership.

**Denise Wharton**  
ASSPA Committee

**Nola King**  
P&C President

**Sonia Martin**  
ASSPA Committee

