

Brooks High School

Launceston, Tasmania



A case study for the Dusseldorp Skills Forum

Research and writing by Kris Latona

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Brooks High School: a case study

'If you go to Brooks your future is likely to come true.' Grade 8 student.

There are more students' comments in Appendix 1.

There are many visitors to Brooks High School, Launceston, Tasmania. [<http://www.brooks.tased.edu.au/>] They come to see the school that is also a sheep and cattle trader, car recycler, broker for casual employment, Registered Training Organisation, where the nation's leaders accept invitations to speak, whose feeder communities are among the lowest socio-economic areas in Tasmania but in most years 100% of school leavers do not take the dole, and where staff say they do 'whatever it takes' to keep it that way.

The Brooks visitor could be struck by several first impressions. The Careers Room is in the busy heart of the school while the Administration section is off at the side. No buzzer sounds every 40 minutes to herald the mass migration of students and teachers that is a feature of high schools elsewhere. The atmosphere is noticeably happy and (since this is real life) hectic, messy and spirited too.

But when the visitor looks harder, there is more to find about the aspirations, philosophy, teaching and programs that underpin Brooks' unusual achievements.

Snapshot of Brooks High

"We are Possibility High.. We do anything." Warren Pill, Principal

There are more staff comments in Appendix 1.

Type of school: Tasmanian state high school for Grades 7 to 10 & Year 11 VET.

Number of students: 620 in 2005

Profile of students: About 66% of students are on the Student Assistance Scheme (STAS). This is one of the highest percentages for a secondary school in Tasmanian schools.

Staff/student ratio: 1: 22

Number of teachers: 45 including part-time

Number of teacher aides: 24 many being part-time

Timetable: Classes in 100 minute blocks; 3 blocks a day; 15 blocks a week; 2x 20 week semesters a year.

Teacher organisation: Teachers work in grade teams, not subject areas.

Classroom organisation: Each grade has its own building, housing all grade classrooms and the grade team staffroom. A classroom belongs to a class, not a teacher or a subject.

Curriculum: Implements Tasmanian Education Department's 'Essential Learnings' requirements through a core and electives model called Toolbox and Personal Interests (PIs).

Other centres: Birribi (off campus), Spanners (on campus) and the Farm (adjacent to the school).

Programs: Teaching programs (Toolbox, Personal Interests) No Dole, Celebration, Registered Training Organisation (RTO) providing VET Certificate 2 courses for Year 11 students and adults.

Educational programs

'Everything we do is curriculum.' Warren Pill, Principal

Essentials Learnings (ELs)

The K-10 curriculum in all Tasmanian schools is based on the Tasmanian Essential Learnings Framework(ELs), which resulted from broad co-construction

[<http://www.education.tas.gov.au/essentiallearningsforall/>]. The ELs changes suit Brooks' innovatory approach to learning with an entirely ELs-based curriculum, rather than subjects as such, being introduced in 2004, 12 months earlier than required.

'Everything is moving very fast for this generation. They have to make judgement calls and they have to understand what's going on rather than use memory. The old knowledge base is important but it's useless unless we have understanding ... Previously it was a case of "will I remember it?" and "when

can I afford to forget it?" [In real life] we're looking at problem solving, or having a conversation with somebody; we bring together information from all over our brains, so with our [ELs] curriculum organisation we give students complex tasks.'

Lynden Leppard, ELs Project Officer

The five ELs (thinking, communicating, personal futures, social responsibility and world futures) are not subjects but umbrellas under which students study many disciplines.

Toolbox (TX) —Core subjects

Toolbox courses are the core subjects of Literacy, Numeracy, Personal Wellbeing, and Information Communication Technology. They also include all the 'No Dole' and Careers provisions, Learning Support, Birribi, and others.

Personal Interests (PIs) — Elective subjects

The ELs of Literacy, Numeracy and Information Communication Technology are built into each PI, which run for is one semester of 20 weeks. Each PI meets and is assessed against appropriate key elements of the ELs.

Creating PIs

PIs are created from two sources: a personal interest survey of students, including intending students in grade 6 and staff's own passions and interests. Student generated PIs include 'Science for Work' and 'Maths for Work', which students wanted so that they could pass aptitude tests for apprenticeships. 'Law' (originally "Imagine a World without Laws") is an example of a staff generated PI.

Individual student PIs

There is a PI map kept for each student, who (with parent approval) negotiates her or his PIs with teachers. No PIs are compulsory for any student, with the staff finding other means of providing broad curriculum coverage. PIs are a major tool for the No Dole program as students actively choose the directions in which their lives are headed.

Continuous improvement

Staff continue a fervent debate the PI system – and in fact the whole curriculum model. Improvement comes from this constant monitoring and

critiquing as well as from work and study outcomes, assessment and surveys.

'In designing each PI we focus on two questions: 1. What kind of understanding are we trying to achieve? 2. Why are we doing this? The second is what we falter on. You have to be able to justify your ideas to the team who are not afraid to critique them. In so many ways teams are very powerful.'

Kelly Hudson, Assistant Principal

Team Personal Interests (TPIs)

TPIs are concept-based, integrated units undertaken by Grades 7 & 8. They are areas of focused teaching which underwrite and guarantee basic curriculum coverage through a system of checks and balances. The curriculum basics are Literacy, Numeracy, Science and Sport as well as extension and enrichment classes.

Assessment

For the first time this year, Brooks will assess against the Student Assessment And Reporting Information System Project (SARIS) [<http://www.education.tas.gov.au/oer/SARIS/>], the Tasmanian Education Department's electronic assessment and reporting system for K-10.

Assessment is the current Professional Development priority for the eight schools in the East Tamar Cluster, to which Brooks belongs.

Celebration

Celebration takes place during Week 20. All students are involved in publishing, performing, being interviewed or otherwise sharing their work in a class, group, pair or individually, to a range of audiences. They teach something they have learned during the semester to other students, their parents and their community.

Celebration allows students to sample other PIs. They may be paired with a student already studying the PI who mentors the newcomer. There may be special activities for interested students: in 'the Animals & Us' PI, students are invited in to help train a horse. 'Animals' also ran a Gymkhana during Celebration in 2004.

A move by teachers to have students assessed for their mentorship roles during Celebration has been resisted in case it dampened the spontaneity, enthusiasm and pride that students have when demonstrating their learning to others.

Student surveys

Students are consulted on PI choices and organisation through surveys run by the Student Executive. The 2004 survey showed that 99% of students felt strongly positive about their PIs. This is despite the fact that not all will be given their first or perhaps even second choice of PIs, due to numbers.

Learning Support

Brooks focuses strongly on learning support. This is particularly true for grade 7 students, but extends to at-risk students in all grades.

At the beginning of grade 7, all students are tested in reading comprehension, maths and spelling. Results are considered alongside information from the student's primary school and any child with a reading age less than 12 automatically receives intensive literacy support, usually with a Teachers Aide (TA) Support in literacy, spelling and maths is often provided in the normal class, and the TA works closely with the teacher on a modified curriculum in line with the mainstream class activities. Literacy is at the core of every aspect of the curriculum at Brooks, serving every other purpose, including the No Dole targets.

Teaching and learning

Grade teaching teams

Grade teams are at the heart of teaching at Brooks. They are fertile ground for curriculum development, innovation, good teaching method, planning individual programs for at-risk students and watching the progress of others.

'Because we work in teams, the synergy is amazing. Much of our work, with the kids and with each other, is building a tribe, an identity. One teacher might suggest an idea with no idea how to implement it; others might add practical suggestions or alternatives until we've really got something. We breed enthusiasm with enthusiasm.'

Jenni Hudson, Grade 7 co-ordinator

The staffroom for each grade team is their grade teaching block. Every staff member also belongs to a grade team.

Mondays after school are reserved for grade team meetings and each second Tuesday afternoons for staff meetings. Grade teams also meet informally before school and in the breaks.

Teaching

My thing is getting the kids to do as much organising of the class themselves as I can manage. My other thing is that I don't give them too much information. I make them find out or think about it and come back and tell me. I believe in routines and positive reinforcement and I never talk negative. I've found there's a passion to teaching. You've got to have it.'

David Chell, Grade 8 Technology teacher

Enthusiasm extends to casual staff:

This is a great school: students get instant rapport and support from staff and staff also support each other in the grade teams. With the school's demographic, some kids are in dire circumstances and can easily fall through the cracks. There are rigorous systems for catching them. On the other hand, it's actually easy to find kids at Brooks with a work ethic.

Sarah Shimmin, relief teacher new to Brooks in 2005

Staff Flexibility

'Teachers with experience or teachers with passion: either and both are what we want in our teams.'

Warren Pill, Principal

Teaching outside one's area of training can be an expedient, but is also actively encouraged at Brooks. Currently 15 out of 45 teachers are teaching outside their areas of trained expertise. For example, several teachers who have been Phys. Ed. or Human Movement trained now prefer to teach Toolbox or ICT. 'Adventure Pursuits' PI is run by a Science Teacher. In 2004, a Materials Design and Technology teacher taught Toolbox and an English / Drama teacher Home Economics. There are several primary-trained teachers and three teachers who are also professional athletes. All various skills are known and used in curriculum design and teaching.

Young staff

Permanent teachers do not usually request transfers to Brooks, so new staff are likely to be young recent graduates. Senior staff say the young age of teachers is very positive. They bring energy, flexibility and idealism, which fits with and perpetuates the school's culture.

Professional Learning

The current focus of Professional Learning(PL) is assessment. Every second Tuesday, school finishes at 1.30pm to allow for PD. Brooks followed guidelines established by the Tasmanian Minister for Education, wherein daily times are re-organised if approval requirements are met, including a 75% voting return by parents, and a 75% support for the change. Some students choose to remain at school to do independent study.

Classrooms belong to the students

Each grade has its own building block and each class its own room, where they do Class Teacher and Toolbox. This explains the rooms' individual decoration and furniture arrangement. Each class has its own CD player; strains of A Simple Plan or Green Day might be heard as students work.

Grade 7

'We hit the ground running with grade 7. By the time they start, new kids have visited Brooks, met their new teachers and been surveyed about their interests. We've met their parents and primary teachers. We want to know as much as we can about them. Everything's organised by day one.'

Kelly Hudson, Assistant Principal

The planning cycle for grade 7 starts in August of the previous year. Intending students all visit Brooks for an induction program.

High Needs students (high needs, low functioning) are identified early. Special plans are made for them with some visiting Brooks up to 15 times before they start so it is familiar. They may begin grade 7 with an individual program, perhaps at Birribi, and gradually join in class activities.

'Grade 7 is a transition year. We don't expect them to be perfect. But we start with a belief that everyone has an enormous value.' Jenni Hudson, Grade 7 team leader

Tracks books

Grade 7 students keep Tracks Books in which they write predictions about the lessons and record and examine their reasons for their belief. Why do they, for example, say they 'like Science'? Is it because their friends like Science? What do they think Science is about?

After the lesson is over, students look back at their predictions and see if they were accurate. This tracking process helps students reflect on their changes and development, keep open minded and develop respect for their own choices and development. They become aware of why they make decisions.

Volunteers

Parent volunteers work with at-risk students, usually by listening to them read. Parents also undertake tutoring, peer support involvement, sharing their expertise with classes, mentoring students through Birribi and coaching sports teams as well as canteen and school council membership.

Zero tolerance of bullying

This extract from a staffroom conversation shows a range of approaches staff take with bullying, from immediate intervention to prevention.

Brooks staff on bullying

'We have to really go hard on bullying and violence. For some students it's the main way their family communicates— they think everyone relates like that. We give one warning, then suspend them.'

'One boy used to walk past someone and do this thing where he tried to hit but miss, then pretend he was only scratching his head. The victim would pick up his aggression and get a shock when he saw the punch coming, but would have no leg to stand on to complain because the punch never landed.'

'The first thing to do with bullying is to nail it— name it, describe it in detail, tell the kid how exactly what they did and why it's unacceptable for the school community, say what will happen if it keeps going. They sometimes get a shock that you've noticed in such detail.'

'We're all pretty aware how important it is to speak in a normal, neutral tone to bullies so you don't sound like a bully yourself.'

'The Birribi program is a good way of dealing with bullying. It gives the bullies new skills and personal support while they take time out from the habitual behaviour they have on the larger campus.'

No Dole program

'It's the combination of working with business to run [the] activities and putting individual career plans in place for students that makes No Dole such a success.'

Beacon Foundation

Origins

'No Dole' [http://www.beaconfoundation.net/about_nodole.php]

began in 1995, when Brooks High approached the Beacon Foundation, [<http://www.beaconfoundation.net/>] a national not-for-profit group with aims to combat youth unemployment and foster local autonomy. Brooks' concerns were the 20% of their school leavers who went straight onto the dole. In 2004 40 Australian schools ran 'No Dole'; about 75 schools will run it in 2005.

How 'No Dole' works

'... the programs which underpin the 'No Dole' purposes are integrated into everything we do, from literacy to work placements and everything in between. All teachers deliver the No Dole Program.'

Warren Pill, Principal



'No Dole' is a set of programs which helps Grade 10 students take charge of their future. They are:

'No Dole' Charter. This is a public ceremony in which Grade 10 students voluntarily pledge to be either working or enrolled in study by the following March.

Students undertake the charter in the presence of the school community. The ceremony marks Grade 10 students' four years of achievement and

points the way to a self-directed future, while creating positive attitudes to work and learning in younger students.

Speakers in past ceremonies have included Prime Minister John Howard, Minister Brendan Nelson and Kim Beazley, a Tasmanian Premier and Governor, as well as footballer Dermott Brereton and racing driver Peter Brock. In 2005, the school is working to invite a high profile person from the Arts.

'No Dole' Student commitment

I willingly commit myself to participate in the 'No Dole Project' which aims to place every Grade 10 student in further education, training or employment by 31st March [next year].

Choices workshops

There are two Choices workshops during the year, run along the lines of small careers expos. Business and education people speak to students about opportunities after Grade 10.

Adopt-a-class

Adoption is two way: each class adopts a local business and the employer adopts and mentors the class for the year. Each relationship takes its own path, but usually students visit the workplace as a class or in small groups and gain a realistic understanding of the working world. The employer may be invited to the class for day-to-day and special visits, perhaps to support parts of the curriculum in which the she or he is an expert or for a regular celebration occasion.

Staff report that this program has been responsible for a lot of community and business interest in Brooks over the years. Some employers come to the school looking for new employees; others give advice, time and resources to the school and become an important community support. Many spread a good word about Brooks' students to other employers.

Work placements

These give students a taste of work and are planned individually to give students an experience of the career area they are currently interested in.

'Work experience was different to my brother's school. He had to come up with a boss who would take you for a week and if your parents didn't know anyone you more or less got stuck with a shop or take-away. At Brooks you have to think about it a lot and teachers help you plan it. Then you have lots of time afterwards to talk about what happened and if it made you change your mind.'

Student Grade 10, 2004

Boys' Day Out/ Girls' Day Out

All students are individually placed in a workplace for one day with a mentor of the same sex. Ideally the mentor is already acquainted with the student. The aim is to expand students' career options and add to their experience of the workplace.

Classwork

In grades 8 and 9 students follow a self-contained study package about work and choices. Grade 9 students also play the 'Real Game', a computer simulation game in which they pretend to be adults. They choose a job, then 'things happen' which force them to think and react.

Birribi

Birribi is an off-campus centre in a converted fire station a few blocks from the main campus. About 100 students a week spend one 100 minute block in respite, renewal and/or enrichment programs.

Flexibility is the keyword, however, particularly if students are at risk. One student did his entire 7-10 schooling at Birribi. It is a vital element that all student attendance at Birribi is voluntary and that this not be seen as a place only for students 'with problems'.

Birribi's ambience is adolescents-on-the-go. The workshop/activities area houses a finished student project: a black and white renovated marshall's car, complete with siren, bullet holes and the Brooks High insignia. It's registered and transports students around from time to time. Ancient car and bike bodies await transformation. An old red phone box is the communications centre; there are lounge chairs scattered around and a chess set ready on a table. The walls display bright murals, funny cartoons, posters about help lines, adolescent websites and services and messages like 'If you think you can or think you can't, you're right'.

Birribi is staffed by a full-time co-ordinator whose background is teaching and youth work. A social worker, an assistant principal, a guidance officer/psychologist and TAs have part-time input.

'Birribi is not a drop out place. At risk students come here but they are never publicly identified, although the grade team is highly aware of what's happening. If a kid comes here in a bit of trouble, he or she gets busy working on something. We get chatting about anger or whatever the problem is. We might hop in the car and go and buy some car parts. It's a captive audience but we're doing something else as well. It can be easier to talk as we drive along.'

Chris Brooks, Birribi co-ordinator

All grade 7 have one 100 minute block per week, for 4 weeks, at Birribi for personal development work. This year special effort has been made with the girls. They have been forming into exclusive friendship groups with a negative effect on grade harmony and cohesion. They do not know that the membership of their Birribi groups has been chosen by the grade 7 team to cut across these cliques and extend friendships. The experiential nature of the Birribi enrichment program also helps the grade 7 team's underlying objective through artwork, discussion and exercises which explore group dynamics and relationships.

Another group this year comprises 15 Grade 7 boys who have been referred by the grade 7 team. They are either bullies or timid and isolated. A special program at Birribi is their carrot to perform better at school, but it has been individually negotiated with each boy. They are in fact a discrete group, but are unaware of it.

Spanners

Spanners is an automotive program, housed in a tin shed with an open courtyard within the school campus. It looks like a typical auto workshop, brightened up by car posters. Students with a particular need, interest or ability may spend half a day per week at Spanners. It is run by a Technical Aide, known as 'Marv the Spannerman' who also maintains the school's vehicles.

'We take kids who are having trouble and mix them up with whoever else is here doing automotive at the time. They wag school but they still turn up at Spanners. I start talking to them. Sometimes I might point out another way of looking at things, some morals maybe. I get to hear what's going on without the red tape.'

Maybe they're slow with books. We get our hands dirty first and get the books out last. We've actually got a boy here who took a VW engine apart and put it back together again without the manual.'

Martin Auton (Marv)



The Farm

Brooks' agriculture program is run at the school farm, which overlooks a stretch of the Tamar River adjacent to the main school campus. Students in all grades can choose farm-based PIs, all of which have a science focus. The school has its own cattle and sheep, which are studied, groomed, judged, led, bought and sold. In 2004, 70 students were involved in caring for, grooming and showing on the Tasmanian agricultural show circuit. The farm's horses and ponies are owned by students, parents and staff. Students can learn to ride a horse, unusual in a city school with students from large public housing areas. The school also provides 'Riding for the Disabled' for its own and other students with disabilities. The farm is the base for VET Agriculture Certificate 2 students.

Careers Room

'Whatever it takes': Joanne's story

Joanne* was a 15 year old student from a family with large and ongoing problems. She had almost stopped attending school, had left home, was disengaged, sullen and withdrawn and looked to the Education and Employment Liaison officer, Ang Hardy 'pretty rough around the edges'.

Ang asked Joanne what she wanted to do. Joanne replied that she was interested in modelling so Brooks enrolled her in a modelling course, which the school funded. Support continued with lifts and the loan of high heels. Ang says, 'By the time Jo graduated from the modelling course, the change was dramatic. Her head was up, she was well presented and seemed like a different girl.'

Joanne is now attending College (Grades 11/12). Ang Hardy comments: 'I can still hardly believe Jo went on to College. She's a great justification for respecting the student's choice without judgement and doing anything to support it.'

* The student's name has been changed.

No Dole

The Careers Room is the home of the No Dole program and is staffed by the Education and Employment Liaison Officer and part-time administrative assistants. The No Dole Co-ordinator, Rob Fleming, is also Grade 10 Coordinator and a member of the Senior Staff Team. Students wanting to discuss their ambitions and work experience can come in during recess and lunch-time and make an appointment for a time during class. They receive a pass which allows them to leave class.

Employment Broking

The Careers Office organises part-time casual jobs for Brooks senior students, 70% of whom choose to work. The aims of this service is to make connections between school and work, encourage a work ethic, support students remaining at school while also developing skills and self esteem. Another benefit is the link to local employers. Several employers now come directly to Brooks to find new employees, both full-time school leavers and part-time students.

Brooks also employs its own students, though always based on merit. The IT, Administrative and Farm/Grounds trainees are all recent Brooks students.

Trainee and Apprenticeship Pathways Program (TAP)

School-based New Apprenticeship Program [<http://www.dest.gov.au>]

'TAP is a Brooks innovation, born when a new member of the senior staff, Darrell Fowler, saw the need for it. Where this will go beyond 2005 is yet to be imagined.' Warren Pill

TAP is due to commence in July 2005 and run to the end of the school year. Working alongside and complementing the school timetable and structure, this focussed program will help students get into traineeships and apprenticeships at the end of year 10. In collaboration with employers and TAFE, the first intake of 15 students will be working in the metals, automotive, and building and construction fields, all areas with identified local and national skill shortages. A new member of senior staff, Darrell Fowler, saw the need and the program was born. Where this will go beyond 2005 is yet to be imagined.

Registered Training Organisation (RTO)

Brooks is an RTO, in which ex-students and parents can do some Vocational Education and Training (VET) Certificate 11 courses and some Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE) courses. Currently 12 continuing students and 6 adults are enrolled.

Parents

Brooks prefers to personally invite parents, nominated by the grade team, to join focus groups on particular issues rather than call general meetings.

'We do anything'

The belief that 'It's all curriculum' partly explains why Brooks embraces opportunities as they arise, even if 7-10 high schools would not normally be involved. Other reasons are that innovation, risk taking and energy are part of Brooks' way of life.

'One of our senior staff just attended a JAG North (Job Action Group) meeting just up the hill at Rocherlea. There's funding to teach people to refurbish public housing in the area while learning VET Cert. 2 skills. We're not a partner and don't want to be, but we guess there might be possibilities for the school, our staff, new clients or funding.'

Warren Pill

At the time of writing, just 18 days into the new school year, Brooks has also become involved in the following 'opportunities':

- Youth Commitment meetings
- Meetings about the new Australian Technical Colleges
- Two case studies
- 'Becoming Numerate in the Middle Years', a PL program
- Media Skills training
- Jointly submitted for DEST funds for "Cultivating Futures"
- Jointly hosting a Learning Choices Regional Forum
- Sent 5 students and 5 parents to meet Crown Prince Frederick and Crown Princess Mary.

Funding

SRP and mainstream programs

For the most part the source of Brooks High's budget is the same as all other Tasmanian schools, the Schools Resource Package (SRP). The annual amount is measured by enrolments and an Educational Needs Index (ENI), by which the Tasmanian Department of Education assesses a school's financial needs. Through this system, Brooks receives advantageous funding due to established high needs.

Birribi and Spanners

The funding of Birribi and Spanners shows how Brooks creatively uses a normal entitlement because the terms of the funding makes flexibility possible. Brooks is allocated 1.3 of a base grade beginning teacher under the Managing and Retaining Secondary Students in Schools (MARSSS) program. Worth around \$90,000 pa, it is cashed in to employ Marv at Spanners as a Technical Aide, some part-time TAs at Birribi and to cover general costs at Birribi and Spanners. ('These costs are minimised as Spanners and Birribi managers are great scroungers,' says Warren Pill.)

The teaching position of Chris Brooks, Birribi Manager, is included in the general staffing quota.

MARSSS funds also pay for students going to outside flexible programs such as St Michael's programs, Intowork, Start@TAFE, the Warehouse and others.

The Farm

The farm is largely self-funding. The Education Department pays \$2000 pa for farm rental but other parts of the farm, belonging to others, are rent-free at present. One teacher works only in Agriculture, and two others do part of their teaching load on the farm. With the help of VET students, a farm trainee and Brooks students, they manage all the maintenance and emergencies, including on weekends and holidays. School managers concede that this volunteer arrangement might not last forever, but is working well for the time being.

Some of the animals used in classes belong to Brooks staff or local farmers and are loaned temporarily to the farm. The farm makes money by very successfully buying and selling cattle and sheep.

No Dole and Careers Room

Brooks is a Career and Transition (CATS) pilot school, along with, at first with 3, and now extended to included 5 partner schools. CATS helps to fund some No Dole activities and subsidises the Careers Room operation. At least some of the objectives of CATS can be met or assisted through activities delivered as part of No Dole.

One-off funding

In 2004, Brooks had two significant donations: the Civil Contractors Association, (though the Beacon Foundation) gave Brooks \$14,000 for their continuing work as a lighthouse school for the No Dole program, and the Federal Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) gave \$34,000 Community Partnerships money to support Brooks' student retention work and to support the sharing of all resources and best practice procedures, as well as to defray the costs of responding to enquiries and hosting visits by others, which numbers nearly 200 over two years.

Spending priorities

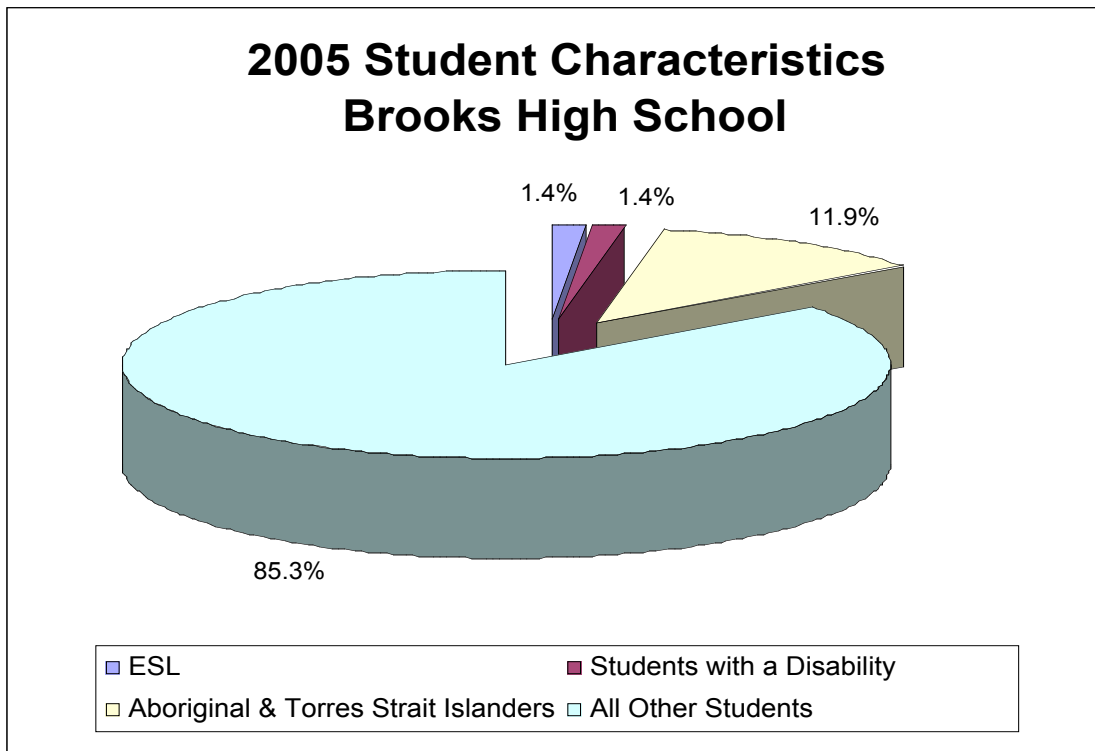
'We consider the right people to be the key.' Warren Pill

Brooks' spending priorities are, in order: Human Resources, Educational Programs, Maintenance, then Professional Learning and Works as equal. In the HR area, TAs in the High Needs and Learning Support areas have highest priority. There are no global budgets in Tasmanian schools, with Teaching staff allocated as a Quota based on enrolment and ENI.

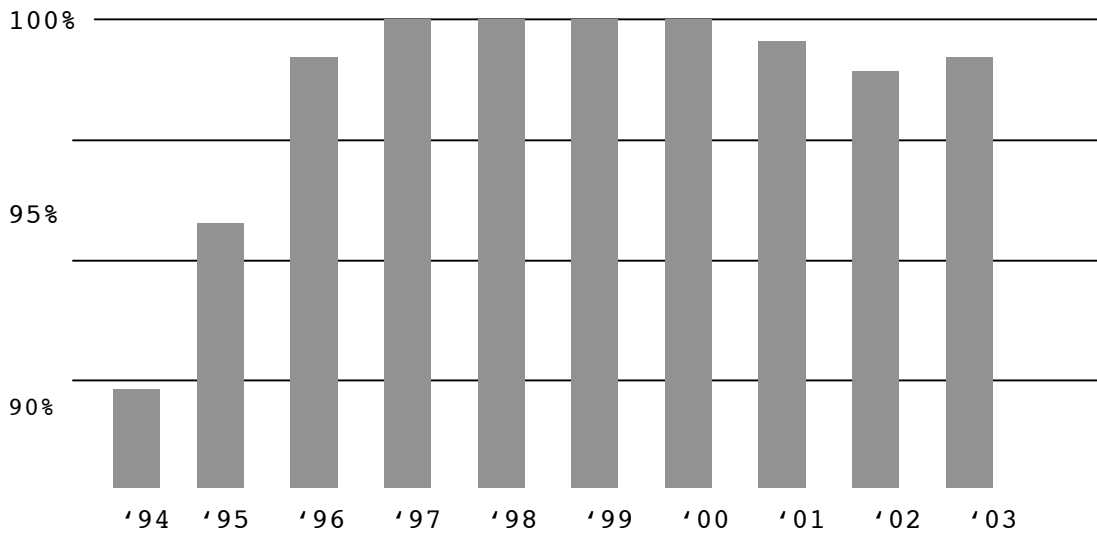
Accountability

There are mandated deliverables for all the funding sources. A more data driven era is around the corner, which will require Brooks to produce more detailed whole of school measures in particular.

Outcomes

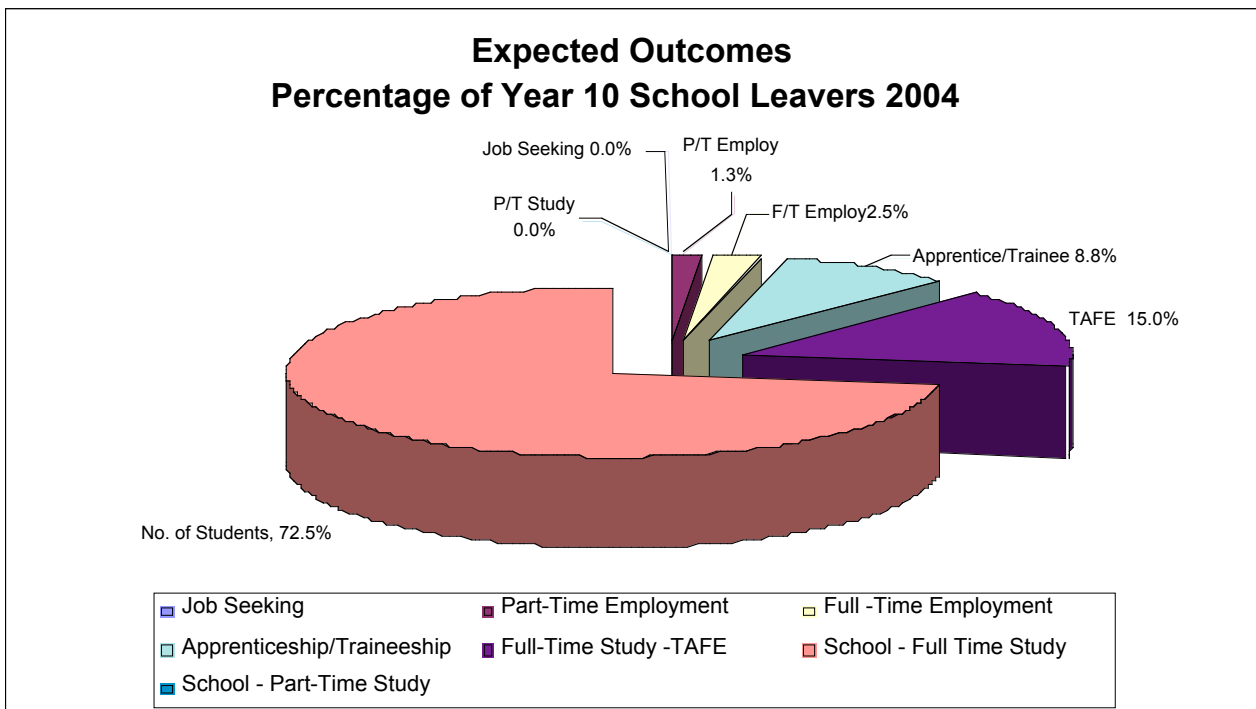


Brooks High School is a 7–10 High School, with a comprehensive VET Agricultural program for Year 11–12 students. The School has a high level of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander students, together with a growing percentage of ESL students. A high percentage of students come to the school with low-level literacy and numeracy. A strong Learning Support Program provides support to these students and to Students with disabilities.



History of the % "...in further education, training or employment by 31st March..." of the following year, quoting the No Dole Charter commitment.

The 2004 leavers are shown in the graph below.



Destinations for Brooks only

Appendix 1 Comments by Brooks students and staff

Brooks students

These are extracts from email correspondence the writer had with some Grade 8 and 9 students.

I have changed to someone that is more confident and is not afraid to take chances (when I came to Brooks I was really shy and was not a people person). The things that I find important in life are the bases of the community and what keeps us alive eg farming.

The things that I find important in life are schooling, family, friends and stuff. The teachers here aren't all that that bad I guess. Students here can be fairly good workers, others are hot headed, some are just plain mouthy.

I've only just moved here from Melbourne. I think teachers explain things better here. I think kids in Australia would have a better education if they moved 2 Launceston or Brooks. Either way, as long as there's not 2 many ppl!!!

The teachers? Some of them are funny but some are a little bit weird. The no dole program gives you lots of opportunities and its more interesting here.

The teachers here are funny, like they have a sense of humour and that's what I like about the teachers, they can have a joke with you. My best teacher is STEVO (Mr Stevenson).

I've got more mature since I started here and learnt heaps of interesting stuff.

The teachers at Brooks are great. They will always help as much as they can and are always friendly and nice.

If I had kids I'd like them to go to a school like mine.

The atmosphere is good and happy so we have good happy lessons. The teachers are always willing to give you a try. And I've noticed that the office ladies don't slack off.

Staff

Much about Brooks' values and priorities can be deduced from staff's comments:

School

A school can be a lot more than just a school.

Why wouldn't we want to be as effective as a school could possibly be, and as effective as *any* school?

Openness

We do anything.

Whatever it takes.

We plunge in on innovation.

We say yes.

Teaching

You lose kids if you don't engage them.

We want the opposite of kids learning in boxes going nowhere.

When I started teaching I tried to become 'teacherish'. One day I woke up and realised I had no option but to be myself.

Curriculum & programs

We focus on curriculum and assessment: our core business is always outcomes on skills and understandings.

We respond to pilots but we don't do them. We try, then tamper.

Literacy is, will be and must be always be our first priority.

Students

Bullying is a black and white issue; it's not on.

When you think about a kid's background you can usually understand them.

For some of these students it's a brave step just to get out of bed and come to school.

Everyone has the same worth.

Students' choices

Having a personal objective pulls along your learning at a great rate.

All career choices are of equal value.

We take each kid's choices literally and respectfully.

I love not having to decide for anyone else.

The Careers Room is the school's engine room.

Staff

We need reflective people. You don't need to be an ideas person.

Personal passion can be as good a qualification as tertiary training for teaching something.

Innovation

When you do something, it takes a long time for the changes to be noticed.

Policies and innovative ideas have no impact unless someone will take them on and make them work.

We make changes to do away with impediments.

We restructure only to foster good teaching.

Michael Fullan and Barry Bennett are helpful thinkers about educational change. [<http://www.michaelfullan.com>]

Appendix 2 Sample Timetable

Sample Year 10 student timetable – Week 1

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:55 – 10:35	Maths for College <i>Mr Claridge</i>	Senior Performance <i>Miss McNear</i>	Toolbox Grade 10 <i>Mr Fleming</i>	Maths for College <i>Mr Claridge</i>	Career Leader <i>Mr Fleming</i>
10:55 – 12:35	Toolbox Grade 10 <i>Mr Fleming</i>	Toolbox Grade 10 <i>Mr Fleming</i>	Maths for College <i>Mr Claridge</i>	Senior Performance <i>Miss McNear</i>	Senior Performance <i>Miss McNear</i>
13:20 – 14:50	Career Leader <i>Mr Fleming</i>	Toolbox Grade 10 <i>Mr Fleming</i>	Toolbox Grade 10 <i>Mr Fleming</i>	Career Leader <i>Mr Fleming</i>	Toolbox Grade 10 <i>Mr Fleming</i>

Sample Year 9 student timetable – Week 1

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:55 – 10:35	Photography <i>Mr Dean</i>	Consider a world without laws <i>Mr Edwards</i>	Toolbox Grade 9 <i>Mr Fowler</i>	Photography <i>Mr Dean</i>	How do I get my car, licence & keep both? <i>Mrs Woods</i>
10:55 – 12:35	Toolbox Grade 9 <i>Mr Fowler</i>	Toolbox Grade 9 <i>Mr Fowler</i>	Photography <i>Mr Dean</i>	Consider a world without laws <i>Mr Edwards</i>	Consider a world without laws <i>Mr Edwards</i>
13:20 – 14:50	How do I get my car, licence & keep both? <i>Mrs Woods</i>	Toolbox Grade 9 <i>Mr Fowler</i>	Toolbox Grade 9 <i>Mr Fowler</i>	How do I get my car, licence & keep both? <i>Mrs Woods</i>	Toolbox Grade 9 <i>Mr Fowler</i>

Appendix 3 Curriculum

This diagram shows the organisation of Toolbox (core) and Personal Interests (electives) for each grade.

	Personal Interests	Team Personal Interests	Toolbox
Grade 7 & 8	2 x 3 Blocks ea	1 x 3 Blocks	6 Blocks
Grade 9 & 10	3 x 3 Blocks ea	-	6 Blocks
Staff	Various Staff, depending on choice	Taught by Grade Team	Taught by Grade Team
Combinations	Gr 7 & 8 combined Gr 9 & 10 combined	Grades not combined	Grades not combined
Calendar	Students choose. Two Semesters of equal length	Focus according to student need	Focus according to student need

Personal Interests Grades 7, 8 and 9

Animals Applied Design Tech (8's only)

Computer Graphics 2D / 3D
Computing

Computing Project

Cooking Beginners (7's mostly)

Craft Design 1 (7 only)

Dance

Sunnyside Art

Fit Girls

I Made It Myself

Junior Performance

Science/ Maths

Sport & Recreation

Where to Now?

Why Fish?

You Be the Chef (8's only)

Senior Personal Interests Grades 9 & 10

21st Century

Adventure Pursuits

Animals

Applied Design Technology

Babies

Basic Catering

Body Beautiful

Building Construction

Careers

Cars / Licences

Maths for College

Computing Project

Cooking for Everyday Occasion

Creative Crafts and Foods

Extended English

Fit Girls

Fitness and Weights

Forensic Science

Law

Manufacturing in Wood

Photography

Radio Station

Science for Work

Senior Performance

Sport and Recreation

Sunnyside Art

Senior Computer Graphics

Appendix 3 Brooks High School Code

My rights

My responsibilities

I have the right to move about the school without being laughed at, hit, pushed, threatened, or in any way molested.

I am responsible to see that I do not laugh at, hit, push, threaten or in any way molest other people in this school.

I have the right to be treated with respect and fairness, irrespective of whether I may be black, white, yellow, short, tall, fat, thin or in any way different to the majority.

I am responsible to see that I treat all people with respect and fairness even though they may differ in some way from the majority.

I have the right to expect my property to be safe within the school.

I am responsible to see that I do not steal, damage or destroy the property of others.

I have the right to live in pleasant, well-kept surroundings that are free from noise or litter pollution.

I am responsible to see that I treat my surroundings with respect, and that I do not contribute to any kind of pollution within the school.

I have the right to attend to my school work without interference of any kind from other students.

It is my responsibility to see that I do not interfere with, or distract other students from their school work.

I have the right to be taught by teachers who are fair, competent and sympathetic to my needs.

It is my responsibility to cooperate with and obey the normal instructions of teachers.

Appendix 4 Abbreviations

CAT	Career and Transition program
DEST	Department of Education, Science and Training
ELs	Essential Learnings
ENI	Educational Needs Index
HR	Human Resources
K-10	Kindergarten to Grade 10
K-12	Kindergarten to Grade 12
MARSSS	Managing and Retaining Secondary Students in Schools
PI	Personal Interest
SARIS	Student Assessment and Reporting Information System
SRP	Schools Resource Package
STAS	Student Assistance Scheme
TA	Teachers' Aide
TAP	Trainee and Apprenticeship Pathways
TCE	Tasmanian Certificate of Education
TPI	Team Personal Interest
TX	Toolbox
VET	Vocational Education and Training