



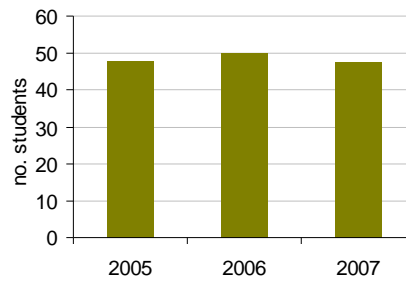
2007 Annual Report to the  
School Community



## School Overview

Seymour Special School is a multi-mode school for students who have an intellectual disability. Some of our students have other associated disabilities such as autism, cerebral palsy, hearing or visual impairment. During 2007 the enrolment of Seymour Special School was 47.6 equivalent full time students ranging in age from 5 to 18 years of age. Students are able to be dual enrolled between this setting and mainstream schools. One of our classes was located at Seymour Technical High School. Another of our classes was located at Seymour Primary School. The school was staffed by 9 teachers supported by nine teacher assistants and a business manager with part time office support.

Total students enrolled in school



Specialist Schools in the Hume Region are located in Cobram, Shepparton, Wangaratta, Wodonga and Seymour. The enrolment area for our school is the Seymour District. In 2007 students came from Thornton, Alexandra, Yea, Flowerdale, Trawool, Kilmore, Reedy Creek, Broadford, Tooborac, Puckapunyal, Nagambie and Seymour.

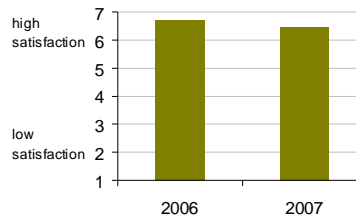
Seymour Special School aims to promote: Independence through Learning by continuing to provide a range of comprehensive curriculum options and experiences that focus on the individual needs of our students. We encourage maximum student achievement through appropriate teaching strategies and learning experiences particularly in the areas of Literacy and Numeracy.



Each student has their own Individual Learning Plan created by their teacher in association with parents and relevant specialists. A student's goals are based on the Hume Region Specialist Schools' Curriculum which provides ten levels of achievement beginning pre Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) and extending to Level 2 of VELs. Students aged 15 or 16 were enrolled in the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning or followed a transition program based on living skills, vocational skills and leisure.

**Parent Satisfaction** - The average score for parent satisfaction at this school was 6.45 on a scale from 0 to 7 where 7 is the best possible score.

Parents' satisfaction with this school  
(average score on scale of 1 to 7, where 7 is best possible score)



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**Teacher Satisfaction** - The average score for staff (teachers and school service officers) satisfaction (morale) at this school was 74.4 on a scale from 0 to 100 where 100 is the best possible score.

**Teacher Absence** - The average number of days absent per teacher was 6.23 days.

**Teacher Retention** - Of the 10 teaching staff at Seymour Special School in June 2006, 8 or 80% were still at the school in June 2007. This figure across all Government schools was 86%.

**Teacher participation in professional learning** - Professional Development is detailed in the School Council President and Principal's report.

**Teacher and Staff Qualifications** - All teachers at Seymour Special School are registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching. Three teachers studied special education during 2007. Two teacher aides began a teaching qualification.



## School Council President and Principal's Report

During 2007 Seymour Special School completed a self evaluation and participated in an external review with Reviewer Zenda Clark. Zenda's opening remarks: 'Seymour Special School has been very successful in establishing a broad learning community for its students. The organisation of the school into a multi campus setting indicates a strong commitment to providing the most suitable and motivating learning environment for students who present with a wide range of cognitive abilities and complex educational needs. The school can be pleased with the progress made in this period and its efforts in achieving the goals of the school charter'. Following on from this we developed a four year Strategic Plan detailing our Strategic Intent with regard to: student learning; student engagement and wellbeing, and student pathways and transitions.



Education Minister Bronwyn Pike presented our Performance and Development Culture Accreditation certificate. We provided evidence of high quality induction programs to support new teachers and set up programs to ensure teachers have the



opportunity to develop professional skills. John Brumby visited the original Seymour Primary School building (which houses our multi-purpose room, kitchenette and classrooms). The Premier is the great great grandson of James O'Neill who took charge of 25 students when the school opened in 1857.

During 2007, Seymour Special School joined with Seymour Technical High School, Seymour Primary School and Seymour East Primary School to investigate educational provision in Seymour. Under the banner of 'Regeneration' we are researching how best to present education to all students in Seymour as one entity.

The themes of 'Values', 'Families', 'Pets' and 'Bush' were the scaffolding for exciting curriculum activities including Harmony Day, Walking School Bus, Family Celebration Day, Pet Show, Concert and Bush camps at Eildon and Toolangi. Students participated in a student leadership conference, maths games day at Puckapunyal Primary School, the ELF (Early Learning is Fun) Reading Day, The Premier's Reading Challenge, cross country, Riding for the Disabled (somewhat hampered by equine influenza), a gym program run by the Active After Schools Program and orientation day at Seymour Technical High School with students from neighbouring cluster schools.

Excursions included a stage beginning of the Jayco Herald Sun Bike Tour, exchange VCAL activities with Verney Road School and whole school attendance at the 'My Grandma lived in Gooligulch' live production in Shepparton.



During Term 4 we were fortunate to have Yosuke Yamashita, otherwise known as Yochan, work with different classes on Japanese calligraphy, art and culture. On 'Japanese Day' students wrote down a wish and hung it at the entrance to the school on a 'wishing tree'.

Our major facilities work was the completion of the 'Warm Welcome' project. This included a new reception area, meeting room, staff work area, resources area, staff room and new principal's office. Due to these works we could also

move the library from the hallway to a room. We erected a new shade sail in minor playground thanks to a donation from the RACV Foundation and Lodges from Yea, Alexandra and Seymour donated a BBQ with utensils to the school. The BBQ has already been used many times. We received generous donations from Seymour Apex, Seymour Goulburn Lions, Seymour RetraVision, Seymour RSL, Yea Lions, Yea Manchester Unity and other individual businesses and individuals. VCAL in turn raised money for jeans 4 genes Day as part of a VET Work Related Skills Unit of study.

Some teaching staff studied Special Education, two aides began a teaching degree and the principal studied a Mental Health course. Staff completed regular updates for Level 2 Workplace First Aid, CPR, Light Rigid Licence, Austswim, OH&S and Early Years Literacy and Numeracy. Thanks to all for a great year!

Mrs Christine Renfrey and Ms Julie Atkins

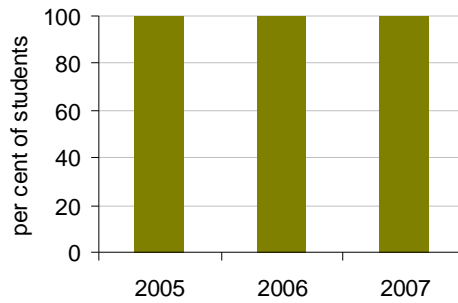
## Student Progress & Achievements

### Student Learning

Students at Seymour Special School are assessed with regard to goals set at Student Support Group Meetings:

- Teachers rank students using a scale of 1:no progress, 2:some progress, 3:satisfactory progress, 4:good progress, 5:very good progress and 6:excellent progress.
- Our students at Seymour Technical High School follow the assessment procedures of other students at that school in addition to the reporting requirements for our school.
- Students in the first three years of schooling follow the Early Years Literacy Program.
- Good to excellent progress was made in each essential learning area – English, Mathematics, Science, ICT, The Arts, Health & Physical Education, Civics & Citizenship, by all students.
- As a school team we feel that if goals are appropriate then all students should achieve a good result with Teacher Assessment of Student Progress. Staff have become skilled at setting achievable goals and recognising excellent progress.
- English is a key learning area where we see students make the most progress. Reading is a skill that can be improved with practice.
- All students who are capable of reading are benchmarked with unseen text at the end of each year.

Percentage of students who made satisfactory or better progress in English



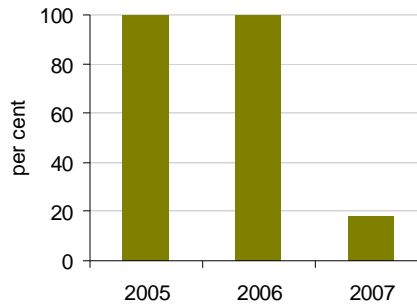
Reading Levels	1	2	3	4	5	7	8	10	12	15	16	18	19	20	21	22	25	26	27	28	29	30	
No of students	4	3	2	1	5	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	3	4	41

- In 2007, 41 students were capable of reading text with 16 students reading at Reading Recovery Level 20 or above.

The Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning is composed of:

- Literacy and Numeracy - foundation level
- Work related skills I and II - foundation level
- Industry specific skills - foundation level
- Personal development skills - foundation level, encompassing the Duke of Edinburgh Award
- Students take two years to complete the certificate, so students beginning in 2007 will take until the end of 2008 to complete the course.
- VCAL gives us recognition for what we were already doing well and also expanded our curriculum.
- In 2007 we worked in cooperation with the Empower Transform Renew Program to provide Certificate II in Hospitality and Certificate I in Work Education.

Satisfactory VCAL completion rates



## Student Pathways and Transitions

Most students remain at school up to and including the year they turn 18. These students have a number of options and usually find a suitable post school placement with the help of the Department of Human Services who provide a program called Futures for Young Adults which:

- Helps students to think about opportunities they could explore after they leave school
- Provides information about the supports students can get after they leave school and
- Provides assistance for up to 3 years or until students turn 21, to help them try out some of the different options

We had one student who turned 18 in 2007. This student transitioned to Goulburn Options - a day placement for disabled adults. The placement is suitable but transport is an issue.

Seymour Special School has various situations where structured transition is needed to suit individual students:

- Pre-school to Special School - coming from a wide geographical area
- Transferring into Special School
- Special School to 18+
- Special School to the Annexe and back
- Special School to Transition and back
- Group to Group

We aim: for students to move from one setting to another with the least disruption possible; for students and staff to feel comfortable when students are transiting from one setting to another and for parents to feel that students will adjust to their new settings as quickly and as comfortably as possible.

A welcome message is mailed to each student to arrive at their home address over the Christmas holiday period from their new teacher. This details which class they will be in for the coming year and who their classmates and teacher assistant will be.

Seymour Special School has a brochure outlining the school programs and facilities, an information book which is updated annually, an enrolment pack and a website at [www.seymourss.vic.edu.au](http://www.seymourss.vic.edu.au)

## Future Directions

We will continue to support our classrooms at Seymour Primary School for our Annexe Group and at Seymour Technical High School for our Transition Group because they provide valuable curriculum support and social interaction for our students.

The Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) have been adapted for the development and implementation of learning programs for all of our students. Hume Specialist Schools will launch a common curriculum as a joint project at the beginning of 2008. This will give students, parents and teachers a set of sequential and progressive levels of achievement which will be used in reporting to parents and also in the development of student achievement goals at Student Support Group Meetings. Revised Individual Learning Plans reflect the integrated nature of learning within the VELs framework. Individual Management Plans were included for the first time in 2007 and also, where applicable, student self assessment reports. We will continue to develop our partnership with the Empower, Renew, Transform Program for our post compulsory education. Our Partnership with the Advance Program supported by the Victorian Government for the delivery of Duke of Edinburgh Awards is equally important.

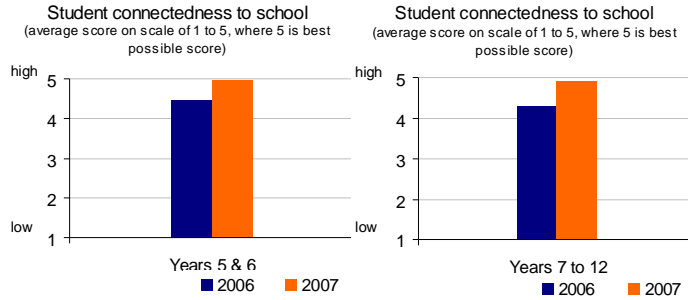
Following recommendations from our school reviewer we will invite a consultant to help us articulate a vision for the school. Parents and community members will be invited to participate in this professional development.

Together with the other Seymour Schools: Seymour Technical High School; Seymour Primary School and Seymour East Primary School we will continue to investigate educational provision for all Seymour students under the banner of regeneration.



## Student Engagement and Wellbeing

The Student Attitudes to School Survey asks students how they relate to their teachers, what they like doing at school, how they feel about their classmates, what they like to learn, how safe they feel and how good they feel about themselves. The graphs opposite show the results of this survey. Our younger students feel slightly more connected than our older students.



We use our Primary Welfare funding to run the TRIBES Program which aims to ensure the healthy development of every child so that each child has the knowledge, skills and resilience to be successful in a rapidly

### Student Attitudes to School Survey.



changing world. TRIBES aims to engage all students, teachers and administrators in working together as a learning community that is dedicated to caring and supporting active participation and positive expectations for all students.

TRIBES Agreements:

*Attentive Listening* - we listen with our eyes, ears and heart

*Mutual Respect* - we will treat people as we want to be treated

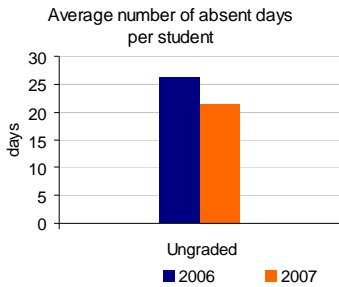
*Appreciation/No Put-Downs* - we will speak kindly to others and think of others' feelings

*Right to participate/pass* - we have the right to pass in certain activities & to know that the more we participate the more we gain

*Personal Best* - we will always try our best in all activities

The wearing of uniforms is compulsory to: 1. promote equality amongst all students; 2. further develop a sense of pride in and identification with our school; 3. provide durable clothing that is cost effective and practical for our school environment and 4. maintain and enhance the positive image of the school in the community. Students at Seymour Technical High School and at Seymour Primary School wear the uniforms of their host school.

During 2007 a Student Representative Council was elected by the students. By implementing the TRIBES Program, forming an SRC and promoting school uniform we hope to develop students' self esteem and improve students' connectedness to school.



Regular school attendance is necessary for improved student outcomes and is the responsibility of everyone in the school and wider community. The graph shows that the average student absences for 2007 were lower than in 2006. While lower, 21 days absent is a high figure. There are a few students who have extended absences for respite or family circumstances. Also, we have a number of fragile students who have high absence rates. The statistic is meant to demonstrate that students are happy at school. If students are unhappy they will find reasons to stay away, sometimes unbeknown to parents. Our experience is that almost all student absences are notified to us either before or on the day of the absence by a phone



call from a parent or guardian and that they are genuine illness or pressing family circumstances.

## Financial Performance

Student Resource Package: Student-based funding is mainly composed of Programs for Students with Disabilities (DAI). A student is assigned funding according to the level of their disability - Level 1:\$5,017; Level 2:\$11,604; Level 3:\$18,316; Level 4:\$24,999; Level 5:\$31,629 and Level 6:\$38,295. This money is in credit and 92% is used to pay staff salaries. Our School-based funding is for building maintenance, electricity, gas, water, cleaning, cross-infection, telephone, administration costs and class materials. This money is a cash grant and together with 8% DAI funds is paid quarterly. Targeted initiatives funding pays for Primary Welfare Programs (TRIBES); VETIS (Vocational Educational and Training in Schools) provides for attendance at VCAL network meetings and Managed Individual Pathways (MIPS) funds are to ensure that each senior student has an individual pathway plan. The Commonwealth Government contributed \$146,000 to our 'Warm Reception' building project and the State Government contributed \$100,000. School Council contributed another \$83,000 to enable the project to be completed. Operating surpluses from 2006 and 2007 meant that we finished 2007 in credit.

Financial Performance for the year ending 31st December, 2007		Financial Position as at 31st December, 2007	
Revenue	2007 Actual	Funds Available	2007 Actual
DEECD Grants	296,341	High Yield Investment Account	22,266.20
Commonwealth Government Grants	8,435	Official Account	238.23
State Government Grants	14,725		
Other	11,158		
Locally Raised Funds	31,001		
<b>Total Operating Revenue</b>	<b>361,660</b>		
		<b>Total Funds Available</b>	<b>22,504.43</b>
Expenditure		Financial Commitments	2007 Actual
Salaries and Allowances	106,654	Accounts Payable Control	
Bank Charges		Camps/Excursions	
Consumables	15,539	Building/Grounds including SMS	2,088.18
Books and Publications	753	Special Programs inc Student Services	
Communication Costs	5,003	Region /Clusters Funds	
Furniture and Equipment	11,547	Professional Development	
Utilities	8,295	Other ( please list)	
Property Services	426,632	School Operating Reserve	20,416.25
Travel and Subsistence	5,901	<b>Total Financial Commitments</b>	<b>22,504.43</b>
Motor Vehicle Expenses	4,965		
Administration	3,378		
Health and Personal Development	160		
Professional Development	16,301		
Trading and Fundraising	6,017		
Support/Service	1,060		
Miscellaneous	34,572		
<b>Total Operating Expenditure</b>	<b>646,776</b>		
Net Operating Surplus/- Deficit	-285,116		
Capital Expenditure ( Cases 21 Finance Only)	23,001		
Please note that the above amounts do not include credit revenue or expenditure allocated or spent by the school through its Student Resource Package			

## School Contact Information

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Principal:	Ms Julie Atkins
School Council President:	Mrs Christine Renfrey
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Web site:	<a href="http://www.seymourss.vic.edu.au">www.seymourss.vic.edu.au</a>

This report contains summary data extracted from the School Level Report. If you would like to access the School Level Report, please contact the principal: Julie Atkins (03) 5792 2209.