



# Torrens Primary School Board Report 2014



Figure 1: Vegetable garden at Torrens Primary School

This report supports the work being done in the ACT Education and Training Directorate, as outlined in the Strategic Plan 2014-2017 “Educational capital: Leading the Nation”. It complies with reporting requirements detailed within the Education ACT 2004 and the National Education Agreement.



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The school website is <http://www.torrensps.act.edu.au>.

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## About our school

### School Board

#### Australian Curriculum Review

The Australian Government established the Review of the Australian Curriculum in January 2014, with the Final Report being released in October 2014. One of the main issues identified was an overcrowded curriculum. The Review's Final Report and its recommendations are currently being considered by all Australian education ministers. Parents and carers are one of the most important influences on a child's education and I would encourage all parents and carers to read the Report.

#### School Policies and Strategies

In 2014, Torrens continued its focus on data collection, community and curriculum.

Both staff and the Board reviewed the Homework Policy. During this time, the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry report was released and concluded that homework does not increase student learning in primary schools (with the exception of reading). Both staff and the Board will continue to monitor this issue.

The Board also endorsed the new student report format, which was introduced at the end of 2014. A big thank you to Emma Thomas and other staff for making these important revisions, aligning the new reports with the Australian curriculum.

#### Academic and Other Achievements

There were a number of achievements in 2014, both academic and otherwise:

- Torrens Primary School dominated the media for their impressive NAPLAN results across all areas and years. NAPLAN results were consistently above the ACT average in reading, writing and numeracy and Torrens was ranked one of the top ten schools in the ACT.
- A National Quality Standards (NQS) panel assessed Chifley Preschool, which received an impressive ranking of 'Exceeding' in all 58 categories of its accreditation.
- The NQS panel also assessed Pearce Preschool, which received an equally impressive ranking of 'Exceeding' in all categories of its accreditation.
- Year 4 and Year 5 students made it through to the ACT Wakakirri Story Dance Finals and won a number of awards for their performance 'Waltzing Matilda – Fight for a fair go!'
- A number of students went to the Legislative Assembly to be awarded prizes in the Chinese Panda Competition. Torrens again took out the overall first and second prizes, thanks to Mandarin teacher Cissy Lu.
- Three teachers were nominated for the 2014 Teacher Excellence Awards.
- The Board was pleased to note that Torrens received good results in the annual school satisfaction survey.

**Finance**

The Early Intervention Unit at Pearce Preschool closed at the end of 2014 with the move towards the National Disability Insurance Scheme. Although it was raised with the Education and Training Directorate a number of times, the Board was disappointed that Torrens did not receive sufficient funding to cover amenities.

Torrens was successful in receiving funding for a School Chaplain, which will commence in 2015. The position of the Board is that anything that supports the students is a good thing, noting the need to communicate that it is an optional service and does not include religious teachings.

As usual, I would like to thank Ingrid Gaunt for her thorough monitoring of finances and for her work as Board Secretariat.

**Property and Asset Management**

There was a major storm in early 2014, which caused substantial damage to Torrens Primary School including 12 classrooms and halls. Additional costs were needed for repairs, cleaning and the purchase of new tan bark, to replace the tan bark that had washed away.

The refurbishment of the computer room was completed, new student laptops and interactive whiteboards were purchased and the solar panels are now up and running. The Directorate upgraded the Torrens website, which now includes a calendar function.

The Board was concerned to hear reports of dangerous driving behaviour and speeding around the school; this will be an issue that the Board will continue to monitor.

**People**

In 2014, we welcomed Craig Lilley (parent representative) to the Board. Christopher Gill (Deputy Chair and parent representative), Adam Rankin (parent representative), Clare Zacharias and Mich Allen (teacher representatives) continued.

The school community farewelled Neil McLeod, who retired at the end of 2014. Neil had been teaching for 40 years, with nearly 20 years at Torrens. He made a big impact on the lives of both students and staff; his dedication and passion will be missed.

Heather Ross and Alison Reid transferred to Garran and Farrer primary schools and with the closure of the Early Intervention Unit, Sue Frost and Kim Macpherson both transferred to Arawang Primary School.

Belinda Bacon will be the new Executive Teacher and was appointed in 2014 to start in 2015. The school will also welcome Monique Harrison and Genevieve Tischler (part time) to Torrens Primary School.

I would like to acknowledge Principal Sue Mueller, who had a busy year validating five different schools. This was a great experience for Sue and a fantastic opportunity to validate

what our schools are doing well and get ideas of what could be done better. Deputy Principal Rachel Matthews did an excellent job acting as Principal during this time, as did Louise Morton who acted as Deputy Principal. I would also like to extend my gratitude to the dedicated staff at Torrens, who all made 2014 a great year.

Finally, after five years on the Torrens School Board, I will be stepping down in 2015 when my term as Chair expires. Thank you to everyone that I have met over the years - it has been a real privilege to be on the Board and watch the school (and children!) grow. I have been proud to be part of the Torrens school community.

*Debbie Burkevics*

*Chair, Torrens Primary School Board*

### **Introduction to School**

Torrens Primary School is located in the suburb of Torrens in central Canberra. Three preschools at Pearce, Chifley and Torrens are attached to Torrens Primary School. They are all located off site. Torrens has an enrolment of about 500 students – 100 students in the preschools and early intervention unit and just over 400 in the primary school.

In 2014 all of our preschools offered 30 hours per fortnight. Torrens Preschool is full time and runs two sessions, Chifley Preschool and Pearce Preschools are both part time with one session. The early intervention unit also operates at Pearce Preschool part time and offers developmental support for students 3-4 years of age.

Torrens Primary School provides a purposeful, productive and comprehensive education of the highest quality, working in partnership with the school community. The school strives to provide quality experiences that empower students to live in, and contribute to, a changing society. Torrens has high quality teachers committed to and capable of creating deep and broad learning. Torrens strives to develop student's ability to work as members of a team in cooperative learning environments, and to appreciate the worth of individual differences, with the capacity to act as responsible, independent citizens who care about themselves and their environment. Together we are building a powerful, responsible and innovative community.

Academic areas of focus include literacy and numeracy with special emphasis on explicit and guided teaching, curriculum based units of work from P-6 based on the Australian Curriculum, with a school wide focus on quality teaching and learning. Specialist programs offered at Torrens include Mandarin, Science, performing arts, and library.

19 single year level classes operated in 2014.

## Student Information

### Student enrolment

In 2014 there was a total of 511 students enrolled at this school.

*Table: 2014 Student Enrolment Breakdown*

Group	Number of Students
Male	273
Female	238
Indigenous	16
LBOTE	126

Source: Planning and Performance, August 2014

### Student attendance

The following table identifies the attendance rate of students by year level during 2014. Student attendance rate is the percentage of school days attended by students in each year level at the school. Student attendance is measured over two school terms; that is from the first day of the school year for students in term one to the last day of term two.

*Table: 2014 Semester 1 attendance rates*

Year Level	Attendance Rate %
K	92.8
1	92.8
2	95.0
3	95.1
4	93.7
5	94.3
6	93.6

Source: Planning and Performance, July 2014

Student attendance is monitored through the marking of class rolls twice each day. Parents are asked to inform teachers when their children are absent and the reason for the absence either by telephone message or a note to the teacher. Teachers actively follow up absenteeism with parents and carers when unusual patterns are noted and after a 3 day period of unexplained absence.

## Staff Information

### Teacher qualifications

All teachers meet the professional requirements for teaching in an ACT public school.

The proportion of teaching staff with certificates/degrees/diplomas and a postgraduate qualification is shown below.

*Table: 2014 Qualification of Teaching Staff*

Qualifications	Teaching staff (%)
Certificate/Diploma/Degree	100
Postgraduate	47

Source: School Data, 2014

## Workforce Composition

In 2014 the workforce composition of the school is highlighted in the following table. The data is taken from the school's verified August pay report. For reporting purposes it includes all school staff including preschools if applicable, staff absent for a period of less than four consecutive weeks, staff replacing staff absent for more than four consecutive weeks. It does not include all casuals and staff who were not paid in this period and staff absent for a period of four consecutive weeks or longer nor unfilled vacancies.

*Table: 2014 Workforce Composition Numbers*

Role	Total
Administrative Service Officers	9
General Service Officers & Equivalent	1
School Leader A	1
School Leader B	1
Teachers	28
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>40</b>

Source: Workforce Management, August census 2014

**Note:** This table includes pre-school staffing

There are no indigenous staff at this school.

## Volunteers

Volunteers have worked an estimated 1500 hours supporting Torrens Primary students through involvement in the School Board and P&C, at sporting events, junior reading programs, class programs, library assistance, coordination of the canteen, uniform shop, book club and student banking.

## School Review and Development

In 2014, the ACT Education and Training Directorates *Strategic Plan 2014-2017* provided the framework and strategic direction for the school's plan. This is supported by the *School*

*Improvement in ACT Public Schools Directions 2010-2014* and the *School Improvement Framework* which are the overarching documents providing support to achieve high standards in student learning, innovation and best practice in ACT public schools.

All ACT public schools participate in a four year cycle of school review and development. Schools take part in a continuous cycle of review comprising annual self-assessments against their school plans. In the fourth year schools undergo an external validation process. This process provides an independent and unbiased assessment of the school's progress towards achieving system and school priorities.

Torrens Primary School will be validated in 1017. A copy of their most recent validation report can be found on the school website.

## School Satisfaction

Schools continually use a range of data collection tools to gain an understanding of the satisfaction levels of their parents and carers, staff and students. In August/September 2014 the school undertook a survey to gain an understanding of school satisfaction at that time. Staff, parents and students from year 5, and above, with the exception of students in special schools, who were invited to take part in an online survey.

## Overall Satisfaction

In 2014, 82 parents, 28 staff and 101 students responded to the survey. Where less than five responses were received the results were not reported due to concerns about participant privacy.

In 2014, 89% of parents and carers, 100% of staff, and 82% of students at this school indicated they were satisfied with the education provided by the school. As well in 2014, 14 national parent survey items and 12 national student survey items were included in the surveys. These items were approved by the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC) for use from 2014. The following tables show the percentage of parents and carers and students who agreed with each of the national items at this school.

*Table: Proportion of parents and carers in agreement with each national opinion item*

Item	(%)
Teachers at this school expect my child to do his or her best.	90
Teachers at this school provide my child with useful feedback about his or her school work.	84
Teachers at this school treat students fairly.	87
This school is well maintained.	99
My child feels safe at this school.	95
I can talk to my child's teachers about my concerns.	90

Student behaviour is well managed at this school.	88
My child likes being at this school.	98
This school looks for ways to improve.	83
This school takes parents' opinions seriously.	77
Teachers at this school motivate my child to learn.	89
My child is making good progress at this school.	90
My child's learning needs are being met at this school.	85
This school works with me to support my child's learning.	75

Source: 2014 School Satisfaction Surveys, September 2014

*Table: Proportion of students in agreement with each national opinion item*

Item	(%)
My teachers expect me to do my best.	97
My teachers provide me with useful feedback about my school work.	67
Teachers at my school treat students fairly.	56
My school is well maintained.	74
I feel safe at my school.	80
I can talk to my teachers about my concerns.	54
Student behaviour is well managed at my school.	51
I like being at my school.	75
My school looks for ways to improve.	83
My school takes students' opinions seriously.	56
My teachers motivate me to learn.	87
My school gives me opportunities to do interesting things.	81

Source: 2014 School Satisfaction Surveys, September 2014

This information can be considered alongside information available on the *My School* website (<http://www.myschool.edu.au>).

These results as well as the continual review of school performance contributed to the evaluation of our school plan and the development of annual operating plans. The school plan is available on the school website.

## Professional Learning

Torrens Primary School priorities within the Operational Plan for 2014 addressed Education and Training Directorate priorities. The Quality Teaching principles, Australian Curriculum, assessment and data, and communication with parents were areas highlighted for improvement at the school in 2014.

Professional learning undertaken by staff included:

- Principals as Literacy Leaders (PALLS),
- Relational Practices led by Marg Thorsborne,
- Values and Emotional Literacy workshops,
- Formative Assessment,
- Kids Matter,
- Curriculum planning,
- Atlas programming,
- Quality Teaching Rounds, and
- E-learning units regarding bullying and harassment for workers, responding to abuse and neglect and work health and safety fundamentals.

Throughout the year various staff also engaged in professional learning of interest to them. Examples are listed below:

- ZART art,
- First aid,
- Preschool specific and related to NQS,
- Guided reading,
- Wakakirri story dance,
- THRASS,
- Educating the gifted learner, and
- Djembe drumming workshops,

Health and safety courses are always a priority as information must be current and staff need to be trained for first aid within the school and when on excursions with the students.

Curriculum training is a very high priority to ensure teachers are familiar with the Australian Curriculum and are meeting the needs of every student in their class. Preschool teachers attended training and regular meetings about the National Quality Standards.

Other professional learning courses were chosen by staff and related to specific needs and interests.

## **Learning and Assessment**

### **Performance in literacy and numeracy**

#### **Early Years Assessment**

Students in kindergarten undertake an on-entry assessment of their early reading and numeracy skills using the Performance Indicators in Primary Schools (PIPS) program. Student results are reported against five performance bands at the end of semester one and two.

The following table shows the comparison of the school against the ACT on raw scores in reading and mathematics.

*Table: Torrens Primary School PIPS 2014 mean raw scores*

Test Domain	School Start	School End	ACT Start	ACT End
Reading	47	146	51	124
Mathematics	40	57	39	54

Source: Planning and Performance December 2014

PIPS data showed expected steady improvement. In reading, 36% of students showed better than expected growth, 62% expected growth and 2% less than expected growth. There were 98% of students gaining expected or better than expected growth in reading.

In maths, 47% of students showed better than expected growth, 38% expected growth and 15% less than expected growth. There were 85% of students who gained expected or better than expected growth for mathematics.

Jolly Phonics is a program used to promote sound and letter knowledge in Kindergarten. This is supported throughout the school with the use of THRASS tools in years 1-6. Parents are offered an information session about Jolly Phonics and are encouraged to join the Kindergarten students reading program.

PM Benchmarks were reached by 13% of Kindergarten students and exceeded by 67%. There were 13% below benchmark.

The literacy and numeracy team, along with the special needs team, monitor students in Kindergarten, providing extra support for individual students and teachers. This support extends to other year levels where groups are able to be reduced and a guided, supported approach to teaching and learning is key. Numeracy support will also be offered to all year groups in 2015.

A detailed analysis of our school's academic achievement are incorporated into the information related to reporting against our progress against our priorities. This is found later in the report.

### **NAPLAN Assessment**

Students in years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in all ACT schools participated in the National Assessment Program-Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). This program assesses skills in reading, writing, spelling and grammar and punctuation and numeracy.

In 2014, 1.80 % of year 3 students and 0.00 % of year 5 students were exempt from testing based on nationally agreed criteria.

Results are not reported when there are fewer than five students with NAPLAN results. This rule is applied to protect the privacy of students in small schools.

The following table shows the 2014 mean scores achieved by our students compared to the ACT.

*Table: Torrens Primary School 2014 NAPLAN Mean Scores*

Test Domain	Year 3 School	Year 3 ACT	Year 5 School	Year 5 ACT
Reading	473	440	562	523
Writing	424	405	503	474
Spelling	432	413	531	502
Grammar & Punctuation	489	441	562	520
Numeracy	443	415	525	499

Source: Performance and Planning December 2014

Year 3 students reached 473 for reading, meeting the ETD target of 462+/- 20 and gaining higher scores than those of all ACT schools at 440. Year 5 students also reached their ETD target of 540+/- 18 by gaining 562 (again higher than the score reached for all ACT schools).

Year 3 students reached 443 for numeracy, meeting the ETD target of 417+/- 18 and gaining higher scores than those of all ACT schools at 415. Year 5 students also reached their ETD target of 523+/- 16 by gaining 525 (again higher than the score reached for all ACT schools).

The Support Team work across all year levels throughout the year to enhance the teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy and to ensure students special needs are being met. This program is intensive and includes extra teachers and assistants in classes. Teachers are given time to plan and prepare programs together with executive teachers. School data is collected and analysed to ensure all students progress.

### **Performance in other areas of the curriculum**

Students represented Torrens Primary School at ACT sporting events such as swimming, athletics and cross country.

Mandarin students excelled in the Panda Competition again in 2014. This competition attracted entrants from government and non-government schools.

Mandarin students also represented the school at the Governor General's residence where they were the only school invited to meet the Chinese President, his wife and Australian government officials, including the Prime Minister.

Students from years 4 and 5 entered the Wakakirri Story Dance Competition with an entry called *Waltzing Matilda – Fight for a fair go!* The students again made it through to the finals. Many teachers and parents assisted with costumes, practices, music, transport,

organisation etc. This competition attracted entrants from government and non-government schools.

Science was taught by a release teacher during 2014 to enhance the program offered to students from Kindergarten to year 3. A scarecrow competition was run to decorate and protect the vegetable gardens with many families and staff providing entries. Sustainability is an area of particular interest at Torrens with students participating in a number of activities through the year eg. Nude Food days (no disposable wrappings), recycling programs, annual involvement in Clean Up Australia and gardening programs.

Bandstravaganza was the culmination of 2 year's work by the students in our year 6 band. This was a combined performance with other bands enjoyed by students and their families. Torrens Primary had 2 brass bands operating in 2014, year 5 and year 6. Band students also contributed to performances at Combined Band Practices and Floriade.

Winter and Spring Projects were completed by year 5 and year 6 students. These are projects decided by the students and worked on at home. Students display their projects for the entire school and the larger community.

Year 6 students participated in a visit to Panania School which has been a tradition continued for over 40 years. This excursion is the culmination of history studies for Torrens students. Panania School visited Torrens and local Canberra sites of interest during term 3.

Stay and Play was established in 2013 and continued in 2014 to encourage parents within the community with babies and toddlers to come and join the school for an hour per week in term 4. Familiarisation with the school assisted both parents and their children transitioning to school and encouraged friendship and support networks.

Students from year 3 to year 6 engaged in camps taking leadership roles and learning resilience. Year 3 and 4 went to Birrigai, year 5 went to Cooba Camp and year 6 went to Panania.

Torrens students were also provided opportunities to take on leadership through the School Captains program, sports captains, SRC and the ibean cafe.

Year 6 students engaged in the Da Vinci Decathlon winning first prize in the Code Breaking program. This was their first entry in the competition.

Robotics is a new club offered at Torrens. The Spirit of Robo Cup is another first time event for Torrens. The senior girls team were in the top 6 for the Robo Dance competition and the senior boys team won an encouragement award in the Rescue competition.

The Doing It Together Day in 2014 focussed on reading with parents throughout the school during the Book Week activities.

Fresh Tastes was introduced in 2014 and is a whole school approach to healthy eating approved by the School Board and the P&C. This work will continue in 2015.

## Progress against School Priorities in 2014

### Priority 1

Invest in a safe and supportive learning environment

#### Target/s

By the end of 2014:

- proportion of parents reporting satisfaction through system surveys in relation to:
  - student behaviour is well managed increases to 91% from 89% in 2013
  - my child feels safe at school increases to 97% from 96% in 2013,
- proportion of students reporting satisfaction through system surveys in relation to:
  - student behaviour is well managed increases to 70% from 66% in 2013
  - I feel safe at school increases to 88% from 84% in 2013
  - teachers at my school treat students fairly increases to 75% from 71% in 2013,
- proportion of teachers reporting satisfaction through system surveys in relation to:
  - being supported by the school in the management of student behaviour increases to 93% from 90% in 2013
  - being supported if bullying or harassment occurs increases to 66% from 63% in 2013
  - occupational health and safety issues are dealt with promptly increases to 70% from 67% in 2013, and
- 100% of ratings within the National Quality Standard linked to Area 2: children's health and safety, and standard is at Outstanding level.

#### School improvement domain/s covered with this priority

- A culture that promotes learning, community partnerships

#### Progress

The following actions describe our journey in relation to our first key improvement strategy **to implement a comprehensive health and well-being program P-6.**

*Kids Matter* is a flexible approach for the whole school to address children's mental health and wellbeing. It is an umbrella under which the existing programs at Torrens can fit as well as standing alone. The framework was introduced to the Torrens community in 2014. A team of six teachers trained to become *Kids Matter* presenters. Parents and staff have completed two of the four components.

The components completed in 2014 are:

- introduction to social and emotional learning, and
- teaching social and emotional skills.

One more component will be completed in 2015.

The *Social and Emotional Literacy* scope and sequence document was presented to staff at a staff meeting in February. A trial of the document found that while all teachers are implementing health and well-being programs, timetabled each week, they are not consistent across the school. *Bounce Back* has been used in conjunction with the *Social and Emotional Literacy* scope and sequence. A unified whole school approach will be the focus for 2015.

New library resources have been purchased to support health and well-being in classes.

All teachers attended professional learning in January led by Marg Thorsborne on *Relational Practices*. Teachers used the principles and activities from *Relational Practices* when planning programs for their students.

In respect of the key improvement strategy to **establish a support team to support well-being practice** the Special Needs team met weekly to discuss the support and ongoing requirements of students throughout the school identified by teachers and parents. A change of focus from a 'one off' or short term approach to a case management approach has meant that students identified are constantly monitored throughout their time at Torrens Primary School rather than needing to be re-identified at different year levels.

Feedback to teachers by the Support Team has been ongoing and formal. At the conclusion of each term all teachers are informed of the progress of each child and the support they received.

An indicator of success for this strategy included the proportion of teaching staff identifying improvement in clarity and consistency of communication between staff and the Support Team as measured by the Habits of Highly Effective Schools matrix. This information showing satisfaction for student support is outlined below:

*Table Proportion of ratings against Are education environments safe, supportive and welcoming and inclusive for students?*

Rating	2013	2014
poor	0%	0%
Ineffective	0%	0%
Effective	33%	50%
Highly effective	66%	50%

*Table: Proportion of ratings against What are the perceptions of the effectiveness of the school's transition strategies?*

Rating	2013	2014
Poor	0%	0%
ineffective	0%	0%
Effective	100%	60%
Highly effective	0%	40%

Source: School data, 2014

Whilst there is some movement between the effective and highly effective categories for both questions, 100% agree that the school satisfactorily supports students.

Student engagement results are indicated below:

*Table: Proportion of ratings against: What structures are in place that allow teachers to address the specific needs of individual students (physical, social and academic)?*

Rating	2013	2014
Poor	0%	0%
ineffective	0%	20%
Effective	66%	50%
Highly effective	33%	30%

Source: School data, 2014

Workshops and meetings with staff at the conclusion of 2014 have shown that there is a misunderstanding of the roles of ETD sections and the school. This is an area for future clarification and work throughout 2015. However, school processes remain as effective as for 2013. Accountability measures have increased in 2014 and also remain a continued focus for 2015.

*Table: Proportion of ratings against: What processes exist to enhance staff and student interactions?*

Rating	2013	2014
Poor	0%	0%
ineffective	0%	0%
Effective	66%	50%
Highly effective	33%	50%

Source: School data, 2014

Staff and student interactions are effective at Torrens and will continue to be an area of focus and development.

The second indicator of success was the proportion of case management dealt with by the Support Team in 2014. In semester 1 there were 57 students or about 11% of all students

with special needs referrals managed by the Support Team. In semester 2 this number was 58 or 11.4% of all students.

Students supported in reading in small groups or individually 2-5 times a week numbered 89 or 17.4% of students in semester one and 83 or 16.2% of all students in semester two, 2014.

The final indicator of success was the proportion of parents who agree the individual needs of their child is being met. In 2014 there were 25 students or 4.9% of students with Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) at Torrens. There are 11 indigenous students who represent 11.2% of students at Torrens, and they all had a Personalised Learning Plan (PLP). Twenty two students at the Early Intervention Unit had ILPs. This figure represents 100% of students in the Early Intervention Unit. Only one child at Torrens Preschool had an ILP. Six students or 1.2% of all students were included in the Integrated Support Program.

### **Progress against targets**

There were two barriers encountered in meeting targets for this priority.

1. Unfortunately, in second semester, during the administration of the Satisfaction Surveys, both year six teachers became ill and took extensive leave. Students were extremely unsettled by this and were worried about the health of their well respected teachers. Obviously classroom structures and management changed during this period with relief staff. For one of the year six teachers, finding a suitable longer term relief teacher was initially a problem.
2. The School Climate Survey was administered by Education and Training Directorate at the end of term 2 for the first time and with short notice. Parents may have thought that they had already completed the Satisfaction Survey.

As a result, there was a low response to both the School Climate and the Satisfaction surveys by parents and staff.

Targets were not reached in relation to the percentage of parents reporting satisfaction through system surveys. Parent satisfaction did not increase to expected levels when reporting 'my child feels safe at school' and 'student behaviour is well managed' in fact both dropped by 1% from 2013 figures.

Targets were not reached in relation to the percentage of students reporting satisfaction through system surveys. 'Student behaviour is well managed' did not increase from 66% in 2013. In 2014 51% of students reported against this item when the target was 70%. In all P-6 schools 54% of students thought student behaviour was well managed. In the School Climate Survey 90.4% of students reported engaging in very little aggression and 9.6% engaged in occasional aggression. These figures are favourable when compared to those for the ACT where 85% of students reported engaging in very little aggression and 11% engaged in occasional aggression. In our school 61.3% of students in the School Climate Survey self-

reported low levels of victimisation by fellow students, while 25.3% reported moderate levels. These figures are better than those for the ACT at 59% for low levels of victimisation and 22% for moderate levels.

Satisfaction related to 'I feel safe at school' decreased from 84% in 2013 to 80% in 2014. This figure was still higher than 78% for all P-6 schools. However, in the School Climate Survey these same students indicated that they did feel safe at school with 97.3% reporting their school is mostly to strongly a safe, supportive and nurturing environment.

In 2014, 56% of students felt 'teachers at my school treat students fairly' reduced from 71% in 2013. This is also lower than the system P-6 figure of 71%. In the Climate Survey, 100% of students reported excellent to adequate levels of staff and student relations. However, this is an important area and one that all staff at Torrens intend to focus upon in 2015.

Targets were reached for teachers who expressed satisfaction for 'I am supported if bullying or harassment occurs' which rose from 63% in 2013 to 82% in 2014. This figure exceeded the target of 66%. This result correlates with some staff changes and a restructure of the work undertaken through the Quality Teaching Rounds and committees for meeting operating plan goals.

In relation to 'occupational health and safety issues are dealt with promptly' targets were exceeded in 2014 with 91% satisfaction by staff compared to 67% in 2013. This exceeded the target set for this area of 70%. A whole school approach to issues of health and safety has developed greater awareness of issues. A systematic approach to improvements throughout the school has also assisted raising awareness. All staff completed online health and safety training.

Targets were almost reached for 'I am supported by the school in the management of student behaviour' which rose from 90% in 2013 to 91% in 2014. This was just under the target set for 2014 which was 93%. High levels of satisfaction for student management are maintained through constant whole school approaches, whole staff and team discussions of problem areas and a focus on health and well-being through programs and professional learning for all staff.

Two preschools were assessed through the National Quality Standard, Chifley and Pearce. Both schools received a rating of 'exceeding' for Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety. This is in excess of the target set, which is reaching an 'outstanding' rating.

## Priority 2

Deliver inspiring, innovative and inclusive education

### Target/s

By the end of 2014:

- proportion of 'within school matched' students achieving expected growth in NAPLAN increases by 1 point for each test domain,
- proportion of students achieving better than expected growth in PIPS Reading and Maths increases by 3% points for each test domain,
- proportion of parents and students satisfied with the education being provided increases by 2% points for each group, and
- 100% of ratings within the National Quality Standard linked to Area 1: educational program and practice, standards 1.1 and 1.2 achieves an Outstanding rating.

#### School improvement domain/s covered with this priority

- An expert teaching team, a culture that promotes learning, analysis and discussion of data

#### Progress

To action our strategy to **embed Quality Teaching principles across the school** all teachers have been part of Quality Teaching Rounds during 2014. Teachers were provided opportunities to observe classes and reflect on the practices observed. Meeting times were timetabled and expectations for Quality Teaching Rounds were clearly identified for all teachers.

Staff and team meetings were utilised to hold conversations around best practice. Teachers shared ideas and practices that were interesting, innovative and new with their colleagues. Teachers also shared programs, assessment and resources with network schools e.g. science moderation and preschool practice.

All teachers included Quality Teaching Rounds in their Professional Pathways plans and have contributed to the professional learning of colleagues.

Engagement in Quality Teaching Rounds in 2015 is a priority both at Torrens and within the Woden Cluster. Time will again be set aside for the process.

The school continued to action the key improvement strategy to **embed the delivery of a systematic curriculum from P-6 aligned with approved frameworks.**

The introduction of a universal programming process that enables teachers to see the programs of all year levels and provides a solid process for induction of new staff to the school was established in 2014. All teachers have been provided with professional learning on the process, individually and as a team. All teachers have contributed to the development of school programs. Time has been provided to all teachers in order to meet and plan together. Teachers were engaged in professional learning designed to focus on differentiation in the curriculum at the conclusion of 2013. This work has continued in 2014 with teachers writing programs specifically targeting how they develop all of their students.

Executive teachers monitored programs by meeting with year level teams each term. The focus of these meetings changed over the terms e.g. Alignment with the Australian

Curriculum and exploring literacy and numeracy; differentiation, handwriting and assessment; explicit teaching of literacy and numeracy, and differentiation; and data usage to develop programs and activities to suit individual needs, and social and emotional learning.

A review of the Atlas program has shown that 100% of teachers are using the tool and appreciate the options the tool provides as well as developing a consistent approach to programming across the school.

In respect of key improvement strategy 3: **To establish an evidence based practice to inform teaching emphasis** Torrens Primary School has developed an assessment and data focus committee to investigate a whole school approach to data collection. This committee gained agreement for the purpose and timing of assessments to be recorded for whole school data. A trial of the process has been undertaken during 2014. Support for the process was provided in the Front Office with one person inputting the data for all teachers.

Assessments have been recorded on the Torrens spreadsheet twice a term for all teachers. Student growth is being monitored and tracked by teachers; the support team and the literacy and numeracy team. Teachers also have access to data held in the form of a data wall in the literacy and numeracy room and use this information during team meetings and special needs meetings.

Literacy and numeracy data is being used when teachers plan programs. The learning assistance program is also planned using this data and targets specific year levels at different times through the year. Extra teaching staff and assistants are provided to support small groups and to promote learning through specific, guided lessons.

All teachers are using data to plan programs and develop groups within their classes. All teachers are contributing to the development of a whole school data base to inform school progress and individual student and class need. However, teachers are using this data inconsistently when planning and reporting across the school. This area will be addressed further in 2015.

Torrens has trialled a number of different means for recording school data that have not been successful. In 2014 all teachers have been recording data to provide a school 'picture' of our students in addition to the system data collected. This area remains a focus for 2015.

Torrens Primary was commended by the School Validation team in 2013 on the following points related to this Strategic Priority:

- Its strategic approach to developing and fostering collaboration in teaching and learning has resulted in high levels of staff satisfaction. This has been achieved through the development of professional learning communities and staff working in teams.

- For embracing Quality Teaching principles to improve teacher performance and providing opportunities for mentoring and coaching.

The 2013 School Validation Report recommended that Torrens Primary School:

- Reaffirm commitment to working collaboratively through continued participation in professional learning teams, focusing on improved student outcomes.

This process has effectively been implemented in 2014 with all teachers joining network and cluster initiatives and Torrens PS planning and timetabling professional learning and workshops.

- Build upon and enhance the focus on improving teacher quality and teacher standards by embedding clear feedback procedures for teachers into their Quality Teaching rounds and professional learning.

All teachers are part of a Quality Teaching Round. They are given time to undertake the process and provided time for feedback sessions.

- Establish an effective whole school data collection, collation, analysis and reporting system, communicate this to all staff and support it through ongoing professional learning.

This work was begun in 2014 and will continue for the life of the strategic plan 2014-2017.

### Progress against targets

1. Proportion of 'within school matched' students achieving expected growth in NAPLAN increased by more than 1 point in all test domains, with the exception of writing for each test domain as detailed in the table below.

*Table; Proportion of within school matched students achieving expected Growth in NAPLAN tests.*

Domain	Less than expected growth	Equal to or better than expected growth	% point Diff in Growth from 2013
Reading	39.6	60.4	9.2
Writing	30.2	69.8	-8.2
Spelling	37.7	62.3	18.4
Grammar & Punctuation	26.4	73.6	17.5
Numeracy	34.1	65.9	2.5

Source: SMART data , December 2014

2. The proportion of students achieving better than expected growth in PIPS reading increased by 12%, more than the planned 3%. However, PIPS maths did not make the same expected gain, reducing by 5%. This is an area for the Support Team to focus on in 2015.

3. The proportion of parents satisfied with the education being provided their children decreased from 93% in 2013 to 89% in 2014. Results were however, 2% above those for all ACT schools in 2014. Students reported that they were less satisfied they were getting a good education in 2014, 82% than they were in 2013, 90%. Results for students were 1% lower than those for all ACT schools in 2014, 83%. Torrens will continue to work on this area in 2015.
4. Two preschools were assessed through the National Quality Standard, Chifley and Pearce. Both schools received a rating of 'exceeding' for Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice. This is in excess of the target set, that of reaching an 'outstanding' rating.

### Priority 3

Create new capacity to strengthen community relations and engagement

#### Target/s

By the end of 2014:

- Proportion of Parent satisfaction related to survey indicators questions:
  - I can talk to my child's teacher about my concerns increases from 94% to 95%
  - The school takes parent's opinions seriously increases from 80% to 85%
  - The school works with me to support my child increases from 88% to 90%
  - Community partnerships are valued/maintained) increases from 79% to 81%,
- Number of parents engaging with school programs that build relationships with the community increases by 10%, and
- 100% of ratings within the National Quality Standard linked to Area 6: collaborative partnerships with families and communities, standards 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 is at Outstanding.

#### School improvement domain/s covered with this priority

- School community partnerships

#### Progress

This strategy is to **strengthen parental engagement in the school through ILPs and PLPs.**

The focus on providing Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) and Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs) has been raised through 2014. All students at Torrens being monitored by the Special Needs team have an ILP and all indigenous students have a PLP.

Teachers are provided with time to write the plans in conjunction with the Special Needs team. All parents are given the opportunity to participate in the plans. Indigenous students are encouraged to participate in planning for improvement in their learning.

Professional learning was provided for teachers to assist with writing meaningful ILPs and PLPs. This occurred during February.

There were 100% of ILPs and PLPs were completed.

This strategy is to **enhance a community approach to healthy living including canteen, *Kids Matter*, and food based rewards.**

*Kids Matter* principles were revisited each term with staff to maintain their commitment to the framework. *Kids Matter* was introduced in 2013 when six members of staff were trained as trainers and formed the development committee along with the school counsellor.

At the first P&C meeting, parents were informed of the framework and the progress planned for 2014 and asked to join the process. Parents had given 'in principle' support for the framework in 2013 and were supportive of *Kids Matter* being introduced as a whole school focus in 2014.

Professional learning has been provided during term one and three of 2014 that included interested parents and relief staff.

The P&C undertook work with the canteen to develop healthy food and drink guidelines. This work is continuing and will remain a focus in 2015. The Canteen menu was aligned with healthy guidelines and a traffic light system was instigated and highlighted in the menu. Green, amber and red foods were clearly detailed for parents. Very few red items remain on the menu with limited times when they are on sale.

A partnership with *healthy food @ school* was established. A committee of teachers and parents was developed to monitor progress towards healthy goals and to report to school staff and the P&C. Items of interest and concern are discussed and solutions promoted e.g. food rewards have been removed from classrooms, the canteen is more aware of red foods and ensuring they are removed from the menu over time and healthy living aspects are at the forefront of P&C discussions.

At times the P&C committee were a little too committed, moving too fast for some members of the Torrens community. This required some negotiation and redirection by executive and staff to smooth the way forward.

### **Progress against targets**

Targets were not always reached in this Strategic Priority. The targets for the proportion of parents indicating satisfaction through the system survey to specific questions were not always reached. For example, 'I can talk to my child's teacher about my concerns' decreased from 94% in 2013 to 90% in 2014. This figure was also below the figure for All P-6 schools at 94%.

The survey item 'the school takes parent's opinions seriously' also decreased from 80% in 2013 to 77% in 2014. This figure was just under the figure for All P-6 schools at 78%.

Again, 'this school works with me to support my child' decreased from 88% in 2013 to 75% in 2014. This figure is also under the All P-6 schools recorded figure of 82%.

However, 'community partnerships are valued/maintained' increased from 79% in 2013 to 82% in 2014, surpassing the target set and equalling that of All P-6 schools.

The Torrens school community recorded 100% of parents reporting excellent to adequate levels of identification with their child's school in the School Climate Survey. There were 83% of parents reporting excellent to adequate levels of school and family connections which is less than the result for all ACT parents of 96%. However, 100% of parents reported excellent to adequate levels of involvement with their child's school.

The number of parents engaging with school programs that build relationships with the community increased. Parents are attending P&C meetings for workshops and discussions e.g. a homework discussion raised the numbers attending from 8 or 9 to 19. Parents regularly attend the Stay and Play program operating through term four. Other areas where parental contributions are high include:

- attending Learning Journeys with their children,
- attending literacy workshops run by teachers,
- assisting in the Canteen for special lunch days and functions such as athletics carnivals,
- engaging with ILPs and PLPs with teachers and the Special Needs team,
- assisting with Wakakirri preparations and attending final performances,
- attending assemblies to support their children,
- attending band performances at Torrens and other venues,
- joining whole school 'Do It Together' days eg. Book Week activities,
- assisting with reading, especially in the junior school, and
- attending preschool to kindergarten transition days and information sessions.

Two preschools were assessed through the National Quality Standard, Chifley and Pearce. Both schools received a rating of 'exceeding' for Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities. This is in excess of the target set, that of reaching an 'outstanding' rating.

### **Preschool Unit- Quality Improvement**

The National Quality Framework which has been agreed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has put in place a new National Quality Standard to ensure high quality and consistent early childhood education and care across Australia. The National Quality Standard assists the school in identifying preschool unit strengths, and areas that require improvement. The school has identified the following preschool unit strengths using

the National Quality Standard. Areas for improvement will be identified in the School's Operating Plan.

### **Education program and practice**

The leadership team and educators demonstrate a working knowledge of the Early Years Learning Framework and commitment to its implementation. This is reflected in both the design and application of the preschool curriculum, particularly through the use of fortnightly statements of intent. The preschool philosophy, developed in collaboration with families, provides a statement to guide curriculum decision making with educators demonstrating their knowledge of the statement through clear articulation of how it guides practice.

Educators have a deep understanding of children's learning, agency and developmental needs and this is the driving force behind curriculum decisions. Educators actively listen to children's ideas and respond in ways that ensure every child is engaged in the program. A strong focus on empowering, engaging and challenging children is evident throughout the preschool units.

The preschool curriculum fosters children's agency and provides meaningful opportunities through both child and educator led experiences to strengthen children's sense of self, to make connections and to influence events in their world. Children are able to access equipment independently, show agency in packing away and they are able to initiate their own experiences.

### **Children's health and safety**

Educators implement the approved provider's policies and procedures to ensure the health needs of children were consistently met. Enrolment records and medication records for individual children are effective in not only providing detailed information but also ensuring that all educators were aware of individual children's health requirements.

Procedures and practices demonstrate an embedded understanding of the importance of health and hygiene amongst children and educators. Appropriate hand-washing techniques are represented through signs in the bathrooms. This is reinforced further by the addition of conversations with children and clear guidelines outlining processes to maintain effective hygienic practices.

The preschool units use the provider's policies and procedures to ensure appropriate measures are in place for preventing, controlling and responding to infectious diseases. Accident and injury responsive materials such as first aid kits and fire extinguishers were located in prominent positions throughout the preschool. The use of detailed information to educate educators and families about medical conditions further provides details in regard to how injury and illness is effectively managed. Health and safety is constantly monitored in all preschools by teachers, assistants and executive with issues promptly dealt with.

Throughout the preschools children participate in relaxed and social meal times. Educators engage with children during meal times. These interactions promote healthy eating through discussions about what children are eating and how these foods impact upon energy levels. The self-help skills developed through the opportunity of children to be involved in setting up meal times further enhanced opportunities for children to gain essential skills that support and promote healthy living.

Physical activity is consistently promoted and opportunities for children to engage in gross motor experiences have been designed around children's interests and development. The implementation of movement through music is a focus to engage all children that promotes physical activity

### **Relationships with children**

Building respectful relationships is an integral part of the philosophy statements, illustrated through the intention to create an atmosphere where children's individuality is fostered. Through engaging in positive experiences guided by educators all children are given the opportunity to feel a sense of 'belonging'. Educators consistently engage in meaningful interactions, encouraging warm, responsive and trusting relationships through everyday learning opportunities.

The children interact with each other in a relaxed atmosphere with educators joining in their play in a meaningful way to support the acquisition of skills for learning. Clear expectations are a feature of the preschool units, with educators articulating their belief in all children as competent learners. Children confidently explore and learn with educators showing a genuine interest in children and responding positively to their needs.

### **Staffing arrangements**

Quality teaching and learning programs are delivered at the preschool units through the maintenance of educator-to-child ratios. The organisation of the educators contributes to enhancing children's learning and development in that responsive relationships are strengthened through quality interactions.

Continuity of care for children is ensured through the establishment of purposeful staffing arrangements that enable the educator team to enact the service philosophy to 'provide opportunities for investigation through a play-based learning approach'. The consistent approach in having educators work across three amalgamated preschool units ensures that educators who are familiar with the preschool can contribute to a high quality learning environment for all children.

### **Leadership and management**

Effective leadership has enabled continual implementation of clear goals and positive culture in an established education and care service. Policy and procedural documentation, established by both the provider and the service, is in place to manage the service.

The leadership team is systematic about staffing to ensure the continuity of educators and supports the establishment and continuity of quality practices and consistent, effective processes which benefit the children and their families. The leadership team, under the guidance of the educational leader, sets high expectations for teaching and learning and curriculum direction, providing support in the consistent use of the Early Years Learning Framework.

A culture of learning has been established at the preschool units through the development of a clear philosophy which documents a shared understanding of learning. The statements communicate the principles of; children as individuals, a play-based approach and intentional teaching, the fostering of children's uniqueness and individuality, and the development of learning goals in partnership with families. These guide all aspects of operations. Regular review of the philosophy statements has allowed the community to participate in their development as working documents.

Educators participate in a comprehensive performance management program which links personal development plans to the strategic planning of the service. This focuses the entire team on quality improvement and ensures that knowledge, skills and practices are current and areas for further development are addressed.

Families have opportunities to participate in the establishment of the quality improvement plan and its review through a variety of systematic, formal and informal avenues. This leads to all stakeholders being engaged to align program delivery and quality improvement planning.

### **Physical environment**

The preschool units operate from purpose built early childhood facilities in which designs contribute positively to children's learning and development. Within the physical facilities educators create spaces for learning where children create, explore, express, imagine and learn using appropriate sized and numbered well maintained equipment and resources. Children are able to access learning materials independently which supports their growing self-esteem and contributes to their safety.

Children have access to flexible spaces, described in the philosophy as an 'aesthetically pleasing environment' in which educators give children an opportunity to participate in planning for their own learning. This occurs at the beginning of investigations with children asked what their plans for learning are and what resources they may need.

To ensure access and participation critical reflection about the use of the indoor and outdoor spaces has been undertaken by educators. This has led to flexible use of the environment which as a result, better meets the needs and interests of each child.

The outdoor learning areas are just as important as the indoor learning areas and are planned as meticulously in all preschool units. Students have activities that develop specific

areas of need and interest. Health and safety issues are dealt with promptly and the space is monitored regularly. In 2014 outdoor equipment was updated to meet new standards. Students are able to access a broad array of equipment to keep them motivated and interested. Staff upgraded the resources to provide more for students for example, gardens have been built and maintained in all units, murals were added, and large musical instruments were created. All preschools had external painting completed and Pearce Preschool had substantial renovations during the 2013-2014 holiday periods.

### **Collaborative partnerships with families and communities**

Relationships with families are viewed as the cornerstone of creating a welcoming and inclusive environment and are seen as an integral part of establishing positive, collaborative relationships. Partnerships with families are initially built through an extensive enrolment process to foster two-way communication and an understanding of expectations. Shared decision making and flexible processes are implemented to ensure families feel connected within the whole school environment, with particular emphasis on the needs of individual families.

The leadership team and educators have focused on building a strong inclusive community that supports families in their parenting role which is a feature of the service philosophy. By providing a welcoming learning environment in which families can participate, children's learning and wellbeing is further enhanced.

The leadership team, alongside educators, provides a variety of ways to give families comprehensive information about the operation of the preschool unit. The implementation of a number of strategies, such as a comprehensive enrolment process and access to information about the educational program, build relationships with families and is an acknowledgment that families, however busy, are an integral part of the teaching and learning process.

## Financial Summary

The school has provided the Directorate with an end of year financial statement that was approved by the school board. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

The following summary covers use of funds for operating costs and does not include expenditure in areas such as permanent salaries, buildings and major maintenance.

### Professional learning

The average expenditure at the school level per fulltime equivalent teacher on professional learning was \$1133.

### Voluntary contributions

This school received \$29,904 in voluntary contributions in 2014. These funds were used to support the general operations of the school. The spending of voluntary contributions is in line with the approved budget for 2014.

Financial Summary	
	31-Dec-14
<b>INCOME</b>	
Self management funds	300782
Voluntary contributions	29904
Contributions & donations	1263
Subject contributions	6600
External income (including community use)	6465
Proceeds from sale of assets	0
Bank Interest	13807
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>358821</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	
Utilities and general overheads	90157
Cleaning	99138
Security	75
Maintenance	38092
Mandatory Maintenance	0
Administration	3860
Staffing	0
Communication	12389
Assets	29923
Leases	0
General office expenditure	41395
Educational	36524
Subject consumables	6625
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>358178</b>
<b>OPERATING RESULT</b>	<b>643</b>
<b>Actual Accumulated Funds</b>	<b>209289</b>
Outstanding commitments (mir)	2894
<b>BALANCE</b>	<b>207038</b>

**Reserves**

<b>Name and purpose</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Expected Completion</b>
Preschools – this reserve was created to replace photocopiers in the preschools	\$5715.41	2016
Environment Centre/Science – enhances the equipment available to students. This reserve was expended in 2014 with the purchase of a digital microscope	0	2014
New photocopier for primary school	\$15,000	2015
Carpet tiles in classrooms	\$20,000	2015
Ground maintenance – to enhance the learning environment for students. This amount was expended in 2014 with Board approval for creation of a sandpit in the junior school and repair of garden edges	0	2015
Curriculum resources – reading and research material to be purchased for students	\$16,000	2015
Old school maintenance/painting – the building is old with continued maintenance required	\$20,000	2015
School projects – this amount is held to pay for classroom upgrades, approved and underway 2014/15	\$10,000	2014

**Endorsement Page**

I declare that the Torrens Primary School Board has operated in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 2004 including the following sections.

- 39 (4) The school board must give effect to the chief executive’s directions.
- 44 (2) The chief executive must end the appointment of a member of the school board of a public school, other than the principal of the school if-
  - a) The member is absent from 3 consecutive meetings of the board without reasonable excuse or leave given by the board or
  - b) Contravenes section 49 (disclosure of interests by members of school boards) without reasonable excuse.
- 46 The members of the school board of a public school must, whenever is necessary, nominate a member of the board as a member of any selection panel established by the chief executive to make recommendations to the chief executive about the appointment of the principal to the school.
- 47 (2) However, the school board must meet at least four times a year.
- 48 (10) The school board must keep minutes of its meeting.
- 49 Disclosure of interests by members of school boards.
- 49 (3) The disclosure must be reported in the school board’s minutes and, unless the board otherwise decides, the member (The first member) must not-
  - a) be present when the board considers the issue or
  - b) take part in any decision of the board on the issue.
- 49 (5) Within 14 days after the end of each financial year, the chairperson of the school board must give the chief executive a statement of any disclosure of interest under this section in relation to the school board during the financial year.

**MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL BOARD**

- Parent Representative:** Chris Gill, Adam Rankin, Craig Lilley
- Community Representative** Debbie Burkevics
- Teacher Representative** Mich Allen, Clare Zacharias
- Board Chair:** Debbie Burkevics
- Principal:** Sue Mueller

I certify that to the best of my knowledge and belief the data and information reported in this Annual School Board Report represents an accurate record of the school’s operations in 2014.

**Principal Signature:**  **Date:** 23/02/2015

I approve the report, prepared in accordance with the provision of the ACT Education Act, section 52.

**Board Chair Signature:**  **Date:** 26/2/2015