Our school at a glance

Towamba Public School is an inclusive, welcoming and friendly school, supported by a close-knit community where students receive a dynamic education and are provided with opportunities to foster individual talents and interests. Our talented, motivated and caring staff inspire children to have a love of learning by using innovative and challenging educational programs including: a comprehensive creative and performing arts program, community radio, technology, garden and cooking clubs and physical education. Strong emphasis is placed on the skills of literacy and numeracy with advanced technology used as an integral part of all subjects. We pride ourselves on developing social conscience in students in partnership with a vibrant and forward thinking Parents and Citizens Association and local community groups.

Significant programs and initiatives

Social and Emotional Learning Knowing how to manage feelings and get on with others are important skills for everyone. This kind of learning starts in early childhood with parents and carers as children’s most important first teachers. Research has found that teaching children social and emotional skills at school as well as at home makes a positive difference to their wellbeing. The kind of social and emotional skills that are important for our children to develop include: self-awareness; social awareness; self-management; responsible decision making; relationship skills. At Towamba Public School, Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) lessons are timetabled weekly, but the belief in its importance underpins all Key Learning Areas at all times.

Student achievement in 2012

All school students across Australia sit for the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) in Year 3 and Year 5. The performance of students is reported in skill bands ranging from Skill Band 1 (lowest) to Skill Band 5 (highest for Year 3) or Skill Band 6 (highest for Year 5). The reporting of information must be consistent with privacy and personal information policies. Ten or more students must complete the NAPLAN for individual school skill band data to be publicly reported. At Towamba Public School 2 Year 3 and 1 Year 5 student, sat the NAPLAN assessment tests in 2012. Therefore their results cannot be provided in this report. All parents have been advised of their child’s achievements.

Messages

Principal’s message

Towamba is a remarkable school because of its community. The word “community”, comes from the Latin, “munus”, which means, “the gift”, and, “com” which means, “together, among each other.” So, community literally means to give among each other. Communities are the building blocks that allow us to make sense of the world we live in, and to participate and share experiences. They provide a sense of identity and purpose, a sense of being a part of and belonging.

Our school is not a separate piece of Towamba, indeed, it is part of, contributes to, and benefits from the whole community. When I look back to the magnificent collaborative and creative efforts of August the 4th which marked the culmination of many months of dedication and hard work by the 150th organising committee, the P&C, community members, staff and students, I feel incredibly proud to be a member of this community and to have the opportunity to contribute to its ongoing success through the education of its children.

I’d like to finish with an excerpt from Prime Minister, Julia Gillard’s message received on the occasion of the school’s 150th birthday this year. She said: “No school can be measured by its enrolments. A school is measured by the commitment of its staff, parents, students and community that sustains them. Measured in that way, Towamba Public School is a giant – a place...
that not only champions academic improvement but offers an inclusive and friendly environment for every child. That is the definition of a successful school.”

I certify that the information in this report is the result of a rigorous school self-evaluation process and is a balanced and genuine account of the school’s achievements and areas for development.

Kathryn Davis
Principal

P & C message
Towamba is, and always will be, located in an isolated valley, but this doesn’t mean that we are shut off from the rest of the world. In fact, it serves to heighten one’s awareness of what is happening elsewhere and around us. Our school was one of the very first established in the south-east and, this year, we were all fortunate to have the opportunity to be part of the 150 year celebrations on August 4th. Even the mandatory February - March floods did not distract everyone’s focus from this momentous occasion. Eighteen months of planning produced a great day that people still talk about 6 months later. Even the weather gods gave us a clear day in amongst three weeks of rain. The day was attended by 500 people who came from near and far to view the historical displays and working demonstrations of blacksmithing, shearing, post shaping, dancing and Johnny cake making (with eating of course). The rest of the year became a let-down and recovery period for staff, parents and students alike.

The school’s garden project continues to provide an interesting outside learning venue, and the children willingly participate in the cooking of the produce – for the obvious side benefits. More of our families have moved on into full time High School parents. With decreasing families in the school, we will be encouraging more community support in the future with all P & C activities. The school grounds are now being utilised as part of the new Towamba Acoustic Folk Festival and this (naturally) involves more catering for the hard working parents. But all is good as the children love nothing better than having their parents involved at their school; we just need more of them.

Ken Connell
P&C President

Student representative’s message
We started the year with the combined small schools swimming carnival. It was the day of my last small schools swimming carnival and I was very nervous. I went in all the races there were and tried my very best. Although I didn’t win any
ribs that day I had loads of fun and I think that’s the most important thing of all.

Later in Term 1, on the 30th of March, Stage Three (Years 5&6) went to Bermagui to participate in a Bioblitz. We had to search throughout the day for shells, sea creatures and bugs. We went to three different habitats: the swamp, the beach and the estuary. The whole day was lots of fun. Everyone enjoyed the experience. I think days like this are a real privilege because we get to make new friends from different schools and learn a heap of new things about the amazing environment on our back doorstep. I hope that next year’s Stage Threes will be able to experience this excursion as well, because it is a great learning opportunity to enjoy.

On the 15th of June 2012, the students who qualified for the athletics carnival at school went to Bemboka to participate in the combined Small Schools Athletics Carnival. Everyone who went participated in the sports. We had loads of fun on the day, playing around with friends or competing in events. I am glad that the teachers take time out of their day to train us and arrange these events.

On the 4th of August Towamba Public School celebrated its 150th birthday. The entire day passed in a blur of stalls, performances, speeches and friends. The day officially started with the current Towamba students marching in through the school gate, followed by the past students. I went around the stalls and watched the blacksmith, wood chopping and also the Wyndham School of Dance jazz and ballet performances. Everyone had a great day and it will definitely be a day that I will remember for the rest of my life.

This year for the Stage 3 camp we all went to Jindabyne Sport and Recreation Camp. This camp was a load of fun, actually, I think I’ll change that, it was heaps more than a load of fun: it was a super duper load of fun!!! There was a rope course, green machines, initiatives, archery, rock climbing, a circus challenge and a disco. We had to really challenge ourselves.

In Term 4, the whole school participated in Jump Rope for Heart. It is a fundraiser to raise money for research to help children who aren’t as lucky as us and have a serious heart condition. On days like this we can show everyone our own unique skipping abilities and maybe even show people different techniques they could try. I think these days should be more often because they are super fun, help raise awareness plus raise money to help with the research that is needed. After watching people skip in their groups on the day, we then enjoyed a fresh wrap made from the vegies in the garden and an icy pole. We raised $62 and placed the coins next to a skipping rope. The whole day was terrific and I hope these sorts of days continue so we can help people in need.

Year 6 Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

School context

Student information

It is a requirement that the reporting of information for all students must be consistent with privacy and personal information policies.

Student enrolment profile
Student attendance profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
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<td>92.3</td>
<td>96.3</td>
<td>90.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>94.1</td>
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<td>94.2</td>
<td>90.4</td>
<td>91.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>93.6</td>
<td>93.8</td>
<td>92.6</td>
<td>92.6</td>
<td>94.7</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Management of non-attendance

Towamba Public School enjoys a high level of student engagement and attendance. Non-attendance is handled as per the school policy which requires parents to provide a valid reason for student absence. If necessary, students can be referred to the Home School Liaison Officer for further support.

Staff information

It is a requirement that the reporting of information for all staff must be consistent with privacy and personal information policies.

Staff establishment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deputy Principal(s)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal(s)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher of Emotional Disabilities</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Mild Intellectual Disabilities</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Reading Recovery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Teacher Learning Assistance</td>
<td>P/T</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teacher qualifications

All teaching staff met the professional requirements for teaching in NSW public schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>% of staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree or Diploma</td>
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</tbody>
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Financial summary

This summary covers funds for operating costs and does not involve expenditure areas such as permanent salaries, building and major maintenance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of financial summary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
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<td>Balance brought forward</td>
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<td>Global funds</td>
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<td>Tied funds</td>
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<tr>
<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
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Expenditure

Teaching & learning

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excursions</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extracurricular dissections</td>
<td>4052.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>3356.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A full copy of the school’s 2012 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the School Council and/or the parent body. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

**School performance 2012**

**Achievements**

**Arts**

The school has a very active creative and performing arts program.

It’s been a very busy year in regards to the visual and performing arts. The school celebrated its 150th year of education and the students were involved in a number of ways such as a story board focusing on the past and the present as well as strengthening their artistic skills in completing a mural for the event. The students also became actively involved in the end of year school play to which the whole community is invited to participate in as an audience and in the singing of Christmas carols. The play gives the students an opportunity to showcase their talents and become actively involved in the production by helping with the script writing, music, prop and costume making.

This year the students had an opportunity to meet people associated with the visual arts. It took their understanding and appreciation to a higher level. The students travelled to Bega Regional Gallery to meet a very passionate artist whose focus was on birds in nature and their connection to Australian history. During the session the students enjoyed looking at the professional quality of the artist’s work and then were given the opportunity to make art themselves. The students also met another artist through the Connected Classroom program and were able to produce prints through the guidance of the artist with the focus being on invertebrates.

The school has also become involved in Operation Art; where students’ work is selected for the Children’s Hospital at Westmead, NSW. Two of our students had their work selected to be a part of a major art exhibition held in Sydney.

Once again the senior students participated in the Lions organisation International Peace poster competition with one of our students being selected to progress onto the next level.

The music program is a very important part of the overall development of the students at the school with students learning the skills of being in a choir and being involved in a major community schools event in the district.

**Sport**

During the course of 2012, Towamba Public School continued to provide opportunities to participate in regular and varied physical experiences to promote healthy lifestyles and good sportsmanship. We have been very fortunate this year to offer a much wider range of activities and experiences. The students maintained a level of enthusiasm and
perseverance to improve their skills, which is reflected in the high level of participation at all, levels, in all sporting activities.

The year began with the participation of fifteen Towamba students in the Towamba/Wyndham Carnival at Candra Pool. Twenty students then represented Towamba School at the FSCSSC Swimming Carnival.

Once again all our students participated in The School Cross Country Carnival. Sixteen students were then selected to represent our school at the Zone Cross Country held at Wolumla. During 2012 Towamba School received a grant through the Premier’s Sporting Challenge. This money was utilised to fund two bus trips to Eden Marine High School to undertake an athletics skills training and mentoring day. The students benefitted greatly as seen through the greater participation and success at the FSCSSC Athletics Carnival held at Bemboka. Many students were placed in the various events throughout the day, with 1 student being awarded the age champion, and 2 students awarded runner-up. Three students then went on to represent the FSCSSC schools at the zone carnival in Bega. One Towamba student then progressed to the regional athletics in Canberra, placing eighth in the event. Towamba School also participated in the ‘Jump Rope for Heart’ challenge. All students eagerly participated in daily skipping sessions; singles doubles and groups. This culminated in a ‘Jump Rope for Heart Day’, where all students worked in groups to perform their own routine to music. We then celebrated with a ‘Healthy Heart Lunch’ partly made with fresh produce from the school vegetable garden. We were able to broaden our Sporting program this year with the inclusion of a whole school Gymnastic program. This was a fantastic opportunity for the students to gain experience in this area with the tuition carried out by a qualified Gymnastic coach. Many Towamba students were inspired to take up a career in the circus after a visit from a circus skills instructor. The equipment supplied with the program has had many hours of use in the months following this visit. Finally, twenty seven of our students participated in the week long Swimming School held at Pambula pool. This was a wonderful opportunity for the students to improve their swimming stroke and stamina as well as learn about basic water safety and rescue techniques. The change of venue enabled maximum conditions for learning.

Playground use of equipment continues to feature in Towamba’s day, with many games of hockey, tennis, netball, rounders and obstacle courses. It is so inspiring to see our students eager to participate, ‘have a go’ and persevere in all sporting activities.

150th Celebrations

The 4th of August this year was the day distinguished and special guests, and past and present community, staff and students gathered to celebrate and reunite. It was the culmination of many months of dedication and hard work by the 150th Organising Committee, the P&C, community members, staff and students and was standout event in Towamba’s recent history. The event, which took place in the school grounds, surrounded by natural beauty and splendid weather, showcased the creative, caring, involved and hardworking people involved in its organisation. Those who visited our beautiful valley school for the first time were wide-eyed and open-mouthed at the professional yet easygoing way the day unfolded. Many, many people who travelled vast distances and were visiting after a long absence, were reminded of the beauty of the valley and its people – and of
happy times at our great little school. Our very special guest was Mrs Una Halliday who started her school life at Towamba Public School in 1918 and was the most senior past pupil present. Mrs Halliday cut the celebratory cake with the youngest student in Kindergarten.

**Academic**

In the National Assessment Program, the results across the Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 literacy and numeracy assessments are reported on a scale from Band 1 to Band 10.

The achievement scale represents increasing levels of skills and understandings demonstrated in these assessments.

Yr 3: from Band 1 (lowest) to Band 6 (highest for Year 3)

Yr 5: from Band 3 (lowest) to Band 8 (highest for Year 5)

Ten or more students must complete the NAPLAN for individual school skill band data to be publicly reported. At Towamba Public School, 2 Year 3 and 1 Year 5 students sat the NAPLAN assessment tests in 2012. Therefore their results cannot be provided in this report. All parents have been advised of their child’s achievements.

In the National Assessment Program, the results across the Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 literacy and numeracy testing (NAPLAN).

Click on the link [http://www.myschool.edu.au](http://www.myschool.edu.au) and enter the school name in the Find a school and select GO.

**Significant programs and initiatives**

**Aboriginal education**

**No Gap: No Excuse** Towamba Public School is committed to enhancing its Aboriginal cultural awareness and, through improved student education attainment, helping to decrease the current life expectancy gap which exists between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians. All staff members are participating in the No Gap: No Excuse professional learning modules. Module 1 and 2 were completed last year. This year Module 3: Our Kids, Our Classroom, Our Community, and Module 4: Community Engagement and Journeys will be completed.

Towamba Public School is also closely linked to the development of the Bundian Way project. The Bundian Way is an ancient Aboriginal walking track that connects the highest part of the Australian continent and the coast, passing through Towamba on its way. It is the first Aboriginal pathway to be listed on the NSW State Heritage Register.

**Multicultural education**

As part of the cultural diversity and community relations policy, the school recognises the need to focus on multicultural education as part of all curriculum areas.

**National partnership programs**

Schools participating in the Low SES School Communities National Partnership are required to undertake an annual evaluation and report on the effectiveness of the strategies undertaken by the school. Evaluation is the judgment of the merit, worth or value of an activity on evidence that has been systematically collected, analysed and interpreted. Evidence from evaluations can be used to plan activities,
monitor and improve their implementation and make judgments about their impact and the allocation of resources. Evaluation supports evidence-based decision making, systems improvement, accountability and successful innovation.

Progress on 2012 targets

Target 1

Literacy and Numeracy

- Improved Literacy and Numeracy outcomes for students focusing on explicit teaching aligned with the Quality Teaching Framework and syllabus outcomes and indicators.
- Strengthened teacher capacity to improve student learning outcomes through analysis of SMART data trends.

Our achievements include:

- Improvement of up to 12 – 18 months in RA with in a 6 month period for students on Making Up for Lost Time in Literacy (MultiLit) program 4 days/week.
- Early intervention program, MiniLit (phonic driven), in operation from mid-Term 2, impacted on both reading and spelling.
- SENA 1 and 2 Testing, pre and post class evaluations and Numeracy Continuum indicate progress K-6.
- Teaching staff are now using SMART data to inform and strengthen teaching strategies.

Target 2

Aboriginal Education

The strength, diversity, ownership and richness of Aboriginal cultures and Custodianship of Country are respected, valued and promoted throughout all aspects of school life at Towamba Public School.

Our achievements include:

- The Aboriginal Flag is flown each day, on its own dedicated flagpole.
- An Acknowledgement of Country is given by all students, K-6, and staff each day at the beginning of morning assembly.
- In addition to Stage 2 and Stage 3, Early Stage 1 and Stage 1 were included in educational programs and facilities at Bournda Environmental Education Centre during NAIDOC Week this year.
- The Towamba 150th Google Earth History project, launched during the school’s 150th celebrations and coinciding with Education Week, included the Bundian Way.

Target 3

Kids Matter: Social and Emotional Learning

Component 1 completed: School community promotes mental health and well-being, respectful relationships, belonging and inclusion.

Our achievements include:

- Staff surveys indicate commitment and deepening awareness of the importance of supporting students’ mental well-being.
- Identification of programs, (You Can Do It) which will be delivered to all students next year.

School evaluation

Students at Towamba Public School recognise the importance of literacy and numeracy. The majority of the students feel the school teachers and their parents expect them to do well in literacy. This feeling is supported by the student’s perception of their own progress. Students feel that teachers use a variety of appropriate
learning activities to assist in all areas of their literacy learning. The teachers also explain the importance of what they are learning. All students agree that the activities are challenging and make them think. The majority of students also indicate that they receive constructive feedback in literacy and numeracy.

Professional learning
All staff participated in a range of professional learning activities throughout 2012. As well as external professional learning activities and workshops, and online training, staff development included staff meetings such as updates on Child Protection, School Development Days focused on Literacy and Numeracy, and the dissemination of shared knowledge from individual course participation with the wider staff group so that all could benefit. Teachers were again encouraged to build capacity in school leadership to support student learning outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy in 2012. The Principal attended both the Regional Principals’ Conference in Wollongong and State Conference in Sydney. She was also an area representative at the NSW Primary Principals’ Association Annual Conference in Sydney. The Principal undertook professional learning related to the new curriculum, attended PLP Project Meetings and South Coast Learning group meetings and facilitated No Gap: No Excuse Modules 1 and 2 to all staff. The Principal and K-2 teacher attended a number of facilitator Kids Matter workshops in Cooma and Bega. Two teachers trained (Sydney or Melbourne) in Minilit, an early literacy support program. A whole staff initiative to improve maths knowledge and skills involved over 20 hours Count Me In Too professional learning program. K-2 teachers were trained in a Targeting Early Numeracy (TEN) pilot program. Teaching and support staff attended ARCO Training, Online Training for understanding Dyslexia and significant difficulties in reading, Pre-School to Kindergarten Transition Days. All annual updates e.g. CPR, Child Protection, Emergency Care, Code of Conduct, etc., successfully completed. A staff member gained NSW Teachers Institute Professional Accreditation.

School planning 2012—2014

School priority 1
Outcome for 2012–2014

Literacy and Numeracy

Strengthened school-wide pedagogical understanding and deepened teacher capacity to improve student learning outcomes through analysis of SMART data trends and targeted Professional Learning. 2013 Targets to achieve this outcome include:

- Students, K-6, achieve expected levels of growth in all aspects of Literacy, as indicated by school and state data. [Enter text here as required.]
- Students, K-6, achieve expected levels of growth in all aspects of Numeracy, as indicated by school and state data.

Strategies to achieve these targets include:

- Personalised Literacy plans for each student, incorporating Pre/Mini/MultiLit where required and differentiation through placement on the Literacy Continuum.
- Appoint a “Numeracy Leader” to coordinate K-6 Mathematics organisation, implementation and to supervise on-going evaluation.

School priority 2
Outcome for 2012–2014

Aboriginal Education

2013 Targets to achieve this outcome include:

The strength, diversity, ownership and richness of Aboriginal cultures and Custodianship of Country are respected, valued and promoted throughout all aspects of school life at Towamba Public School.

Strategies to achieve these targets include:
• Complete Module 3 of *No Gap: No Excuse* Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Program completed (3 hours) Professional understanding and dialogue deepened.

**School priority 3**

**Outcome for 2012–2014**

**Social and Emotional Learning**

Kids Matter Component 2 completed: Effective social and emotional learning (SEL) curriculum for all students and opportunities for students to practise and transfer their social and emotional skills.

Strategies to achieve these targets include:

• Weekly K-6 Personal Development lessons utilising the, “You Can Do It!” Program Achieve, an Australian social and emotional learning curriculum by Professor Michael E. Bernard, Ph.D.

**About this report**

In preparing this report, the self-evaluation committee has gathered information from evaluations conducted during the year and analysed other information about the school's practices and student learning outcomes. The self-evaluation committee and school planning committee have determined targets for the school's future development.

Kathryn Davis            Principal
Anna Charlton            Teacher
Lucy Macey               Teacher
Louise Hopson            Teacher
Nancy Blindell           School Admin Manager

Ken Connell              President P&C
Year 6 2012 students

**School contact information**

Towamba Public School
Towamba Street, Towamba, 2550
Ph: 64967159
Fax: 64967059
Email: towamba-p.school@det.nsw.ed.au
Web: www. towamba-p.schools.nsw.ed.au
School Code: 3252

Parents can find out more information about Annual School Reports, how to interpret information in the reports and have the opportunity to provide feedback about these reports at: