



Annual Report

2020

Legal Entity Name - Advance College of Education Inc.

Incorporation Number - A0095946S

School Number - 2901

ABN - 31 279 225 481

Advance College acknowledges and pays respect to the Bunurong / BoonWurrung people, the traditional custodians of these lands and waters

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College Overview

Advance College has three campuses across the Mornington Peninsula - Hastings, Mornington and Rosebud. It has specialist teachers, learning support assistants and well-being staff to deliver the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) at three levels - Foundation, Intermediate and Senior.

Our college community is made up of many groups including students, parents, guardians, friends, staff, college council/committee, local community organisations and the general public. Advance College has a strong focus on its community as it ensures that our students are provided with the best and most relevant education possible. It provides an alternative, education setting to mainstream school, with a strong emphasis on supporting students in pathways to employment or further education and training.

Our VCAL is presented in a positive, education framework which assists our teaching and education support staff to meet the specific needs of disengaged young people in their pursuit of positive achievements in education. It is specifically designed to improve our capacity to address engagement so that young people can achieve their personal and social potential through educational achievement. It is a whole-school approach that meets the developmental strengths and needs of students, teachers, and leaders.

Our Vision

To CREATE change through education

Our Mission

To meet the individual learning needs of our community through best practice learning experiences

Our Values

- Courage** We understand that doing the right thing is not always doing what is easy.
- Respect** We value diversity and treat everyone fairly, recognising individual contributions.
- Empathy** We are kind and extend ourselves to understand other perspectives and experiences.
- Accountability** We work hard and are individually accountable and collectively responsible.
- Trust** We say what we mean and act with integrity.
- Empowerment** We support our colleagues and community to be the best that they can be.

Aims

Advance College is focussed on supporting and actively promoting the principles and practice of Australian democracy, including a commitment to:

- The elected government
- The rule of law
- Equal rights for all before the law
- Freedom of religion
- Freedom of speech and association
- The values of openness and tolerance

Advance College aims to provide a balanced education to all students who attend by:

- being a recognised, independent, specialist school that provides high quality, innovative learning and development opportunities that positively impact on local communities; and
- providing a challenging, engaging and non-judgmental learning environment, supported by shared community partnerships that enable each individual student to achieve successful educational and social outcomes and maximise their vocational potential.

Philosophy

Advance College believes that all students have the right to a quality, individualised education program that enables them to succeed and connect with the wider community.

Advance College is committed to the creation of a learning environment which centres on improving wellbeing, stamina and resilience to strengthen educational, social and vocational outcomes for each student.

Our programs are delivered with high expectations for academic achievement and personal and social development that broaden further education and/or employment options.

Governance

Advance College is an independent, specialist school registered with the Victorian Registration and Qualification Authority (VRQA). It is an incorporated association and a registered charity. It has a Committee of Management (also known as the College Board or School Council) as its governing body and is primarily responsible for the strategic direction of the College and the appointment of the Principal. The day to day operation of the school is delegated to the Principal.

Committee members for 2020 were:

- Andrew Joseph (President)
- Arthur Walmsley (Treasurer)
- Lyn Treloar (Secretary)
- Bryan Ridgeway
- David Kidd
- Steve Wright (Principal)



President's Report

Reflecting on the past 12 months it would be easy to write the year off and simply report that there were challenges and barriers that resulted in a reduction in output but in reality COVID has brought out the best in Advance with a real focus on resilience and a continued commitment to supporting the learning and wellbeing of our amazing students.

As we move forward in to another year, one that is looking very bright for Advance with the establishment of the new Rosebud Campus which will enable a continued growth in enrolment and importantly flexible learning opportunities for young people on the Mornington Peninsula I want to firstly give praise and thanks to all that have made Advance such a success over the past 12 months.

When I think of the word success I often reference the following quote from Albert Schweitzer who states "Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success. If you love what you are doing, you will be successful."

With a team of dedicated and passionate individuals that all genuinely live and breathe the schools moto of Being Kind and Working Hard and importantly 'love what they are doing' it goes without saying that Advance has achieved great success over the past year.

Appreciating that as we transition in to a period of COVID normal which brings with it a level of uncertainty I take comfort in the fact that Advance can give certainty to facilitating an educational environment that is safe, inclusive, vibrant and progressive. Equally I take comfort in knowing that there is certainty in the level of commitment that the students have to their learning and personal development and with this the change that they will make to their own lives and those around them.

Yes the future is definitely looking bright for Advance.

Andrew Joseph (President 2020)



Principal's Report

Our fourth year of operating started with student enrolments being very strong with all sites at capacity and an extensive waiting list of prospective students. This was the first year this had occurred and an indication that Advance College is growing a reputation, in our community, as a 'school of choice'. The College has implemented a number of strategies to positively engage students and is in a great position to be able to support our students with their learning and personal development. As we are a relatively small school we are able to provide a more individual support program ensuring that students receive the education they deserve.

Our VCAL is presented in a positive education framework which assists teaching staff to meet the specific needs of disengaged young people in their pursuit of positive achievements in education. It is specifically designed to improve our capacity to address engagement so that young people can achieve their personal and social potential through educational achievement. It is a whole-school approach that meets the developmental strengths and needs of students, teachers, and leaders.

The pandemic obviously had a significant impact on our College. The situation changed rapidly throughout the year and required all staff to assess its impact both professionally and personally. Staff were given the option to work either on site or from home for most parts of the year. Most elected to work on site with a couple working both from home and on site when necessary. This worked well enabling the College to continued a dynamic learning program for all students.

Although difficult, the situation saw some very positive aspects. For example, students who had difficulty engaging at school because of anxiety have benefitted from the distance learning mode. The College will retain some of this distance learning capacity to support student engagement if they are unable to attend regularly. Another major positive has been the excellent collaboration and mutual support shown by all staff.

Staff provided a higher level of wellbeing support during the lockdowns to the students with our Psychologist, Julia, being utilised in a range of roles from individual student support to running group sessions focussing on wellbeing and coping strategies. Staff emphasised the need to have a routine and a range of activities to ensure students are optimising their engagement.

It is also pleasing to note that we now have a full complement of teaching staff with two VIT registered teachers at each site. This is something we have aimed for, but only achieved since the start of Term 4 this year. All of our staff have indicated their long-term commitment to Advance College which will facilitate a strong team strength and consistency.

This year the College entered into an agreement with Chisholm to enable our students to access the Caroline Chisholm Foundation scholarship fund to pay the tuition fees for their Vocational Education and Training (VET) in School program for 2021 and beyond. This will benefit students next year as it will greatly increase their VET options. I would like to convey my gratitude to the Chisholm Foundation for their support.

Referrals for enrolments continue and, projecting student numbers for next year, we may start the year at full capacity with a significant waiting list. Next year will also see our Senior VCAL have the highest student enrolments ever. This, I believe, is an indication of two things - students want to stay at our school; and local options for school leavers are limited, possibly due to the pandemic.

A major development that occurred this year has been the purchase of a block of land opposite TAFE (6 Henry Wilson Drive) for a new Rosebud campus. As has been the trend for the last few years, the demand on our current Rosebud campus has been significant with an extensive waiting list. This year we have been preparing to build a new, purpose-built, state-of-the-art, facility with plans and permits now all in place. I am delighted to announce that construction is scheduled for completion by the start of the 2022 school year.

I have to say all staff and students have responded to these difficult times incredibly well. The year has been a huge challenge for all and especially our school community. The challenges of a changing workplace, preparation and implementation of the two periods of online delivery, return to on-site learning, working from home, heightened hygiene/infection risk control have all been met admirably by all staff.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of our school community – students and their families, our staff and Board members and all those who have supported Advance College throughout 2020.

Steve Wright
Principal



Curriculum

The five streams of VCAL (Literacy; Numeracy; Personal Development Skills; Work Related Skills; and Industry Related Skills) are integrated into student-centred Projects that are completed throughout the year. The Project planning process is continually refined with a template developed to ensure expectations, teaching strategies, practice activities and assessment tasks (including evidence requirements) are clearly articulated and mapped against learning outcomes.

Students undertake multiple projects in three week blocks to promote increased engagement and enthusiasm for each subject. This also ensures outcomes from all VCAL curriculum streams are covered on multiple occasions which enables students to demonstrate competence in a variety of ways.

Throughout the Projects there is a strong emphasis on preparation for work including participation, by all students, in work experience and vocational education and training (VET) programs. Individual Education Plans are developed for all students. Each plan contains the student's profile, interests, strengths/achievements, areas for improvement, barriers to learning and long term/short term goals.



Teaching and Learning

2020 Teaching and Learning Report

We will never forget 2020.

COVID-19 undoubtedly turned everything upside down but we can confidently say that everyone at ACE came through the year with new skills, positive attitudes and increased stamina and resilience. We began the year onsite, primed and eager to enact the 'Skills for the 21st Century' 2020 vision for teaching and learning. Our focus was on incorporating: critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, information literacy, media literacy, technology literacy and flexibility into our learning program. Ironically COVID-19 provided us with a great avenue to do this and despite spending Terms Two and Three 'doing distance' we were able to:

- Roll out of the Feuerstein Program at the Rosebud and Mornington campuses and continue the program at Hastings.
- Complete the NESLI Staff Wellbeing Program to ensure that staff practice self-care to prevent burnout.
- Have the Learning Engagement Coordinator model excellent teaching practices, provide coaching and curriculum advice to ensure that students were provided with every opportunity to develop 'Skills for the 21st Century'.
- Expand collaborative team teaching and planning practices through dedicated non-teaching collaborative planning days and staff meetings.
- Ensure that Individual Education Plans were 'live documents' which teachers use proactively to develop every student's 'Skills for the 21st Century'.
- Implement the reviewed Behaviour Management framework which incorporates BSEM principles and restorative practices.
- Further develop and utilise core skill and knowledge building booklets/activities.
- Implement the transition and (modified) excursions program.
- Become an eSmart school and integrate eSmart into the program.
- Maintain our staffing model of:
 - One Home Teacher at each site and;
 - Two teachers rotating sites every 3 weeks and;
 - One ESO (Wellbeing) rotating sites fortnightly and;
 - One ESO (Work Readiness) rotating sites fortnightly and;

- One part-time School Psychologist two days per week (at each site twice over a 3 week cycle);
- One Education Support Coordinator rotating sites as required and;
- One Learning Engagement Coordinator.

Every ACE staff member is to be congratulated for the time, thought and effort that they put into ensuring that all students maintained their connection to and engagement in learning. This was an enormous achievement that centred on constantly reaching out to students to provide individualised learning programs and targeted support to ensure that they could overcome the additional barriers which learning remotely in Terms Two and Three provided.

Elements that worked well in 2020 included:

- Dedicated non-teaching collaborative planning days
- The project planning frameworks, particularly the 'Pick Your Path' concept utilising Gardener's Theory of Multiple Intelligences and Bloom's Taxonomy to support individual learning programs and student's capacity to engage and achieve at their own pace.
- The School Psychologist facilitating small group work and working with teachers to incorporate curriculum focus areas.
- Explicit teaching of core skills and knowledge.
- The staff PD program. All teachers have set and are working towards achieving realistic professional development goals with support from leadership.
- The focus on 'live' Individual Education Plans and regular review of these to ensure that students needs are being met
- The NESLI Staff wellbeing program which encouraged staff to dedicate time to thinking about their needs and how to incorporate self-care into their daily routine. It also provided an insight into how colleagues react to different stressors and situations.
- The 'Doing Distance' guidelines which provided a framework for effectively engaging and supporting our students during remote learning periods.
- The establishment of Professional Learning Communities (PLC) to ensures that a range of extra-curricular activities are introduced, driven and reviewed by staff 'captains'. Regular PLC meetings were scheduled to foster conversations about 'how' rather than 'what' students are learning in order to make it more impactful. PLC focus areas included: BSEM, Feuerstein, eSmart and Communications, Excursions/Camps, QA, Community Connections, Student Voice, Independent Living Skills, Enterprise Skills, Student Alumni and Diversity and Diversity and Inclusion.

Teaching and Learning Direction 2021

The vision for 2021 is 'active participation' to prepare students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life. This will be enacted through:

- Further refining the ACE Curriculum to more clearly outline what it is that students should be given the opportunity to learn, and the associated progression or continuum of learning.
- Further refining the ACE Learning Program to describe how ACE students will be taught and supported to learn.
- Providing students with more opportunities to apply the skills that they have developed in 'real world' situations through participation in community activities and work environments.
- Proactively developing student voice to ensure that students are heard and that their input is valued. This will encourage them to take responsibility for their learning.
- Continuing to develop and implement PLC aims and objectives.

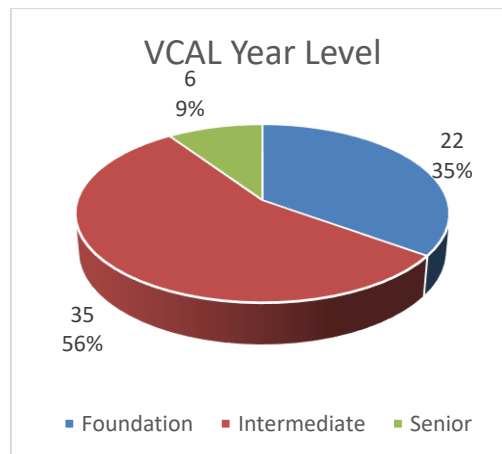
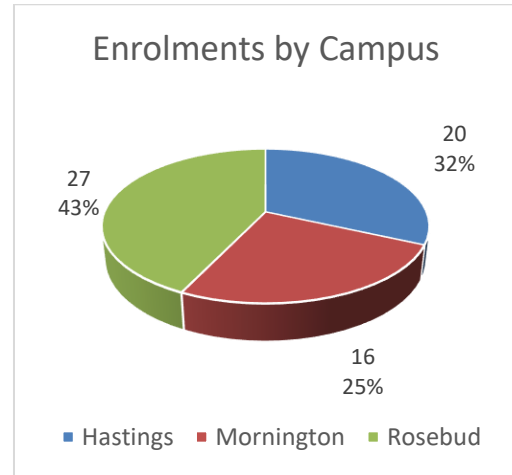
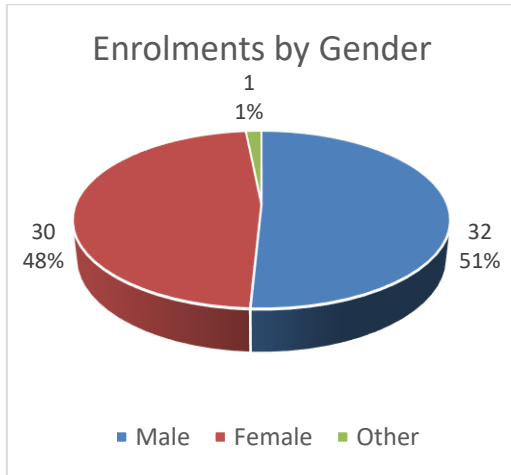
Kris Helisma

Teaching and Learning Manager



Student Report

Across the school year we had 63 students enrol with 9 withdrawing prior to the August census. The College received funding for 54 students enrolled as at August 7, 2020 (the Census date for Independent Schools). This was an increase of seven from the comparative period in 2019.



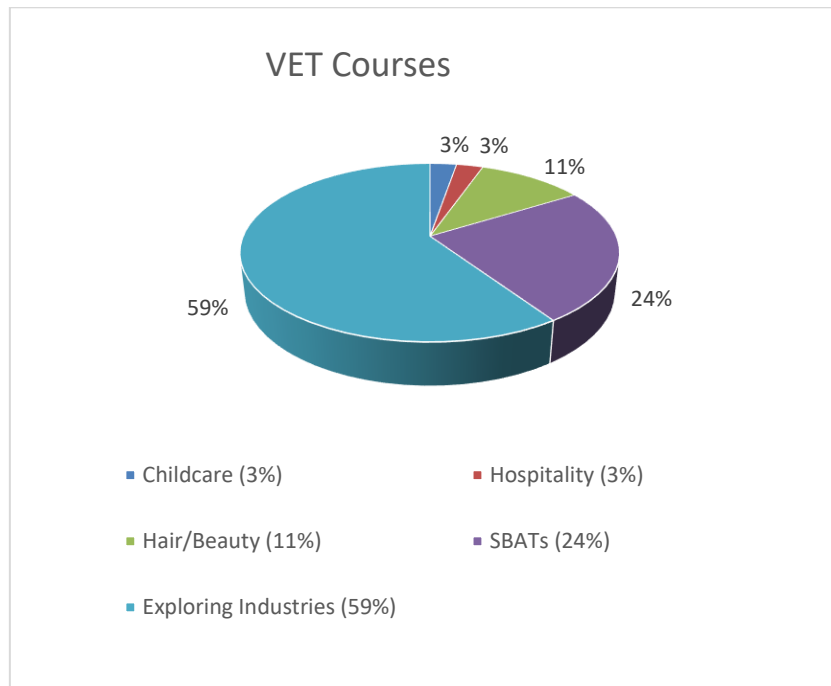
Overall student attendance rate for 2020 was 78.0%, which is an increase from 2019 (74%) – a pleasing result. This year's attendance is rated as good considering the participation and engagement barriers our students face.

Student completion rates have been pleasing with 22 achieving their full VCAL certificate and 19 achieving a part Certificate or Statement of Attainment. Most of those who did not finish their VCAL certificate will have the opportunity to do so in 2020.

Our staff members are highly committed to supporting the individual learning needs of all of our students and achieving continuous improvement in student outcomes.

Vocational Education and Training (VET)

A total of 37 Intermediate and Senior students successfully participated in VET in 2020 with five separate streams being offered. Utilising four different registered Training Organisations, some students were very focussed on their vocational aspirations (eg Beauty, Childcare, Hospitality), whereas as others completed a more generic range of VET taster programs (Exploring Industries). The units offered a practical placement for each student giving them an introduction into the 'world of work' and what the expectations and responsibilities in actual workplaces. In 2021 it is anticipated there will be other variety offered to students, again, aligning to their career aspirations.



Graduation

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic we were unable to hold a formal graduation event. Staff and, more particularly students were very disappointed with not being able to celebrate their amazing achievements. Considering the nature of 2020, I was extremely proud on the way our students applied themselves – this is demonstrated by the fact that more than half achieved a completed VCAL qualification.

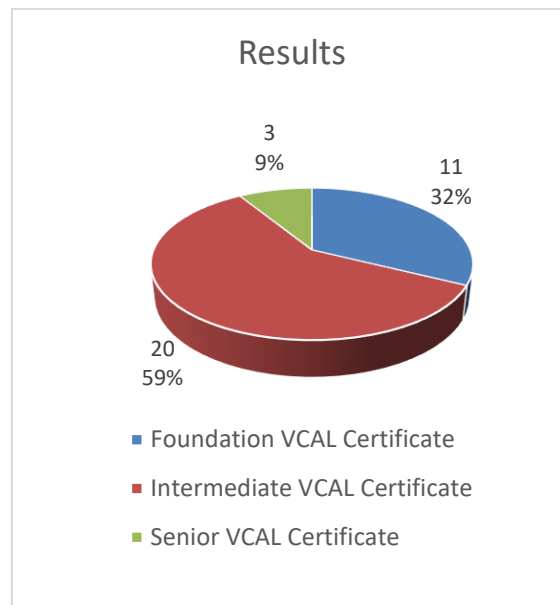
On behalf of the whole College community I wish all our graduates the very best in their chosen pathway.

Steve Wright (Principal)

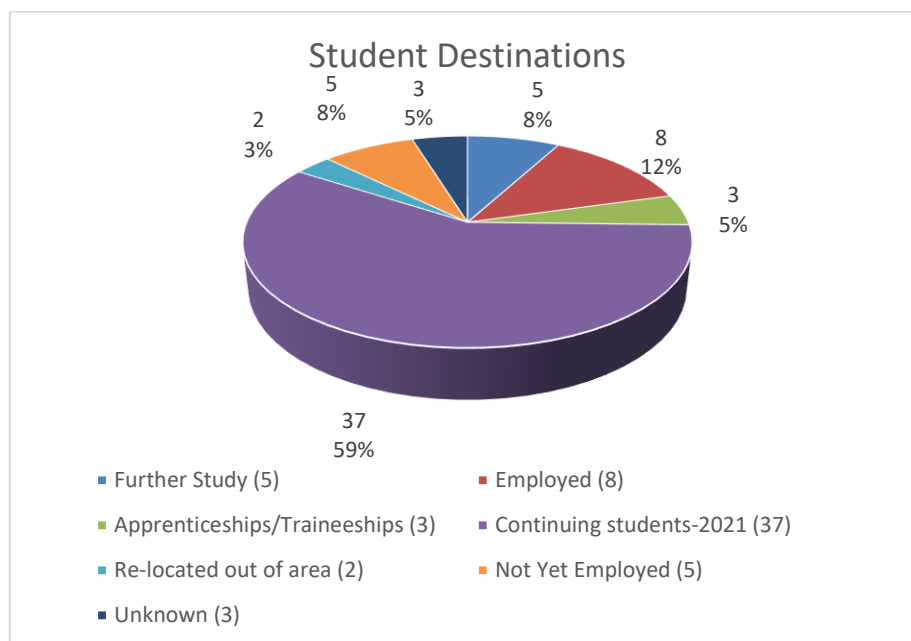


Outcomes and Destinations

In summary, of the 63 students across 2020, we had 34 gain their full VCAL certificate with just under half returning in 2021 to complete their studies.



One of the key aims of Advance College is to prepare our students for employment and life after school. Students are supported to gain a successful, post-school outcome while in school and after they leave. Students are provided with on-going assistance to find employment, gain a tertiary placement or an apprenticeship or traineeship for as long as required.





Staff Report

Staffing

Staffing for 2020 comprised:

- VCAL Teachers (6)
- VCAL Education Support Officers (3)
- Psychologist
- VCAL Learning and Engagement Co-ordinator
- VCAL Learning Support Co-ordinator
- VCAL Learning and Engagement Manager
- Finance Manager
- Assistant Principal
- Principal

This year was a very taxing year for all of our staff. All showed a very high level of stamina and care for each other and our students. It was a year where they should be proud of everything that they have achieved.

All teaching staff have current registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT).

Staff Professional Development

A significant emphasis is placed on all staff undergoing Professional Development (PD). Two important resources for this have been Independent Schools of Victoria (ISV) and Berry Street Education Model (BSEM) training. Supporting our College is our membership of ISV, BSEM Alumni, AITSL, VIT, the Victorian Teacher Learning Network. Peninsula VCAL Association, Peninsula Pathways Association and the Frankston Mornington Peninsula Local Learning and Employment Network.

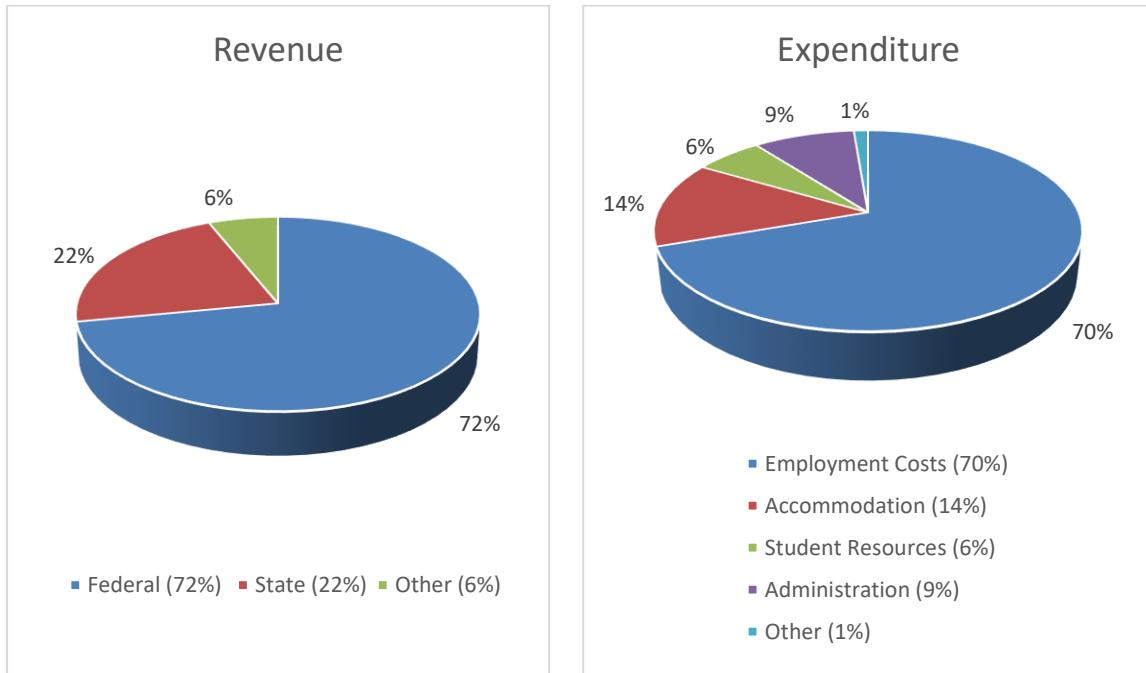
All staff undertook a wide range of professional development activities including:

- Validation / moderation of student assessment
- Staff Wellbeing - Work life balance, calm classrooms
- First Aid training HLTAID001/HLTAID004
- DET - Mandatory Reporting
- DET - eModule - Risk Management
- Respectful Relationships
- VALA - Teaching VCAL remotely
- Infection prevention and control
- Unpacking the 'Man Box' webinar
- Feuerstein implementation / refresher training
- eSmart Responsible use of technology
- NCCD Moderation
- DET - eModule - Child Protection
- Remote Learning with Google
- Literacy in the Secondary Classroom
- Supporting Students with Autism
- Teaching Learning Network - Student voice



Finance

It is pleasing to note that a small, committed surplus was achieved in 2020. It should be noted that Advance College is a Special Assistance School with low fees. Fees are kept at a minimal level with students being provided with all the resources they need at no further charge. These resources include: all excursions, materials, equipment (including laptop computers), breakfasts and Vocational Education and Training (VET) fees.



Audited Financial Statements are available on request.