FICKS CROSSING

2026 SILVER LINING SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT

(Based on 2025 Data)





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BOARD CHAIR REPORT

Dear Families and Community,

It is with great pride that I share this message as Chairman of our school's Board, looking back on a year marked by resilience, connection, and achievement. Here at Ficks Crossing, our purpose remains unchanged: to offer our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students a learning environment built on care, cultural pride, and genuine belonging.

We continue to choose to stay small, currently supporting 34 students, because we know this is what allows real connection to flourish. A smaller school means no child goes unnoticed, no family goes unsupported, and every program can be shaped around the person it's meant to serve. For us, education is inseparable from family, culture, and community - and our size is what makes that possible.

This year brought a moment of real pride for our whole school community: three of our students completed Year 12. Their achievement is a testament to their own hard work and resilience, and to the encouragement of everyone around them who never stopped believing in what they could accomplish.

Behind every student's success is a team that works together, drawing on a broad mix of skills and lived experience to meet the diverse needs of the young people in our care. This year, 8 of our school staff identified as Indigenous, making up 72% of our school-based team. Their cultural knowledge and professional dedication shape the heart of what we offer our students. Our Board, too, remains entirely First Nations-led, ensuring the school's direction stays grounded in community voice and cultural authority.

We pay our deepest respects to the Traditional Custodians of the land on which Silver Lining School stands, and we remain honoured to walk alongside the Cherbourg community, guided by the knowledge passed down through generations.

We are also mindful of the real obstacles many of our students face in re-engaging with school and education more broadly. These journeys are rarely straightforward, but we continue to see each challenge as a chance to learn, adapt, and grow stronger - together with our families, community leaders, and partners who support our students every step of the way.

To the Cherbourg community, thank you for your continued trust and partnership. It is this shared commitment that builds a strong foundation - academically and culturally - for every student who walks through our doors.

We are grateful for your support and look forward to another year of shared growth and achievement.

Warm regards,

Nigel Daisy
BOARD CHAIRMAN

Silver Lining Foundation Australia

SILVER LINING FOUNDATION AUSTRALIA

The Silver Lining Foundation Australia is a First Nation charity working with Australian young people in areas of training and education. Established in 1999, the Foundation has been influential in helping to shape the lives of young Indigenous people in Queensland. The charity is governed by Indigenous people, and it runs programs on Traditional Land in Queensland.

Silver Lining Foundation Australia is committed to an Indigenous led response regarding the growing number of indigenous students whose learning needs are not being met by mainstream schooling.

SILVER LINING SCHOOL - FICKS CROSSING

Silver Lining School is an Independent Special Assistance School established to cater to the diverse learning needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners from our local community. The school delivers learning experiences that are culturally rich, age-appropriate, and academically achievable while maintaining the integrity and intent of the Australian Curriculum.

Students are at the centre of our practice, with their needs, backgrounds, perspectives, and interests reflected in the learning programs.

The school networks with vocational educators, health care professionals, local businesses, and community service providers, working towards establishing better options for healthy and meaningful futures.

Silver Lining School acknowledges the United Nations statement regarding the *Right to [an] Education* that is "available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable."[1] Furthermore, the school aims to deliver a culturally appropriate education in consultation with community elders.

Our Local Community

Silver Lining School at Ficks Crossing is a two-and-a-half-hour drive northwest of Brisbane, Queensland. With Barambah Creek flowing to the property's east, the gently sloping paddocks of gums provide an ideal location for students to engage in property and land management activities. The property was named 'Bahun Jal Mono' by a local elder, Aunty Beryl Gambrill, meaning *Place of People of Tomorrow,* evoking hope for the futures of young people from the local community.

Silver Lining School is on Wakka Wakka country, with the totem being the Powerful Owl.

The local indigenous community has experienced significant historical disruptions, whereby local indigenous peoples have struggled to retain their cultural heritage. The dispossession of their land, skills, and language has resulted in a generation of often disenfranchised young people.

Many students who attend Silver Lining School are from the Cherbourg community where levels of poverty, unemployment, substance abuse, addiction, physical and mental health problems, domestic violence, incarceration, and suicide are concerningly over-represented.

Silver Lining School is an Indigenous-led response by the community elders in partnership with education and community services to create pathways to positive futures for their young people.

Community, Culture, and Family

The connectedness of family and community is fundamental for Indigenous communities. When events are scheduled, there is a strong tradition for the mob to gather. This may be for ceremonies, celebrations, or country-specific occasions. Students have often missed mainstream school to participate in these cultural events. As cultural learning is essential to the learning program, many of

1 *Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General Comment No. 13 – the Right to Education, UN Doc E/C.12/1999/10 (1999), paragraph 6–7. Our Community*

these activities are embedded into our curriculum, and participation in the experience is a vital part of our learning.

Our Young People

Silver Lining School works collaboratively with local high schools, support agencies, and community elders to identify young people who have disengaged from mainstream schooling options for referral to the school. The school offers a culturally appropriate, hands-on, and highly individualised approach to learning which aims to prepare students for a transition to the workplace or further learning. The school welcomes both indigenous and non-indigenous students.

Referrals to the school are primarily from community service providers including CTC, Mercy Community, CRAICCHS, Cherbourg Youth Justice Centre, and local schools. Young people are considered for the program when they have been unable to access mainstream schooling options due to significant social, emotional, and learning needs. The school continues to work collaboratively with community services to ensure that support is provided for young people and their families. 34 students were enrolled at Silver Lining School by August 2025.

YOUNG MEN'S PROGRAM (Ficks Crossing)

The Young Men's Program was reestablished by the Silver Lining Foundation Ltd in 2019 after the program had been previously closed by another education provider. Silver Lining School spent the first few years establishing trust with community elders, families, and services that the school would be a long-term option for young people. The Young Men's program began mid-year 2019 with 11 young men who were ready to re-engage in their education journey and growing to 15 students in 2021, and 19 young men counted in the Federal Census in August 2025.



YOUNG WOMEN'S PROGRAM

In 2021 Silver Lining School began community consultation for the establishment of a *Young Women's Program.* The school began working alongside community service providers and the local secondary schools to identify young women who would benefit from an alternative schooling program. Workshops were held in 2021 each Wednesday in Cherbourg, where a core group of prospective students for the program met to develop trust and rapport with the Silver Lining School staff and identify what they felt was important in an educational program for young women in the community. In 2022, the Young Women's Program commenced with 5 students and continues to support the community with 15 young women counted in the Federal Census in 2025.



EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY AND AIMS

Statement of Philosophy

To empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to confidently navigate the two worlds they live in, by prioritising cultural learning and growth, alongside academic learning.

Aims

Silver Lining School aims to:

Embrace Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, cultural knowledge, and wisdom to foster strong, positive identities for our young people.

Create a safe environment in which students can develop their emotional literacy, cultural knowledge, academic knowledge, skills, and confidence to achieve their full potential so that they may contribute positively to their families, their communities, and the broader society.

Provide learning opportunities that have real-world links to vocational outcomes.

(Note: The school had additional enrolled students who did not meet the criteria for inclusion in the State and Federal Census).

Core Values

Silver Lining School's core values are:

Country	Look after country, and all that share it.
Responsibility	Understanding shared and individual responsibility, and the interconnectedness of us all.
Culture	Ensure culturally appropriate knowledge underpins all aspects of school life & learning.
Belonging	Understanding that belonging is an integral part of the human experience, and a need we all share.

Mission Statement

The purpose of Silver Lining School is to provide an educational environment in which young Indigenous people can grow culturally, emotionally, intellectually, and physically, empowering them to engage positively and successfully in their culture, their community, and the broader world.

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy (2015)

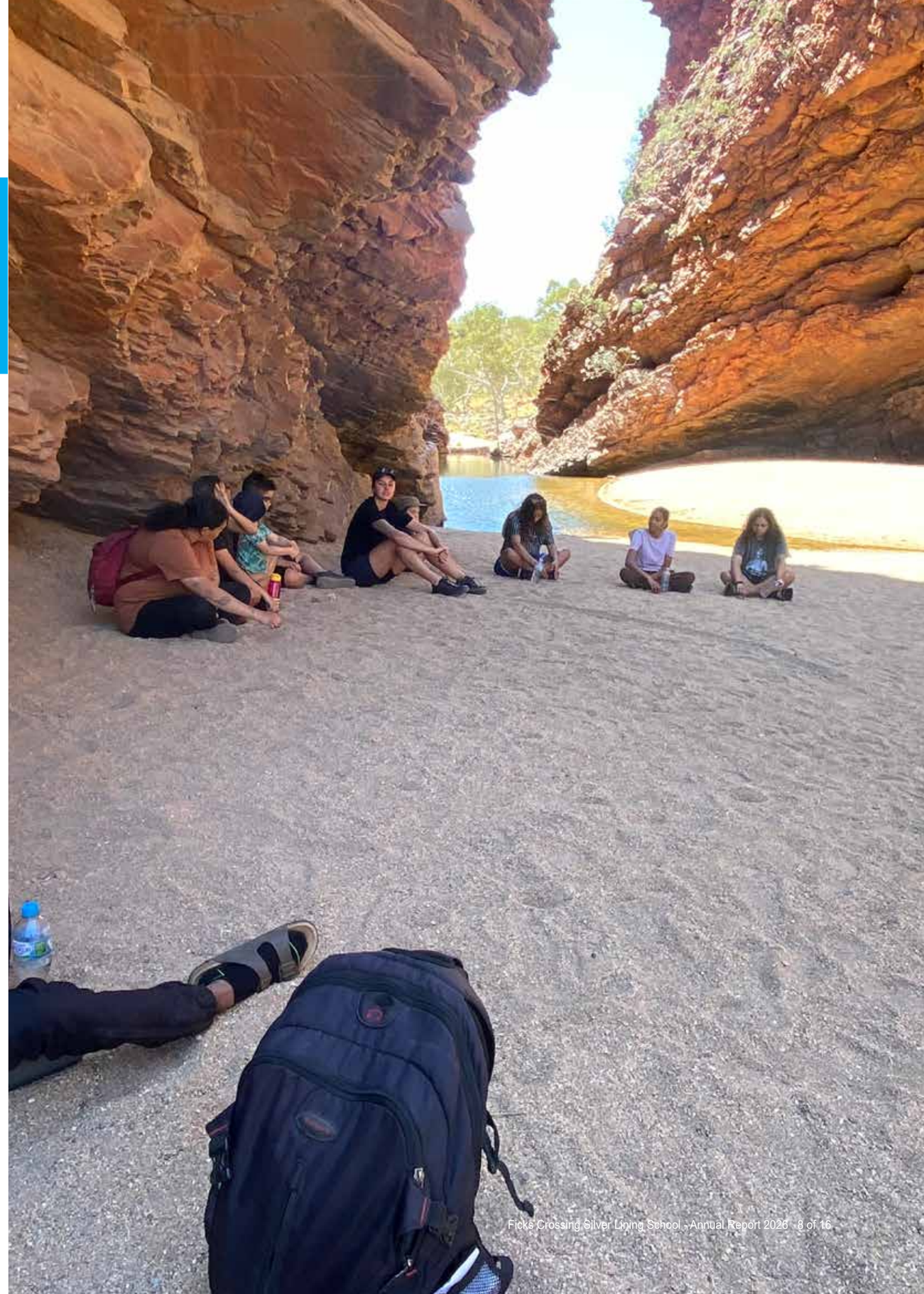
Silver Lining School is an Indigenous-led response to the ever-growing disengagement and educational gap of young Indigenous people. The local culture of the Wakka Wakka people and maintaining relationships of trust and respect are foundational in meeting the educational needs of our students.

The School's Education Program is guided by the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy (2015). The principles that underpin the strategy include:

- ✓ High expectations for our young people to achieve their potential
- ✓ Equity of educational opportunities for young people in our community
- ✓ Accountable, transparent, and responsive practices
- ✓ Recognition of our community's culture, histories, values, and languages
- ✓ Time spent in our community to develop meaningful relationships
- ✓ Partnerships with the community to make decisions for the school
- ✓ A local approach that maximises educational outcomes
- ✓ Quality programs based on knowledge, evidence, and research.

The *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy* 'priority areas' that are reflected in our Education Programs include:

1. Culture and Identity
2. Partnerships
3. Attendance
4. Transitions
5. Literacy & Numeracy



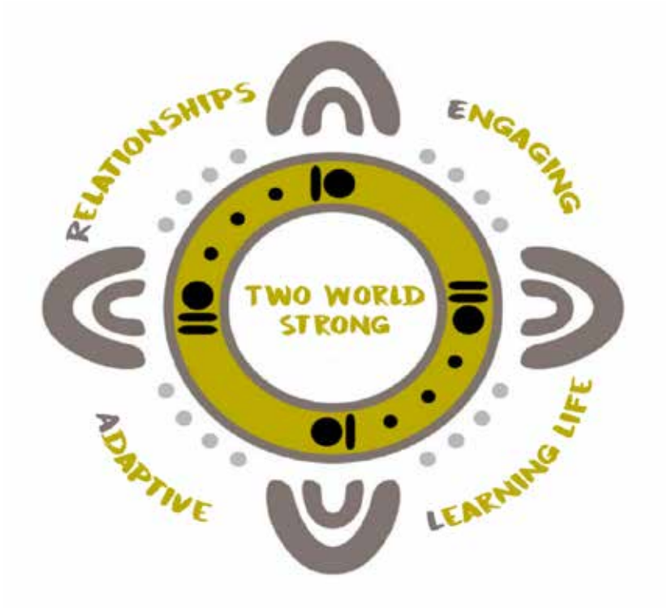
PEDAGOGICAL FRAMEWORK – Keeping it R.E.A.L.

Silver Lining School - Ficks Crossing aims to consider all aspects of *Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning* in ways that keep it REAL! Our Pedagogical Framework highlights the evidence-based approaches that are central to what we do and the way we do it.

Central to the 'Keeping it R.E.A.L. framework' is the emphasis on an approach to Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning that is 'TWO WORLDS STRONG'. The framework acknowledges the importance of students becoming strong in their ability to engage in both their culture and in the wider community. Value is placed on both aspects of learning, with neither being emphasised at the cost of the other.

Keeping it R.E.A.L highlights 4 core elements that underpin our pedagogical framework; *Relationships, Engaging, Adaptive, and Learning Life.*

Relationships	Attachment Aware Approach, Restorative Practices, Relationship Framework, Wellbeing Focused.
Engaging	Explicit and responsive instruction, hands-on learning projects, student-centred, strengths-based approach.
Adaptive	Data-informed, responds to individual needs, inclusive universal design, and differentiated learning.
Learning Life	Learning to Learn, transferrable skills, preparation for employment and further education, active and informed citizens, real-world problem solving, learning for life.





CURRICULUM, TEACHING, AND LEARNING

Learning Areas and Subjects

Silver Lining School offers a flexible curriculum program that caters to the needs of all students. All students in Years 7-12 participate in a variety of *Immersed Learning* activities, *Wellbeing Programs*, and *Cultural Learning* experiences in addition to the core learning areas.

Years 7-10 Curriculum

The School's Years 7-10 program has a significant focus on Literacy and Numeracy as well as providing students opportunities to engage with other learning areas in a way that is both culturally and developmentally appropriate.

The 7-10 Curriculum is founded in the Australian Curriculum including all ACARA Learning Areas, General Capabilities, and Cross-Curricular Priorities. The Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages form a foundation for the cultural learning program.

Senior Curriculum (Years 11-12)

The Senior secondary education program offered at Silver Lining School is based on the QCAA senior syllabus and includes other courses recognised by the QCAA.

Students are given options regarding their senior program through the SET plan process.

In addition to the QCAA senior subjects and courses available, students may also continue with elements of the Year 7-10 program, including individual literacy and numeracy programs.

STUDENT WELLBEING

The wellbeing of students is the foundation for developing a healthy learning community at Silver Lining School. Student wellbeing is achieved through a learning community where young people are active participants in the learning community, and where their views and ideas are valued. Students who do not feel safe and supported in their school environment are at greater risk of disengagement from the school and the wider community.

STUDENT DISENGAGEMENT

Silver Lining School recognises the significant barriers students face daily which impact their attendance, engagement, and learning. Some of these barriers are influenced by factors including:

- *Remoteness*
- *Family & Cultural Needs*
- *Social Disadvantage & Poverty*
- *Health & Wellbeing*
- *Disabilities*
- *English as an Additional Language or Dialect*

The school recognises that student disengagement is rarely caused by a single factor or event and is usually the result of a complex process that has resulted from barriers related to the individual, family, school, and wider community.

Silver Lining School provides a pathway to re-engagement through understanding the barriers to learning experienced by its students, then creating an environment to mitigate these factors. By understanding the powerful impact of students' attitudes, motivation, and behaviour toward learning, staff focus on student strengths and celebrate successes to alleviate shame and fear of failure.

YARNING CIRCLES AND RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

Yarning Circles are an important process within both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. This practice allows a learning community to develop the skills for respectful and honest interactions where members can have a space to hear from others and the chance to respond. Students participate in a daily Yarning Circle where relationships are further developed, cultural learning takes place, and matters impacting the community are discussed and resolved. The use of Yarning Circles provides the basis for building a healthy environment where Restorative Practices can be implemented.

Silver Lining School uses a restorative approach to developing healthy learning communities where individuals are held responsible when they have caused harm to others. The approach provides opportunities for individuals to accept responsibility for their role in conflicts and take the necessary steps to repair the damage caused.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Silver Lining School is committed to providing the highest quality Indigenous Special Assistance Education for young people who have disengaged from education for a variety of complex reasons. The school acknowledges the privilege and responsibility that comes with providing students with another chance at education.

Silver Lining School is committed to the implementation of policies, processes, and practical strategies which emphasise the importance of tracking and assessment, regular monitoring of students, and strategies for engaging relevant students.

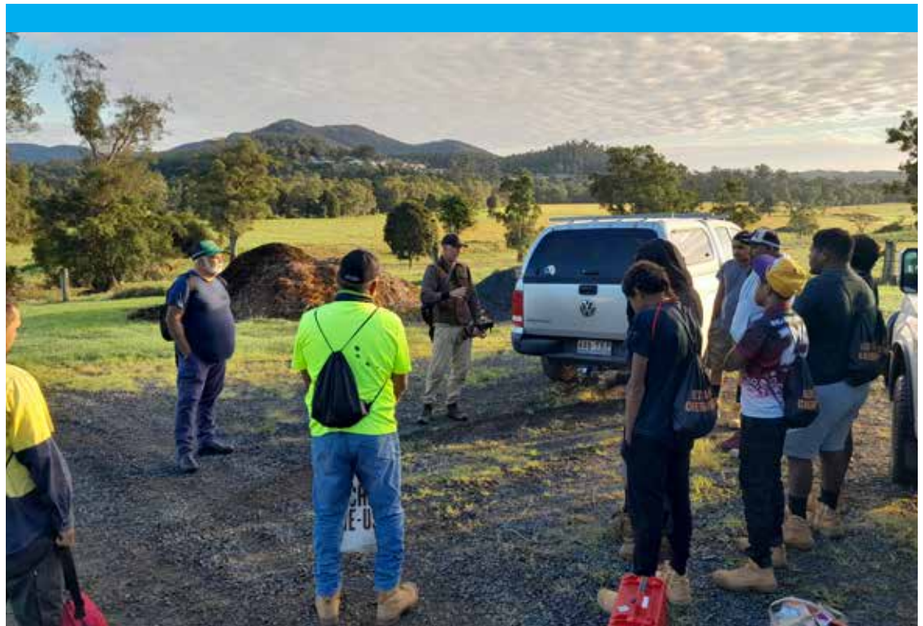
SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

The average student attendance rate for the school was 47%, with 21% of students with an attendance rate above 80% (Semester 1 2025 data). The attendance rates for this Annual Report include Ficks Crossing and Cairns sites. Please note, the average attendance rate for each year level has not been included due to the low number of students in each year level.

The school implements a variety of evidence-based models and strategies to promote the engagement of students with complex needs in the teaching and learning process. These models include:

- ✓ Community Breakfast and Lunch Programs
- ✓ Student-centred Approach
- ✓ Attachment Informed Schooling
- ✓ Restorative Practices
- ✓ Cultural Learning
- ✓ Connecting with Country
- ✓ Explicit or Direct Instruction
- ✓ Learning to Learn

- Door-to-door school pick-up by Education Support staff who undertake wellbeing check-ins for students and families
- Clear communication with students and parents/carers regarding expectations around school attendance and school policy for approved absences
- Daily communication with parents/carers regarding school absenteeism (often initiated by the school)
- Ongoing tracking of absenteeism to identify students who require early intervention and family support strategies to maximise school attendance (e.g., initiating home visits and support and advice from community elders)
- The proactive monitoring of student attendance including community visits and an integrated approach by other community youth service providers (e.g., drug/alcohol support services, housing support, mental health support)
- Working with students, parents/carers, and other stakeholders to identify barriers to school attendance, and strategies to overcome these barriers
- Notification to relevant government agencies when reporting extensive absenteeism or non-attendance is required (e.g., Centrelink, EQ Regional Office)



NAPLAN RESULTS

Data is not available due to the low number of students who participated in NAPLAN in 2025. (Please note, a school's NAPLAN test must have a minimum of 11 participants and an 80% participation rate for a comparison to be available.)

YEAR 10 – 12 RETENTION RATES

The Year 10 -12 retention rate in 2025 was 20%. In 2023 there were a total of 5 students enrolled in Year 10. In 2025, 1 of these students graduated Year 12.

YEAR 12 OUTCOMES

Silver Lining School was proud to have 1 year 12 students graduate in 2025, with 2 Year 12 students remaining enrolled to complete their studies in 2026.

POST SCHOOL DESTINATIONS

The 2026 Next Steps survey for students who completed Year 12 in 2025 will be made available by the Queensland Department of Education in September 2026. However, as our school generally has fewer than five Year 12 graduates each year, information about the post-school destinations of Year 12 completers is usually not published by DoE due to data confidentiality.



OUR STAFF

In 2025 Silver Lining School had 4 teaching staff (FTE 4.0) and 17 non-teaching staff (FTE 0.0). Our staff operates as a collaborative professional team, sharing a wide range of skills and experience in supporting young people with diverse backgrounds and learning needs. The school employed 8 Indigenous staff (6.6 FTE). 72% of school-based staff were Indigenous.

	Teaching Staff	Non-teaching Staff
Number of Staff	4	17
Full-time equivalent	4	9

TEACHER AND SCHOOL LEADER QUALIFICATIONS

Highest level of qualification	Number of qualifications
Doctorate	-
Masters	-
Graduate Diploma	-
Bachelor Degree	4
Diploma	-
Certificate	-

SCHOOL FUNDING

Information regarding the school's funding sources can be found on the My School website.



SILVER LINING FOUNDATION
AUSTRALIA

Silver Lining Schools acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners of this country throughout Australia, and their connection to land and community. We pay our respect to all Traditional Owners, and to their Elders past, present and emerging.