

# Annual School Report 2023 School Year

St Xavier's Primary School, Gunnedah



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Principal  
Jennifer Honner

## About this report

St Xavier's Primary School is registered by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and managed by the Diocese of Armidale Catholic Schools Office (CSO), as the 'approved authority' for the Registration System formed under Section 39 of the NSW Education Act 1990.

The Annual Report provides the school community with fair, reliable and objective information about school performance measures and policies, as determined by the Minister for Education.

The report outlines to the school community information about initiatives and developments of major interest and importance and the achievements arising from the implementation of the school Annual Improvement Plan.

The report demonstrates accountability to the Federal and State Government regulatory bodies, the parish and school community and the CSO. This report, approved by the CSO, monitors school processes to ensure compliance with all NESA requirements for Registration.

This report complements, and is supplementary to, school newsletters and other regular communications. It is available on both school and CSO websites by 30 June 2024 following its submission to NESA.

The contents of this report may be tabled for discussion at various parent forums, including the School Advisory Council meetings and all information is public.

Further information about the school or this report may be obtained by contacting the school on 02 6742 1136 or by visiting the school's [website](#).



## **1.0 Messages**

### **1.1 Principal's Message**

There were many people who assisted in the development of the school as a Catholic learning community. In particular, special thanks are extended to the parent body and the school staff for all their generous efforts. St Xavier's Primary School is indeed blessed to have such dedicated and enthusiastic people supporting the school.

As a Catholic professional learning community, we have a universal and unconditional positive regard for the children in our care and a high regard for the collective capacity of a school staff team to increase the faith, learning and wellbeing outcomes for their students.

St Xavier's Primary School has explicit and clear targets for improvement. Shared beliefs and understandings have created a common language, particularly around numeracy and literacy. Every child can learn if given the right time and the right support. Students in K-2 are targeted to give them the best start possible. The classrooms are fine examples of the co-teaching model which cultivates an authentic collaborative culture.

The Living Well Learning Well Framework underpins all aspects of the school. Learning and wellbeing go hand in hand at St Xavier's.

The school has a proud history of sporting achievement and participation with a high degree of representation in athletics, swimming, rugby league, rugby union, netball and many other sports at local, regional and state levels.

St Xavier's plays an integral role in the community through participation in, and promotion of, community organisations and annual events, and is heavily represented in local cultural celebrations.

Jennifer Honner  
Principal

### **1.2 A Parent Message**

Both the School Advisory Council and the P&F Association are important and highly valued parent bodies within the St Xavier's school community. Parents and friends were engaged in volunteering to help with school social and fundraising occasions.

The P&F main purpose is to facilitate the involvement and contribution of parents/ carers and friends to support the school and the parish. The P&F achieves this by organising social and fundraising events. Funds raised by the P&F are invested in educational tools, programs, facilities and assets.

The P&F was involved in organising a variety of activities. In particular, Mother's Day and Father's Day events, the Catholic Debutante Ball and Golf Day. These events strengthened links with the wider community. Parents, staff and students worked together as a team to continue the tradition of St Xavier's Primary School by providing excellent educational opportunities for all.

Megan Ellbourn  
President  
P&F and SAC



## 2.0 This Catholic School

### 2.1 The School Community

St Xavier's Primary School is located in Gunnedah and is part of the St Josephs Parish which serves the communities of Gunnedah, Curlewis, Carroll, Mullaley and Boggabri, from which the school families are drawn.

Last year the school celebrated 145 years of Catholic education.

The parish priest, Father Abmar Dumayag, is involved in the life of the school.

### 2.2 Catholic Life and Religious Education

St Xavier's Primary School follows the Armidale Diocesan Religious Education Curriculum and uses the student text *To Know, Worship and Love*, as authorised by the Bishop of Armidale, Michael Kennedy.

The school continued to incorporate the Catholic Principles and Values statements mandated by Bishop Michael Kennedy into the programs of all Key Learning Areas. The parish priest, Father Abmar Dumayag, visited the school on a regular basis.

The school week begins with a whole school assembly for prayer, welcome to country, the national anthem and Living Well Learning Well certificates. Recognition of events of special significance is an important part of each assembly.

Daily prayer is part of the school routine. Staff meetings, School Advisory Council meetings, and Parents and Friends meetings also began with prayer. Prayer is included in each edition of the school's newsletter.

Sacramental programmes of reconciliation and first Holy Communion were planned and presented at key times during the year through daily RE lessons. Parent nights were offered, with the parish priest giving key information about each sacrament.

Each class prepares for Mass by doing the readings, prayers of intercession, and offertory. Classes have the opportunity to attend reconciliation each term. Staff attended twilight retreat and prayer opportunities and had one Pupil Free Day designated for RE during the year.

A Lenten programme was offered for all staff and parents of the parish. The staff regularly attend weekend Mass, participating in the liturgical life of the parish through reading and assisting at parish events.

The school follows the Diocesan Charitable Works Policy, with students fundraising for events throughout the year. The various seasons of the church year were acknowledged and celebrated, with students and staff actively participating in fundraising for Caritas.

Students in Year 6 in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Armidale undertake the Diocesan Religious Education (RE) Test annually. The test consists of 30 multiple-choice questions.

Results of the test are analysed by teachers and are used to inform teaching and learning in Religious Education.

Our School's average result (as a mark out of 30)	
Year 6	25

### 2.3 School Enrolment

St Xavier's Primary School caters for children from Years K to 6. The following table indicates the student enrolment characteristics:



	Year K	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	TOTAL 2023	TOTAL 2022
<b>Male</b>	34	29	26	34	23	22	33	205	198
<b>Female</b>	21	25	32	23	31	33	26	191	198
<b>Totals</b>	55	54	58	57	54	259	59	396	396

## 2.4 Student Attendance

In order for students to reach their full potential it is important that they attend school regularly. Whilst it is the parents' legal duty to ensure their children attend school regularly, staff, as part of their duty of care, monitor attendance each day. The class roll is marked every day and rolls are checked each week by the Principal or their delegate. The school uses the attendance coding system adopted in all NSW schools. Unexplained absences are followed up promptly by staff. Parents are requested to provide a satisfactory explanation for an absence by means such as a written note, telephone call, SMS message or email to the school, preferably on the first day of absence and certainly within seven days. The Principal is made aware of sustained student absences or absences reflecting a pattern. In these situations, the Principal or delegated staff member contacts the parent/guardian. Parents are encouraged to arrange medical and other necessary appointments outside school hours. Prolonged periods of absence occur from time-to-time for various reasons. In these cases, students and their parents meet with the Principal to discuss the leave request.

The average student attendance rate for the school during 2023 is shown in the following table.

	Year K	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	All Years
<b>Average Student Attendance Rates</b>	91.0%	90.0%	91.0%	88.0%	88.0%	91.0%	89.0%	89.7%

### Managing Student non-attendance

Regular attendance at school is essential if students are to maximise their potential. The school, in partnership with parents, is responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students. While parents are legally responsible for the regular attendance of their children, school staff, as part of their duty of care, monitor part or whole day absences.

School staff, under the Principal's leadership, support the regular attendance of students by:

- providing a caring teaching and learning environment which fosters students' sense of wellbeing and belonging to the school community.
- monitoring engagement of individual students in their learning and identifying strategies to enhance engagement.
- maintaining accurate records of student attendance.
- recognising and rewarding excellent and improved student attendance.
- implementing programs and practices to address attendance issues when they arise.

The Principal is responsible for supporting the regular attendance of students by ensuring that:

- parents and students are regularly informed of attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance.



- all cases of unsatisfactory attendance and part or full day absences from school are investigated promptly and that appropriate intervention strategies are implemented.
- intervention strategies for students with unsatisfactory attendance may include academic case management, social case management, referral to counselling and parent/ carer involvement.
- the Director of Catholic Schools or designated Catholic Schools Office Armidale officer is provided with regular information about students for whom chronic non-attendance is an issue and for whom previous strategies have failed to restore regular attendance.

When the Catholic Schools Office Armidale is notified of a student for whom chronic non-attendance is an issue and previous strategies have failed, the Principal and the System Performance Leader will convene a meeting with the family, the student, and other agencies if required, to develop a Return to School Plan.

## 2.5 Staff Profile and Teacher Standards

Teacher Qualifications / Staff Profile		Number of Teachers
1.	Those teachers at the NESA Teacher Accreditation Provisional or Conditional level.	4
2.	Those teachers at the NESA Teacher Accreditation Proficient level.	23
3.	Those teachers at the NESA Teacher Accreditation Highly Accomplished level.	0
4.	Those teachers at the NESA Teacher Accreditation Lead level.	0
5.	Teachers with recognised qualifications to teach Religious Education.	17
6.	Number of staff identifying as Indigenous employed at the school.	0
7.	Total number of non-teaching staff employed at the school.	10

## 2.6 Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility

The school ensures that at every available formal and informal opportunity the values of respect and responsibility are promoted. We want every student to understand and appreciate that they are part of both the school and the local community. The school models and teaches students about respect and responsibility in a number of ways:

- The values of respect and responsibility lie at the heart of Catholic schools, and underpin all policies and procedures. Students, teachers and parents are regularly reminded of the school's commitment to these and other school values by newsletter items, assembly messages and by the nature of interpersonal relationships.
- The diocese has developed a framework called Living Well Learning Well. This framework is based on three beliefs; that children are safe, respected, valued and cared for and that they are learners. All intervention and support strategies are aligned with these beliefs.
- Growing Strong Minds is a framework that is based on character strengths and the development of these strengths in students. Positive education has the best outcomes when it is implemented as a whole school approach incorporating explicit and implicit teachings. The implications of



this are that the well-being of the whole school community, including teachers, ancillary staff, parents and students, is encouraged to thrive.

## **2.7 Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction**

The opinions and ideas of parents, students and teachers are valued and sought. Their suggestions are incorporated into planning for and achieving improved outcomes for students. This year, the school used a variety of processes to gain information about the level of satisfaction with the school from parents, students and teachers.

### **Parent Satisfaction**

Of the 403 parents, 135 completed the survey (33% completion rate is considered good). All scores were above 2.1 which placed St Xavier's in the top category for each section. Parents stated that they like contemporary collaborative classrooms that are welcoming and promote learning opportunities. The facilities are immaculate, engaging and safe. Children have access to technology, and we cater for all abilities. Parents believe the staff are welcoming, kind and caring. There is a positive, inclusive culture with the core values evident. There is a real sense of community and school spirit.

### **Student Satisfaction**

Of the 174 students, 161 completed the survey (93% completion rate is considered excellent).

Identified areas of strength as highlighted by student responses were:

- I feel safe at this school
- I feel accepted by other students at this school
- I would recommend this school to others
- My teachers care about me
- All of my teachers encourage me to do my best
- The school Principal and other leaders in the school are approachable
- My teacher help me to set specific targets to improve my learning
- My teacher suggests ways to improve my learning
- I receive feedback from my teacher to improve my learning
- I regularly use technology at my school

### **Staff Satisfaction**

Of the 45 staff, 33 completed the survey (73% completion rate is considered excellent).

Identified areas of strength as highlighted by staff responses were:

- School leaders at this school know me as a person and support my wellbeing
- I have the opportunity to have input into decisions affecting my work in this school
- My school encourages a climate conducive to staff professional learning and improvement in practice
- Staff meetings are productive
- Collaborative planning processes in this school are effective



- The school manages behaviour incidents well
- The Pastoral Care policy and behaviour management processes are known and followed consistently
- Catholic religious identity is a high priority in this school
- Core Catholic Principles and Values are explicitly taught in this school

Identified areas of weakness as highlighted by staff responses were:

- There is adequate time for staff to gather and analyse information about student's progress
- There is good balance in time allocation for curriculum delivery
- The school's curriculum includes a strong focus on the development of cross-curricular skills and attributes
- All students, particularly high-achieving students, are appropriately engaged, challenged and extended

### **3.0 Teaching and Learning**

#### **3.1 School Curriculum**

The school provides an educational program based on and taught in accordance with the NESA syllabuses for Primary Education. The Key Learning Areas (KLAs) are English, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Human Society and its Environment, Creative Arts and Personal Development, Health and Physical Education. In addition, the school implements the curriculum requirements of the Catholic Schools Office Armidale.

Religious Education in Catholic schools is a mandatory KLA included in the curriculum for students in each year group. St Xavier's Primary School is committed to providing a quality education that meets the needs of all students.

The staff at St Xavier's are well qualified and present learning opportunities to suit the various learning styles of the students. Staff are lifelong learners participating in professional development and further training to maintain proficient teaching standards as outlined in the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers.

St Xavier's strives to be a Catholic Professional Learning Community (CPLC) with a commitment to:

- Being a community with an authentic Catholic identity and culture
- Having a focus on learning for all students
- Having a collaborative culture and collective effort to support student learning
- Being results orientated to improve practice and drive continuous improvement

The Leadership Team drive and support the implementation of specific programs and teaching strategies outlined in the school's Annual Improvement Plan. These initiatives enhanced teaching and learning for all students. Staff worked in collaborative teams to facilitate co-teaching and learning opportunities and to develop assessments for future learning programs.

From Kindergarten to Year 6, the school implements a 120-minute uninterrupted English block, where all components of reading, writing, speaking and listening are taught. As part of the Mathematics Improvement Initiative which is led by the Catholic Schools Office, Armidale, all grades utilise quality programming resources that allow students to deepen their mathematical understanding through the Great Mathematics Learning Sequence. In using the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model, teachers scaffold the learning for students in all KLAs, allowing them to become independent learners. All KLAs are taught as mandated by NESA and Religious Education is included in the daily timetable.





Data was a significant driver throughout the year, with steady growth of all students being monitored and challenged. The Best Start program for Kindergarten students informs learning practices. Significant student data collected and analysed by all staff was used to plan and implement specific learning targets across all stages.

Years 3 and 5 students participated in NAPLAN and Year 6 students completed the Year 6 Religious Education test. Further, whole school assessments and ACER online assessments were utilised to identify student skills and knowledge with data being used for future whole school planning.

Professional Development continued throughout the year to reinforce the key messages and content of the curriculum. Extra teaching staff and paraprofessionals provide ongoing support to students and assist teachers with curriculum access for all students. Social programs are implemented to assist students in their school life, to promote independent learning and to maximise opportunities for learning. ICT was used by K-6 to support student learning.

## **3.2 Student Performance in National Testing Programs**

### **3.2.1 NAPLAN**

The school participated in the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) with students in Years 3 and 5 tested. In Year 3, 59 students presented for the tests while in Year 5 there were 55 students.

In Literacy there were four elements tested. These were reading, writing, spelling and grammar and punctuation. In Numeracy, students were tested in number, patterns and algebra, measurement, data and space and geometry.

Commencing in 2023, NAPLAN test results are reported using proficiency levels.

Students' results show how they performed in each of the NAPLAN assessment areas against 4 proficiency levels:

- Exceeding: The student's result exceeds expectations at the time of testing.
- Strong: The student's result meets challenging but reasonable expectations at the time of testing.
- Developing: The student's result indicates that they are working towards expectations at the time of testing.
- Needs additional support: The student's result indicates that they are not achieving the learning outcomes expected at the time of testing. They are likely to need additional support to progress satisfactorily.

At St Xavier's Primary School, school and student performance are closely monitored. These tests are one means of gathering data on individual student and school achievement. School staff have participated in Catholic Schools Office information sessions on NAPLAN and Data Analysis workshops.

The following data indicates the percentage of St Xavier's Primary School students in the top two levels compared to the State percentage.

**Year 3 NAPLAN Results in Literacy and Numeracy  
Percentage of Students in Levels Strong and Exceeding**

<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Spelling</b>	<b>Grammar and Punctuation</b>	<b>Numeracy</b>
78.0	74.0	58.0	58.0	68.0



**Year 5 NAPLAN Results in Literacy and Numeracy  
Percentage of Students in Levels Strong and Exceeding**

Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar and Punctuation	Numeracy
81.0	65.0	69.0	64.0	72.0

#### **4.0 School Policies**

##### **4.1 Enrolment Policy**

The Diocese of Armidale adheres to the policy as endorsed by the Bishops Commission for Catholic Schools 'Enrolment Policy' of Students in the Catholic Systemic Schools of the Diocese of Armidale. The Catholic Schools Office Armidale monitors the implementation of this policy. The policy has been developed in the context of government and system requirements. Children from families who are prepared to support the ethos and values of the Catholic Church may be considered eligible for enrolment. A pastoral approach is adopted for parents experiencing genuine difficulty with the payment of fees.

This school does not have any enrolment policies or support documents in addition to the Bishops Commission for Catholic Schools 'Enrolment Policy' for schools in the Diocese of Armidale. This policy is available on the school's [website](#) and the Armidale Catholic Schools Office [website](#).

##### **4.2 Living Well, Learning Well - A Student Support Framework for the Diocese of Armidale**

Living Well, Learning Well - A Student Support Framework for the Diocese of Armidale are policies and procedures justifying a model of student support that considers learning, wellbeing, school connection, behaviour, family-school partnerships and similar domains as inseparable and interrelated elements in the lives of children and young people and in the complex community that is the contemporary school.

The development goal of Living Well, Learning Well, and related policies was, and is, to ensure contemporary research and findings in fields of pedagogy, inclusion, behaviour support, pastoral care, bullying prevention and intervention, student voice, participation and connection to school, child and adolescent psychology, student wellbeing and staff collective efficacy are reflected in all language, policy, practice and protocols of the system and schools. It supports a whole-system ecological approach to understanding and acting on the complexity of factors that interact to shape and form the lives of children and young people.

At the heart of Living Well, Learning Well is a universal and unconditional positive regard for children and young people and a high regard for the collective capacity of a school staff team to increase learning, wellbeing and life-opportunity outcomes for children and young people. The full text of the school's Living Well, Learning Well procedures may be accessed on the school [website](#).

Corporal punishment is expressly prohibited in this school. The school does not sanction the administration of corporal punishment by school staff or non-school persons, including parents, to enforce appropriate behaviour in the school.



### 4.3 Student Protection Policies and Procedures

The role of the Catholic school in child protection is to protect children and young people and to promote and safeguard the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people. This responsibility is shared with the whole community. Every school within the Armidale Catholic Schools Office (CSO) system of schools works within a statutory framework of cooperation with government authorities and other relevant agencies and with families in the care and protection of children and young people.

Schools have a key role to play in today's society by assisting students and families with child protection. The safety, welfare and wellbeing of students is given the highest priority in every preventative and protective action taken.

In caring for children and young people, we must act in their best interest and take all reasonable steps to ensure their protection. This involves sincere commitment to upholding children's rights to safety and their wellbeing, and taking comprehensive steps to create a child safe school organisation and culture, with shared responsibility requiring all Armidale CSO personnel to work together within a comprehensive framework to ensure action and accountability for child safety.

St Xavier's Primary School is committed to fulfilling its obligations and seeks to develop best practice to identify and address risk and harm, and to promote the wellbeing of all children and young people in Armidale CSO schools. The dignity of the human person is a central truth of the Gospel message of Jesus. In respecting the dignity of all human persons, Catholic school communities are called to ensure the welfare and safety of all of their members.

The protection of the students entrusted to our care, then, is a very serious responsibility. In taking up this responsibility along with parents, who are recognised as the primary educators and carers of their children, Catholic school communities are committed to ensuring Catholic schools have at their centre the total care of the whole student.

St Xavier's Primary School follows the guideline, policies and procedures as determined by Armidale Catholic Schools Office who provides policy, procedures, forms and links to other resources relating to child protection. These resources have been developed to guide and assist staff and to inform Catholic school communities. Further details can be accessed from the school's [website](#) which includes a further [guide for parents](#).

### 4.4 Complaints Handling Policy and Guide

The Diocese of Armidale has established a 'Complaints Handling Policy and Guide' which is implemented by this school. The rationale for this policy is that within the reality of the schooling experience, it is recognised that, from time to time, misunderstandings and differences of opinion will occur, and that these need to be resolved satisfactorily. Addressing such matters within a framework of dignity, respect and truth can provide powerful opportunities to model the love of Christ in the reality of the contemporary world. The Catholic Schools Office monitors the implementation of these policies.

*No changes were made to the 'Complaints Handling Policy and Guide' this year.*

*The full text of the school's 'Complaints Handling Policy and Guide' may be accessed on the school's [website](#) or the administration office.*

### 5.0 School Review and Improvement

Each year, the school develops an Annual Improvement Plan indicating the intended key improvements for student learning outcomes. The plan is drawn from the school's Strategic Improvement Plan and informed by the Catholic Schools Office Annual Improvement Plan. The school engages in an annual evidence-based evaluation of its effectiveness against these external standards in collaboration with the System Performance Leader.



Key Goals Achieved and Implemented in 2023	Key Goals for 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• K-2 Syllabi implemented led by LoP and K-2 Leader &amp; Mentor of Learning.</li> <li>• Consistent assessment practices with clear links to the syllabus outcomes developed.</li> <li>• A variety of co-teaching models were used aiding group work in maths lessons.</li> <li>• Planning is complete for the implementation of the 3 to 6 Maths and English syllabi.</li> <li>• Increased pedagogical capacity in maths, reading and writing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further build professional co-teaching relationships.</li> <li>• Strengthen the process of staff performance growth and development.</li> <li>• Increase the pedagogical understanding in the teaching and assessing of Oral Language K-6.</li> <li>• Focus on meeting the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students.</li> </ul>

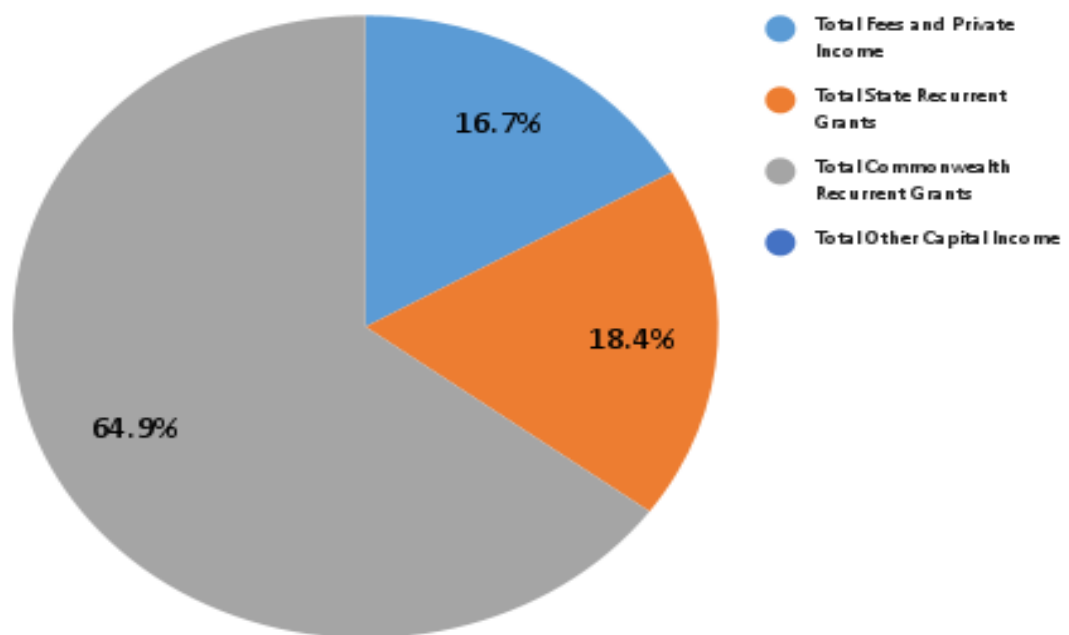
## 6.0 Financial Information

Catholic schools are accountable for all monies received. Each year, the Diocese of Armidale Catholic Schools Office submits to the Commonwealth Government a financial statement on behalf of the parish primary schools, K-10 schools and secondary colleges. This statement details the income and expenditure of each school. In addition, the financial accounts for each school and for the Catholic Schools Office are audited annually.

A visual summary of the income and expenditure reported to the Commonwealth Government for 2023 is presented below:



2023 Income - St Xavier's Primary School, Gunnedah



2023 Expenditure - St Xavier's Primary School, Gunnedah

