

Aurora



**SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS
STEINER SCHOOL**

Education is not the filling of a pail,
but the lighting of a fire
WB Yeats



Annual Report 2016

Aurora Southern Highlands Steiner School

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Our school

Nestled in the heart of the Southern Highlands among rolling hills, with stunning natural displays of the best of each season, stands Aurora Southern Highlands Steiner School.

Our school, while still young, has continued to grow in the past year with the addition of new families, programs and staff, establishing itself as a first choice option for independent education in our region. Our aim is to provide a living, inspired learning environment, which strives to foster the qualities of goodness, beauty and truth through the research and implementation of the principles in the educational approach of Dr Rudolf Steiner.

Our learning community and its physical, soul and spiritual needs are the focus of our school. We continue to strive for a respectful, safe and loving environment for all who work and learn at the school. We continue to reach for the best in each student, and our joy is to meet the children through their burgeoning discoveries of life, earth and humanity. Our school recognises that without the respect and understanding of who we are as individuals, the needs of our planet and all life on it, new forms of culture suited to the healthy advancement of humanity will be limited. So on we walk, hand in hand, making history as we go.



Statement of purpose

Aurora is one of over 1000 Steiner/Waldorf schools throughout the world. It is a small school offering a big-hearted education full of nourishment for the whole child.

Our approach, inspired by the indications of Dr Rudolf Steiner, actively engages the senses with real life experience, learning through the head, heart and hands.

We are a school that upholds a respect and reverence for the natural world. We celebrate the Australian seasons, grow food in our garden and explore the beauty of our local area.

We are a school of spirit, welcoming families into our community with open arms and open hearts. We value kindness and compassion and we seek to create an environment that fosters healthy social relationships.

An education at Aurora builds a strong academic foundation. We provide a rich, engaging environment where students learn concepts and skills at a time that is developmentally appropriate. The attributes of curiosity, creativity and capacity are nurtured, ensuring our children are equipped for today's world as morally responsible global citizens.

Our education

Rudolf Steiner once said the following regarding the need to understand the inner nature of the growing child:

Once we can understand those we are to shape, we will be able to educate and teach, just as painters must understand the nature and quality of colours before they can paint, and sculptors must first understand their materials before they can create, and so on. If this is true of the arts that deal with physical materials, isn't it all the more true of an art that works with the noblest of all materials, the material that only the human being can work with—human life, the human being and human development.

Our education focuses on more than the simple application of curriculum as prescribed by methods given to us through a set of standards. We recognise that as teachers, the way in which we educate children sinks deeply into the physical, psychological and spiritual nature of the child standing before us. The ways we teach in early childhood continue their work in the child over their entire lifetime, often appearing at different stages of their life. For this to be a positive influence, it is essential that we seek to understand the subtle nuances of teaching, harboured in warmth in the growing relationship between teachers and their pupils.

Our teaching program begins with early learning, through our playgroups, pre-kindergarten and kindergarten. In this initial phase of learning, up until around age 7, our focus is on helping the children to develop their foundation - a healthy body, a healthy will. We do this through our understanding that rhythm is the grounding force of all life. Therefore, our educational program for this age is tailored around rhythms and repetitions in learning. Healthy physical development depends upon movement and play. These foundations are beautifully paved in our school, with our natural environment, our large grounds, and beautiful resources for open ended creative play.

In the second phase, we recognise that children, after 7 and up until the early teenage years, develop most strongly their innate sense of being. Children learn academically much more effectively when they are engaged in a warm relationship to their teachers, whom they look up to as a loving authority. During this middle phase, everything musical in quality, whether it be singing, playing a musical instrument, or learning to speak poetry with musical expression, brings nourishment and balance to the literacy and numeracy lessons.

Aurora, currently, does not offer a high school program. However, we recognise that from 14 years onwards, once the physical foundation has been laid in the first seven years, and the basis for a healthy feeling life in the next seven years, the intellect is now stimulated. In this third stage, the teenager engages in the life of thought, questioning the world and developing a true basis for scientific thinking.

In this triad of the developmental stages in childhood, a harmonious chord can sound which is carried through the stages of life beyond the school years.

Below are the elements which play through the structure of our educational program:

Main lesson and storytelling

Main lesson and storytelling is based upon a historical developmental perspective which gives a sense of timeless values: that we are all a part of humanity, each having qualities to value, share and contribute meaningfully. The archetypal richness speaks to the feeling experience and awakens a sense of beauty, truth and wisdom. This feeling engagement, providing the life force through a deepening,



balanced experience of the senses is always considered in the learning process and encouraged through physical experiential expression, advancing the use of imagination and initiative.



Creative arts and craft

Expressive movement and dramatic and poetic language, verse and song are integral to the daily rhythm of the school day. Deepening students' experience through the living arts such as dramatic playmaking, creative movement and language and the exploration of colour creates dynamic nurturing experiences building on the life forces. Children learn about natural resources and how these become the material for making useful utensils, containers, props and aids in their developing lives. Practical application of a variety of crafting skills develops their confidence and abilities contributing to their sense of well-being.

Caring for our environment

Outdoor classroom, nature walks, the nature table, building the garden, reaping and preparing foods for community soup and bread, engaging with 'green time not screen time': all these are activities which deepen our connection to the natural world and provide a sense of reverence for life. This in turn develops a sense of responsibility and care for the future and a feeling of empowerment to effect change.



Caring for each other

Group and self-directed play in particular engages the children in social and emotional education. The children negotiate many levels of relationships such as experiencing responsible leadership/ cooperation, consensual agreements, independence and self-reliance.

Guidance and modelling by the teachers through their values, including a restorative justice-style practice, means that their interventions and modelling are always aimed towards respect, equality, health and wellbeing. A weekly focus for discussion at college meetings is based around aspiring values and student social/emotional welfare. A three weekly in-depth child study builds on nurturing and restorative processes.

Sharing circles with the whole class are founded on values of equality, community and an ability to negotiate and accept differences. Strengthening the sense of connection, daily circles (including group mealtimes) are a form of communication and engagement, deepening an attitude of care and respect for each other. This in turn encourages a safe and secure balance in personal relationship and group dynamics.

Teachers promote caring from older to younger children at transition times in the day, they instil procedures such as greetings and acknowledgements and bring attention to inclusive behaviours and changes that assist conscious integration and a sense of rhythm. This in turn adds to a sense of security and self-reliance- of self-respect for the child.

Caring for others and visitors to our school

Seasonal festivals and community events are community building with a global and historic perspective. They celebrate multicultural presence and contributions from within our community with aspirations for social renewal. Attending special indigenous nature days encourages respect for Aboriginal heritage and a deeper sharing of values for our environment.

The living organism of our school

We call our structure 'a living organism'. Such a statement fits with our concept and practice of education. The 'place' of education is more than the physical structure of the classroom, the grounds and buildings. For, within these grounds and walls, life happens, and it happens in a lively way because of all that holds it together.

School governance board – Southern Highlands Association for Steiner Education Inc. (SHASE)

SHASE was developed in 2009 for the advancement of Steiner education in the Southern Highlands. The vision and purpose of the school board is to ensure that families in the region have access to Steiner education if they choose it for their children. The school board carries and upholds the school's vision, ensures that school's practices are both lawful and secure, and that the whole organism of the school is overseen. Through the governance of SHASE, the school can continue to grow into a learning environment and workplace that reflects accountability, responsibility, transparency and inclusivity. The board's vision continues to support the existence of the school and its place in the highlands. The board continues to develop strategies to lead into the future and consolidate the gifts of our pioneering years.



School management

The Principal is the responsible manager for the school, ensuring that the College of Teachers have the support of content, study and professional development to maintain and grow the quality of the educational program. The Principal is also responsible for liaising with NESA, the school board, Steiner Education Australia, AIS and all other organisations that schools are in contact with. The Principal forms the link between staff, parent, students and the school board. The Principal is responsible for educational and business management with the aid of the Business Manager and the College of Teachers, as delegated by the school board.

The College of Teachers

The college is a group of teachers and other staff in our school who undertake to develop education programs to deepen the experience of teaching and leading and form a vision of what next needs to be achieved on an educational level. All staff members are welcome to take part in college matters. The college undertakes studies to further their own practice, but also central to the work of the college is the development of child study, where each individual child can receive a time of focus. Parents are often welcomed throughout to this college activity as well as other artistic work such as Eurythmy and Bothmer gymnastics. Our teachers are constantly developing their teaching practice in accordance with the needs of students at the school



Students

The students are the heart of the school. All of our work circles around the needs of our children's education, and how to best meet requirements for their strong and healthy development. The students bring not only their bodies and minds, their joy and anticipation to learn about the world, but also they bring the seed of their destiny, which informs the future of the world. Our children also bring us the challenges which enable us to overcome our own limitations, and compel us to develop capacities we didn't have before, which in turn offers the best of human example and role modelling towards their education.

Parent body

The parent body is the grounding element in our young school. Much of our active work in the outer community through marketing comes from the efforts of our supportive parents. Our parent group is diverse and active, celebrating the fruits of what the education brings to their children and, in turn, being celebrated in the school for their valuable contributions. The school recognises that the value of our school is supported by parents also through their payment of fees. The financial support goes a long way to contribute to the success of growing this school with a stable and secure foundation. Our parents offer an active voice in the wider community. Our vibrant parent group works tirelessly to create our newfound presence in the Southern Highlands.

From the Chairman of the board

I again have the pleasure of presenting the Chairman's report on behalf of the board for the year ended 31 December 2016.

Consolidation of the school's foundations

Over the 2016 year, the board focused less on marketing and more on consolidating the foundations of the school and growing the school in a measured and targeted manner. We placed great expectations on and trust in our Principal James Goodlet, teachers and Business Manager and the school grew more rapidly than first anticipated. Our staff and management succeeded in adapting to this growth, managing the change and keeping up with the paperwork and for this we are appreciative.

The school grows

We started the year with a healthy group of 19 children across all age groups from pre-kindy to year 4.

By the beginning of Term 2, due to a collaboration of our Principal, landlord (Peter Kazacos) and another tenant (Koori Kulcha), an indigenous program commenced and 5 Koori children joined the school. This was a most exciting step in the school's development, bringing to the school a greater diversity, acceptance of others and richness of experience.

At the same time another 14 children started across all year groups resulting in 38 students starting school in Term 2. Effectively the school had doubled in size seemingly overnight. By the end of the year, more children had joined, and some had also left the school, but the final number of students by the end of the year was even higher.

School prepares to extend to Years 5 and 6

At the end of March 2016 our Principal James Goodlet and his team's efforts were concentrated on finalising the school's Board of Studies application for approval of the introduction of Years 5 and 6 to commence in 2017. After several weeks of late nights and focus the application was finalised and submitted. I attended the school during the Board of Studies (BOSTES) inspection on 19 April 2016 and the school's application for approval was duly accepted with resounding positive acclamation.

Training and development

On the more mundane side of things, the board accepts we are all volunteers with careers in areas other than education and school management and are subject to mandatory training in the area of governance. Accordingly we all undertook our obligations as to governance training and development with conscientiousness and purpose. Fortunately the Association of Independent Schools (AIS) provides online modules for training purposes in the quiet of our own homes; and we all diligently set out to undertake those in our own time.

Other governance training that we undertook included attendance at the AIS annual conference on 22 April 2016 at which Inga Oates (Secretary) and I were lucky to secure tickets as the event was sold out very early. At this conference, stellar presenters gave us insights into the challenges and triumphs facing schools and school leavers from various independent schools across NSW. The take home message for us was the importance for all children to develop resilience and resourcefulness for the challenges that lie ahead, and I felt strongly that our school was on track to provide the right environment for our children to develop these competencies.

I was also fortunate to attend the Steiner Education Australia (SEA) Governance, Leadership and Management (GLAM) conference held at the Sophia Mundi inner Melbourne Steiner School in May 2016 at which all facets of Steiner leadership, governance and management were explored. I delighted in attending Eurythmy sessions and meeting other school leaders, and was amazed at the beauty of that Steiner school and the resourcefulness of its leaders in creating practical spaces within the historical walls of a former convent.

Business plan

Fortunate it was that Steve Klipin was also attending the GLAM conference, and James Goodlet (our Principal) arranged for Melissa Savill (Business Manager), James and me to meet with him. Steve gave us some advice on how to manage our school's rapid growth. We later engaged Steve to assist us in developing a sound business plan to take effect later in the year. This plan started by distilling a vision for the school from our various views of matters of importance; James developed this plan further and then invited the school community to comment on and develop it. All decisions from that point were mapped against that vision to ensure we stayed true to it.

A new school bus

Due largely to the board's careful management of funds, the school found itself able to purchase a school bus at the end of 2016. The purchase of the bus will give to the school an opportunity of marketing each time it voyages out on excursions or in providing private transport due to the Aurora branding on it.

Thank you to our leaders

On behalf of the board I thank James Goodlet for his hard work and attention to the task of Principal in growing the school; he has managed the different aspects of this task well and we are grateful to have him. A big thank you must also go to our Business Manager, Melissa Savill who makes all of our jobs so very much easier.

Thank you also to Chris Cloran who took over as Treasurer from Francis during Francis' tenure in Stuttgart. Thank you for attending to the accounts with such attention to detail and assuring us of the school's financial viability into the future.

Thank you also to the ongoing board members; your continuity is essential for a strong future. Of particular note it is refreshing to have Inga undertaking her role as Secretary with such passion and fervour, for which we can be thankful when reading over our updated Board Members Manual.

In closing I'd like to note that as it currently stands, our school is in great shape. We have experienced strong growth and exceeded all our targets. We have a strong, capable and flexible leader in James Goodlet; the teachers' feedback is that he provides them all with space to grow and develop in a safe and supportive environment. I think this speaks for the children too.

Jane Button, Chairman

From the Principal

A healthy social life arises when the whole community finds its reflection in the mirror of a person's soul, and when the virtue of each person lives in the whole community.

Rudolf Steiner

Theme for 2016

Our theme for 2016 was 'truth, beauty and goodness'.

Truth

We examined ways to practise transparency, openness, honesty and integrity in the whole community. Although there is always room for improvement, we had successes in improving communication between the school and parents with regular newsletters, website updates, email notifications and reminders of upcoming events as well as parent evenings and parent discussion and education events. We have tried to find ways to be clearer in articulating our vision and practice at Aurora referring to our statement of purpose and upholding the values contained within it.

Beauty

In 2016 we were on a quest to create a more beautiful physical environment and practise beautiful, healthy social relationships. This was done in the classrooms with programs such as restorative practices as well as beautifying classroom spaces. Gardening and landscaping projects in the school also upheld the value of beauty.

Beauty is very important in the Steiner primary school years curriculum. We work artistically with the children in this age group, developing children's 'feeling life'. All the teachers worked on ways to bring beauty to the children in 2016 through speech, song, movement and art.

Goodness

At Aurora, young children work on ways to practise good deeds and share stories of the selfless, saintly heroes. As a staff, we have been especially conscious of the effect we have as role models for goodness in the community. We looked for opportunities to model kindness in 2016.

Enrolments

Aurora started the 2016 school year with 18 students and starts 2017 with over 40 students Pre-Kindergarten – Year 6. We welcomed new local families and others who moved to the area to join our school. Our policy of inclusion has meant that we have needed to make adjustments to meet the needs of a diverse community but the overall benefits have been evident. We are a welcoming community!

Some new programs and projects in 2016

Chaplaincy

We were very fortunate to acquire chaplaincy funding for 2016-2018 and to secure the services of Lisa Devine for the role as Chaplain as well as Eurythmy teacher. Lisa's work with students, staff and parents brought a sense of care and inclusion.

After school care

in 2016 we secured government funding to set up Aurora Out of School Hours Care. We started after school care on a small scale in 2016 and, although the numbers remained fairly small, it grew slowly and Rachel Buckley was a welcome addition to our staff, bringing consistency and warmth to the after school program.

Aboriginal education program

After researching various programs in other schools, we developed our own program at Aurora working in partnership with Kazcare and Koori Kulcha. The program involved welcoming Indigenous students and families to our school and teaching local language and culture to all students. Rachel Buckley was our teacher in this program, developing it together as we went.

Mapping Aurora's future

Mapping Aurora's Future is a process and a document that involves a three-year business plan and a strategic plan. In 2016 the staff, the board, parent representatives and community representatives assisted in developing a business plan for 2017-2019. The process started in late 2015 and involved stakeholder meetings, research and document development. The three main elements of the business plan are: professionalism, financial sustainability and child focus. All our business decisions will refer to these three elements. In 2017 we will be clarifying our strategic vision for the school.

Playgroup moving off-site

After having playgroup in a school classroom space, then in Room 8 on the Kazcare site, in Term 4 of 2016 it moved to Harmony Centre in Mittagong. On the whole, this move was a great success. Thank you Rochelle and Jenny for your hard work, flexibility and positivity through all these changes.

Learning support and literacy skill development

In 2016 the staff worked on developing an effective literacy program at Aurora. This involved research and discussion. Professional development included a visit and talk in Term 2 from Rosemary Micalowski, Principal at Central Coast Steiner School, about how we can improve literacy practice in Steiner schools.

In Term 3 Terence Corbett was brought on board as our learning support teacher and assisted class teachers with reading programs and other in-class assistance and assessment. We saw great progress in children's literacy skills. Thank you Terence and all the other staff and volunteers involved in the program.

Some things to look forward to 2017

New classes

We will have four classes next year: Kindergarten (Annabel), Class 1/2 (Kate), Class 3/4 (Terence) and Class 5/6 (Jeddah). Kindergarten will move to a new site on the other side of the Kazcare site with much work being done in the summer holidays in preparation. There will also be work preparing and re-painting the new Class 3/4 room (the old Kindergarten room) and the Class 5/6 room (Jeddah's current room).

Kitchen garden program

Pascal Nelemans will be running a kitchen garden program for the whole school in 2017. It will include providing a healthy morning tea for all students as well as gardening and cooking classes.

School shirts and hats

Students will have the option to purchase school T-shirts (long sleeve and short sleeve) as well as hats. They will be in bright colours with a school logo.

IT program for Class 5/6

One point of difference in our school is our limited use of digital technology and screens for young students. We will continue to encourage parents to limit screen time at home and will continue to do so at school. In Class 5/6 we feel that it is appropriate for students to have access to digital technology for some projects. In 2017, students will each have access to a laptop, provided by the school, and will have a structured program implemented by Jeddah to enable the students to develop skills and use digital

technology as a tool when appropriate. Laptops will be kept in a cupboard in the classroom, brought out when needed and put away when students have finished with them.

Outdoor education and environmental studies program

Now that Aurora will be a K-6 school we will have the opportunity to more fully develop outdoor education. This will include a camping program starting with one camp on the school site for Class 1/2, two camps for Class 3/4 and three camps for Class 5/6. There will also be more day excursions to experience the wonders of the Southern Highlands. The outdoor classroom and environmental education program will be expanded with strong links to the curriculum. Camps and excursions will be included as part of school fees. With the skills, experience and energy on our staff we have a unique opportunity to create a school where experience in and study of the natural environment will be a core value.

In such a young school, each year is crucial in developing a healthy school culture. 2016 was a year of vision, collaboration and agility. There was a very real sense that every member of the school community was an important co-creator in the future of the school. The individual contributions from the school board, staff, parents and students are too numerous to mention and it is probably more appropriate to see the community's achievements as being a combined effort, reflective of the collaborative way we worked in 2016.



Staff profiles

We are indeed fortunate to have a dedicated team of teachers forming our College of Teachers, all of whom are fully qualified and accredited, with additional training in Steiner education.

James Goodlet

Principal

James believes in the power of educating the whole child: head, heart and hands. His passions include playing and coaching sport, playing music, the beach, gardening, building, bushwalking and spending time with his family. For over 20 years his career has been predominantly in primary teaching and education leadership and management in state schools, Steiner schools and independent schools. He has also worked in outdoor education and environmental studies as a teacher and manager. He has experience in the building industry as a tradesman and construction manager. He currently combines all these skills and experiences as Principal at Aurora.

James sees the challenge of growing a Steiner school in the Southern Highlands as exciting. Even though Aurora's numbers are small at this stage, it already has a strong community with committed, generous, big-hearted people. He would like to build on this strength and foster the creation of a friendly, inclusive place for learning; a place where adventure is encouraged and creativity is nurtured; a healthy place for all with a focus on the outdoor classroom, practical and artistic skills and the development of independence and resilience in young people.



Annabel Brown

Kindergarten Teacher 2016



Annabel Brown is a founding teacher at Aurora, having taught in the Kindergarten since the school's inception in 2013. She holds a Bachelor Degree in Social Inquiry from UTS and a Graduate Diploma of Teaching & Learning from Charles Darwin University, and was previously a Kindergarten Teacher at Chrysalis Steiner School in Bellingen.

Annabel is passionate about children's social and emotional health and relationship to the natural world: 'I find it immensely satisfying to create experiences and environments where children learn through their own exploration and through being in community together. I know that day by day here in the Aurora Kindergarten, each child builds a whole range of skills and attitudes that will underpin their long-term wellbeing- and that's the beauty of a truly developmental pedagogy.'

Having been Steiner educated for most of her own schooling, Annabel returned to the Steiner approach as a teacher because of its relevance to the needs of tomorrow: 'The future is calling for people who can think clearly, draw on the wisdom of the heart, and bring new ideas into practical action. And Steiner education is the best way I know of preparing young people for this kind of leadership in a changing world.'

Of this fourth year of the school's life, Annabel reflects: 'Together we're building something very precious here; a school with so much heart and with solid academic and administrative foundations. I'm proud of the collegial culture of collaboration that we're creating as the school grows, all of us bringing different perspectives, yet brought together by our shared commitment to take a fresh look at how the essence of Steiner education can unfold in this particular place and time, to truly meet the needs of these particular children.'

Kate Koch

Class 1/2 Teacher 2016

Kate Koch is one of the founding teachers of Aurora Southern Highlands Steiner School.

Kate began teaching at the previous Bowral Steiner School in 1998. She initially worked in the Kindergarten part time and ran playgroups. Kate did casual teaching in the primary school and went on to teach Health and Personal Development and English and Drama in the high school. Kate was co-class guardian for the composite Year 9/10 class with Benjamin Cherry and at that time introduced the Year 10 School Certificate. She holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree, a Graduate Diploma in Teaching, and a Masters in Art Psychotherapy.

'In Steiner education we respect and value each child and what they bring to the world,' Kate says. 'The primary years are a magical time. We aim to meet the child where they are at developmentally. The world of childhood is a participatory, imaginative world and so it is through stories and artistry that academic learning is introduced.'

'The early years of a child's education are vital,' she says. 'They form the foundation on which their future lives are built. So it is an honour and a great pleasure to be bringing Steiner education to the children of the Southern Highlands.'



Jeddah Teasdale

Class 3/4 Teacher 2016



Jeddah Teasdale joined Aurora in 2015 as a part time teacher in the Year 1, 2 and 3 class. She comes with a passion for environmental education having gained the qualification of Master of Environmental Management (Honours) and having worked in the field for many years before retraining as a teacher at the University of New England where she gained a Master of Teaching (Primary). She has a particular interest in helping students achieve their full potential in all aspects of their life and has engaged in professional development to assist her in these aims.

Jennifer Lloyd
Craft Teacher 2016

Jennifer's initial teaching experience was as a Junior Primary/ Kindergarten Diploma trained teacher in country and urban South Australia for four years with complementary training as a specialist teacher in Music through Movement (Dalcoze Eurythmics) and Children's Art classes. Since 1972 she has been studying and practising as an artist with a focus on personal development, gaining a Graduate Diploma in Social Ecology as well as an Honours Degree in Visual Arts. Registered as a relief teacher with the NSW DEC over the years she conducted a variety of arts projects in schools. As a parent at Eukarima/ Bowral Rudolf Steiner School Jennifer offered silk painting workshops and assisted in costume making for several school productions including Mozart's 'The Magic Flute.



In recent years Jennifer volunteered as secretary for the Vietnam Children's Project, which sponsors an orphanage and three Steiner-based kindergartens in Vietnam. This renewed her interest in the philosophical basis for Steiner education. She is now working towards contributing in a rich and worthwhile way to our new and developing Steiner school, teaching Craft and training as a Playgroup Leader.

Jennifer says: 'Through the pursuit of living a life motivated by inspiration and joyful loving engagement, through seeking personally meaningful fulfilment, I find myself involved in the extraordinary experience of being a part of this creative growing school community. There are challenges to encounter (we are on an adventure after all) but also many precious moments to cherish. I am the one being educated.'

Lisa Devine
Eurythmy Teacher 2016

Lisa Devine worked as a youth worker when she finished school and after working with a 'street kids project', spent time working with people who had disabilities. She enjoyed working in a movement and dance program with them. Later she completed a Masters in Psychology majoring in counselling where the focus has been working with people in life crisis. Lisa met the work of Rudolf Steiner through following her lifelong love of movement and dance. She completed her Eurythmy training in 1998 and has been teaching part-time in a range of Steiner schools since then, teaching kindergarten, primary, high school and adult classes. She completed her Eurythmy Therapy training in 2014.

Eurythmy in Kindergarten in 2015 was focused on developing beautiful archetypal movements in the children through imitating. We are shaping the sounds that live in the words with our arms and feet. These sounds work back into the physiology as their bodies are growing and forming in a healthy and harmonious way. We use stories which mirror the journey of becoming a human being on the earth where goodness is enjoyed. We moved the story of a floppy floppy pancake who ran away and after refusing to be eaten by a number of characters feeds three hungry children. We also moved the story of three billy goats gruff.

Eurythmy in the primary class was focused on creating beautiful archetypal forms as a group. The individual children are working on both fine and gross motor skills and learning the language of Eurythmy where the sounds of speech become alive and work into the physiology of the children to bring balance to their development. For example; the L lifts heaviness into lightness and the S brings chaos into form. The class learned to walk to tricky counting rhythms that take full concentration and bring a sense of joy when they are achieved; they crept silently to take back the gems from the blindfolded lion; they jumped the vowels in their feet with Griselda; they flew the Cassini Curve as

falcons and hawks; they polished copper rods which were used for developing nimble feet with 'Jack be Nimble', the 'dragon's ladder' and the 'seven-fold rod exercise'; they stamped as 'robbers' and faced the 'dragon' with forms in arms and feet that bring certainty and confidence; and they told the tale of Bridget through movement. Together we remembered what a pleasure it is to move our body in ways that nurture our soul and spirit.

Our highest endeavor must be to develop free human beings who are able of themselves to impart purpose and direction to their lives. The need for imagination, a sense of truth, and a feeling of responsibility—these three forces are the very nerve of education.

Rudolf Steiner



Professional learning

In 2016, staff participated in the following professional development activities:

The Glenaeon Teachers Intensive 2016

January Residential (5 days)

Attended by: Kate Koch

Highlands First Aid Training

Provide first aid in education and care setting

Provide basic life support

Provide cardiopulmonary resuscitation

Attended April 2016

Attained by: Kate Koch, Jeddah Teasdale

Child Study

Over 3 weeks Term 3, 2016

Attended by: Kate Koch, Annabel Brown, Ben Horsington, James Goodlet

Child Study

Over three weeks Term 4, 2016

Attended by: Kate Koch, Annabel Brown, Pascale Nelemans, James Goodlet

Aurora Story Circle

Term 2 and Term 3 2016

Attended by: Kate Koch

Sydney Rudolf Steiner College

Diploma of Rudolf Steiner Education

Distance mode, Semester 2

September 2016 residential (5 days)

Attended by: Kate Koch

AIS - BGA Capital Grants Application Briefing

Feb

Attended by: James Goodlet

AIS - Supervising Teachers Progressing to Proficient Teacher

Feb

Attended by: James Goodlet

AIS - Principal Induction Program

Feb 2016- Feb 2017

Attended by: James Goodlet

Atkinson - CHCPRT001 Identify and respond to children and young people at risk

Attended by: James Goodlet

AIS - Supervisor Certificate Section 111, Children (Education and Care Services) National Law (NSW) Certified supervisor

Feb

Attended by: James Goodlet

SEA - Governance, Leadership and Management Conference, Willunga

May

Attended by: James Goodlet, Melissa Savill

SEA - Delegates Conferences

March, August

Attended by: James Goodlet

AIS - Multi-Enterprise Agreement Briefings

May, November

Attended by: James Goodlet, Melissa Savill

The Vital Years: Conference of the Australian Association for Rudolf Steiner Education

July

Tarremah, Hobart

Attended by: Annabel Brown

The Quest: Conference of the alumni of the Sydney Rudolf Steiner College

January

Glenaeon, Sydney

Attended by: Annabel Brown

Increase Your Effectiveness: 7-week training course with Wendy Hart

March-May

Online

Attended by: Annabel Brown

Creative Discipline In Action with Lou Harvey Zahra

February

Aurora, Bowral

Attended by: Annabel Brown

Festivals In The Southern Hemisphere: a seminar with Martin Samson

March

Steiner House, Sydney

Attended by: Annabel Brown

Moral Technologies: a conference convened by students of the Sydney & Melbourne Steiner Seminars

April

St Jude's Conference Centre, Melbourne

Attended by: Annabel Brown

Story Circle: an exploration of storytelling in the classroom and the home

June, August, October

Aurora, Bowral

Attended by: Annabel Brown

Literacy in the Early Years: College consultation with Rosemary Michalowski

August

Aurora, Bowral

Attended by: Annabel Brown and Kate Koch

Regional Meeting of the Australian Association for Rudolf Steiner Education

August

Glenaeon, Sydney

Attended by: Annabel Brown

Parents' & Teachers' Session at the Landmark Forum for Teens

October

Pyrmont, Sydney

Attended by: Annabel Brown

Landmark's Self Expression & Leadership Program

November commencement

Pyrmont, Sydney

Attended by: Annabel Brown

Indigenous Perspectives in the Early Childhood Environment: consultation with Aunty Rachel Buckley
December
Aurora, Bowral
Attended by: Annabel Brown

Current Issues in Steiner Education in Australia: College/Board consultation with Tracey Puckeridge, CEO of Steiner Education Australia
November
Aurora, Bowral
Attended by: Annabel Brown

Proficient Teacher Accreditation Process with TAA James Goodlet
Submission made November
Aurora, Bowral
Attended by: Annabel Brown, Jeddah Teasdale

Membership Australian Association of Environmental Education
Attended by: Jeddah Teasdale

Membership Australian Association of Maths Teachers
Attended by: Jeddah Teasdale

Attendance Gleneagon Intensive Class 3
January residential (5 days)
Attended by: Jeddah Teasdale

Sydney Rudolf Steiner College
Diploma of Rudolf Steiner Education
Full Year distance mode – Introduction To Anthroposophy
Residential 1- April (5 days)
Residential 2- September (5 days)
Attended by: Jeddah Teasdale

The student cohort and student achievement

Kindergarten

The student cohort

In 2016, the Kindergarten class was made up of 14 children - eight boys and six girls, all aged 4-6 years old. Three other students attended for part of the year. Two students had attended other Steiner early childhood settings previously, and Steiner education was new to a number of families.

All students spoke English as their first language and nearly all parents were Australian born. Nearly all the children had siblings. There was a fairly high level of individual needs in this group, with four of the children needing some level of adjustment. Two children had diagnosed autism spectrum disorders.

Despite these challenges, the children all formed a strong sense of belonging in the Kindergarten and worked effectively as a class group. Dramatic play, cooking and oral storytelling were particular strengths of the class.

Four of the children went on to Year 1 at Aurora, and another eight continued on in the Kindergarten.

Our Kindergarten Year

Our theme at Aurora in 2016 was Truth, Beauty & Goodness, and life in the Kindergarten was a rich embodiment of these. Our array of structured learning activities was balanced with child-initiated play and exploration in this environment where the children can learn through rhythm and imitation. We welcomed many new faces and farewelled others, had wonderful opportunities for connecting across age-groups, and celebrated the seasons and special events of the year. The harmony and wellbeing so important at this stage of the children's development was vibrant and deepening across the course of the year. Head, heart and hands were nourished!

In the early childhood years, we seek to offer a rich environment where students can experience immersion in the beauty and wonder of day-to-day life, all the while learning in a non-reflexive and unselfconscious way. While the environment and experiences we create for the children are thoughtfully crafted and carefully prepared, we want the children to engage with these in a natural, flowing manner, such that they rarely notice the learning taking place. This allows the children to develop their experiences, knowledge and skills in ways that become simply part of 'who they are', rather than as named-and-labelled competencies extrinsic to them. The result is that these children generally feel a deep connection with their surroundings, a sense of belonging in the world and in the community, and an unselfconscious security in themselves. With these strong foundations, the children are well equipped to set sail into the world of far more conscious and 'awake' learning in their primary school years.

Here at Aurora we value childhood. Our school life is honoured not only as a means to an end (producing a knowledgeable adult) but as an end in itself. Our goal is to live well together each and every day, with reverence, mindfulness and enjoyment. Our circle times each morning and afternoon bring the class community together for poetry, music, movement and drama, and games to build social and cognitive skills. Our domestic experiences are highly valued - preparing food, setting the table, eating together, washing and washing up, and caring for our environment indoors and out through tasks such as sweeping, polishing and gardening. 'Making' activities form a large part of our days, both in structured form and in child-initiated play. Paper crafts, beeswax modelling, crayon drawing, watercolour painting, seasonal and nature crafts, handcrafts such as finger knitting, stitching and fleece work: these all contribute to the children's fine motor abilities, pre-numeracy skills and sense of confidence and agency. Child-initiated play is another key dimension of the Kindergarten experience, both indoors and out, and

allows the children to explore and transform their environment, integrate their lived experiences, and develop important relational skills. Stories, songs and finger games all contribute to the children's early literacy skills. Alongside these day-to-day activities, we celebrate the seasons and key festivals, and enjoy regular excursions - all events of wonder and magic that connect us with the bigger rhythms of life.

Each term has brought its own flavour and memorable highlights. In the final term we enjoyed water play on hot summer days, creek care sessions, regular Library lessons, Advent preparations, and a transition-to-primary program for the older children. Term 3 brought the beginnings of Spring which we celebrated well with picnics, frequent Kazcare nature walks and climbing adventures! Ben's German lessons continued, as did Eurythmy sessions with Lisa, and our Spring Michaelmas Festival & Open Day was a lovely end to the term. Looking back to Term 2, as Autumn moved into Winter, we went apple-picking at Moonacres, dug potatoes, and prepared for our Midwinter Festival with candle dipping and lantern making. Back in Term 1 we shared afternoon sessions with the older class and had regular singalongs led by James. We cooked peach pie from Kazcare peaches, and decorated eggs for our Easter Harvest Festival. Many visiting faces have passed through the Kindergarten through the year, and this has given the children an enormous flexibility and capacity to welcome change. What a big and colourful year we've had!

Class 1/2

The student cohort

At the start of 2016, the primary class was made up of eight children, four girls and four boys. The eight students comprised two girls and one boy in Year 1, with two girls and three boys in Year 2. The three Year 1 students had completed kindergarten at Aurora Steiner School in 2015. Four of the five Year 2 students had been in the composite class the previous year, with one student joining the group who had a sibling in Year 3. Thus, the children had a familiarity with many aspects of school life and all students participated keenly in our range of learning activities and classroom routines. In Term 2, three Year 2 boys joined our class. In Term 4 one Year 2 boy left the class to move to Sydney with his family. At Aurora School in 2016, three students completed Year 1 and seven students completed Year 2.

In this composite 1/2 class five Independent Learning Plans (ILPs) were developed for students with varying support needs. All students spoke English as their first language. Of the 11 children that attended the class, three attended for part of the year and eight for the full school year.

In 2016 we were fortunate to be able to offer specialist classes to the students in German, Eurythmy, library, Aboriginal Culture and music, taught by expert teachers, Ben Horsington (German), Lisa Devine (Eurythmy), Rachel Lamer (Library), Aunty Rachel (Aboriginal Culture) and Vanessa (music). The class also attended swimming lessons at Bowral Pool and 'Book Week' at Bowral Library. The class went on two excursions to Moonacres Organic Farm. In Term 4, the students enthusiastically took part in their class camp on the school grounds.

Here at Aurora we work together to create a sense of exploration, collaboration and unity between all the children. Each morning in class the day began with a sharing circle exploring character strengths. The class shared thoughts and experiences around the themes of courage, kindness and friendship.

Special characteristics of this group were a love of language and drama, mathematics and nature. Socially, the children bonded well as a class group with each other and with Kate as their teacher.

Student achievement

Year 1 is the beginning of the class teacher period and the threshold of a new world of adventure and learning. The Year 1 children were genuinely eager to enter a wider world and experience a new and

more organised group experience. The Year 2 students entered the next phase of their learning with a sense of camaraderie and enjoyment.

Ten students completed the composite Class 1/2 program in 2016. A range of formative and summative assessment methods was used to track the children's learning and development, including main lesson books, day-to-day teacher observations and anecdotal records and tracking via regular skills and outcomes rubrics.

End-of-Year reports indicated each student's development across all six Key Learning Areas (KLAs), plus Social & Emotional Development. In most subjects, students achieved Satisfactory and Accomplished grades, with individual students exhibiting occasional areas where they achieved the Working Beyond grade and some occasionally Working Towards. In Creative Arts and also Personal Development, Health & Physical Education, students achieved similarly high levels of competence. Around Social & Emotional Development, many students demonstrated Accomplished and Working Beyond levels in relation to outcomes.

Class 3/4

The student cohort

2016 started with a small group of five students. By Term 2 the enrolments had increased to 13 students made up of four boys and nine girls. Five students were attracted to the school through the Wiritjiribin partnership with local Aboriginal group Koori Kulcha.

Student achievements

Students were involved in many educational programs during the year including camps, excursions and quality learning in each KLA. Specialists lessons in General Music, Violin, Library and German were part of the weekly curriculum for 2016.

There was a focus on Outdoor Education with one day each week dedicated to learning under the tree in the playground during Term 1 and Term 2. The class explored the nature and history of the local area with walks to Bowral, Mt Gibraltar and two camps, one at school and another at the Yurt Farm, Goulburn. Farm visits were also enjoyed with visits to Moonacres Organic Farm and Ben Ricketts Environmental Preserve. Other excursions included a trip to Tulip Time, Book Week at Bowral Library and an incursion with the Guide Dog Association.

Academic achievement in English and Maths was further progressed for the school with our first 3/4 class. Main lessons included Hebrew stories, Time, Volume and Capacity, Measurement, Fractions and Decimals, Early Settlers, On the Farm and Norse Myths. The class did a wonderful job performing 'Moses, The Play' in front of an appreciative audience. Additional academic support was offered to students who required further one on one specialist assistance. Independent Learning Plans (ILPs) were developed together with staff and families for all students identifying as Aboriginal and for those with diagnosed support needs such as ADHD.

Looking back at Aurora in 2016

Deepening staff and student learning

- Class teachers began the Diploma of Steiner Teaching through Sydney Rudolf Steiner College and attended Glenaeon Class teacher Intensives as 'other professional development'.
- Literacy teaching and learning was reviewed to improve literacy practice and learning support program was introduced.
- The new music program was implemented including specialist teaching of theory and ensemble work as well as a strings program for Class 3/4 students.
- A high quality after school care program was established.
- An Aboriginal language and culture program was established.

Strengthening our community

- Involvement in targeted local community events and projects
- Development of high quality, structured parent education program

Running the school in light of emerging needs

- Continuing the work of 2015 in improving financial literacy in school governance
- Establishment of Teacher Accreditation Authority policies and procedures

Growing our school

- Development of a structured marketing program
- Improvement of social media presence and message
- Development of partnership with Koori Kulcha to encourage Aboriginal student enrolments

Mapping Aurora's future

A strategic plan and business plan for Aurora Southern Highlands Steiner School 2017-2019

Background and rationale

Mapping Aurora's future is a process and a working document, led by Aurora's Principal, James Goodlet, in consultation with members of the school community including: the Business Manager (Melissa Savill-financial), the College of Teachers (educational), board members (governance), parent representatives, Business Management Consultant (Steve Klipin - professional partner), Koori Kulcha and Kazcare (community partners).

From the beginning of 2015 there was a recognised need by the school board and management team for a comprehensive business plan. With Aurora being a new school it had been challenging to develop an accurate business plan as we didn't have an established pattern of income and expenditure, especially in relation to government funding. As the school has progressed there has been greater capacity to plan due to more reliable data being available. Thanks to careful financial management and commitment from the school board, staff and parent community, the school is currently in a very solid financial position. The establishment of the Statement of Purpose in early 2015, with the whole community invited for input, helped us set a path for our school vision but there was an increasing need for us to be able to plan financially for this vision.

In October 2015, business planning discussions started between management and the board and then with Steve Klipin, Business Management Consultant. A working group was established in March 2016 consisting of Business Manager Melissa Savill, Board Chair Jane Button, Treasurer Chris Cloran and Principal James Goodlet. It was at that time that we established the three main identified areas/values

of the school that underpin current practice and will drive planning in the next three years. These are: financial sustainability, professionalism and child focus. It also became evident that the business planning should be expanded to include another layer, broader school strategy and vision. It was identified that priorities for spending are linked to the values and vision for the school. The name for the overarching plan was suggested: Mapping Aurora's Future. In August 2016 a stakeholder meeting took place with representatives from the school community and other interested groups. The participants were asked to discuss and list priorities for the school's future.

Summary of school priorities from stakeholder meeting August 2016 - collated by Annabel Brown

Financial sustainability

- Developing a long-range vision for the school's year levels and size
- Planning for premises to accommodate that vision
- Diversifying funding streams
- Creating structures that feed enrolments into the school and accommodate students when they leave
- Building community awareness of our school - marketing and promotion that reflects what we're about

Professionalism

- Valuing staff by investing in their development, drawing on their expertise and passions, and creating opportunities for staff to learn from one another
- Connecting with current educational discourse and best practice, and making these our own as we apply them in our setting
- Deepening our engagement with Steiner's indications and their application in our contemporary Australian context
- Creating excellence in our Wiritjiribin program
- Building a culture of free and inspired teaching

Child focus

- The integrity of the Steiner curriculum and its expression to suit the needs of our students in this time and place
- Environment as teacher - creating environments indoors and out that represent what we're about, including our links with Aboriginal culture
- Literacy and numeracy as a foundation for a life of learning
- Food production, gardening and outdoor education as focus areas in our school
- Parent education and early childhood experiences as a foundation for ongoing student success

Aurora Southern Highlands Steiner School Business Plan (2017 – 2019)

From a business perspective, 2017 heralds a somewhat different set of factors than what we faced 12 months earlier.

Key assumptions

- As with the last three years, there is a projected budget surplus in 2016. It will be larger in 2016 due to a significant increase in student numbers with minimal increase in outgoing costs. This surplus will assist in funding significant extra costs in 2017.
- Although our enrolment numbers have doubled in 2016 our plans will be based on a more conservative 25% increase per year 2017-2019.

- In the last three years there has been uncertainty surrounding both state and federal recurrent funding which has made planning challenging. This funding accounts for approximately 75% of our income. There is now a greater understanding of funding arrangements but this will only last until the end of 2017 when new arrangements will be in place.
- Aurora school will undergo statutory Years 5 and 6 registration in 2017 and whole school registration for K-6 in 2018 from BOSTES (soon to become NESAS). Arising out of the preparation for our inspections a number of policies and practices are being revamped and will become current practice in 2017. The impact of these changes requires changes to some administrative matters. This will be done with a slight increase in the admin FTE load in 2017.
- In 2017 there will be a new class (Middle School 5/6) with a new teacher employed along with increased load for some specialists and room rental costs.
- Aurora school has a new Multi-Enterprise Agreement 2017+. This will bring employees into line with the vast majority of other independent schools in NSW. It will have implications for salaries and conditions.
- Aurora school will remain on the current site (Kazcare) for 2017-2019.

This business plan format has layers associated with it. These include: the 2017 budgets (wet and dry), educational offerings, the marketing strategy and the place in which this sits as part of the strategic vision of the school. The business plan along with additional documents will form part of the adopted 'Mapping Aurora's Future' in February 2017.

Three focus areas

The following key areas address the Business Plan for the start of the triennial 2017–2019. These areas are the drivers for the school plan.

- **Financial sustainability**
 - a. A budget surplus (excluding depreciation) is a requirement.
 - b. Aurora continues to seek opportunities for expanding student numbers and protecting financial sustainability.
- **Professionalism**
 - c. Ongoing staff mentoring and support is the highest staff priority.
 - d. Professional development courses such as: Diploma of Steiner Ed, Glenaeon Class Teacher Intensives, Vital Years conference, SEA conferences and AIS courses will continue.
- **Child focus**
 - e. Meeting the needs of children and developing healthy relationships are the highest priorities.
 - f. Literacy, music, Eurythmy, language, creative arts, Aboriginal education, environmental and outdoor education are priority areas.

External matters

- BOSTES (NESAS) Years 5 and 6 registration March 2017
- BOSTES (NESAS) teacher accreditation will be a compulsory element of teacher development from 2017 onwards including minimum professional development hours, application for/retention of proficient teacher level and professional profile.

Recommendation

That an allocation equivalent of 0.1 FTE administrative workload be budgeted in order to support the teachers and Principal comply with the registration requirements for the NSW Board of Studies inspection

Methodology

Hire extra administration staff as required to assist in the compilation and organisation of the documentation for the NSW BOSTES inspection and teacher accreditation process in 2017.

Internal matters

- **Financial sustainability**

Recommendations

- a. That a budget surplus of minimum 5% per year be achieved over the life of the 3-year business plan.
- b. Aim in 2019 to have full classes of 25 students in Kindergarten, Class 1/2, Class 3/4, Middle School Class (5-8). Financial planning is geared more conservatively with an anticipated 25% growth in enrolments each year.

Methodology

- Develop a wet budget for 2017 in Dec 2016 and a dry budget in Feb 2017 reflecting actual enrolment numbers.
- Identify areas that can be contracted in the event of a decrease (or less increase than anticipated) in student enrolment numbers.
- Develop a formal marketing plan in 2017 to be implemented in 2018 to continue enrolment growth.

2. Professionalism

Recommendations

- a. That ongoing professional development including mentoring and supervision be enhanced and included in Mapping Aurora's Future developed and implemented commencing 2017.
- b. That the BOSTES teacher accreditation process is accounted for with teachers moving to proficient teacher level, developing a professional profile and completing required professional development hours.

Methodology

Allocate up to 200 hrs towards the development and implementation of a school wide professional learning plan for staff including mentoring, appraisal, professional development, staff profile development in alignment with BOSTES Teacher Accreditation and Aurora Map

3. Child focus

Recommendations

- a. New kindergarten classroom and playground establishment
- b. Greater support and supervision needed in the Kindergarten
- c. Learning support program
- d. Separate classrooms for each class (Playgroup will be offsite unless we can find a separate space on campus)
- e. New resources needed for new Middle School Class students including IT
- f. Consolidation of Wiritjiribin Program including language and culture specialist teaching and provision of four new scholarships for Aboriginal students in 2017
- g. Specialist lessons in music, Eurythmy, language, craft.
- h. Continuation of 2016 literacy review and implementation of program 2017-2019

Methodology

- Staff and parents set up working group. Employ landscape gardening contractor and handyman/builder, to help set up Kindergarten classroom and playground
- Employ Kindergarten assistants (1.6 FTE) for 2017 to cater of the range of students
- Employ part-time LS teacher (0.6) coordinating resources, volunteers, administration and literacy program implementation.

- College to recommend the best spaces for age levels and resources for new spaces by December 2016
- Work with Koori Kulcha to welcome new Aboriginal students; continue to pursue options for financial support from Koori Kulcha.
- Continue with specialist teachers with a small increase in time allocation to allow for the new class in 2017.

Changes for Term 4 2016

1. Employ Kindergarten assistants (1.6 FTE) to assist with cooking and supervision of students (in the light of growing numbers of students with special needs and an increase in pre-Kindergarten student enrolments). Three educators present at busy times.
2. Establish a working group to design new Kindergarten.
3. Start the learning support program on a small scale (0.1) in readiness for 2017 (0.6) position.
4. Start purchasing IT resources for Middle School (5-8) Class 2017 in consultation with the Middle School Teacher.

To be decided by January 2017

1. Whether to apply for BOSTES (NESA) registration for Years 7 and 8 for 2018. Application needs to be submitted by 31st March 2017.
2. Whether to purchase a school bus for 2017 and beyond.

This Business Plan (2017-2019) comes to the board with the support of the Business Plan Working Group. Although the Principal has led this process, it has involved the input of many members of the school community. The Business Manager has developed and provided consultation and supporting documents, such as financial statements. I believe it is a cohesive document which fits our current and strategic plans and aspirations. In December of each year the Business Plan will be reviewed and altered to suit the current conditions.

Attendance and retention rates

Attendance

The average student attendance rate in 2016 was **92.2%**

FORM	OVERALL	MALE	FEMALE
Kindergarten	94.7%	90.2%	98.3%
Class 01	89.5%	78.8%	97.7%
Class 02	90.7%	88.7%	94.0%
Class 03	94.7%	92.9%	97.1%
Class 04	91.4%	90.3%	91.6%

How the school manages non-attendance

The school recognises that a child's school attendance is compulsory. Parents are provided access to the school attendance policy at orientation or soon thereafter and this is also discussed with the parents at the child's enrolment interview.

The school has in place a policy, reviewed annually, regarding non-attendance. An attendance register is maintained on a daily basis.

Parents of students are required to report their child's absence as soon as practicable after the absence is known. Where absence has become frequent, meetings are conducted with parents to ascertain whether any difficulties have arisen that the school and parents can work through together.

Mandatory reporting procedures apply where absences are extended or the student may be at risk of significant harm through school absence.

Student Retention (K-4 only)

Year	Start Year	Finish Year	Out during Year	In during year
2016	19	33	10	24

Respect and responsibility

Aurora Southern Highlands Steiner School intends that all students feel they are valued. Parents and teachers work together to provide care and support, thus engendering self-esteem, mutual respect and responsibility.

The board has developed policies and procedures within their 'Safe and Supportive Environment' and 'Student Welfare' goals, to ensure that respect and responsibility comes through clearly for students, teachers, parents and the community in which the school resides. These policies are publicly available to parents and are reviewed annually.

In addition to regular parent teacher meetings, the board and College of Teachers hold regular meetings for parents to discuss the basis for these policies and the framework in which the policies have been created, so as to educate the school community in how these are to work. These policies are developed with the aim of promoting respect and responsibility among students, parents, teachers and the wider community.

Key school codes, policies and procedures

Student wellbeing

Pastoral care at the Aurora Southern Highlands Steiner School is based on the philosophy and core values underpinning Steiner education and the school. It is holistic in nature, recognising that the social and emotional wellbeing of young people needs to be addressed along with intellectual and physical wellbeing. The promotion of wellbeing is integral to young people's schooling outcomes, their social development and their capacity to contribute to their families, the community and the workforce. The creative, artistic and imaginative aspects of Steiner education provide opportunities for participation, communication, engagement and expression that can increase student's self-esteem and build a protective connectedness to the school community.

Aurora Southern Highlands Steiner School seeks to provide quality education for all students taking account of their age, background, ability and interests. As a Steiner school, we believe:

Our highest endeavour is to develop individuals who are able out of their own initiative to impart purpose and direction to their lives.

Rudolf Steiner

We follow the 'Three Golden Rules for Teachers' to:

Receive each child in gratitude from the world they come from; educate each child with love; lead each child into the true freedom that belongs to human beings.

Rudolf Steiner

A comprehensive body of formal documents serve to guide many aspects of school life. All are available on the school's website. Each year, they are reviewed and updated to ensure that they are in true alignment with the school's values and practices. Below are excerpts from a range of key documents relating to student wellbeing, the conduct of all school community members, complaints and grievances, and enrolments.

Student Rules and Code of Conduct Policy and Procedure

This policy provides a framework to guide students and parents on the school's approach to acceptable behaviour to ensure that a positive and productive learning environment is maintained for all students. Descriptions of behaviours that are acceptable and not acceptable are provided in areas such as respect towards others, completion of homework, care for the environment, care of personal belongings and public behaviour. School rules are also set out in this policy.

Policy and Code of Conduct for Parents, Guardians, School Community

In addition to the Code of Conduct for Students, a Code of Conduct has been developed to encompass all community members who may contribute to the development of the child's education or be associated with the school. The Policy and Code of Conduct for Parents and Guardians is developed on reasonable community expectations of behaviour encompassing mutual tolerance, respect and personal safety of all with the goal of making the school a safe and pleasant environment for all our community.

Promoting Positive Behaviour and Discipline

Bullying conduct is not tolerated in our school. Anti-bullying policies concerning staff are located within the Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Statement for Employees, Contractors and Volunteers.

Anti-bullying policies concerning students are located within the Behaviour Management and Discipline Policy as well as the Codes of Conduct for Students, and for Parents, Guardians and the Community.

Discipline Policy

Under the school's Discipline Policy, students are required to abide by the School Rules and Codes of Conduct and to follow the directions of teachers and other people with authority delegated by the school.

Where a student disregards rules, disobeys instructions or otherwise engages in conduct, which causes or may cause harm, the student may be subject to disciplinary action and required to engage in considered restorative practices.

The disciplinary procedures undertaken and restorative practices required by the school vary according to the seriousness of the alleged offence. When advised of an allegation the student and parents will be informed of the procedural steps to be followed in dealing with the matter. In relation to all matters to be investigated, the student will be informed of the nature of the allegation and given an opportunity to respond to the allegations.

The School's Complaints and Grievances Policy

Aurora Southern Highlands Steiner School is committed to providing a work and study environment that is safe, fair and free from discrimination for all members of the school community. The school has a responsibility under state and federal legislation to ensure staff and students are not subjected to behaviour that may constitute discrimination, harassment, vilification or victimisation. An essential part of developing that environment is ensuring that students and parents are encouraged to come forward with their matters of concern and grievances in the knowledge that the responsible staff will take prompt and effective action to address these concerns. Grievances that are not addressed have the potential to grow into major problems that can cause tension, low morale and reduced learning and academic achievement.

In line with this aim, the school has developed a Grievances Framework, which is downloadable from the school website. This Framework was developed so that parents, students and other members of the community know to whom to take their particular concern and how they can expect their concern to be addressed.

Enrolment policies and prerequisites for continuing enrolment

Aurora Southern Highlands Steiner School is a co-educational primary school providing an education based on the philosophy and values of Steiner education and, like all NSW schools, we are approved by the NSW Board of Studies. All applications will be processed in order of receipt and consideration will be given to the applicant's support for the ethos of the school, siblings already enrolled in the school and other criteria determined by the school from time to time. To maintain their enrolment, once enrolled, students are expected to act consistently with the school's ethos and comply with the conditions and terms of enrolment. Parents are also expected to be supportive of the ethos of the school.

Enrolment procedures Information

We offer all prospective parents the following information by email or mail:

Aurora Southern Highlands Steiner School Prospectus

Relevant handbooks and/or access to school policies

Current newsletter

An invitation to attend a school tour

Enrolment procedures for Kindergarten –Year 6

Application for Enrolment

Parents are to complete the Aurora Southern Highlands Steiner School Application Form.

Receipt of Application Form, Documentation and Application Fee

Receipt of the Application Form, Application Fee and attached documentation will be acknowledged by telephone, email or mail. If a place is available, the school will forward an invitation to attend an interview with the Class Teacher and Principal or their nominee. If a place is not available, the child's name will be added to the Waiting for Interview List. Prospective parents will be informed of this, and contacted for an interview once a place becomes available.

Interview with Class Teacher and Principal

Both the parent/s or guardian/s and the student are required to attend an initial interview with the Class Teacher and Principal or their nominee at which all aspects of the student's education at Aurora Southern Highlands Steiner School will be discussed including the financial requirements of the school, fees and charges. It is expected that parent/s or guardian/s and the Principal or their nominee will have some private time during the interview. Parents are to make arrangements for younger students to be cared for while this happens. During this interview a start date may or may not be nominated and subsequent interviews may be requested.

Letter of Offer

If a place is available for the nominated start date, a letter of offer will be forwarded to the applicant.

Acceptance of Offer Form and Acceptance Fee

The Acceptance of Offer Form together with a non-refundable enrolment fee of \$625 must be returned to the school within 14 days of receipt of the offer. Payment of this fee reserves a place for the applicant's child to commence at the nominated time. If the offer is not accepted, then it will lapse. Upon receiving the Acceptance of Offer Form, parents will be required to read and accept the school's Policies and Procedures. After reading the policies parents will need to fill in the Conditions of Enrolment Form to indicate that they have read and understood the school's policies, and return this checklist together with a non-refundable Enrolment Fee of \$625.

Payment of fees and charges

The first term's fees, consolidated charges and other charges are to be paid prior to the student's first day at school. For families with children already enrolled in the school, the required fees, consolidated charges and other charges for the newly enrolled child will be added to their existing account and invoiced accordingly.

Parent, student and teacher satisfaction

Parents, teachers and students are involved in many aspects of school life. This involvement is welcomed and encouraged. A host of parent and student initiatives occurred throughout 2016 including market days, cultural days, fundraising events, marketing and communications, parent information and education, parent involvement in classes and more.

Responses to the question 'What did you value most about our school in 2016?'

- Supportive understanding staff. Lovely parent body. School environment. Feeling of being part of a likeminded community.
- Philosophy. spirituality. community. growth. The way in which my daughter was treated as an important individual and the way in which her growing and learning at school was approached with sensitivity, care and dedication. The way in which I can relate with the teachers on a holistic level and discuss as a team.
- The friendly environment
- Child centred, natural, heartfelt, spiritual and broad education. (head, heart, hands/body)
- The close knit community of parents and teachers, the support given by all teachers far beyond what is usual, Mel and James alike. German lessons, healthy food as the rule not exceptions and the wonderful festivals at the end of each term. I love the festivals.
- Community love and support of children
- Its growth, the sense of community and security a larger cohort provides

Responses to the question 'From your perspective, what values does our school represent?'

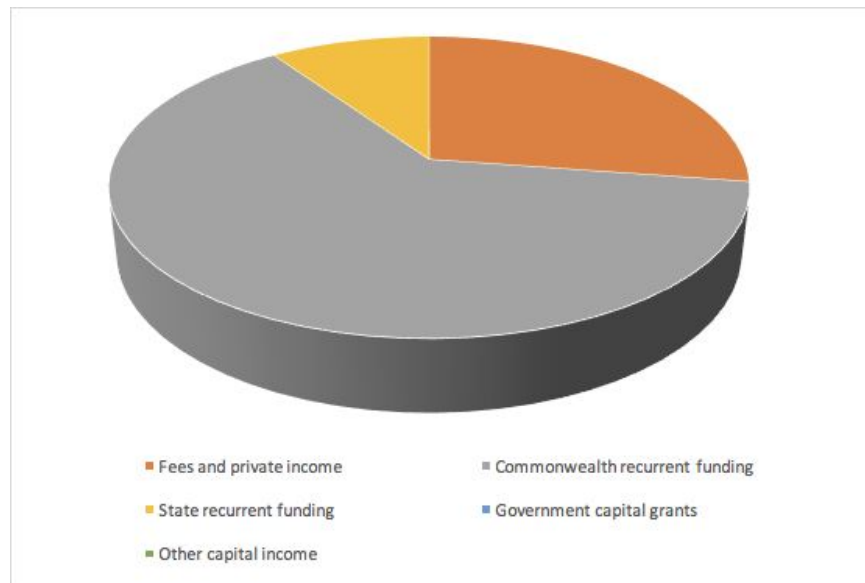
- Respect, love for nature and the environment, togetherness, community, developmentally appropriate education
- Communication, spirituality, connection to nature nurturing individuals love wholistic education
- Nurture and respect each other and the environment
- Values of self awareness, community/helping spirit, self reliance, being in the present moment
- Community and sharing nature and nurture
- Children , nature, balance, empowerment , self awareness
- Hands on, practical, holistic education

Responses to the question 'What was the highlight of the 2016 school year?'

- Oh gosh... camp, social night, school picnic, meeting new families
- Beginning of the journey... our daughter starting pre-kindy and becoming part of the community. watching her become more and more comfortable and at home and building relationships with teachers and peers. Receiving my daughter's folder with all of her drawings!
- Winter Festival
- Celebrating students commencing class 1 - learning german - parent night
- To see my kid thrive and blossom all the school festivals are great. Aurora at the grow cook eat festival
- Goodness . Our parents party ?? The growth of my son . And how his issues with learning to deal with his emotions were handled
- The festivals

Financial Summary

Income



Expenditure

