

Where learning lives...



Annual Report for 2019

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 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, offering a big-hearted education that nourishes the whole child.

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

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

An education at Aurora builds a strong academic foundation where the attributes of curiosity and creativity are nurtured. We provide a rich, engaging environment where students learn concepts and skills at developmentally appropriate times.

We are a school of spirit, welcoming families into our community with open arms and open hearts. We value kindness and compassion, seeking to create an environment that fosters healthy social relationships, equipping students 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 subtleties 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 artistic in quality, whether it be singing, playing a musical instrument, learning to speak poetry, moving with grace or visual arts expression brings nourishment and balance to the literacy and numeracy lessons.

With the new high school program starting in 2020, we recognise that from 14 years onwards, once the physical foundation has been laid in the first 7 years, and the basis for a healthy feeling life in the next 7 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.



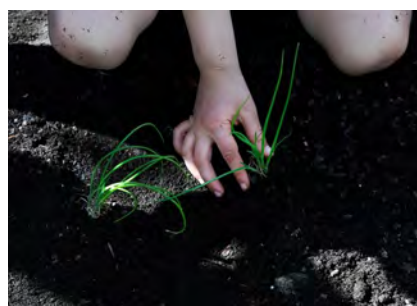


Creative arts and crafts

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 affect 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 practices approach, means that their interventions and modelling are always aimed towards respect, equality, health and wellbeing. A weekly focus for discussion at staff 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 instill 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, self-reliance and 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 First Nations 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 – Southern Highlands Association for Steiner Education Inc. (SHASE)

SHASE was developed in 2009 for the advancement of Steiner education in the Southern Highlands. SHASE members elect a School Board made up of seven members. 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 staff 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 NESAs, the School Board, Steiner Education Australia, AIS and all other organisations that schools are in contact with. The Principal forms the link between staff, parents, 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, Bothmer gymnastics and music. 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 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 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 2019.

Consolidation of the school's foundations

Our year began with 85 students from pre-kindy to Year 6. This is exactly the number that was predicted to start the year and we are proud to say that our expansion is in line with our marketing and business plan, formulated in 2015, to which we adhered faithfully.

Our strong performance and principled financial management have enabled the school to be approved for funding for much needed expansion. The first lot of funding was allocated to the construction of a new classroom, which is scheduled to be completed in Term 1 2020. In April we applied for further funding, which was approved in the latter part of the year. As at the end of the 2019 year, the Board/School have not made final plans for further construction.

The school continues to grow and at one point, there was a waiting list for new kindergarten students; however we were able to lease another classroom from Kazcare, to enable all students to be accommodated in 2020. 110 students are expected to start in 2020.

Board changes

We were sad to bid adieu to Julie Sedgmen who resigned from the board. A new Board was elected at our AGM on 22 May 2019, with Terence Corbett being elected along with Meredith Hatton, David Savill, Inga Oates, Jenny Lloyd, Lisa Devine and me.

High School

High School plans continued to develop for the 2020 year and a lot of time was dedicated to costs considerations, and also to parent engagement/feedback sessions and other events. New staff have been employed specifically for the High School, and the plan is for Years 5-6 and 7-8 to work together. Consideration has been given to developing project based learning. We continue to work towards offering the International Baccalaureate for years 11-12 rather than the Higher School Certificate. Principal James Goodlet and Caroline Farrell spent some time travelling to and talking with other schools that offer the International Baccalaureate and other programs to consider whether they would be suitable for our school. James also attended the international conference in Stuttgart in September 2019 for the centenary of Steiner Education, bringing back valuable insights.

Thank you to our leaders

Thank you again to our Principal James Goodlet and, in particular to our Business Manager, Melissa Savill who skillfully managed the school through a change to the funding model, and to Jeddah Teasdale, who has provided essential curriculum support and to Annabel Brown who has also been instrumental in developing new strategic models. I also thank all of our teachers and staff. Your contributions are enormous both at school and beyond. Our school community is strong because of you and your dedication.

Finally, thank you to the parents. Many of you assist at the school in varying capacities, for which we are grateful, but without your children as students, there would be no school. Thank you also to the Board members past and present; your skills and contribution are essential for a strong future.

Jane Button
Board Chair
31 December 2019

From the Principal

2019 - CONNECTING WITH THE WORLD

Aurora's theme for 2019 was 'connecting with the world' in conjunction with Waldorf 100, a celebration of 100 years of Waldorf/Steiner education including over 1200 schools throughout the world. We viewed Waldorf 100 films in our parent sessions, exchanged postcards with students all over the world, staff professional learning nationally and internationally, began the process of becoming an International Baccalaureate school, and welcomed visitors from all over the world.

This outward and global focus was good timing for our school with expansion of our community, preparation for high school and a new strategic plan which includes broader community engagement.

Aurora Map - Strategic and business planning

The Aurora Map, strategic and business plan for 2017-2019, was planned to come to completion at the end of 2019. A process of consultation and development took place throughout 2019 to develop a new map in 2020. The process of writing our new strategic and business plan for 2020 onwards started in Term 2 in 2019 with parent sessions as well as staff and board planning meetings throughout the year.

Building

Building works for the new Class 7/8 classroom started in 2019. Planning is underway for the establishment of new spaces for stand-alone classes in the primary (Years 1-4) and spaces for the upcoming high school students (Years 9-12).

A new outdoor classroom space for practical arts on the northern side of Class 3/4 building will be established throughout 2020.

A new application for the building of new classrooms in 2020 was submitted 30th April 2019 to the AIS and a grant was approved in December funded by the Block Grant Authority.

Students

In 2019 student numbers grew throughout the year to start 2020 with over 110, in line with the projected growth of 25%. Our successful programs such as camps excursions, kitchen garden, peer support, learning support, after school care and music continued and were refined. The students were involved on a global scale with Waldorf 100 celebrations sending and receiving postcards with children throughout the Steiner school world. They were given many opportunities to explore the world around them and make great improvements in their academic skills.

High school

An application to NESAs was submitted on 31st March 2019 for Year 7 and 8 in 2020. 2019 saw progress on the new classroom space for Class 7/8. NESAs visited the school for an inspection on Thursday 13th June 2019 and approved initial registration for 2020.

Playgroup

Playgroup expanded to 4 playgroup sessions per week with over 50 children. Rochelle and Clayton Hairs' shed at Berrima was converted to a beautiful playgroup space at the start of 2019 to accommodate the growth in numbers.

Summary

2019 saw another time of solid growth for Aurora and all the indications are that this growth will continue at about 25% per year. The *Aurora Map* and the *Master Plan* will see us continue to use the physical classroom and outdoor spaces on the Kazcare site with the addition of one classroom being built by Term 2 of 2020. There was consolidation of our composite class structures with a slight increase in staffing allocations with increased student numbers. The great progress made at Aurora in its short history has been due to the collaborative work of the Board, the staff, the parents and students. Along with Aurora's expansion there have been some great challenges and tough decisions made especially by the Board and I thank them for their wisdom and strength. There has also been some good fortune and good timing in taking up opportunities for funding and employing the right staff at the right time. Even with significant building and landscaping expenses and increased staffing, the school is in a healthy position financially and culturally to accommodate further growth.

The College of Teachers has been operating as the spiritual heart of the school and there is an ever-increasing feeling of confidence in its ability as a group, to make considered, healthy judgements for the school's pedagogical future and doing what is healthy for students at this time and in this place. Special thanks to Melissa Savill who has provided great support to me and has displayed flexibility, skill, patience and leadership in her role as Business Manager.

Thank you to the support that the whole school community has given to creating a vibrant learning place. The staff have all worked to make Aurora a place of wonder and warmth, taking seriously the job of modelling healthy relationships. The students have been industrious, adaptable and friendly; making the most of the resources we have at school. There are many examples of parents making great efforts to support the school by creating a healthy home environment, encouraging a positive attitude to school activities and teachers, punctuality and offering to help in school activities and ideas. A special thanks to the School Board for supporting me with decision making, problem solving and discussing ideas.

James Goodet
Principal

Staff profiles

Staffing 2019

We said goodbye to our music teachers, Vanessa Woodhill and Sarah Hindson, replaced by Melissa Reyder and Nataliia Fatkulina. Thank you, Vanessa and Sarah, for their outstanding pioneering contributions and thank you Melissa and Natie for providing such a smooth transition and continued improvement of the program.

Aunty Rachel Buckley expanded her role with after school care to include working within school hours on our Ngununggula school program and yarning circle with the broader community on Friday afternoons.

Assistant teachers Renaye Dudek (Kindergarten) and Jann Todd (Class 3/4) started with us in 2019. They were a great help in accommodating the growth in student numbers whilst maintaining the high teacher to student ratios.

Staff changes 2019

- Eva Leone became the new assistant teacher 0.3FTE for Class 1/2,
- Melissa Reyder became the new 0.2 FTE specialist Music teacher for Years 1-6,
- Terence Corbett stepped down as Class 3/4 teacher at the end of 2018 and began working across the whole school teaching PE, outdoor classroom and woodwork 0.2FTE as well as relief teaching,
- Annabel Brown moved to a new role as Class 3/4 teacher,
- Caroline Farrell was 0.2FTE on Class 5/6 and high school development, progressing to 0.8 during Term 3 in preparation to become full-time Middle School teacher across Years 5-8 in 2020.

Summary of 2019 Staff

James Goodlet- Principal
Melissa Savill- Business Manager
Jeddah Teasdale- Class 5/6 teacher
Caroline Farrell- Middle school teacher
Annabel Brown- Class 3/4 teacher and community engagement coordinator
Kate Koch- Class 1/2 teacher
Eva Leone- Assistant teacher Class 1/2
Elodie Guidou- Kindergarten lead teacher.
Bess Knox- Kindergarten assistant
Sandra Marques- Kindergarten assistant
Shirley Bell McLeod- Craft assistant and early childhood mentor
Terence Corbett- teacher and mentor
Jo Anne Woodman- Learning support, library, Japanese teacher
Lisa Devine - Chaplain and Eurythmy teacher

Jenny Lloyd- Craft teacher
Melissa Reyder- Music specialist
Sarah Hindson- strings teacher
Vanessa Woodhill- Music teacher (volunteer)
Pascalie Nelemans- Assistant teacher (Kitchen garden program)
Rachel Buckley - After School Care Coordinator & Cultural Educator
Rochelle Hairs- Playgroup coordinator
Emma Luxford- Playgroup leader
Renaye Dudek- Playgroup assistant and relief Kindergarten assistant

At Aurora, we are in the privileged position of having a strong team of staff, all of whom share a passion for quality education and a commitment to professional excellence. All of our staff hold relevant professional qualifications and, in addition, many have a background of study in Steiner education.

James Goodlet - Principal

NESA Accreditation: Teacher Accreditation Authority Delegate, Proficient Teacher

Master of Education (Leadership), Bachelor of Arts, Diploma of Teaching (Primary), Cert III Business Management, Personal Counselling Certificate, MACE, MACEL

James believes in the power of educating the whole child: head, heart and hands. With over twenty-five years of experience in teaching, leadership and management across different school sectors, Steiner, state and independent, James sees the challenge of guiding our young school as an exciting adventure. Having worked in the building industry, environmental education, teaching at primary school, high school and tertiary level, and with passions ranging from music to coaching and playing sport, James brings an array of skills and experience to Aurora's development.

James holds a deep commitment to people's growth and development, including the staff and students of Aurora. 'What I want is a friendly, inclusive place for learning - a place where adventure is encouraged and creativity is nurtured. A healthy place for everyone, with a focus on the outdoor classroom, practical and artistic skills and the development of independence and resilience in young people. We're lucky to have such a strong community with committed, generous, big-hearted people here.'

Melissa Savill - Business Manager

Bachelor of Nursing, Diploma of Business, Certificate III Education Support (Administration)

Melissa brings a strong background in the administration of independent schools, having worked for a number of years in large K-12 schools in Sydney. Additionally, she brings skills drawn from her experience in nursing, farming and business. Along with her passionate belief in a Steiner approach, these combine to forge Melissa's rigorous commitment to building a strong and sustainable school.

'What's unique about this place is the positive, enlivening atmosphere. It's empowering to everybody and I can see the benefit to the children every day. I see myself as a facilitator, linking the wider community to the Aurora community and welcoming them to the family, and as someone who's here to ensure the success and longevity of the school so it can continue to provide what the community needs.'

Jeddah Teasdale - Class 5/6 Teacher

NESA Accreditation: Proficient Teacher

Master of Teaching (Primary), Master of Environmental Management (Honours), Bachelor of Science (Architecture), Certificate in Rudolf Steiner Education

Positive relationships are the foundation of quality learning outcomes for students. With a passion for environmental education, mathematics, and the crossover between the two, Jeddah brings a dynamic and reflective approach to the classroom. Jeddah is continually investigating best teaching practice, and sets standards that are both high and also realistic for students to achieve. She has presented at the Australian Association of Maths Teachers reSolve Champions "Wonder in the Maths Classroom".

She has a particular interest in helping students reach their full potential in all aspects of their lives, and invests real energy in preparing our students for their transition to highschool.

'What I really value at Aurora is the way that we're always in conversation about our teaching practice and what works best for students. I appreciate that we're always reflecting and questioning - I think we're very forward thinking in that way.'

Caroline Farrell - Class 5/6 Teacher

NESA Accreditation: Proficient Teacher

Bachelor Arts, Honours (Theatre Studies), Dip of Education

Caroline brings an energetic force to the classroom that inspires students to rise to the challenge of their education. She is passionate about drama and uses this across all KLA's to build self confidence within the students so they feel empowered. "Drama and speech is a vital tool for the development of the individual, who is able to take up, or make, their place within society. The driving focus of all the curriculum I am striving to develop in our high school will assist our students in understanding the world in which they live as well as the development of those capabilities that will stand them in good stead for their future"

Caroline energetically searches for systems and processes to support students on their learning journey and, with her expertise in high school humanities, she is building a vision for the upcoming high school years. She has a team spirit and brings students along with her on a dramatic, enquiry based and fun loving educational journey.

Annabel Brown - Class 3/4 Teacher

NESA Accreditation: Proficient Teacher

Bachelor of Communication (Social Inquiry), Graduate Diploma of Teaching & Learning

Annabel is passionate about children's social and emotional health and their 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.'

As a founding teacher at Aurora, 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

NESA Accreditation: Proficient Teacher

Master of Art Psychotherapy, Bachelor of Arts, Grad Dip Teaching

Kate is one of the founding teachers at Aurora. Since 1998, she has had a wide range of experience in early childhood, primary and high school settings. Kate brings a passion for each child's social and emotional wellbeing, a love of language, and a deep commitment to ways of working that are rooted in mutual respect rather than reward and punishment.

'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... A child's primary school years are vital. Here they form the foundation on which their future lives are built - and so it is an honour and a great pleasure to be bringing Steiner education to the children of the Southern Highlands.'

Élodie Guidou - Kindergarten Teacher

NESA Accreditation: Provisional Teacher

Teaching Degree (Early Childhood-Primary), Certificate in Steiner Education (Early Childhood), Cert III Assistant in Early Childhood

To seek to understand each child in a holistic way; this is the starting point of our journey as educators, Élodie believes. Having worked as a teacher in government schools in her homeland of France, Élodie set out on an exploration of what children need to be healthy and strong; an exploration that led her across the world and brought her to discover Steiner education. 'In Steiner's work', she says, 'we find at least some answers to the questions, What is it to be a human being? By looking at the whole picture, by looking in a profound way, we can more easily find the keys to help a child.'

'The task of being with the children at this age, at the beginning of their life - it's such important work and I feel so blessed to be guiding them gently - striving to show them a path that can help their abilities unfold, and laying a foundation for who they will become as adults. I don't have to wonder why I wake up every morning, and I'm happy to go to work! There is a meaning in this work and it's important, and it's a joy to see the children happy in this environment.'

Jo-Anne Woodman - Japanese Teacher, Learning Support and Library Teacher

NESA Accreditation : Provisional Teacher

Bachelor of Economics, Diploma in Education, Cert IV TESOL, Cert IV Training and Assessment, Certificate Course for Teaching Students with Specific Learning Difficulties, Cert IV WHS, Cert IV Business Administration

Having worked in learning support, high school and university settings for close to 30 years, both in Australia and Japan, Jo-Anne brings a wealth of experience to her multifaceted role at Aurora. Her immersion in Japanese culture brings great richness to the school, and her warm hospitality and sense of fun are qualities that the children love and respond to.

'To see the lightbulb of understanding go on- that never stops being an inspiring and rewarding thing, even after so many years. Whether in one-on-one learning support, in Japanese, or through library sessions, it's always exciting to see the children's skills and confidence growing right before my eyes.'

'I'm so glad to have come to Steiner education, and wish I'd found it long ago! In my own teaching practice, I've always sought to create real-life experiences as the basis for learning- focussing on the child's experience, and intuitively worked in quite different ways with different age-groups. Now I'm discovering a whole structure of thinking behind that, and it makes a lot of sense.'

Terence Corbett - Class Teacher Mentor

NESA Accreditation: Proficient Teacher

Bachelor of Science, Dip Ed (Primary), Diploma of Steiner Education

An environment where children can experience security, groundedness and harmonious working together - this is what Terence is committed to providing for the students of Aurora. With over thirty years of teaching experience in Steiner, state and Catholic school settings, Terence also brings a strong repertoire of practical and artistic skills - having worked across a number of trades and artistic disciplines. This breadth of experience, Terence says, has strengthened his resolve to work with students using the holistic, integrated approach of Steiner education.

'Here at Aurora, I'm able to teach in the way that I feel most at ease and that I believe is most healthy for the children. By working with rhythm and by bringing movement, practical and artistic elements into all our learning, the work becomes enlivening for all of us. Music, verses, poetry, plays, and working with imaginative pictures - these things, in combination with solid practical skills and hard work, help the children to develop inner calmness, self acceptance, and an enduring love of learning.'

Sandra Marques - Kindergarten Assistant

Cert IV Business Studies (Human Resources), Foundations of Early Childhood Education (Rudolf Steiner Education)

Being present with children and honouring the early childhood years - these are things that Sandra is passionate about. Having spent over thirty years in and around Steiner school settings, Sandra brings a wealth of experience when it comes to creating inviting environments and nourishing experiences. A warm, domestic atmosphere is a key feature of life in the Kindergarten, and Sandra cultivates this especially through her focus on kitchen work and tending of the spaces with the children.

'Food is an integral part of the Kindergarten - it's a real part of the daily rhythm and ritual. I love the alchemy of being in the kitchen and supporting the children to build skills that they will use throughout their lives, peeling and chopping veggies, setting the table, washing up, sweeping and so on. For them, all this is still play and as educators we're here to create the rich, safe environment where children can explore the world through their play. And all of this within a school that's striving to be real, inclusive, transparent and open - it's a lovely thing to experience.'

Bessie Knox - Kindergarten Assistant

Cert III Children's Services (Early Childhood Education & Care), Diploma of Theology, Foundations of Early Childhood Education (Rudolf Steiner Education)

'Every day when I come to school, I know that I'm working for peace. What we give to the children now will stay with them through their lives- and this is my way of helping make a better world.' Having worked for some years as a nanny, Bess has a strong understanding of the little things that make a big difference when it comes to the children's care and communicating with families about their child's day. In the Kindergarten, she helps create a homelike environment in which the children can take the earliest steps in their schooling journey.

Bess is a voracious reader and loves reading broadly on education and parenting topics. 'I think that there's something to learn from so many different authors and philosophies. And it's something that I really appreciate about Aurora- the fact that we're supported in gaining a broad base of professional learning. It is a real community here- you see that with the families and also with the staff. It's a learning community where everyone's development is valued- children and adults alike.'

Pascalie Nelemans - Kitchen Garden Program Coordinator

Bachelor of Cultural and Social Studies (Netherlands), Advanced Diploma of Nutritional Medicine

Pascalie has a background in nutrition and natural health, and a passion for connecting children with where their food comes from. Over the past two years and a half, Pascalie has developed our Aurora Kitchen Garden Program, whereby a hot lunch is available to students each day, and students are regularly involved in food preparation, gardening, composting and chook care. Pascalie also emphasises a healthy environment by recycling everything from food scraps to soft plastic and everything in between.

'Working here, I know that I'm doing something meaningful. It's wonderful to be able to give children the chance to grow a relationship with healthy food, so that they're set up with good habits for life. I love being able to show the students the connection between growing vegetables, being out in the fresh air with the chooks running around, and the kitchen. I just love preparing food with the children - seeing their enthusiasm to cook and their happy faces... they always want to stay in the kitchen!'

Jenny Lloyd - Handwork Specialist

NESA Accreditation: Existing Teacher

Bachelor of Arts (Honours), Diploma of Teaching (Primary), Graduate Diploma of Social Ecology

Jenny is a qualified teacher and practising artist who believes strongly in the value of handwork and practical skills as important aspects of every child's education. Jenny has run a number of successful workshops and

creative projects in primary school settings over the past twenty years, and recently ran some workshops for trainee teachers locally and in China.. With a background in sculptural ceramics, Jenny now focuses on fibre crafts and community arts practice, and is particularly interested in the role of creative processes in bringing people together, sustainability and nature crafts.

Of her work with the primary classes at Aurora, Jenny says, 'Handwork involves the learning of practical, hands on skills that are based on pre-industrial techniques. It has relationships to both art, maths and engineering.. While meditative in the doing handwork builds an independent capability, especially when the children see their efforts bear useful results. For some it is a struggle to maintain focus but persistence and the repetitive rhythm and patterned action of coordinated hand movement often wins through to a joyful endeavour.

Rachel Buckley - After School Care Coordinator & Cultural Educator

Bachelor of Adult Education and Indigenous Studies

Aunty Rachel Buckley is a Wiradjuri woman and has a background in adult education, farming and indigenous studies. Rachel is particularly interested in the crossovers between Australian indigenous wisdom and the understanding brought by science and other cultures from around the world. She is passionate about educating children in the heritage of this land in inclusive, empowering ways; and she brings a rich perspective on the similarities and differences between Steiner and First Nations pedagogies.

'The whole idea of working with your hands and head together is a First Nations way of learning and teaching. In my work with the children, they set the direction and the pace and I guide and support them. The learning is emergent and it's always through the practical things that we get to see how the children are going in their thinking - it all works together.'

Lisa Devine - Chaplain & Eurythmy Specialist

Master of Psychology (Counselling), Bachelor of Behavioural Science, Diploma of Youth Work, Eurythmy Diploma and Eurythmy Therapy Training

Lisa offers a wealth of knowledge and experience when it comes to bringing Steiner's philosophy to the challenges and opportunities of contemporary life. With a lifelong love of movement and dance and a background in youth work and counselling, Lisa works with both children and adults, individually and in community, to promote healthy alignment on all levels.

Lisa has worked in a number of Steiner schools throughout Australia, and is widely regarded as a speaker, parent educator, teacher trainer and facilitator. At Aurora, her pastoral support is available to all members of the school community; and additionally she facilitates Eurythmy movement practices for class groups, staff and parents.

Rochelle Hairs - Playgroup Facilitator

Master of Nursing, Bachelor of Arts (Psychology and Education)

Rochelle holds a strong commitment to children being able to reach their full potential through a warm and nurturing start to life. With a background in child and family nursing, and a love of creating beautiful spaces and objects, Rochelle supports and inspires families to create homes filled with laughter, presence and peace.

Over the past years, Rochelle has built up a thriving community of families who enjoy a parent-child session each week - and in doing so, has helped to build a strong foundation of young children who will come through as the school grows. 'We find that children who have come through the playgroup transition so smoothly to school at Aurora. And not only the children - parents find that it's a great way to gain a real hands-on experience of what this education is about. Every playgroup is a joy and it's a privilege to lead!'

Shirley Bell - Early Childhood Mentor and Handwork Specialist

Diploma of Early Childhood, Steiner Education Training (Australia and America)

Shirley brings to Aurora over thirty years of wisdom and experience as a Steiner early childhood teacher and craftsperson. She is sought after internationally as a mentor and teacher trainer, and travels regularly to work with Steiner educators throughout Asia where there is a flourishing Steiner movement. Shirley has particular interest and skills in fibre crafts, storytelling, puppetry and doll-making, and holds a strong regard for the benefits of these arts to community life. Shirley also offers a wealth of experience around child observation and the application of Steiner's theories of child development.

Shirley has been involved with Aurora since its inception, and now offers mentoring support to all early childhood staff across our playgroups and kindergarten.

Vanessa Woodhill - Music Education Coordinator

Master of Arts in Recorder (Honours), Bachelor of Science, Fellow of the Trinity College of Music, London (Recorder)

Vanessa brings a wealth of experience in children's music education. With a lifelong passion for music and its role in human development, Vanessa has studied widely when it comes to building children's musical literacy. She has been involved with a number of successful ventures including the establishment of the Goulburn Regional Conservatorium, the Creative Arts program at the University of Wollongong, and a range of choral and orchestral projects.

At Aurora, Vanessa works with class teachers and other music specialists to deliver a challenging yet developmentally appropriate music program for all students across the primary school, involving singing, melodic percussion, string and wind instruments.

Sarah Hindson - Violin Teacher

Bachelor of Music Performance, Graduate Diploma of Music Performance

Sarah is an accomplished violinist having studied throughout her life under a number of acclaimed musicians. She enjoys chamber music and plays with the WIN Wollongong Symphony Orchestra. Sarah is also a passionate teacher, having taught at the Wollongong Conservatorium of Music, as well as in a number of independent schools and privately.

'Learning an instrument is all about helping the children to foster a love of music. By loving music and loving to play the instrument, students will achieve the best possible results. All students are given the opportunity to achieve, no matter their ability level. What I hope for most for my students is to inspire a lifelong love of music.'

Professional learning

Staff from across the school participated in an array of professional development activities throughout the year. In addition to personal reading and research and regular shared study in College meetings, staff attended the following sessions:

2019

Title	Staff attending	Institution & Location
Diploma of Business (BSB50215)	Melissa Savill	ACCM
Professional School Visits	James Goodlet Caroline Farrell	Various
Foundations in Early Childhood ECO1	Bess Knox Sandra Marques	Sydney Rudolf Steiner College
Teacher Leader	Elodie Guidou	AISNSW
NCCD Disability Standards in Education - Part 1 & Part 2	Jo-Anne Woodman	

Term 1 2019

Title	Staff attending	Institution & Location
Glenaeon Class Teacher Intensives	Jeddah Teasdale Annabel Brown Caroline Farrell	Glenaeon Rudolf Steiner School
Literacy and Numeracy Progressions	Jeddah Teasdale Jo-Anne Woodman	AISNSW
Safe2StepOut: Teaching Road Safety in K-6 - Online Module	Terence Corbett	AISNSW
HLTAID 001, 002, 003, 004	Jeddah Teasdale	CBD College
NCCD Term 1	Jo-Anne Woodman	Moss Vale
Lou Harvey Zahra visit	Melissa Savill Jenny Lloyd Elodie Guidou Rochelle Hairs Sandra Marques Bess Knox	Aurora Steiner School

Term 2 2019

Title	Staff attending	Institution
The Australian Waldorf 100 Conference	Caroline Farrell Terence Corbett Jenny Lloyd Kate Koch Eva Leone Elodie Guidou James Goodlet Annabel Brown	Shearwater Steiner School
SEA Governance, Leadership & Management Conference	Melissa Savill James Goodlet	Lorien Steiner School
SEA Delegates Meetings	Annabel Brown James Goodlet	Noosa Pengari Steiner School
NCCD Application and Evidence	Jo-Anne Woodman	Moss Vale
The New Zealand Waldorf 100 Conference	Annabel Brown	Michael Park School, Auckland
Early Childhood Regional Meeting	Bess Knox Shirley Bell Rochelle Hairs Emma Luxford Elodie Guidou Renaye	Orana
Story Writing	Elodie Guidou	Susan Perrow

Term 3 2019

Title	Staff attending	Institution
AAEE Annual Conference	Jeddah Teasdale	Australian Association of Environmental Education
Optimising the Impact of Classroom Observations - Online Module	Terence Corbett	AISNSW
School Communities Working Together - Online Module	Terence Corbett	AISNSW
Obligations in Identifying and Responding to Children and Young People at Risk - Online Module	Terence Corbett	AISNSW
Live Life Well @ School: Starting the Journey - Online Module	Terence Corbett	AISNSW
Creative Writing for Everyone: finding your voice.	Annabel Brown Kate Koch Caroline Farrell	Shelley Davidow
2019 Effective Numeracy Essentials	Annabel Brown	AISNSW

Understanding Higher Level Accreditation	Annabel Brown	NSW Education Standards
SEA Delegates Meetings	Annabel Brown James Goodlet	Armidale Steiner School
World Steiner Teachers Conference	James Goodlet	Goetheanum, Dornach, Switzerland
Assessment Practices in Steiner Schools Professional Learning Day	Jeddah Teasdale	NSW Education Standards
Japanese Primary Teach-meet	Jo-Anne Woodman	JTAN - Japan Foundation
Outdoor Classroom	Elodie Guidou	John Lawry
Understanding Additional Needs in the Classroom	Jo-Anne Woodman Kate Koch	Liz Dunnon
Professional School Visit regarding I.B curriculum	Caroline Farrel	Sophia Mundi Steiner School

Term 4 2019

Title	Staff attending	Institution
Professional School Visit	Jeddah Teasdale	Linuwel Steiner School
Assessment and Feedback in Languages	Jo-Anne Woodman	AISNSW
Teacher Training for Students with Neurodiversity	Jo-Anne Woodman	Get Into Neurodiversity
Languages: a Vital Resource for Australia	Jo-Anne Woodman	AISNSW
JTAN Workshops	Jo-Anne Woodman	JTAN - Japan Foundation

The student cohort and student achievement

Playgroup

Playgroup is often the first experience families have with Steiner Education. Our weekly program is based on the seasonal cycles of the year, expressed through stories, songs, craft activities and festivals. The program is for children aged 18 months to 4 years of age. Many of the children are with us for several years before they move up to Pre-Kindy.

The heart of playgroup is play, the most natural and normal activity of a young child. For inside play our simple handcrafted toys encourage the development of the imagination. It is a pleasure each year to see how the children's play develops over the months. We combine our inside play with seasonal songs, stories and breadmaking – not to mention morning tea where we eat our much loved Playgroup Bread!

In our beautiful outside space the children can roam and discover the richness of nature. This past year the children have enjoyed visiting our resident Satin Bowerbird's bower, feeding the horses and seeing kangaroos, sheep and more horses on our nature walks.



Kindergarten

The student cohort

In total, we had 29 children, 13 Kindergarten (full-time school aged students) and 16 Pre-kindergarten (part-time students), in the Aurora Kindergarten throughout 2019. The pre-kindergarten children attended only 2 days a week: on Monday-Tuesday or Wednesday-Thursday. Many children had older siblings at the school, and most had previously experienced a Steiner early childhood setting in our Kindergarten or at Steiner playgroups. All students spoke English as their primary language at home and came from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. One student identified as Aboriginal, and 6 students had additional learning needs. It was a pleasure to teach this group of children and to see 10 children proceeding to Year 1 at Aurora in 2020.

Student achievement

Students were assessed throughout the year based on the NESA Early Stage 1 outcomes as well as holistic Steiner assessment tools focusing on child observation. Those students progressing to Year 1 achieved adequately on all NESA Early Stage 1 outcomes, with most students achieving expected proficiency in certain Key Learning Areas. Our Transition to Year 1 program was designed such that all required outcomes were met within the stage, without compromising the Steiner Kindergarten experience for the wider early childhood group.

Year Overview and Accomplishments

2019 represents the third year spent in the new Kindergarten classroom and the second year for Elodie Guidou as the lead teacher. Staffing was stable with Bess Knox as a full-time Kindergarten Assistant, Sandra Marques as a part-time Kindergarten Assistant, and Shirley Bell as Early Childhood Mentor all continuing in their roles.

Kindergarten accomplishments of 2019 include:

- The Bush Kindy program on Friday mornings continued to be a success.
- Daily nature walks to explore local surroundings and excursions further afield to:
 - Living Earth Farm for our Autumn Festival
 - Gaia, where the Playgroup is held, for our Spring Festival
 - Cecil Hoskins Park and the Tree Keepers as part of our Bush Kindy Program.
- Successful Year 1 Transition Program throughout Term 4 for those students progressing to the Aurora Primary school. Several sessions to assess Year 1 readiness were held by Elodie Guidou, Terence Corbett and Shirley Bell. This proved to be very effective.
- Thorough orientation session for those families entering the Kindergarten in 2020
- Morning tea and lunches were provided for all students every day throughout the year. Each child brought a piece of fruit and a vegetable each day to build a connection between home and school. This provided benefits in terms of the children's nutrition, and building a sense of community through 'breaking bread' together - in addition to all the learning benefits of the children being involved in the preparation of meals, from chopping the vegetables, mixing the eggs, to grinding grains.
- Sandra Marques continued to focus on the food preparation and Bess Knox on assisting Elodie and the children during all parts of the day.
- An Early Childhood faculty meeting was implemented, aside from the whole school meeting, to better focus attention and study on Early Childhood related matters. Early Childhood staff continued to participate in the whole school meetings at various levels to preserve a connection with Primary. Early Childhood staff were involved in reviews at the end of each term to track professional learning and progress.
- We welcomed a Kindergarten age student who had been assessed as having higher needs. We were able to welcome her part time and employed Renaye Dudek as her aide. Her role was to support the student with her learning and adaptation of the school program.
- Throughout the year, building a sense of cohesion and a shared understanding of our approach at Aurora.

Class 1/2

The student cohort

At the start of 2019, Class 1/2 was made up of 25 children, 11 girls and 14 boys. The 25 students comprised 7 girls and 6 boys in Year 1, with 4 girls and 8 boys in Year 2. 12 Year 1 students had completed Kindergarten at Aurora School in 2018. 9 of the 12 Year 2 students had been in the composite class the previous year. 4 students joined the class from other schools. All students participated enthusiastically in our range of learning activities and classroom routines.

In Term 1, a year 1 girl left and moved interstate with her family. In Term 3, a Year 1 girl left to be home-schooled. At the beginning of term 4, 2 girls and 1 boy joined the class in Year 1. At Aurora School in 2019, 14 students completed Year 1 and 12 students completed Year 2.

In this composite 1/2 class, 7 Individual Education Plans (IEPs) were developed for students with varying support needs. 27 students spoke English as their first language, 1 student was bi-lingual. Of the 28 children that attended the class, 5 attended for part of the year and 23 for the full school year.

Year Overview

This year Eva Leone Joined the class as Assistant Teacher to Kate Koch. The children bonded socially with each other as a class and with Kate and Eva as their teachers.

Throughout the year, our school days are made up of a morning circle session of warm-up and community-building activities, music, movement and singing. This is followed by main lesson work including oral literacy and numeracy work, story and book work. This year we have had 12 Main Lessons or thematic units across the 4 terms. Following morning tea and play, our middle session is generally linked to literacy, numeracy, artistic and cultural development activities. After lunchtime and play, our afternoon sessions include a read and relax time and then a session with a focus on practical tasks.

Main lessons 2019:

Term 1

Form Drawing (Literacy, Numeracy, Creative arts focus)
Animal Wisdom (Literacy focus)
One Is the Sun (Numeracy focus)

Term 3

The King of Ireland's Son continued
The Emu in the Sky (HSIE, Science focus)
Ida Spider, patterns of the times tables (Numeracy focus)

Term 2

The Journey. (HSIE, Science focus)
The Four Helpers (Numeracy focus)
The King of Ireland's Son (Literacy focus)

Term 4.

Saints and Heroes (HSIE, Literacy focus)
To Market (Numeracy focus)
The Four Kingdoms and Advent (HSIE, Science, Literacy focus)

As well as this year's across-subject thematic main lessons, the children have had regular lessons in craft, First Nation language and culture, gardening, cooking, beeswax modelling, painting and drawing, Japanese, library, eurythmy, games/sport, peer support, restorative practice (sharing) circles and music.

Each student has also had one-to-one literacy sessions with our specialist literacy teacher. Additionally, each student has had a special birthday celebration honouring them and their place in the class.

This year we introduced the outdoor classroom. The outdoor classroom is a space used during the main lesson where the children are able to consolidate their learning through sensory and tactile experiences.

During the first half of the year in our cooking program, the class cooked lunch for the whole of primary school every Friday. Our students are terrific cooks and the lunches were a big success.

Another of our projects involved the creation of a book based on First Nation astronomy stories called 'The Emu in the Sky'. This book was written and illustrated by the class.

Alongside all these activities that are woven into our weekly rhythm, the class has enjoyed many festivals, excursions and special events. Our festivals have included Autumn Harvest, Midwinter, Spring and Summer Advent. The children have undertaken special preparation work for each of these festivals in the way of crafting, cooking and music.

Our excursions have taken us to the local library for book week, to a wonderful performance by Opera Australia and to the Moss Vale Aquatic Centre to develop swimming skills.

Some of the special events at school have been the First Nation story and drama workshop brought by Rock Salt Art. During the visit from children's literature specialists Robyn Morrow and Margo the children enjoyed hearing stories from different countries and learning about books. We experienced a terrific performance by the visiting North Sydney Girls Highschool Orchestra as well as our own school music concert. Our class

camp here at school has been another recent highlight. The children got plenty of practise with setting up and packing down tents, Our night walk and campfire sing along were among many joyful camp experiences.

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.

A range of formative and summative assessment methods were 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 6 Key Learning Areas (KLAs), plus Social and 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 Personal Development, Health & Physical Education, students achieved similarly high levels of competence. Around Social & Emotional Development, many students demonstrated Accomplished levels in relation to outcomes.

2019 has been a rich year full of deep social, academic and creative learning.

Class 3/4

The student cohort

The year started with 16 students - 7 in Year 3 and 9 in Year 4. A couple of students came and went through the year, and we finished with 6 students in Year 3 and 10 students in Year 4 - made up of 9 girls and 7 boys. 5 students came from First Nations backgrounds, and across the class there was a broad range of needs and abilities.

Student achievement

Students showed progress across all KLAs and were well supported by our Learning Support Team, both in class and in one-on-one or small group sessions. A range of formative and summative assessment methods were used to track the children's learning and development.

Year overview

The year 2019 was a rich and vibrant year of learning! Following is a summary of our many activities as a class.

Our Main Lessons were:

- The Cycles of Time
- The History of Writing
- Building & Shelter
- Fractions & Geometry
- The Norse Myths
- Our Place: local history and geography
- Wordcraft: an introduction to grammar and punctuation
- Creatures Great & Small: animals of Gundungurra country
- The Theft of Thor's Hammer: our class play
- A Good Measure: measurement

Our regular activities included:

- Daily form drawing throughout Term 1
- Literacy and numeracy practice lessons several times per week

- Daily singing, recorder and violin practice for much of the year, plus regular specialist lessons in each of these
- Handwork- including woodwork, beading, leatherwork, longstitch, crochet and natural dyeing
- Gardening, chook care and cooking
- Daily reading time and weekly library sessions
- Eurythmy with Lisa, Bothmer gymnastics with James
- Cross-country running and nature play
- First Nations learning with Aunty Rachel & Aunty Niomi
- Sports including a range of games, touch football and basketball
- Watercolour painting and drawing
- Japanese sessions with Jo-Anne Sensei
- One-on-one learning support sessions for all students, whether remedial or extension
- Peer Support sessions to facilitate mixed-age connections

Our excursions and special activities included:

- Bushwalking at Glow Worm Glen, Gibbergunyah Reserve and the Berrima River.
- Harvesting 40+ kg of grapes at Benji's farm, processing them, and creating a produce stall to raise money for our building project.
- Revamping the front entrance of the school- involving lots of measuring, removal of the old fences and sleepers, and carting and placing timber for our bushwood serpentine.
- Visiting the Reidy's slab hut for our Building and Shelter main lesson.
- Building a village of cubbies by the creek and visiting them regularly throughout the seasons.
- Participating in local landcare for Clean Up Australia Day.
- Creating a mini-play under student direction and performing it for the whole school.
- Having several informal concerts and jam sessions, plus performing at festivals and the end-of-year concert.
- Our festivals and preparation for them- the Autumn Harvest Festival, Midwinter Festival, Spring Festival and Spring Games, and the Summer Advent Festival.
- Creating gifts and cards for Mothers Day, Fathers Day, birthdays and other significant celebrations.
- Publishing the class magazine, and, for many students, creating portfolios to attain their pen licences.
- Preparing school lunches each Wednesday through first term, plus special cooking sessions leading up to festivals.
- First Nations language, art and culture with Aunty Niomi and Aunty Rachel- respect circles, yarning circles, individual paintings and totem poles. Also the RockSalt Arts visit- creating collaborative performances based on practices described in by Bruce Pascoe in Dark Emu.
- Touch football training and Gala Day.
- Our Harmony Day celebration with a sharing circle with many visitors in our classroom.
- Book Week activities including a local library visit and sessions with visiting specialists.
- Visiting Thirlmere Train Museum and the Gib lookouts.
- Enjoying amazing performances by Opera Australia, the Bell Shakespeare Company, North Sydney Girls High band and orchestra, and our very own Class 5-6 with their production of Julius Caesar.
- Visiting the Japan Foundation in Sydney.
- Swimming lessons at the Bowral Pool.
- Producing our class play The Theft of Thor's Hammer, in which each student played two or three different roles over four performances.
- Going on the wonderful Yurt Farm camp as the year drew to a close.

Class 5/6

The student cohort

The 2019, Class 5/6 was composed of seventeen students. 8 students were in Year 5 and 9 in Year 6.

Students Achievements

Students in Years 5 and 6 want to be more involved in the world around them. To meet this need we offer many opportunities for the students to move their learning outside of the classroom, participate in specialist classes and take more responsibility for their learning.

'Meeting the world' has been a theme across Aurora this year. Incursions and excursions are arranged to support the main lessons and provide a variety of opportunities for students. Here are a selection of activities that Class 5/6 have been involved in this year.

Environmental education continues in Year 5 and 6 with many activities tying directly to this theme. The Kiama ecosystem and Kiama Community Garden excursion in Term 1 was the first of such excursions. Canoeing on the Wingecarribee River in Term 1 combined environmental education while building physical skills in which to enjoy the world. Students participated in a camp to Mt Keira in Term 2 to observe the changing night sky in the freezing cold. We explored the bush of the escarpment and watched the landscape change on the way to Wollongong. We visited the Wollongong Botanic Gardens and experienced a variety of plant life. The Rock Salt Arts workshop in Term 3 developed understanding of the First Nation people's sustainable agricultural practices using drama, dance and story. The Wingecarribee School's Environment Day in Term 4 showcased some of the best environmental education in the region and students had the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities to develop their knowledge of local environmental issues. Students have engaged in the kitchen garden program over the year, cooking food for the school and gardening. The Year 6 group were able to participate in the planting of a willow cubby as a legacy for the Aurora Playgroup.

Opportunities to immerse in creative and performing arts were arranged, the highlight being the student's performance of Julius Caesar in Term 3. All aspects of theatre were pulled together by the students; set design, props, costumes, learning lines, stage cues, lighting and soundscapes. The students have also been in the audience to view two world class drama companies with Bell Shakespeare performing "Just Romeo and Juliet" and Opera Australia's "The Owl and the Pussycat". The Rock Salt Arts incursion in Term 3 had the students participating in the drama to make an impromptu performance of dance, drama and storytelling to explore First Nation agricultural practices. The class attended the South Coast Public Schools Dance Festival as part of their camp in Term 1 and were captivated by watching students from other school's dance performances. The Year 6 performed a wonderful and dangerous fire twirling routine at the Winter Festival in Term 2, accompanied by the musical talents of the Year 5 class. The students performed in the Aurora Music Concert in Term 4, showcasing the wonderful work they have been doing in their music classes over the year. The class has been to the Sturt Art Gallery and spoke to the many artists at The Shac in Robertson.

Showing students that what they learn in class has relevance beyond the class walls forms the basis for many excursions. Excursions for Science to the Science Centre and Planetarium in Term 1 and the Science and Engineering Day in Term 2 had students engaging with hands-on learning. Year 6 also visited Questacon in Canberra. The Bowral Library book week excursion was followed soon after by a visit to the school from Robin Morrow, a renowned children's book curator and children's book judge. The enthusiasm for books and writing was high after these events. In Term 4 the class went to the Japan Foundation in Sydney to progress their cultural understanding of the language they have been learning. The Year 6 students participated in civics themed excursions during their Canberra Camp in Term 4 visiting Parliament House.

Opportunities for physical development is a key part of the curriculum. The Year 5 students honed their physical skills at the Greek Olympics camp providing opportunities for friendship building and personal

acknowledgement in skill, beauty and team-work. The Touch Football Gala Day is a shining light in our sports curriculum with students competing against other schools in an atmosphere of participation.

Camaraderie is actively encouraged between schools and students find their independence when they assert new friendships with different peers. The class has visited Elonera Montessori in Wollongong and been welcomed into their classrooms. The class has also established friendships with other Steiner School peers at the Canberra and Greek Olympics Camp.

Students showed progress across all KLAs and were well supported by our Learning Support Teacher. A range of formative and summative assessment methods were 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. The Social & Emotional Development markers for this group showed remarkable growth over their time at Aurora.



NAPLAN

In 2019, four students in Year 5 participated in the NAPLAN assessments in May. As there were less than five students included, there was not sufficient data to calculate a statistically reliable school average to post on the *myschools* website.

No Year 3 students participated in NAPLAN in 2019.

Looking back at Aurora in 2019

Priorities as outlined in *Mapping Aurora's Future*

Financial Sustainability

- As projected, enrolment numbers grew by approximately 25% in 2018.
- Marketing was targeted to a few appropriate local media advertisements, Cambridge University's Innovation 800 publication - one of 100 educational organisations chosen worldwide for innovative practice, ongoing development of the school website and regularly updated school Facebook page.

Professionalism

- Professional learning prioritised College meetings studies as well as other individual staff professional learning especially in teaching and learning improvement.
- Class teachers continued studying Diploma of Steiner Education through Sydney Rudolf Steiner College, Glenaeon Class Teacher Intensives. Board and management continued with AIS governance and compliance training.
- Upgrading of NESA teacher accreditation from provisional to proficient teachers.
- Development of high quality, structured parent education program including parent coffee morning discussions each fortnight, parent evenings each term and regular written communication from class teachers and management.

Child Focus

- Continued development of a structured student support program with a focus on literacy improvement with specialist student support teacher working with class teachers.
- Expansion of outdoor education program including more camping and excursion opportunities.

Priority areas for improvement

Key improvements made during 2019 include:

- The commencement of the process of gaining accreditation to offer the International Baccalaureate as our senior qualification from 2023 onwards
- Building works commenced for the new yurt classroom
- The employment of Aunty Rachel Buckley as our full-time Cultural Educator and the formal establishment of our Ngununggula program, Gundungurra language teaching and adults Yarning Circle
- An extensive stakeholder engagement process was conducted to inform our next Aurora Map
- The development of outdoor classroom areas adjacent to the office and Class 1-2
- The expansion of the learning support team and provision of in-class support for students with additional needs
- Attaining full member status within Steiner Education Australia and recognition by their CEO Virginia Moller as a school leading the way in collaborative practice
- Continued expansion of the Aurora Playgroups run by Rochelle Hairs and her team
- Updating and improvements of the kitchen space, food hygiene practices and lunches menu led by Kati Ferro
- Continuing professional development via the Waldorf 100 conference and an array of courses and workshops attended by staff
- The building of the profile of the school via our staff presenting at conferences and events
- Landscaping work including the creation of garden beds at the front entrance, and a playscaped retaining wall in the playground
- The employment of Eva Leone as full-time assistant teacher to support Kate in Class 1-2

- The 'Shakespeare Festival ' initiative was created by Caroline Farrell, with the Class 5-6 performance of Julius Caesar and visit from the Bell Shakespeare Players
- Enhanced connection with other schools through the Greek Olympics camp, visits with Elonera Montessori school and the Waldorf 100 global postcard project

Going forwards, priority areas for improvement are:

- The establishment of a second early childhood classroom that can more fully meet the needs of the younger students
- The streamlining of enrolment processes
- Renewal of our prospectus, website and enrolment materials
- Building the profile of the school in the local community
- Developing cohesive whole-school approaches to literacy and numeracy learning, drawing on best practice Steiner pedagogy
- Deepening the pedagogical value of school lunches and the Kitchen Garden program
- Supporting the transition of students and their families who come to us from other schools
- The setting of clear guidelines and expectations through Parent handbooks, Staff Handbooks and ongoing communication and education
- Formalising staff induction processes
- Planning for the establishment of positions of additional responsibility as we grow, with the soonest being a Head of Teaching & Learning position and an Early Childhood Coordinator position
- Establishing a part-time Maintenance position
- The development of the high school with the first Yr 12 students completing the International Baccalaureate in 2024. Including program development, promotion and securing healthy enrolments, and gaining NESA accreditation year by year
- The deepening of our Ngununggula program and the establishment of a formal Reconciliation Action Plan
- Creating a school-wide professional development strategy for both teaching and non-teaching staff, encompassing areas such as professional accreditation, mentorship and peer mentorship, development activities, structured reviews, strengths utilisation and so on

Aurora Master Plan 2018 - 2021

1. Executive Summary

1.1. Scope of Master Plan

Aurora School began in 2013 with a small group of Kindergarten students. It is on a rented property which is a mixed educational facility owned by Kazcare. This arrangement has enabled the school to rent more space when needed. In 2018, as a K-6 school, there are now 4 classrooms, a kitchen space, a small library, an office space and playgrounds. Our landlord, Kazcare, is supportive of the school's growth on the site but there are no more rooms available for rent. There is space for extra buildings and Kazcare is supportive of establishment of 4 GLAs in the next 3 years to accommodate growth in enrolments. These buildings are transportable should the school move to another site.

This master plan covers 3 phases of building at Aurora. Stage 1: 2019 building 1 new GLAs for the primary faculty, Stage 2: 2020 building 2 new Kindergarten GLAs, and Stage 3: 2021 building new facilities for a Years 7 and 8 on another site.

In 2016, a combined strategic plan and business plan, *Mapping Aurora's Future*, was created to provide direction in 2017-2019. The concepts established in the strategic plan are the basis for this master plan.

1.2. School Enrolment

The Master Plan is based on the development of new facilities to serve a total student population of students across K-6 2019 = 75, 2020 = 94, 2021= 117. The population is approximately split 50% males students 50% female students. Of the total enrolment, 9 students with recognised disabilities, requiring significant adjustments, are integrated within K-6. There are 7 students who identify as Aboriginal students. The SES level is 95.

1.3. Assessment of Educational and Staff Needs

An assessment was made of the school's educational and staff needs to determine whether additional general purpose classrooms and specialist facilities were required in relation to student numbers. The outcome of this assessment determined that the overall General Learning Areas (GLAs) and specialist facilities are currently inadequate for predicted growth. This is the key in developing this master plan.

1.4. Aesthetics and Brand

Since the school's inception in 2013, the pre-existing learning spaces, from a previous school that closed in 2007, have been renovated, extended, altered and beautified. The existing buildings were: an office space, a design and tech room, an art room and primary classroom but we have managed to convert these rooms to: 2 small office spaces, 4 classrooms, a small library, and kitchen. These rooms will be inadequate to meet the growth in enrolment numbers and there is already pressure on 3 learning spaces with existing numbers. Use of natural, environmentally responsible materials, a connection with nature and developmentally appropriate architecture in relation to colour, light and how open to the outside or how cloistered the spaces, are an important feature of existing spaces and will continue with further development.

2. Purpose

2.1. General Master Plan

The purpose is to provide a forward looking strategy and framework for the orderly physical development of Aurora School which will respond to the school's vision and strategic plans.

A master plan should establish:

- Big picture ideas
- Broad planning principles

- Zoning of the campus and the relationship between the zones
- Location & connections of new facilities to existing facilities
- Preservation of sites & corridors for future development
- Opportunities for expansion into another property
- Ways to improve functionality and amenity

2.2. Updates to the Master Plan

The purpose of this master plan is to guide the building development of the school over the next 4 years. The master plan is a living document that needs to be flexible to changing circumstances and modified over time as the school's educational and physical needs change and evolve. This master plan will provide a record of the thinking, decisions, and directions taken at the time of its preparation for review, modification or implementation at a future date.

The initial impetus for this updated master plan came from the requirement in the application for a BGA grant in late 2017. Even though it is still in its beginning stage, it has grown to become part of the school's strategic vision. With the 3 principles of financial sustainability, professionalism and child focus we face 2 main options as a school:

1. We grow to the limit in our existing infrastructure with 4 composite classes to a maximum of 100 students. This maximum level, we predict, will occur by the end of 2020 with waiting lists on all classes K-2.
2. As we do not have the resources to build infrastructure and the SES background of our student body suggests we will not be able to raise funds in the foreseeable future, we seek close to 100% external funding to build for further growth now. The 3 main stages recognised:
 - a. **Stage 1:** 1 new primary General Learning Areas (GLA)
 - b. **Stage 2:** 2 new Kindergarten GLAs; move Year 1 into the current Kindergarten classroom, build outdoor covered learning space outside the current Class 1/2 classroom.
 - c. **Stage 3:** Establishment of High School on a new site

For Option 2, the actual planning process so far has involved the following distinct stages:

- a) The site selection of new Primary and Kindergarten GLAs
- b) Identifying and resolving the displacement of existing functions
- c) Site Assessment
- d) Usage Assessment
- e) Staging
- f) Board approval
- g) Design Concept for Stage 1
- h) Financial Costing and Capacity Assessment
- i) Funding proposal and BGA application

Next steps if funding is granted:

- j) The Outcome
- k) Construction of Stage 1
- l) Design Concept for Stage 2
- m) Financial Costing and Capacity Assessment
- n) Funding proposals
- o) The Outcome
- p) Construction of Stage 2
- q) Design and construction of Stage 3
- r) Longer-term Planning Issues

The proposed timeline for development is as follows:

- **2018:** funding application to BGA for Stage 1 and further design development of Stage 2
- **2019:** Construction of Stage 1 – Middle School GLA and Funding application to BGA for Stage 2

- **2020:** Construction of Stage 2- Kindergarten and outdoor learning space for Primary. Site acquisition for High School and funding application to BGA for Stage 3 – High School buildings
- **2020:** onwards - Continued long term landscape and infrastructure planning, expansion to Years 7 and 8.
- **2021:** Stage 3 building- High School

3. Historical review of Aurora School

3.1. History and Philosophy of Aurora School

Aurora School began in Bowral in 2013 when a group of dedicated parents were inspired to start a primary school based on the educational principles of Rudolf Steiner. The school began with 7 Kindergarten students in a classroom formerly used as a woodwork room in the old Eukarima School, a Steiner school that closed in 2007. From these humble beginnings, the school has grown steadily to 63 students in K-6, offering a comprehensive primary curriculum delivered by a dedicated team of teachers and specialist tutors in a nurturing and inspiring environment.

Aurora School has a strong policy of inclusiveness. To this end, the school aims to provide the highest quality education in a manner affordable to as many people as possible. Inclusive practices include: parent volunteerism, scholarships for Aboriginal students, bursaries for families with limited financial resources and an integrated learning support program for students with special needs. The school welcomes students from all social, ethnic, and religious backgrounds, and students with diverse intellectual and physical needs.

The students currently enrolled at the school come from near and far. From South West Sydney, as far North as the Oaks 60 kms, the Illawarra and as far South as Wingello, 50 kms. Many families move to the area from Sydney to send their students to the school. The ability of Aurora School to attract students from such a large geographic area is a testament to its success.

3.2. What Aurora School offers

Our School provides a unique learning environment focused on equipping students with the intellectual, social, physical, practical and emotional skills to thrive in the world. Unique features include a kitchen garden program with provision of healthy lunch for students each day. Aurora School had their first graduating Year 6 class in 2017 who have adapted well to moving to several independent and state high schools.

As well as strength in the core, academic curriculum, the school has very strong music, creative arts, languages, craft, kitchen garden and environmental science programs. The school employs specialist eurythmy, language, craft, music and strings tutors as an integral part of the weekly curriculum. The school also offers specialist literacy and numeracy support based on individual student needs. The ICT program is enhanced in Year 5, familiarising students with the use of computers in preparation for high school.

The school provides a Kindergarten program, with a mix of 4, 5 and 6 year old students. It provides an excellent beginning to the child's school life, is formative in establishing their social learning and inducting them in the school ethos and culture of learning that will stay with them for the rest of their schooling. The Kindergarten is now full with a maximum of 22 students on any particular day. There is now a waiting list for Kindergarten students.

The school currently provides 3 composite classes from Years 1 to 6. Class 1/2, Class 3/4 and Class 5/6. With growth in the lower end of the school, the new buildings would allow there to be single stream classes in the coming years for Years 1-4 and a composite for Years 5 and 6. It is the intention of the master plan to maintain this configuration of primary classes in one section of the school and early childhood classes in another section.

The school offers playgroup for 60 children aged 0 to 4 years 4 mornings per week. It is open to everyone regardless of a parent's intentions to enrol their child in Kindergarten at Aurora School. However, the

overwhelming majority of children attending playgroup are enrolled for school. Playgroup is a very positive way to familiarise future parents and their children with the ethos and educational style of the broader school environment. For these reasons, playgroup is an important part of our early childhood educational program at the school.

3.3. The Future

Aurora School has a healthy future with strong enrolment numbers and waiting list for Kindergarten. This situation is projected to continue for a variety of reasons:

- Aurora School offers a unique and highly regarded educational environment. Many families move to the region specifically for their children to attend the school;
- Local schools such as Bowral Public School are overcrowded and have run out of play space. There have been students enrolling at Aurora, in part, for the reason of overcrowding in the local public school;
- The Southern Highlands has a strong and diversified economy;
- The most recent 2016-2017 ABS figures show surrounding areas of Leppington/Cobbity and the Illawarra as among the highest population growth areas in NSW and the new Renwick development of 700 dwelling will provide for an influx of 1500 people, 10 minutes drive from the school.
- The School will expand to Years 7 & 8 in 2020. This would complete the 2nd 7-year development phase of Steiner curriculum and establish our Middle School concept (Years 5-8). The possibility of purchasing land would allow us to extend our campus size creating space for the next stage in development, High School (Years 9-12).

3.4. Background to the Infrastructure of Aurora School

Since the initial establishment of the first Kindergarten class in 2013 in a rented woodwork space, and its subsequent conversion to classrooms, Aurora School has prioritised educational excellence and prudent financial management over any lavish spending on infrastructure.

Over the last 5 years the school has creatively and frugally developed and adjusted spaces in existing infrastructure to suit its growing needs. While this has served the school adequately, it has meant that the majority of the school's buildings are not purpose built facilities. Class sizes have grown and these converted spaces will only house small classes.

Aurora School has funded all these developments with its own resources. This is its first application for grant money for building works.

3.5. While the school will continue to steward its infrastructure for the successful long-term education of its students, the program outlined in this master plan offers a pressing and much needed improvement to enable its educational program to flourish.

4. Background to the Master Plan

4.1. History of Planning at the School

Aurora School's Master Planning Group (MPG), comprises the Principal, the Business Manager, other members of staff, the Board, and school parents.

- In February 2016 and February 2018 the Principal attended BGA Capital Grants Applications briefings at the AIS.
- In February 2018, the MPG engaged the Architect, Helmut Rohde, to assist developing plans for the first stage of the master plan.
- Wednesday 18th April 2018 the Principal led a meeting of the MPG to check that all were on-board with a plan to apply for BGA grant for Stage 1 to build twin GLAs in 2019. This meeting used the existing strategic and business plan, Mapping Aurora's Future 2017-2019, as the basis for discussion

about the master plan. The decision was made by the MPG and subsequently, the Board, to apply for the grant with the approaching deadline of 30th April 2018. It was also decided that, given the tight time frame, for the Principal to lead the writing of the master plan with assistance from the MPG in preparation for the grant submission.

This document is the result of that mandate and provides the critical thinking and subsequent framework for master planning over the next 4 years. We believe that with more efficient, modern and larger primary classrooms, school enrolments will be able to increase with single stream classes in the primary. The experiences and educational opportunities we offer existing students will increase as well. This master plan and the projects it proposes are about better managing the school's future growth and also much needed upgrading of facilities. Completing these projects allows the school to consider offer Middle and High School in the future with a further increase in student numbers.

The MPG report on infrastructure needs also recognised the need to identify and consider longer term planning issues beyond the 3 year time scope of the 2017-2019 Strategic Plan. In order to avoid future planning conflicts, this master plan has identified the relevant longer-term issues in its final section.

5. Strategic and Business Review & Plan

In 2016, the school's management group embarked on developing a strategic and business plan Mapping Aurora's Future 2017-2019 to establish goals that encompass the school's decision making process, educational and financial needs, and its relationship with the broader community.

Mapping Aurora's Future 2017-2019 identified key aims relating to infrastructure, as outlined below:

- To remain on the Kazcare site until the end of 2019.
- To accommodate 4 composite classes in 2017 aiming for 25 students per class by the end of 2019.

6. Primary GLAs Development

In 2013 the first Kindergarten was housed in what is now the Class 3/4 and kitchen area. A small office was set up in what is now the library. In 2014 another classroom became available (which has remained the Class 1/2) and then in 2015 another learning space became Class 3/4 and in 2017 it became Class 5/6 when Kindergarten moved to a new classroom on the North West corner of the Kazcare site. In 2016 the new office space was converted into 2 smaller office spaces with a dividing wall.

The learning areas have been painted and refurbished to be appropriate primary classrooms. The Class 1/2 and Class 5/6 rooms could accommodate class sizes of up to 30 students, the Class 3/4 room would struggle with accommodating 25 students.

Whilst we have a supportive environment for students with special needs, we are increasingly unable to accommodate new special needs students due to the limitations of space and the extra complexity that composite classes present.

6.1. Primary GLAs Site Selection - 3 stages

6.1.1. Detailed Brief development

The MPG review led to the following brief for new primary GLAs.

The Brief: In summary, a new Primary facility would comprise 2 classrooms, each with a capacity for 25 students. Each classroom would have a wet area. It would have ample storage, 2 children's toilets per classroom, a disabled toilet and a small office for interviewing parents and children. Currently, on site storage of supplies is very limited. Equipment is stored off site. This requires transport for supplies

The covered outdoor space and outside play space would be large enough to cater for both classrooms, would have direct access to a large grassy area, as well as a variety of garden spaces.

Note: Due to funding limitations this brief has changed in 2019 to a single classroom with 4 toilets including 1 disabled and a total capacity of 25 students

6.1.2. Site Assessment

A site assessment was carried out to determine appropriate locations for a new Primary GLAs. The site assessment involved examining the most effective and efficient use of space and resources as well as practical considerations.

The review included:

1. Portability- as the school does not own the property, the ability to dismantle buildings with relatively low expense and practical ease and be able to transport them to a new site
2. Building areas that the landlord (Kazcare) would approve
3. Other factors such as fire and flood
4. Proximity to other Primary school facilities
5. Aesthetics and architectural sympathy with existing buildings

6.1.3. Options were proposed and evaluated

With both the Primary school brief and site assessment, options for selecting a site for the Primary learning spaces were examined. Two overall sites presented themselves as suitable for a new Primary GLAs:

1. The area between the existing Kindergarten space and the cricket oval; or
2. The Primary playground.

For each of these sites, two further options were considered:

1. Build 2 separate learning spaces; or
2. Build a twin classroom space

After consulting with the architect it was decided that the best option was to build a twin classroom in the Primary playground where the cubby and swings currently reside. The reasons:

1. There are efficiencies in building a single, combined building with adjoining classrooms as opposed to separate buildings such as: site preparation, services and materials.
2. It would take up less total ground area and allow for less encroachment on playground space.
3. One of the two areas earmarked for a single GLA is prone to flooding so we need to use the other area.
4. Close proximity to other Primary spaces makes it more functional and efficient when used.

Other considerations in design phase

I. Storage

More storage is needed. In planning the new GLAs, consideration has been given to providing storage areas both within the GLA, and under the building.

II. Additional Toilets

More toilet spaces are required generally in the school as well as specifically for this area. In planning the new Primary GLAs, consideration was given to providing 3 general use toilets and 1 disabled access toilet.

III. Disabled access to the Primary GLAs

In planning the new GLAs, consideration has been given to providing disabled access. Access to the GLAs, deck and disabled toilet is provided with wider doorways and from ground level, an access ramp and new crushed granite pathway.

7. Overview of provision of facilities

7.1. Development Proposals

Year	Building Description/Planning	Proposed Stage	Estimated Cost (excl GST)
2015-18	Completed Projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bus shelter ● Primary school building renovations, alterations and additions ● Primary playground landscaping ● Kindergarten renovation and playground landscaping 	Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● \$9,500 ● \$43,000 ● \$8,500 ● \$39,000 \$ 100,000 total
2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Primary GLAs design development. ● BGA grant funding application 	Pre-stage and project management	\$ 100,000
2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Construction 	1	\$ 350,000
2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● BGA grant funding application for Kindergarten development 	1a	\$ 100,000
2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Construction of Kindergarten 	2	\$ 1,250,000
2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Refurbishment of old Kindergarten room and relocate Year 1 into it. 	2a	\$ 20,000
2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Purchase land for high school development 	2b	\$ 3,000,000
2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● BGA grant funding application for High School development 	2c	\$ 100,000
2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Construction High School GLAs 	3	\$ 1,250,000



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8. Stage 2 - A New Kindergarten

Having built a new Primary GLA in 2019, ideally, the Kindergarten construction program would commence early 2020 for 2 new Kindergarten GLAs relocating later in the year.

9. Financial and Capacity Assessment

The spectre of the old Bowral Steiner school closure in 2007 due to financial difficulties looms large over this new and separate Steiner school entity, Aurora. Aurora school has never been in debt and does not intend to be until the end of its strategic plan cycle, 2019. It has operated with a healthy surplus until 2017, when there was a loss due to staffing growth and building and landscaping costs. Recommendations from the school's auditor in conjunction with the application of the 3 key principles outlined in the school's strategic and business plan (financial sustainability, professionalism and child focus) have informed financial planning. Exercising extreme caution, the MPG have made a decision that growth in school building infrastructure is almost entirely dependent on government funding. If this is not provided, the school will not be in the position to expand significantly beyond its current building profile in the foreseeable future.

It has been determined that the division of the project into 3 distinct construction stages was a prudent strategy from a capacity perspective. As a small school, it is critical that any given building development remain well within the capacity of the school's human resources.

It is important to note that all of the proposals contained in this master plan are contingent on BGA funding as well as approval by Wingecarribee Shire Council. If Stage 2 funding application is unsuccessful, there will be a need for a complete reassessment of school growth. For that reason, none of the proposals should be seen as inevitable. Aurora School has positive relations with the local shire council and is in communication with town planner as part of the process of infrastructure planning.

10. Funding

This document read in conjunction with the architectural drawings for the proposed Stage 2 of construction, provides the information required to seek grant funding from the AIS Block Grant Authority (BGA) to enable the school to expedite the development.

The school requires the vast majority of additional funds for Stages 1 and 2 even though the school's cash position is quite positive and healthy. We have prepared a strategic cash flow forecast for 2018-2021 and beyond. This demonstrates that the positive cash position held now is required to carry out the school's capital expenditure plans, including the Stage 1- Primary/Middle School GLA Development & Stage 2 - new Kindergarten GLAs, as well as all other capital expenditures planned.

Funds are required for additional minor capital projects that are not reviewed in this master plan, such as:

- Shade sail over the Kindergarten playground area
- Additional playground equipment
- New & upgraded ICT equipment (WIFI, Laptops, Projection equipment)

Therefore, with the Stage 1 project having an estimated cost of approximately \$350,000 we believe we are able to fund the project approximately \$100,000 from our funds for pre-stage costs and apply to the Block Grant Authority for the remainder.

11. Outcome

By the end of 2020, Aurora School would have achieved its goals of continuing enrolment growth at approximately 25% per year. Single stream classes up to Year 4 in 2021 may be realised with a composite Class 5/6 onsite and Class 7/8 and Class 9/10 moving offsite (or temporarily on-site). The following functional areas would be constructed or refurbished:

- 1 Primary/Middle School GLA
- 2 new Kindergarten GLAs
- Moving Year 1 to the current Kindergarten site

The school's major infrastructure requirements would then be satisfied and could then be in a position to expand to High School (Years 9 and 10) in 2021 (Stage 3).

If land becomes available to purchase, the school would be very interested in pursuing the possibility for that very likely expansion.

12. Longer Term Planning Issues

In preparation for this master plan, a great degree of consideration was given both to the longer term implications of the master plan presented in this document, as well as any pertinent external factors beyond the school's immediate control.

These issues are recorded here with the intention that they form a starting point for future planning.

12.1. Finance

Given that the school does not currently own property or buildings, it is more difficult to obtain a bank loan to purchase property for Stage 3 development. Planning for how we finance property purchase needs to start now.

12.2. Car Parking

Car Parking is a long-term issue at the school. While currently the car parking is adequate and will be for Stage 1 development, the school is mindful of finding ways to increase car parking and increase efficiency in transportation systems in the future so there is less congestion.

12.3. Expansion of the Education levels to Years 7 & 8

A Steiner curriculum normally extends to Year 8 to complete the primary education program as it represents the end of the 2nd developmental stage. We will be expanding to Years 7 and 8 in 2020 and the Stage 1 building will enable this to occur. Further expansion to high school is planned beyond that and investigated for its sustainability during our next strategic plan review in the second half of 2019.

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 3 main identified areas/values of the school that underpin current practice and will drive planning in the next 3 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.

Assumptions

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. That 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 (NESA) Years 5 and 6 registration March 2017

- BOSTES (NESA) 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 off site 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. Continue 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 for 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 2018 was **88.0%**

FORM	OVERALL	MALE	FEMALE
Kindergarten	86.7%	88.0%	85.0%
Class 01	87.5%	85.7%	89.2%
Class 02	90.4%	89.4%	92.4%
Class 03	88.5%	88.5%	88.5%
Class 04	85.9%	88.9%	82.8%
Class 05	88.0%	84.6%	93.7%
Class 06	89.0%	80.5%	93.1%

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 - Kindergarten to Year 6

Year	Start Year	Finish Year	Out during Year	In during year
2019	70	72	9	11

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 School 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, build resilience and 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 Education Standards Authority. 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 school policies

Current newsletter

An invitation to attend a school tour

Enrolment procedures for K - 6

Application for Enrolment

Enrolling Parents are required to complete the Aurora Southern Highlands Steiner School Application Form available on the website or from the school office.

Receipt of the Application Form, Application Fee and any other relevant documentation will be acknowledged by telephone, email or mail as appropriate. 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 in the form of 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.

Conditions of Enrolment Form and Acceptance Fee

The Conditions of Enrolment form, together with a non-refundable enrolment fee, 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 formal Offer of Place, parents will be required to read and accept the school's Policies and Procedures. After reading the policies parents will need to sign the Conditions of Enrolment Form to indicate that they have read and understood the school's policies.

Payment of fees and charges

The first term's fees 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 for the newly enrolled child will be added to their existing account and invoiced accordingly.

The full Enrolment Policy and current fee schedule can be found at <http://aurorasteiner.nsw.edu.au/forms/>

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 2019 including parent information evenings, education sessions, parent involvement in classes and much more.

The school welcomes and regularly offers the parent community opportunity to provide feedback. The most formal of these opportunities is via the annual satisfaction survey. Below are some of the responses received in the 2019 survey.

Responses to the question 'What did you value most about our school in 2019?'

- Forward thinking
- Purposeful at age they are
- Doing real life at school
- Connection with teacher, inspiration of teacher (high school)
- The joy of being a child

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

- Relationships
- Values of love and kindness
- Home and school working together, complementing each other
- Care about the individual child as a whole person- relate to Lisa as Lisa, not as a 'unit'

Responses to the question 'What was the highlight of the 2019 school year?'

- Comedy night
- Camps and festivals
- Greek Olympics in Canberra

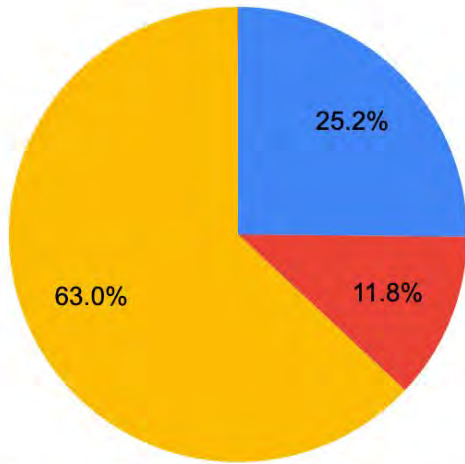
100% of respondents were 'Satisfied' or 'Extremely satisfied' with their overall satisfaction with school for their child in 2019.

100% of respondents were 'Satisfied' or 'Extremely satisfied' with the teaching staff and the quality of teaching.

95% of respondents were 'Satisfied' or 'Extremely satisfied', with the remaining 5% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, regarding the management and administration of the school.

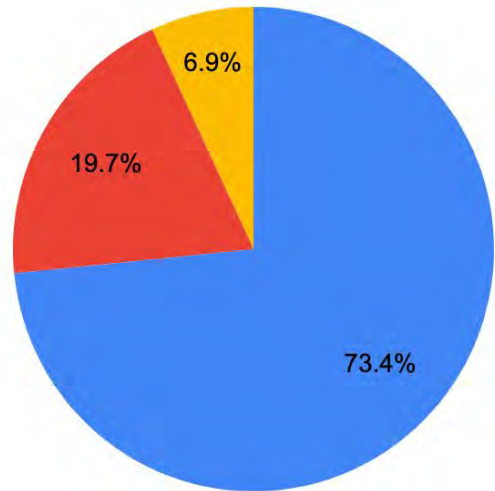
Financial Summary

Income



- Fees and private income
- Commonwealth recurrent funding
- State recurrent funding
- Other capital income

Expenditure



- Salaries and related expenses
- Non salary expenses
- Capital expenditure