

# DANDENONG RANGES STEINER SCHOOL

## Annual Report 2020

[www.drss.vic.edu.au](http://www.drss.vic.edu.au)

ABN 16 320 548 184



## DRSS Board of Governors 2020

Chris Key	Chairperson
Aaron Harvey	General Member – Business and Environmental Planning expertise
Emily Hehir	General Member - College Representative (resigned February)
Glenn Rawlinson	General Member - Steiner Education/Anthroposophy
Joanne Mason	General Member – Steiner education/Governance/Management expertise (resigned June)
John Penry	General Member – Accounting/Finance expertise (May to September)
Karin Penny	General Member - College Representative (resigned February)
Luisa Unda	General Member – Accounting/Finance expertise (resigned February)
Robert Glavas	General Member – Legal expertise
Suzie Brannelly	Deputy Chairperson/General Member – Property expertise
Wolfgang Maschek	General Member – Steiner Education/Anthroposophy
Cath Lanigan	Ex-officio Member (Secretary)
Carol Famer	Ex-officio Member (College representative)

## Chairperson's Report – 2020

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

*Rudolf Steiner*

### INTRODUCTION

2020. Do I need to say anything more? What a year, I'm sure no-one has heard that it was apparently "unprecedented"! I'm happy to report that despite the rocky year for the world, our school has continued to thrive. Early 2020 saw the Board of Governors meeting for just the second time, and over the year I feel we solidified into a cohesive Board, all bringing different views and skills to the table to the advantage of our school.

Despite the uncertain year, the new Board continued its part in guiding the school through the initial steps of our next phase of growth. We undertook a number of capital works projects over both campuses; these included new decking, outdoor blinds and bifold doors in the Prep space and finally getting the Class 3/4 veranda constructed, which makes the Class 3/4 building now complete after many years without a veranda!



After intense discussion throughout the year at both Board level and in the College of Teachers, a decision was reached that for the next stage of the growth of the school, we needed to have a school leader, whose title was decided upon as “Educational Facilitator”. The end of 2020 saw the Board advertise for this position. (With early 2021 seeing interviews and the best applicant we could have asked for hired. The Board welcomes Dana Jindra to our school!)

#### GENERAL BUSINESS

The Board of Governors at the close of 2020 consisted of Suzie Brannelly (deputy Chairperson), Aaron Harvey, Chris Key (Chairperson), Glenn Rawlinson, Wolfgang Maschek & Robert Glavas with Cath Lanigan in her role as Business Manager and Robyn Jacobs as minute taker.

After many years of taking the minutes for the Committee of Management and now the Board, late 2020 saw Hellen Andalis step away from that role for now. The Board thanks Hellen for the many years of support and detailed minute-taking, not to mention the delicious food she supplied for all our meetings!

#### FINANCIALS

The Committee continued to work within strict budgetary guidelines to ensure the ongoing viability of the school whilst also maintaining the integrity and excellence of our standard of education. We’re pleased to report that the school is in a very healthy financial position and continues to maintain current and attract new enrolments.

The circumstances of 2020 saw the Board authorise a 30% fee reduction for Terms 2 & 3 to ease any financial burden on our community, and many further bursaries were offered and gratefully received. The Victorian Government offered a free Kindergarten program which the Board decided to also offer

to our Kinder families. During the entire year, we're extremely pleased that we didn't lose a single enrolment to COVID or the remote learning situation.

#### PROCESSES AND COMPLIANCE

2020 saw the implementation of the CompliSpace system which ensures the school maintains its compliance with the relevant legislative bodies the school reports to. Mid 2020, discussions were being had regarding the schools long term masterplan, with the Board selecting Baxter & Jacobson as our preferred company to work with us on this. Discussions have continued and we look forward to having this completed in 2021.

#### IN CLOSING

Despite a tough year (I never would have imagined board meetings in my bedroom, thanks Zoom!) the school has emerged stronger than ever. I would like to thank everyone who has served on the Board in 2020. On behalf of the Board, I would like to pass on our thanks to the school community as a whole for their understanding and support over the past twelve months. I would like to single out special thanks to our wonderful Business Manager, Cath Lanigan, who with the Management Team has gently guided the school throughout the year.

I wrote this last year, but it still stands: without the people that make up our community, we wouldn't be the school we are, and I'm grateful to be a part of such a wonderful community.

*Chris Key, Chairperson, Board of Governors*

# College of Teachers 2020 Annual Report

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The year 2020 found the College of Teachers facing unprecedented circumstances with the Covid-19 lockdowns taking priority in College business matters. The focus of our work was on developing an online learning policy, an online curriculum and a practical approach to the implementation of the curriculum. College of Teachers pursued these endeavours in close collaboration with Cath Lanigan, Business Manager and the Management Team.



The College of Teachers continued its regular pedagogical work with Child Studies during Term 1 and 4 when we were able to be present with the children. Together with our colleagues in Steiner schools throughout Australia we continued the reflective process of considering the core principles of Steiner Education and their significance for DRSS. College was also engaged in the development of a new Philosophy Statement. We began the year with a Community meeting with SEA CEO Virginia Moller on the topic of Partnerships with Families and Trust.

Julia Wolfson, appointed by the Board of Governors, as our Strategic Planning consultant, worked with the newly appointed Strategic Planning Group which included three College representatives; Emily Hehir, Carol Farmer and Karin Penny as well as Wendy McMahon from the Administration Team and the Business Manager Cath Lanigan. Tamsenne, as newly appointed College Chair, also worked closely with Julia Wolfson and the Strategic Planning Group.

Discussions around the Strategic Planning group's Golden Arrow approach to remote learning took place along with endeavours to address the need for connection between teachers and students as well as the issues around teacher workload.

The need for a School Carer arose and Carol Farmer was appointed. Out of the Strategic Planning work the need for an Educational Facilitator became apparent. 2020 found College engaged in the

lengthy process of developing a role description and the school ultimately advertising for this position.

College continues to develop and support the Restorative Practices model brought to us in 2019 by former Steiner School Principal and education consultant, Jennifer West, to bring an understanding of Restorative Practice and its implementation as a whole school approach encouraging inclusiveness and behaviour that is supportive and respectful.

Two new members for the Management Team, Tamsenne Grogan and Dionne Brown, were elected by College early in the year. They joined current members Carol Farmer and Karin Penny along with Cath Lanigan. College representatives on the Management Team were able to provide teacher input in the mammoth task of running the school during Covid-19 lockdowns, alongside Cath Lanigan.

We have also been looking at College of Teachers Roles and Responsibilities and have made some changes to these to ensure that they are in line with current governance structures.

Stephen Campbell, under the direction of College, has begun working towards creating Assessment Outcomes and Assessment Rubrics based on the Australian Steiner Curriculum Framework documents. These will form the basis for a whole school approach to assessment and reporting. Teaching staff attended a presentation by Stephen, explaining how the new system will work at our November Curriculum Day.

Karin Penny and Susan Birch both attended a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) workshop and provided College members with a presentation of some of the material. We discussed ways in which we can create our own RAP and decided that we will make a start by inviting a guest speaker to our Staffing Day at the beginning of 2021.

College liaised with the Publicity and Fundraising group to find ways in which the school could be promoted, and the community supported during these unusual and unprecedented times. Zoom talks and a Spring Fair for the children only were held as part of a new approach to publicity along with the practice of virtual tours.

#### **Staffing:**

- Marianne Bollman completed the school journey with Class 6
- Advertising for an Educational Facilitator
- Advertising and interviewing for the positions of classroom aides and assistants as well as kindergarten aides took place
- Appointment of Marianne Bollman (Class 1 teacher 2021)
- Appointment of Carol Farmer to School Carer position for 2020
- Appointment of Susan Birch as Woodcraft Teacher



### **Roles and Responsibilities:**

- Newly elected College representatives on the Management Team, Tamsenne Grogan and Dionne Brown in February 2020
- Newly elected College Chair, Tamsenne Grogan in July 2020
- Learning Support Team continue to provide significant support to children, parents and teachers

### **Policy Work:**

- The introduction and implementation of CompliSpace to maintain policy compliance
- Continuation of Policy Review schedule including Remote Learning Policy

### **Professional Development:**

- Restorative Practice update and workshop
- Class teachers attended online week-long curriculum intensive training through the SEA and Glenaeon Steiner School prior to start of school
- College Study continued – Partnerships of Hope by Christopher Schaefer
- Fortnightly Child Study schedule from Kinder to Class 6 (Terms 1 and 4)
- All teachers attended in house OH&S training
- All teachers attended in-house Evacuation and Lockdown training

- CFA fire drill training
- First Aid, CPR and Anaphylaxis update and training put on hold due to Covid-19 restrictions (until Term 1 2021)

#### **Curriculum Management:**

- Continued development of a whole-school approach in Literacy and Numeracy.
- Continued professional development in regard to NCCD requirements
- Review of the VRQA requirements for school registration

#### **Planning and Assessment:**

- Continued assessment and reporting against National Steiner Curriculum and Eight Key Learning Areas
- Engagement of Stephen Campbell to develop a whole school Main Lesson Outline and Assessment program
- Collaboration between teaching staff and Learning Support Team to promote student wellbeing and provide records of students' learning, meetings and follow- up
- Creation and implementation of Remote Learning curriculum

#### **Outreach:**

- Education Week, Open Days, Taste of Steiner Curriculum Day and Market Day were not able to occur due to Covid-19 restrictions
- School tours continued in Term 1 and 4
- Orientation evening for parents beginning the school journey in Class 1
- Teacher involvement in a series of Parent Information evenings organised by the Publicity and Fundraising Group
- Ongoing weed management work in our bushland area
- Beginnings of the implementation of Reconciliation Action Plan Group
- Mentoring of student teachers on placement from Melbourne Rudolf Steiner Seminar in Term 4

Deepening our understanding of and commitment to the development of the core principles of Steiner education helps us to move forward in healthy collaboration and compassion with the whole school community.

*Karin Penny and Tamsenne Grogan*



## Publicity and Fundraising Report

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The Publicity and Fundraising Group is an active working group of the school with seven current members. The members are parents and staff of Dandenong Ranges Steiner School; Michaela Tory is the Chairperson and Uri Cohen is the Bookkeeper. The group's primary focus is to host events that showcase the school, bring the school community together, and bring in additional funds.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions and school closures, the scope of work for the 2020 school year was greatly impacted. The group shifted its focus to social media marketing, virtual information evenings, tours and events.

Unfortunately during 2020, the school was unable to hold any talks or workshops, Education Week activities, or our annual Spring Fair and Market Day. We did host three virtual tours – one in April, August and October (reaching 41 new families). We helped to advertise the Virtual Kinder Information Evening held in November, held a virtual Open Day (with 40 current DRSS families in attendance) and we did hold a Christmas Stall in December.

Fiona Rhodes and Karen Frazier Walsh completed the work on the school's new Publicity brochure.

*Karen Frazier Walsh*

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# Finance and Administration Report

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## 2020 Overview

2020 was an excellent operational year, with an overall surplus of \$706,377, including \$692,862 for the school. This was well above the budgeted surplus of \$164,681 and also well above the education industry benchmark of 10% of income (almost 20%). The larger than anticipated surplus was due to the unexpected bonus of Federal Government support during the Covid-19 pandemic, including becoming eligible for JobKeeper and the ATO Cashflow boost. Building on the surpluses of the past two years, this leaves the school in a healthy financial position to continue to deliver a high quality Steiner education and look at expanding our programs and facilities. School and Kindergarten income are separated and the Kindergarten returned a surplus of \$13,515. A huge thanks to our Finance Officer, Belinda Mackley, who does such an excellent job of maintaining accurate finance records.

## Income and expenditure

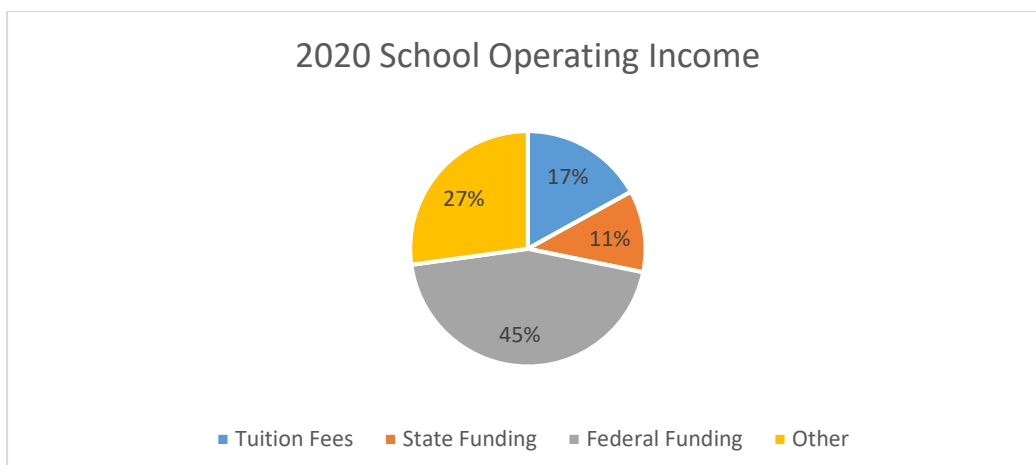
School income for the year was just over \$3 million an increase of approximately \$700,000. This was despite a significant reduction in fees received due to discounts and bursaries. The reduction in fees received was offset by government subsidies and greater government funding due to increased enrolments.

School expenditure was almost \$2.4 million, an increase of almost \$200,000 on 2019 with an increase in expenses for staffing largely due to JobKeeper top-up payments. Administration, property and services costs came in at \$628k, almost exactly the same as 2019.

Kindergarten income was up at \$221K as compared to \$188K in 2019. Tuition fees received were almost half what they were in 2019, as we took up the State Government offer of providing free kindergarten for our families which subsidised most, but not all of the fees. Income was higher overall due to the JobKeeper subsidy, as well as the State Government subsidy in lieu of collecting fees.

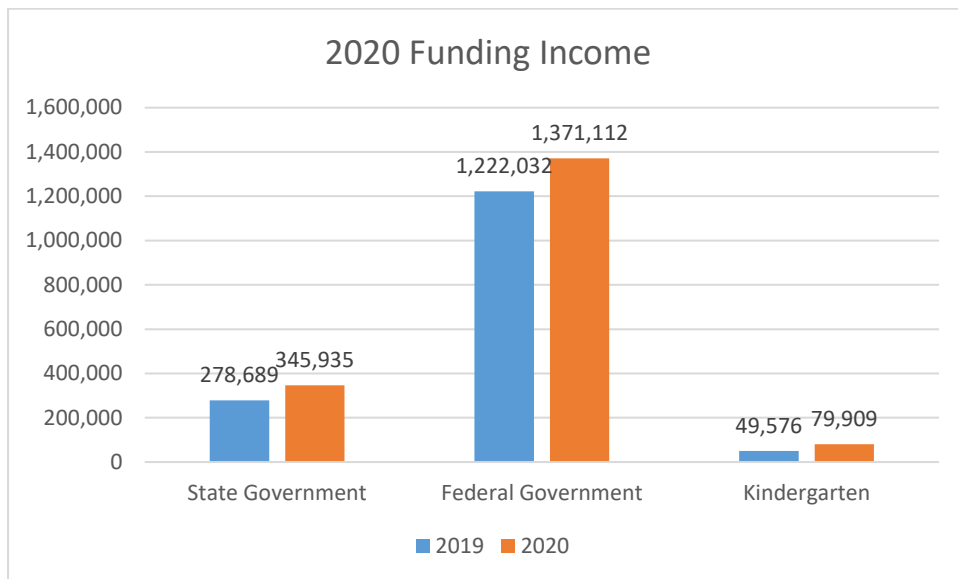
Kindergarten expenses were up largely due to the JobKeeper subsidy, and our early childhood maintenance officer completing a full year's service in the role after commencing in 2019.

## 2020 School Operating Income



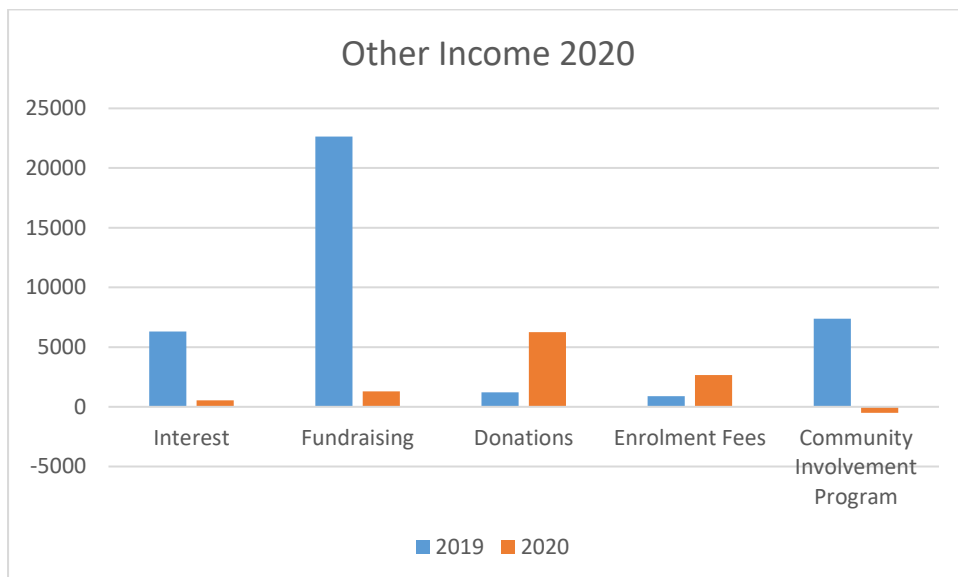
This is a very different graph to usual, with tuition fees 17% of income compared with 31% last year, and other income (including subsidies) 27% instead of 4%.

### 2020 Funding Income



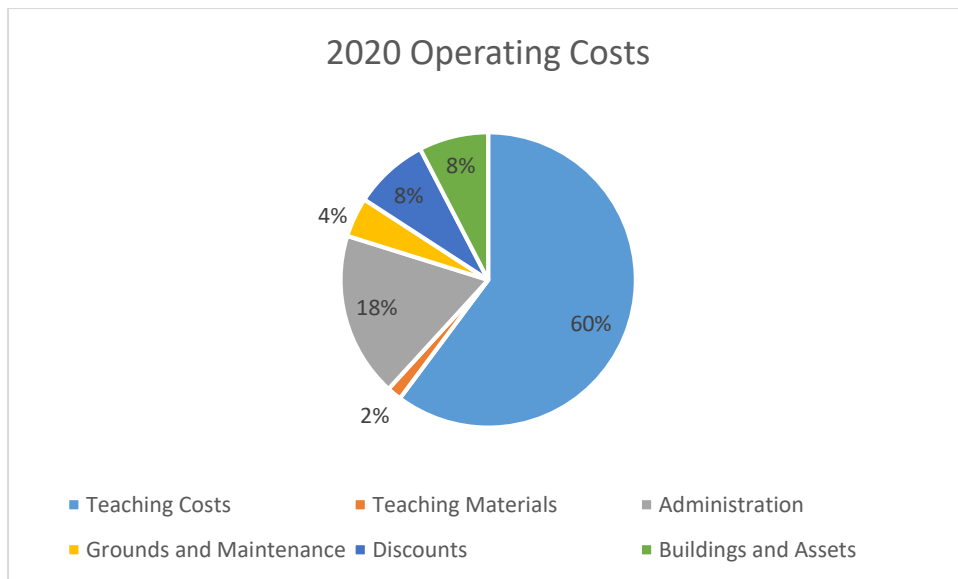
Kindergarten funding was dramatically higher due to State Government grants to offer free kindergarten. State and Federal Government funding were higher due to our increase in enrolments from 129 students to 134 in Prep to Class 6.

### Other Income 2020



Other income varied greatly with interest rates dropping dramatically, minimal opportunities for fundraising, donations increasing to our Building Fund, we increased our enrolment fees and we didn't charge CIP as there weren't opportunities for parents to volunteer.

## 2020 Operating Costs



### Teaching Costs – 60%

- Teachers who provide classroom instruction
- Learning Support staff who monitor academic and social development
- Classroom Assistants who support students learning and development
- Individual and group music tuition for music program
- Librarian who encourages reading and research

### Teaching Materials – 2 %

- Provision of quality classroom materials & food costs
- Craft materials
- Woodwork materials

### Administration - 18%

- School office staff who support the school's daily operations
- Office supplies, postage, photocopier costs
- IT support and communications costs
- School insurance, license fees and subscriptions
- External professional services and legal fees
- Bank charges and financing costs

### Grounds and maintenance 4%

- Maintaining school grounds including repairs and garden supplies
- School cleaning costs
- Costs of electricity, gas, water and council rates

### Buildings & Assets 8%

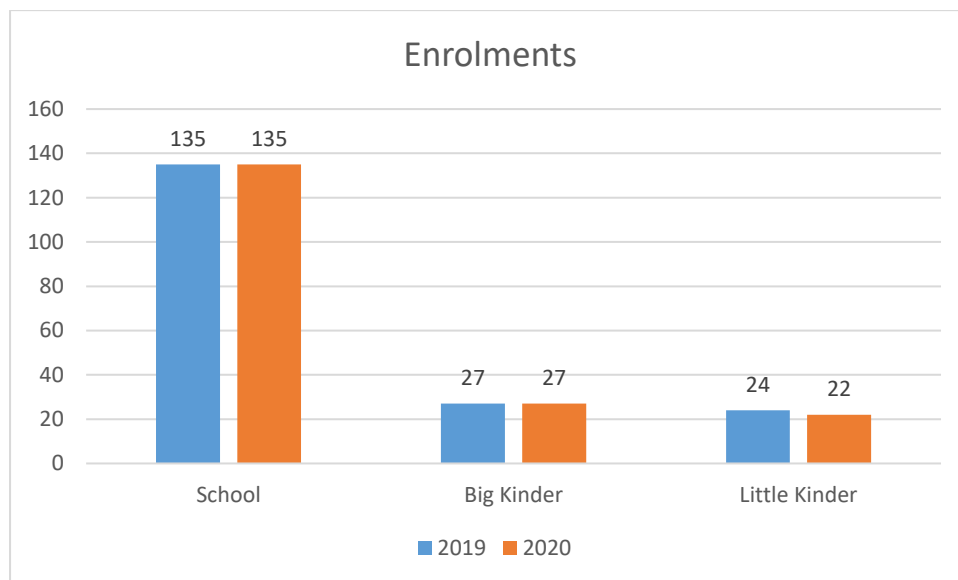
- Building and asset depreciation expense

### Discounts 8%

- Early payment, sibling discount, bursaries, Covid discount

### Enrolments

In 2020, DRSS had total enrolments of 135 students in Prep to Class 6, the same as 2019. Early Childhood enrolments were similar to 2019. Big Kinder had 27 children, Little Kinder had 24 children. Playgroup was unable to operate in Term 2 and 3 and half of Term 4 due to Covid-19 restrictions.



### Attendance

Student attendance in Semester One was 93%, which met government expectations of more than 90%. Attendance records showed that 70% of students attended more than 90% of the time. In Term 3, attendance increased to 96%, with 86% of students attending more than 90%. This was a contrast with the previous year in Term 3 where there was 88% attendance, with 55% of students attending more than 90% where the main absences were due to illness. It was one of the quirks of the Covid-19 year that there was less absence and higher attendance rates due to students doing remote learning. Teachers record attendance twice daily and the school follows up absences on a daily basis.

### NAPLAN

No students undertook NAPLAN tests in 2020 as it was cancelled Australia-wide due to the pandemic.

*Cath Lanigan*  
*Business Manager*

# Management Team Report

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The response to the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on the school was a major focus for the Management Team for much of the year. We made the sharp learning curve switch to remote learning from Term 2. There was a sweet two weeks back at school at the end of Term 2 before the hard lockdown in Term 3 ahead of things happily reverting to some sort of normal operations in Term 4.

Supporting student and staff wellbeing and working within the framework of the Covid-19



restrictions were key challenges. The Covid-19 restrictions were constantly changing as the situation evolved and this involved the school responding with remote learning, offering an on-site program for children who met government guidelines for being unable to study from home, timetabling staff to work at school and from home, staffing the office, finding meaningful work for classroom aides and assistants, increased cleaning, new policies on working from home, safe online learning, and communicating the regular changes to parents, staff and the Board. And then on site temperature checks, high hygiene standards, travel permits etc. The changes to the way we all worked and learned were very challenging, and required a lot of flexibility from everyone. It was such a joyous day when after the long lockdown the children were able to return to school. For much of the year Kindergarten was able to stay open which was lovely

for all. We were grateful throughout this period for the support we received from parents. For some it was a bonus having lots of family time and a greater insight into the Steiner curriculum but for most it was hard work, juggling work commitments and children's learning needs. The dedication of all staff to do the best they could in the circumstances was outstanding. And the regular information we received from our associate bodies, Independent Schools Victoria and Steiner Education Australia was a lifeline. Training and development was almost entirely via Zoom and we were glad that Steiner Education Australia offered so many opportunities to us.



In the midst of it all, we launched into the development of our 2021-25 Strategic Plan working with consultant Dr Julia Wolfson. The pandemic meant this became a research based model with a detailed survey and interviews being the raw material. There were rich findings from the 55 in-depth survey responses from parents, staff, Board members and alumni and 20 interviews with staff, external stakeholders, and school founders. Staff further refined the plan at two staff days before it was finalised by the Board in December.

In 2020, the Management Team was made up of College representatives Tamsenne Grogan, Carol Farmer and Dionne Brown, with Business Manager, Cath Lanigan. Early Childhood Leader, Karin Penny joined in the latter part of the year.

At the start of 2021, we asked parents to reflect on the 2020 year in our annual parent survey. Parents were asked for their responses to key statements and what worked well at the school and what could be improved. The table below shows the comparison of the statements with 2018 and 2019.

	<b>2018 % agree or strongl y agree</b>	<b>2019 % agree or strongl y agree</b>	<b>2020 % agree or strongl y agree</b>
<b>School Survey responses</b>			
I am satisfied with my choice	93	94	94
The quality of classroom and resources is high	88	92	98
Teachers know how my child has progressed	85	92	89
The school is committed to Steiner philosophy	91	90	100
The quality of teachers is strong	81	86	91
My expectations as a parent are fulfilled	84	73	94
The school provides regular feedback about my child	78	70	64
Staff respond effectively when issues are raised	62	70	84
Students behave respectfully towards one another and teachers	85	67	75
There is appropriate learning support for students	56	67	78
The community is supportive and unified	76	59	86
The school is well run by management	62	59	87

We were pleased to see the increase in satisfaction in most areas from parents. The areas where there was less than 80% satisfaction or satisfaction levels were lower are areas for focus in 2021.

The role of the Management Team and Carol as School Carer meant were able to respond more effectively in 2020 to parents concerns and issues that arose.

Our Staff in 2020 were:

## Teachers

Class 6 Teacher	Marianne Bollmann
Class 5 Teacher	Dionne Brown
Class 4 Teacher	Martina Kuhse
Class 3 Teacher	Mara Lupieri
Class 2 Teacher	Tamsenne Grogan
Class 1 Teacher	Emily Hehir
Prep Teacher	Ellise Peart
Big Kinder Teacher	Karin Penny
Little Kinder Teacher	Rebecca Rassavong
Playgroup Leaders	Kelly Madden and Kim Roche

## Specialist teachers/instructors

Craft Teacher	Maree Cross
Eurythmy Teacher	Sumie Nagura
Extra Lesson Teacher	Lisa Levick
German Teacher	Cornelia Klinger
Music Instructor (Cello)	Ida Koenders
Learning Support Teacher	Carol Farmer
Music Instructor (Violin/Viola)	Hiro Mukai
Music Instructor (Violin/Viola) and Orchestra	Judy Hamilton
Prep Craft and Woodcraft Teacher	Susan Birch

## Assistants and Aides

Class 5	Hellen Andalis
Class 4	Casey Meyen
Class 3	Alex Albanis
Class 2	Michaela Tory
Class 1	Laura Magill
Prep	Paula Ewington, Amanda Doubleday, Narelle Key
Kindergarten	Katy Baker, Wendy Baiguerra
Eurythmy Piano Accompanist	Paul Watt

## Administration and Support Services

Administration Officer	Wendy McMahon
Business Manager	Cath Lanigan
Cleaner (Primary School)	David Rixon
Cleaner (Kindergarten)	Nala Rassavong
Enrolments Officer	Karen Frazier-Walsh
Finance Officer	Belinda Mackley
Librarian	Hellen Andalis
Maintenance Officer (Primary Campus)	Alex McHutchion
Maintenance Officer (Early Childhood Campus)	Norm Matthews

Publicity Officer	Vaishnavi Nanjappan
School Assistant	Robyn Jacobs

#### Other Staff

We employed many relief staff during the year. Stephen Campbell and Gillian Ray in particular worked for a large part of the year supervising remote learning at school. Gillian Ray also provided painting therapy sessions when school was on campus. Stephen Campbell and Vaishnavi Nanjappan played a valuable role providing IT support to teachers and parents during remote learning.

This verse from Rudolf Steiner sustained us through the year and helped us stay on track with what was needed in the moment.

*We must eradicate from the soul  
 All fear and terror of what comes towards us out of the future.  
 We must acquire serenity  
 In all feelings and sensations about the future.  
 We must look forward with absolute equanimity  
 To everything that may come.  
 And we must think only that whatever comes  
 Is given to us by a world-directive full of wisdom.  
 It is part of what we must learn in this age,  
 namely, to live out of pure trust,  
 Without any security in existence.  
 Trust in the ever present help  
 Of the spiritual world.  
 Truly, nothing else will do  
 If our courage is not to fail us.  
 Let us discipline our will  
 And let us seek the awakening from within ourselves  
 Every morning and every evening.*

*-Cath Lanigan, Carol Farmer, Dionne Brown, Karin Penny and Tamsenne Grogan*

