



**LINUWEL SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT - 2021**





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This annual school report has been compiled to meet the reporting requirements of the Commonwealth & NSW State Governments and address those aspects of the school's operation relevant to these requirements.

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We would like to begin our Annual Report 2021 by acknowledging and paying respects to the Wonnarua people, the Traditional Custodians of the land on which Linuwel School gratefully lives and grows. We acknowledge that the entire nation of Australia has been cared for by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for tens of thousands of years. May the cultural, spiritual, and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples continue and may Linuwel School promote and facilitate amongst its community members respectful, trusting, and positive relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

## Our Vision

Our vision is a school that provides a contemporary, relevant education that empowers students to meet their destiny with certainty through a sense of connection to place and community, self-knowledge, courage, compassion, and creativity. The aim of the educational experience at Linuwel School is to develop empathetic individuals who can contribute with purpose and direction to the renewal of the world for the betterment of all.

*“Our highest endeavour is to develop young men and women who out of themselves are able to impart meaning and direction to their own lives.”*

**Marie Steiner**

## Linuwel School Mission

Our mission is to provide an educational pathway inspired by Rudolf Steiner’s indications that inspires an inherent love of learning and personal striving along with the capacity for imagination. The school promotes and protects a feeling for goodness and for beauty in childhood and feeling for truth together with the capacity for critical thinking in the high school years to provide a healthy foundation for the unfolding of individual potential. In its valuing of community and relationships, the school encourages gratitude, resilience, responsibility, compassion, and creative thinking in our students.

## Linuwel School Values



The Values of Linuwel School encompass the following:

- *Anthroposophy.* We endeavour to work with the principles of anthroposophy making them tangible within the school. Anthroposophy is the wellspring from which Steiner education finds its meaning.
- *Collaboration.* We work in the spirit of collaboration with the various bodies of the school. We value an approach that fosters collaboration over competition as the basis for both individual achievement and community harmony; we strive to make every classroom a learning community. We operate out of consensus, in the appropriate school forums.
- *Inclusive Community.* We acknowledge the inherent worth and dignity of all students to build and sustain a sense of belonging; we value and respect the beliefs, backgrounds, and ways of living of all community members. We support the development of community amongst students, parents, teachers, and all those involved with the school. We endeavour to integrate with and be active members of our local community.
- *Evidence based best practice.* We work out of current best practice for schooling in accordance with the indications given by Rudolf Steiner and with due consideration to and engagement with current educational research.
- *Fairness and Due Process.* In social, interpersonal, and professional interactions, we operate out of fairness, natural justice, the use of due process, and Restorative Practices.
- *Professionalism.* We comply at all times with a professional code of conduct and the Australian National Teacher Standards for teachers.
- *Respect.* We honour and respect the Traditional Custodians of the land, the Wonnarua people, and the rights of pupils, parents, employees, and all stakeholders of the school. We respect and value the uniqueness of each individual student, recognising that each is on a path of biographical development unfolding their sacred essence of Self

## 1. Message from the School Board of Directors

2021 has again been a year in which the school has needed to make even greater changes than 2020 with continuing and new developments in the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic landscape, whilst endeavouring to still bring a steady and nurturing Steiner education to our students. The School Board has worked hard to support the school and community through this tumultuous time, and to provide as much continuity of vision and purpose as possible.

The largest impacts across the school in 2021 were again due to the Covid-19 pandemic, with a second sudden pivot to schooling at home, for another prolonged period of time. Staff moved quickly to readopt structures put in place from last year's "Linuwel school at home" model. Educational packages, support and online learning platforms appropriate for the different stages of students and their families across the school from preschool to year 12 were again enacted, with many of these supports continuing in a hybrid model throughout the year for students unable to come to school due to illness or isolation requirements. The Board again acknowledges the huge efforts staff, students, parents, and the wider community have made to adapt to the changing and challenging conditions.

The school also saw huge changes and losses in staffing largely as a result of the Public Health Order around the Covid-19 vaccination status of staff. In the interim the School Board moved to endeavour to support affected staff with alternative work and/or leave options if possible, but the ongoing and restrictive nature of the PHO meant this was untenable for many past a certain point. On top of this impact to staffing, were the natural fluctuations usually seen in the course of a year due to change in circumstance, retirement, etc. In total 30% of staff positions were vacated/replaced in the 2021 school year.

The Board would like to express its deepest gratitude for all staff who have moved on from the school during the year, especially those who have given so many years of service and experience, you will always be a welcome and treasured part of the School's community and history. In particular the Board recognises the long-standing work of Michael Turner, Gudrun Ludescher, Diana Scott, Valissa Stewart, Jo Clarke, Vicki Coulthard, Gerrard O'Leary and especially of Grieg Scott teacher, past Principal and Business Manager of Linuwel and Tracey O'Leary, experienced teacher and Principal of Linuwel through these most difficult and trying past few years. These staff have worked hard to ensure that the Linuwel they leave behind is in a strong position to weather the storms of recent change and to grow and flourish with the shared vision that unites us all.

With the resignation of Tracey O'Leary in Term 4, The Board appointed Jane Greenslade as the Acting Principal, whilst it carried out an extensive interview process with several promising candidates for the position of Principal. The Board was unanimous in appointing Jane Greenslade as the new Principal at the end of 2021, and in recommending Meg Lomm, another high calibre candidate, for the position of Deputy.

Day to day staffing shortages due to illness and isolation restrictions have been an ongoing concern in 2021, staff covering extra classes and unfamiliar duties, and rolling student absences due to illness and timing restrictions in returning to school have caused many extra

pressures in the school environment. The Board acknowledges the amazing hard work of all staff working at the school to keep things running as smoothly as possible for the students.

Whilst somewhat impacted by Covid-19 restrictions many Board-supported Initiatives have been able to continue.

The Board is delighted that the out of school care OOSH has been able to start and continue with successful uptake from many families for the service.

The ongoing implementation of the Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan Phase 2, a NSW state initiative managed by AISNSW and introduced into the school in 2017, has again been extended due to disruptions during the year, and will continue to enable the quality of literacy and numeracy teaching and learning to be refined and improved.

The School has continued to provide funding for student wellbeing and learning support with both initiatives proving invaluable to the community. We will again be participating in the Compass whole school wellbeing initiative run with AISNSW and are continuing to work towards being a school with a whole school Restorative Practice framework.

An EAP “employee assistance provider” service has also been arranged by the School to provide staff with access to an external confidential counselling service, providing a variety of short-term, solution focussed techniques to assist in resolving problems or creating a solid foundation for referral to longer term support. Staff can access this service for free with the school invoiced per an anonymous number referral system.

Linuwel’s Reconciliation Action Plan continues to help develop an increased level of awareness and embedded Indigenous culture across the school. A key initiative in this area for 2021 included starting the process of creating a School possum skin cloak, led by Kerri Clarke, to tell the story of the school and to be used in ceremony, celebrations and significant events throughout the school year.

Planning of building works for new classrooms have been further delayed due to circumstances beyond the control of the School, and it is hoped the project will still be able to continue in 2022 once adjustments in the process have been through council, and new contractors can be arranged.

Financially some fee relief was again extended, and fee reductions such as removing some camp and activity fees were passed onto parents. Overall School finances have remained reasonably stable, despite the uncertainty the year has brought, and enrolments increased.

School registration remains current due for renewal in 2025, some senior school course registration requirements have been made by NESA and will need to change for the 2022-23 cohort planning is in place.

Events such as the annual spring fair could not go ahead for the second year in a row, but adapted versions of some festivals were again brought to students to enhance rhythm of the school year and sense of community. Traditional dances, autumn school games around the pond, candle dipping and winter spiral, were all held despite social distancing requirements

and the need to separate between ages and stages. School camps were minimised and run where possible in a reduced and Covid-safe format, whole school Nyiirunang (assemblies) were reduced or held outdoors when possible.

Year 12 students in 2021 successfully completed their programs and major works despite huge obstacles and changes in their learning from periods of non-face-to-face learning online, to restrictions in what they could pursue in a Covid-safe environment, presenting their final works to a wide audience through zoom presentations, with projects that were as diverse as they were impressive. They have navigated the changing process of entry into tertiary studies with resilience and success.

Diana Thorvaldson  
Chair School Board

## 2. Contextual information about the school and characteristics of the student body

Linuwel School Ltd was established in 1979 and offers Steiner education to children from Preschool to Year 12. It is a co-educational, nondenominational school located in East Maitland in the lower Hunter Valley of NSW. The school is single stream and is set in beautiful grounds with classrooms surrounding a wetlands area. The Steiner School movement is one of the largest nondenominational school movements in the world with over 2000 schools in over 60 countries and it offers a holistic approach to education.

We believe that teaching with an artistic approach through thinking, feeling and willing will enable each individual to develop their full potential and enable them to go out into the world with confidence and self-motivation as well-rounded individuals. Linuwel School is an active member of our peak professional body, Steiner Education Australia (SEA) and the Association of Independent Schools NSW (AISNSW). The curriculum fulfils all the requirements of NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and offers our students the scope and sequence to develop skills and understanding in all the key learning areas in a deep and enduring way.

Linuwel School has seen many Alumni develop the initiative and the moral strength to face the challenges of our times and the future with a positive outlook, and approach their adult life with constructive insight, balanced thought, and a striving to take care of their environment.

Further information about the school and characteristics of the student body can be accessed from the [MySchool website](#).

## 3. Student outcomes in standardised national literacy and numeracy testing

Student performance on NAPLAN is available on the [MySchool website](#).

## 4. Senior secondary outcomes

Students are not assessed for the NSW RoSA, nor for the HSC and so it is not applicable to report RoSA or HSC results.

No students were enrolled in VET certificate courses.

## 5. Teacher professional learning, accreditation and qualifications

### 5.1 Teacher Professional Learning

In 2021 the focus for teacher appraisal continued to be regular observation and feedback in relation to implementation of the LNAP program. Regular peer observation and feedback provided valuable opportunities for professional growth.

All staff participated in a range of professional learning activities during the year. These included in-school sharing and collaboration on various aspects of teaching, learning, assessment, and wellbeing, as well as participating in a variety of externally provided courses, conferences, and seminars:

- The January teacher training lectures and seminars, hosted virtually by Glenaeon Rudolf Steiner School.
- Linuwel School teachers and leader's preparation week in the last week of January: a four-day program with the aim of supporting a deepening understanding of Steiner pedagogy, as well as professional best practice.
- Weekly staff meetings at school encompassing professional development as well as business matters. There was much collaboration and up-skilling to provide resources for learning at home, including using a variety of IT platforms effectively.

Other areas of professional development undertaken by staff across the school included:

- Child protection
- Identifying and responding to children at risk
- Professional boundaries and expectations
- Adjusting teaching during COVID-19
- Consolidating and extending teaching during COVID-19
- Explicit direct instruction in numeracy and literacy
- Instructional leadership
- Governance, leadership and management for the executive, including a year-long leadership program for the primary co-ordinator
- Governance training for the Directors
- Student and staff wellbeing
- Restorative practices
- Social and emotional learning
- Critical participatory action research PD for the group of teachers taking part in a small research project.
- AISNSW briefings for managers
- Deepening Steiner education principles
- Curriculum familiarisation and development
- Learning support, adjustments and differentiation

Weekly staff meetings provide opportunities for those who have attended PD to present their learning, hence all teachers can benefit and develop their professional knowledge and skills.

## 5.2 Teacher Accreditation

Level of accreditation	Number of teachers
<b>Conditional</b>	6
<b>Provisional</b>	3
<b>Proficient</b>	20

## 5.3 Teacher Qualifications

All our teaching staff are fully qualified.

## 6. Workforce Composition

School Staff 2021	
<b>Teaching staff</b>	29
<b>Full-time equivalent teaching staff</b>	22.9
<b>Non-teaching staff</b>	18
<b>Full-time equivalent non-teaching staff</b>	10.5

Two non-teaching staff members identified as Aboriginal.

## 7. Student attendance, and retention rates and post-school destinations in secondary schools

School attendance data can be found on the [MySchool website](#). Year group attendance rates were as follows:

Year Level	Attendance Rate %
Kindergarten	89
Year 1	90
Year 2	90
Year 3	90
Year 4	89
Year 5	92
Year 6	91
Year 7	92
Year 8	87
Year 9	84
Year 10	90
Year 11	91
Year 12	83
<b>Whole of school</b>	<b>88</b>

*Note that attendance rates were down in 2021 due to the impact of Covid-19 which required students to remain at home if they exhibited **any** symptoms of Covid-19.*

All cases of non-attendance are followed up for a reason of absence. Absences are monitored and discussed with parents if a concern arises. Policies and procedures have been implemented around approving applications for leave and exemption from attendance.

Mandatory reporting procedures may apply where there are high levels of absenteeism.

36% of the 2019 Year 10 cohort completed Year 12 at Linuwel in 2021. This low rate of completion is a reflection of the newness of the senior school program which leads many students to choose an alternative school for years 11 and 12. Of those completing Year 12, two have commenced university studies with two more taking a gap year prior to further studies – the remainder have not informed the school of their current status.

## 8. Enrolment Policy

Up to 28 students can be enrolled in each class.

Parents/carers are encouraged to visit the school website and read the Information for Parents/Carers page before applying to enrol their child.

Enrolment involves an interview process. To arrange for an interview, please contact the school office. If there is a waiting list for the class, you can request for your child's name to be added to the list and you will be contacted when a vacancy arises.

If there is a vacancy, the relevant class teacher will contact you to arrange a meeting with you and your child. At this meeting you and your child can view the school environs and classrooms and be introduced to the operation of Linuwel School and basic principles of Steiner education. In turn the class teacher/co-ordinator learns about the child and is informed of any factors which may have a bearing on your child's school life. If the school is willing to accept your child, you will be given an enrolment form to complete.

When considering an enrolment application, the Class Teacher may take into account:

- the date of application;
- the enrolment of siblings at Linuwel;
- the parents/carers' demonstrated commitment to Rudolf Steiner education;
- the size and dynamics of the class.

Acceptance of additional students into classes K-12 occurs following consultation with the relevant realm co-ordinator and the class teacher.

A diversity of backgrounds is welcomed within the school.

On receipt of the signed enrolment form and non-refundable enrolment fee your child's place is secured. A refundable (subject to conditions) bond and the first term's fees must be paid before the child starts at the school.

For students entering in Years 7-12, enrolment is probationary for six months, i.e. during or at the end of that time enrolment can be cancelled if the student is not integrating successfully into the class and school.

The class teacher will contact you if there are any further details or arrangements to be discussed.

Continuing enrolment is dependent on students abiding by the school's requirements regarding behaviour, satisfactory attendance, compliance with dress codes, and parents abiding by the school requirements agreed at enrolment, including payment of fees, contained in the [Information for Parents/Carers](#) page of the school website.

Characteristics of the school body can be accessed on the [MySchool website](#).

## 9. Other School Policies

The full text of school policies can be obtained by contacting the school.

### 9.1 Student welfare.

The school aims to provide an environment where learning & personal development can most effectively take place, and which is safe, supportive and pleasant for students and staff.

Protecting students from possible abuse and harm is a high priority for all staff. Staff are responsible for being alert to possible cases and responding appropriately in accordance with the relevant child protection legislation.

Staff are aware of their duty of care obligations to keep students safe, and for ensuring students are adequately supervised at all times. Detailed guidelines are provided for assessing and managing risks when the students undertake activities off the school site. WHS policies and procedures are regularly reviewed.

Students' well-being is centred around the provision of a safe and supportive environment in which the student has the one class teacher through the primary years and another for Years 7-10. Close co-operation and communication between parents and teachers is encouraged at all times. Being a small school enables close monitoring of the whole school environment and early awareness of potential issues affecting student welfare. Guidelines for the use of social media and other forms of e-communication promote respectful and appropriate use of IT.

Updates to policy:

- A new suite of **positive behaviour support procedures** were produced to reflect the use of restorative practice in the school.

The full text of policies is contained in the school's "Information for Parents" document, the "Child Protection Policy" and the "Education Staff Guidelines", which can be obtained from the school.

### 9.2 Anti-Bullying

All members of the school community have the right to a learning and work environment free from intimidation, humiliation and hurt. We all share a responsibility to foster, promote and restore right relationships. Bullying is unacceptable and we [students, staff, and parents] all share a responsibility for preventing it.

Staff members are to be vigilant in monitoring student behaviour for unsafe behaviour and especially for indications of bullying. Incidences of bullying or suspected bullying are to be treated as a serious incident, carefully investigated and appropriate action taken. The perpetrator(s) are to be made aware that it is a zero-tolerance activity within the school and will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence. This policy includes a guide to rights and responsibilities, and the 'Anti-bullying Statement and Guidelines' including 'anti-harassment', has been updated. Policies around the use of social media have been strengthened to protect

students from cyber-bullying.

The PDHPE program across the school contains lessons which address the issue of bullying.

There have been no changes to the policies this year.

### 9.3 Student discipline

School discipline stems from the long-term relationship which develops between the student and their class teacher, based on the teacher's understanding of child development and deep concern for each individual. Student co-operation is sought through making expectations clear and being consistent in ensuring those expectations are met. Where co-operation is not being obtained, teachers liaise with parents to overcome the problem. Corporal punishment is not permitted at the school, nor sanctioned in any circumstances. The policy has been expanded to clarify circumstances under which a student may be excluded from school. The policy is based on the principles of procedural fairness and parents are always included in any disciplinary process. The full policy is contained in the school's "Information for Parents" document, which can be obtained from the School's website: <http://www.linuwel.nsw.edu.au/information-for-parents-carers/>

There have been no changes to the policies this year.

### 9.4 Complaints and grievances.

Any concerns, complaints or grievances, which a parent has, are raised with the child's class teacher. If a parent feels that there are issues which are not being resolved or which they cannot raise with the class teacher they are welcome to approach the principal or another senior member of staff who will mediate between the parent (s) and teacher to resolve the issue. The full text of policies is contained in the school's "Information for Parents" document, which can be obtained from the School's website: <http://www.linuwel.nsw.edu.au/information-for-parents-carers/>

## 10. School-determined priority areas for improvement

Area	Priorities	Achievements
<b>Staff and Student Wellbeing</b>	<i>AISNSW Compass Program</i>	Continued implementation of the AIS Compass wellbeing program which will provide the school with support to identify and implement evidence-based, whole-school, proactive wellbeing approaches that foster safe, supportive and respectful environments so that wellbeing outcomes are enhanced for your students now and in the future
	<i>School Counsellor</i>	Employment of a school counsellor to augment the wellbeing team
	<i>Restorative Practice</i>	External PD in restorative practices for leadership
	<i>EAP</i>	Implementation of employee assistance program pilot, with view to extension beyond March 2022
<b>Facilities and Resources</b>	<i>Day trips for all classes</i>	Purchase of a larger school bus (24 students plus teacher driver) for day trips
	<i>Edumate</i>	Rollout of Edumate parent portal and "Spaces"
		Rollout of SMS via Edumate
<b>Literacy and Numeracy</b>	<i>NSW Government Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan</i>	Continued implementation of the Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan including PD for new teachers and learning support staff
<b>Reconciliation</b>	<i>Reconciliation Action Plan</i>	Reviewing and updating the school's Reconciliation Action plan
		Cultural engagement for all classes in the school
<b>Staff Development</b>	<i>Steiner Philosophy</i>	Deepening an understanding of Steiner philosophy and pedagogy for all teaching staff
	<i>Leadership/Succession planning</i>	Leadership training for executive staff, particularly the primary school co-ordinator

## 11. Initiatives promoting respect and responsibility

All students are made aware of and are expected to abide by the Student Code of Conduct. This clearly outlines their rights, and reciprocal responsibilities, including the respect due to property, staff, fellow students, and people and property generally. Staff lead by example and are vigilant in taking constructive, restorative action when necessary. They also nurture an appreciation for the school environment and interaction with, and acceptance among, the entire student population through a range of whole-school and cross-class activities. Having a small school where the students and staff all know each other is advantageous in achieving this.

The school has a correspondingly low level of vandalism and formation of exclusive cliques. School visits to a wide range of community facilities and venues from a young age set a high standard for behaviour towards other people and property.

Guidelines are provided to promote respect and responsibility in the use of IT and social networking sites by students.

Circle solutions is implemented throughout the school to address issues not incidents, solutions rather than problems, and strengths rather than deficits, providing a framework for student engagement and learning. Student engagement with circle solutions promotes positive thoughts, feelings, and approaches.

A group amongst the teachers called “Honouring the Earth” was formed with a focus on providing social and environmental renewal.

## 12. Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction

### 12.1 Parents

The school continues to enjoy frequent and open communication with parents and the teachers make themselves readily available to discuss student progress and well-being. The vast majority of feedback is positive, with parents appreciative of the school environment and the inspiration the teachers provide to the students. Where there have been parent concerns and suggestions, the school has addressed these, including the parents in the process as appropriate. Follow-up contact with parents continues until (as far as possible) the school has confirmed that matters have been dealt with to their satisfaction. In most cases parents have indicated their appreciation of the process and outcome.

New enrolments are largely a result of word of mouth recommendations, indicating a high level of support for the School within the parent body. Parents of leaving students are surveyed for reasons for leaving and the responses indicate that it is rarely due to dissatisfaction with the school.

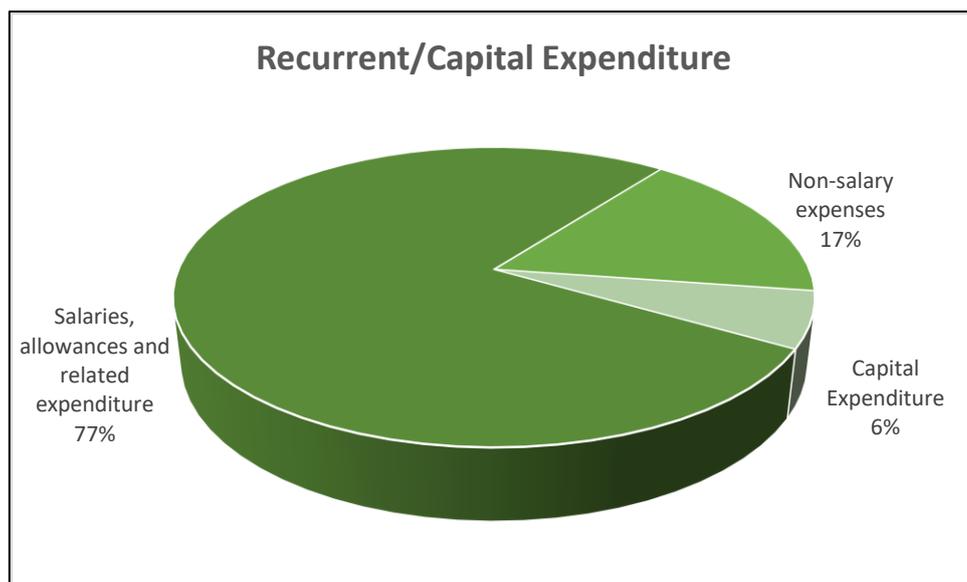
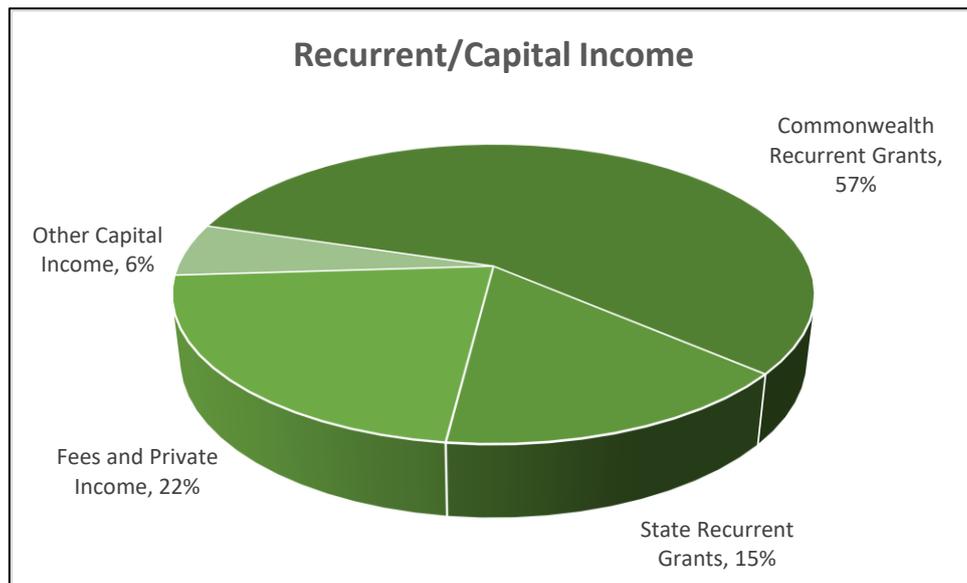
### 12.2 Students

Teachers work to maintain the students' trust and respond to their needs, resulting in a co-operative and productive learning environment, where feedback is welcomed. Low levels of anti-social behaviour and high levels of engagement in school activities are indicative of student satisfaction. Students entering from other schools regularly articulate appreciation for the welcoming and accepting environment and enjoyable learning activities.

### 12.3 Staff

There were significant changes to staffing in October 2021 due to the NSW Government mandate for school staff COVID-19 vaccination. A large number of new staff joined the school in 2021 on a casual or temporary basis. The school has a good record of class teachers staying with their class for the full primary or high school commitment. A safe and pleasant physical environment; a positive, supportive and collaborative professional environment where issues can be raised and addressed; access to a wide range of PD opportunities; and good relations with students, all contribute to a high level of staff satisfaction.

### 13. Summary financial information for the 2021 school year



With gratitude to all who contribute to the health of our School.