

# Newcastle Waldorf School Annual Report 2019

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Available online at [www.newcastlewaldorfschool.nsw.edu.au](http://www.newcastlewaldorfschool.nsw.edu.au) or by contacting the School administration

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## Messages from key school bodies

### Message from the School Board

During 2019, the Newcastle Waldorf School Board continued implementation of a long-term strategy to ensure the school continues to work strongly and sustainably into the future. As part of this strategy, the Board approved commencement of construction of a new building, which was all but completed by the end of 2019 and was usable for term 1 2020. The School continues to maintain a sound financial position, despite rising costs, and continued to improve its capability with regards to long-term financial planning and modelling.

The board continued to investigate the viability and need for a preschool associated with the school. This will continue into 2020.

The Board acknowledges the contributions of the many parents who supported the School through a range of activities throughout the year. These efforts help create the wonderful atmosphere of the School that is enjoyed by everyone. The Board will continue to work with the parent body to facilitate their involvement in line with the long-term strategic direction of the School.

### Message from the Co-Principals

The Co-Principals would like to thank the College of Teachers for their interest and hard work over the year as we continue to navigate the rapidly changing educational environment. We would also like to thank the aides, volunteers and all of the parents who work tirelessly to support the school and their children in so many ways.

The Co-Principals would also like to acknowledge the Awabakaleen and Awabakal People, the traditional custodians of the land and pay respects to their Elders, past, present and future.

## The School Context

The Newcastle Waldorf School values a culture that allows children to fulfil their physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual potential in a way that will enhance them individually and as members of the community and society in which they choose to live as adults. The teachers of the School focus on this pursuit by nurturing the children according to the indications of Rudolf Steiner, so that all aspects of their development proceed in accordance with what is beautiful, good and true. The features of the School which aid in this pursuit are its beautiful grounds and buildings, which have been conceived, designed and in many cases actualised by the efforts of teachers, parents and former students of the School. The School's curriculum allows students to achieve a well-balanced and cultural education. For all students, this includes experience in the fields of music, visual and dramatic arts, handwork, design, gardening and cooking, as well as rigorous academic exercise. This wide curriculum allows for a range of future career choices.

## Student performance in state-wide examinations

### NAPLAN

NAPLAN data is reported on My School website <https://www.myschool.edu.au/school/43716>

The school offers NAPLAN tests to all students in years 3, 5, 7 & 9. In 2019 many parents of the School elected to withdraw their children from NAPLAN testing. The My School website reports student data as “data not available for this school” when numbers of participants are low.

### Record of School Achievement

At the end of 2019, 3 students left to pursue further studies at TAFE. They were eligible for a RoSA.

### Senior Secondary Results

Due to there only being one student completing the HSC this year, we cannot report on results without breaching privacy.

### Vocational or Trade Training

In 2019, no students undertook vocational or trade training as part of their HSC pattern of study.

## Professional learning, teaching standards and workforce composition

### Professional learning

This list is not exhaustive but comprises the main PD activities undertaken by staff in 2019

Number of staff	course	duration	start date
1	7th Grade Waldorf Maths Workshop - Jamie York Press (USA - online)	16 hrs	1/1/19
4	Melbourne Intensives	5 days/31 hours	14/1/19
3	Steiner Curriculum Intensive	5 days/38 hours	15/1/19
all teachers	Lakshmi & Ptries, Module 1 of Teacher development course	5 days	24/1/19
18	Educarado	ongoing	27/1/19
all teachers	CPR, Asthma & Anaphylaxis	6 or 8 hours?	23/2/19
9	Lou Harvey-Zahra staff training on classroom management and transitions	2 hours	28/2/19
5	Lou Harvey-Zahra evening talk on Stages of Development	2 hours	28/2/19
2	SEA Delegates Meeting	2 days	15/3/19
1	Steve Evans support with school RAP	2 hours	8/4/19
2	SEA Professional Learning Day with Prof Stephen Kemmis, Dr Nikki Brunker and Matthew Cunnane - Assessment Practices in Steiner Schools	1 Day	14/6/19
all teachers	Michael Merle (International Waldorf Mentor) Workshop and individual mentoring on Waldorf curriculum	2 Days	4/7/19
13	SEA Teachers Conference	4 days	8/7/19
3	Best Practices for the care of the child from Birth to Three	3 days	1/8/19
all teachers	Matthew Cunnane Workshop and individual mentoring on Waldorf assessment	1 Day	15/8/19
2	SEA Delegates Meeting	1.5 days	16/8/19
5	Indigenous Bush Food Excursion with Jarn Hodgson	2 days	1/9/19
1	Anthroposophical Conference	3 days	1/9/19
All teachers	Assessing Resources for Indigenous acknowledgement	2 hours	27/9/19

## Teacher Accreditation

Level of accreditation	Number of Teachers
<i>Conditional</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Provisional</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Proficient Teacher</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Total number of teachers</i>	<i>18</i>

## Teaching standards

Category	No. of teachers
Teachers having teacher education qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI- NOOSR) guidelines	18
Teachers having a bachelor degree from a higher education institution within Australia or one recognised within the AEI-NOOSR guidelines but lack formal teacher education qualifications	0

## Workforce composition

Teaching Staff	18
Full-time equivalent teaching staff	17
Non-teaching staff	16
Full-time equivalent non-teaching staff	8.1

The School employed one casual and one part time Aboriginal member of staff in 2019.

## Respect, Responsibility and School Satisfaction

### Respect and Responsibility

Respect is one of the key values highlighted by the School in its Supporting Positive Behaviour policy and procedures. The School teaches the value of respect in all areas of school life by modelling, telling relevant stories and positively acknowledging student effort.

The School provides creative activities in which all members of the School community can participate. These activities include playing and singing music, developing and performing dramatic pieces as well as appreciating the artistic endeavours of other students and teachers. These activities allow students to respect the efforts of their peers and take responsibility for their own contribution while sharing in something beautiful and worthwhile.

The School celebrates regular seasonal festivals where students are required to take responsibility for their individual part in building the School Community. Each class takes the responsibility for preparing a part of the meal or festival for the rest of the school.

Students and teachers participate in whole school excursions into nature where they can develop not only a sense of responsibility for their shared welfare, but also respect for the natural world and a feeling of responsibility for its preservation, integrating aspects of Indigenous Australian understanding for the environment.

Students, Parents and Teachers work together to create gifts for each other and loved ones in a festival in November. High school students and teachers lead mini workshops teaching parents and younger children how to create beautiful gifts.

### Parent, Student and Teacher satisfaction

The degree of parent satisfaction emerges from twice-yearly one-on-one interviews with the class guardian. It is also gauged by the willingness of parents to participate in voluntary working bees, to attend talks, music and singing groups and cultural studies groups and school community events, which are offered throughout the year. This year attendance and participation in these activities was consistent with the previous year in most areas and better in others. The College of Teachers will continue to discuss and implement strategies to strengthen the connection between parents and the school, with school community events such as festivals, musical concerts and workshops being very popular among parents.

Enrolments increased by 8% from Census 2018 to Census 2019 as the school continues to expand.

Amongst students, the degree of satisfaction is evident in the way in which they engage not only in classroom activities, but also in music making, plays and recreational activities with their classmates. The cheerful ambience of the School and its environs speaks of students who are happy to engage with their education. In 2019, most students continued to be actively engaged in the course work as well as extra-curricular activities, depending on their preferences.



Year 11 and 12 students completed course evaluations to help teachers to know what is working and what may need improving. These surveys are part of an ongoing collection of data that is used to make any adjustments to the senior secondary program.

The willingness of staff to be involved in all aspects of the life of the School and the long service of many of the teachers has demonstrated a high level of staff satisfaction.

# Student attendance, retention rates and post school destinations

## Student attendance rates

The following data is from the first semester of 2018 and comparatively 2019

	2017	2018	2019
K			91%
1	94%	93%	93%
2	92%	90%	94%
3	92%	93%	93%
4	90%	92%	92%
5	95%	90%	93%
6	93%	93%	91%
7	95%	91%	90%
8	95%	92%	85%
9	95%	86%	89%
10	94%	96%	85%
11	95%	97%	96%
12	95%	86%	98%
<b>School</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>92%</b>

Associated with accepting students midway through their education is the possibility of also inheriting their poor attendance habits. Though we do mostly see improvements in attendance habits over time, this is not always the case, especially late in their education. For example, the year 8 and year 10 was heavily skewed by such non-attendance. There are also some students with considerable health concerns.

### **Student attendance rate (based on years 1 to 10), semester 1 2019:**

- All students 91%
- Indigenous students 93%
- Non-Indigenous students 90%

### **Student attendance rate (based on years 1 to 10), term 3 2019:**

- All students 90%
- Indigenous students 94%
- Non-Indigenous students 90%

## Management of non-attendance

The following information regarding the management of non-attendance is extracted from the Newcastle Waldorf School's attendance policy. The full policy can be viewed on request to the School's administration.

### ***Strategies to improve poor attendance***

- *Class teachers/guardians interview parents of students who have poor attendance, discussing the importance of regular attendance and the rhythm of the school week, term and year.*

- *If the above communication is unsuccessful, a letter will be sent by the Principal.*
- *Unsatisfactory attendance information will be transferred to student reports.*
- *Students who are habitually absent may be reported to Community Services under the Keep Them Safe guidelines.*
- *Principal has a discussion with parents when granting exemptions, especially with regard to mid-term holidays.*
- *HSC and Preliminary Students will receive formal warning letters as per the NWS HSC Assessment Policy*
- *A section on attendance is included regularly in notes and newsletters, especially at the beginning of the year.*
- *Attendance is discussed at class talks.*

## Student retention rates and post school destinations

Student retention rates are good through primary years. The classes often build in numbers in these years. The retention rate in the upper high school is the lowest over the school. This is attributed to families seeking schools that are more established in their delivery of the HSC and with a wider range of subject choices and larger class numbers. Reasons given by families changing schools at this time include:

- Variety of HSC courses offered by other schools
- Students wanting a larger peer/social group
- Parents following an ethos different to that of the school

The retention rate of students from year 10, 2017 through to completion of year 12 in 2019 was 25%. This was an extraordinary cohort where, because numbers were already low, it was difficult for students to remain at the school in such a small cohort. Generally, retention fluctuates from year to year based on the dynamic of the cohort. Students who left between year 10 and year 12 either went to different schools or vocational training. We are pleased to see them prospering in their life choices.

Post school destinations of the student finishing their HSC in 2019 cannot be reported due to privacy issues.

## Characteristics of the student body

The following information comes from the My School Website, which provides information based on the census.

<https://www.myschool.edu.au/school/43716>

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total enrolments	147	142	145	160	195	211
Girls	75	75	76	82	100	108
Boys	72	67	69	78	95	103
Full-time equivalent enrolments	147	142	145	159	189.7	204.6
Indigenous students	3%	6%	6%	8%	7%	7%
Language background other than English	6%	8%	8%	8%	7%	12%

The increase in enrolments is concurrent with a strong interest in Kindergarten and upper primary, we continue to see increases in second generation children (children of Alumni) and associated friends. We also have a successful playgroup associated with the school which feeds the Kindergarten.

## Policies

### Enrolment policy

The following complete text of the Newcastle Waldorf School policy was current for 2019. The enrolment Policy can be found on the School's website at:

<http://www.newcastlewaldorfschool.nsw.edu.au/school-downloads.html>

*The Newcastle Waldorf School is comprehensive and coeducational from K to 12, providing an education based on the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner within the framework and regulations of the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA).*

- 1. Applications for enrolment may be made at any time by the parent/carer(s). The school will process applications in a timely manner having regard for all aspects of the application process, the gathering of information and the consideration of this information by the College of Teachers.*
- 2. The school may accept students who are 4, turning 5 in the term of enrolment or older.*
- 3. Where there are spaces in the class, applications will be processed by considering the student and family's fit with the school, ie:*

*Family:*

- the applicant holding attitudes, values and priorities that are compatible with the ethos of the school, as outlined in the school handbook and at interview.*
- siblings already attending the school or the family having a close connection to the school*
- either parent having attended the school or another Steiner school.*

*Student:*

- the student having attended the School or another Steiner School*
- the contribution that the student may make to the school, including the co-curricular activities*
- reports from previous schools*
- engagement in the educational program of previous schools.*

*School:*

- ability of the school to meet the special needs or abilities of the student*
  - the current composition and dynamic of the of the cohort*
  - order of receipt - when the application to enrol is received by the school*
- 4. The school has an absolute discretion in determining the weight of each of these factors, and other criteria determined by the school from time to, in deciding whether to offer a place for the student.*
  - 5. If a class is deemed to be full, the school may operate a waiting list or ask the applicant to contact the School regularly throughout the year.*
  - 6. Continued enrolment at the school is dependent on the student having a pattern of attendance accepted by the school and the student and the parent/carer(s) observing all codes of conduct and other requirements of the School which are applicable from time to time. The school's expectations are communicated through its handbooks, at parent/teacher interviews, at class meetings and through regular notes, newsletters, emails, phone calls and face to face discussions.*
  - 7. Payment of fees is the collective responsibility of the Parents/Guardians on the Enrolment Contract. They are payable at the start of the term and no remission will apply for students ceasing enrolment during that term.*

## Other School Policies

The following policies relate to student welfare, discipline, anti-bullying and resolving grievances.

Policy	Changes in 2019	Access to full text
<p><b>Supporting Positive Student Behaviour and Discipline Policy</b></p> <p><i>Newcastle Waldorf School aims to provide a warm, nurturing environment where individual students can learn. We aim to do this by teaching values of respect, reverence, truth, goodness and creativity where students are encouraged to share in a vibrant learning community. We encourage goodwill and empathy. We collaboratively set expectations and teach students positive behaviours across the different environments and different times of the school day. Students are expected to strive to meet these expectations and follow requests made by school staff. We endeavour to teach these behaviours through positively acknowledging students. We also endeavour to individualise acknowledgement and consequences for students that are related to the situations and contexts in which the behaviours occur. By doing this we aim to build resilience in our students.</i></p> <p><i>The School prohibits the use of corporal punishment in disciplining students attending the school.</i></p> <p><i>The School does not explicitly or implicitly sanction the administering of corporal punishment by non-school persons, including parents, for any reason at the School.</i></p> <p><i>For serious breaches of expectations, it may be necessary to suspend or expel a student.</i></p> <p><i>The implementation of this policy statement will follow the principles of procedural fairness including parental consultation regarding suspensions and expulsions.</i></p> <p>This policy addresses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expectations &amp; Support</li> <li>• Consequences for persistent behaviour issues</li> <li>• Individual planning</li> <li>• Suspension, expulsion and exclusion</li> <li>• Anti-bullying</li> </ul>	<p>This policy had a review late in 2018 as a result of some staff professional development around responding to bullying. A further review is scheduled for late 2020.</p>	<p>Full text available on request to the School Administration and at <a href="http://www.newcastlewaldorfschool.nsw.edu.au/school-downloads.html">http://www.newcastlewaldorfschool.nsw.edu.au/school-downloads.html</a></p>
<p><b>Child Protection Policy, including:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prevention</li> <li>• Reporting</li> <li>• Risk assessment</li> <li>• Roles and responsibilities</li> </ul>	<p>Minor changes to match legislation, and additions to reflect the review of this policy in January.</p>	<p>Full text available on request to the School Administration</p>
<p><b>Student Welfare Policy:</b></p> <p><i>Newcastle Waldorf School Provides a safe and supportive environment for all students.</i></p> <p>This policy addresses the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Security</li> <li>• Supervision</li> <li>• Homework</li> <li>• Dress Code</li> <li>• Pastoral Care, Communication and Support</li> <li>• Student Leadership</li> <li>• Individual Planning</li> <li>• Medical Treatment</li> </ul>	<p>No changes</p>	<p>Full text available on request to the School Administration</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excursions</li> <li>• Communication and Support</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Complaints and Grievances</b></p> <p>Newcastle Waldorf School acknowledges that from time to time parents and students may raise concerns, complaints or allegations about matters regarding their experiences with the School. The following policy and procedures outline processes that are designed to address concerns before they turn into complaints or allegations. If parents raise concerns early, and they are addressed informally by class and subject teachers or the Principal, the likelihood that they will turn into formal complaints is greatly reduced.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concerns</li> <li>• Complaints</li> <li>• Allegations</li> <li>• Procedures &amp; flowcharts</li> </ul>	<p>This policy was reviewed in 2019 and resulted in a more general and flexible policy around concerns and some adjustments to the complaints resolution flow chart.</p>	<p>Full text available on request to the School Administration</p> <p>Full text available on the School's website at <a href="http://www.newcastlewaldorfschool.nsw.edu.au/school-downloads.html">http://www.newcastlewaldorfschool.nsw.edu.au/school-downloads.html</a></p>

## Determined Improvement Targets

### Meeting 2019 target areas of improvement

The 2018 Annual Report identified the following areas for improvement in 2019:

Teaching and Learning	
Improvement targets identified in 2018	2019 Progress
To continue to maintain and attract high school students who align with the philosophy of the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students from years 10,11 &amp; 12 attended Samford Valley Steiner school for the National Steiner Youth conference. This helped to contextualise their education in that they met many like-minded students from around the country.</li> <li>- A scholarship system was established to allow students who align with the school's philosophy to attend regardless of a family's financial situation.</li> </ul>
Develop before and after school care and early childhood facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Progress was made with a DA for the facilities at 64 Reservoir rd, but there have been other perspectives and opportunities raised and the school is reviewing its options.</li> </ul>
To support new teachers in the development of their understanding of the education philosophy of Dr. Rudolf Steiner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- January attendance by High School Teachers at Melbourne intensives and Primary teachers at Glenaeon.</li> <li>- Teachers also completed Module 2 with Lakshmi and Paries in a 5 day January workshop</li> <li>- Lou Harvey-Zahra PD for primary teachers</li> <li>- Michael Merle visited the school and gave sessions to the high school teachers and to the college as well as the board of directors.</li> <li>- SEA Foundations of Human Experience national Waldorf college study</li> <li>- Lisa Devine guest lectured at College Meeting on sex education.</li> <li>- Professional development budgeting continues to be directed towards Steiner based PD.</li> <li>- Educaredo</li> <li>- National Teachers' Conference</li> <li>- Matthew Cunnane attended school for the day and ran workshops for primary teachers on Assessment in the Steiner School and presented to the whole college on this topic.</li> <li>- Development of an induction booklet for new teachers</li> <li>-</li> </ul>
To maintain high academic standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This is a long term objective that is discussed regularly as part of January meetings.</li> <li>- Timetabling has included extra blocks of lessons for mathematics in the high school.</li> <li>- A peer mentoring reading program continues.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parent Literacy meeting in term 2</li> <li>- Inclusion of literacy discussion in most class talks</li> <li>- Articles on Literacy were included in the school newsletter</li> <li>- Teachers worked collaboratively on mapping the progression through the primary school.</li> </ul>
To communicate with families the holistic and whole school approach the school takes to managing incidents of bullying in light of the education of the child and indications of Rudolf Steiner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- After a professional development session with the AIS in late 2018 and more work in the January professional development with Lakshmi Prasanna and Patries Orange, the school began a long-term development of the PDHPE program.</li> <li>- Workshop with Lisa Devine on sex education</li> </ul>
To widen the range of ways we communicate with families about key Waldorf practices (inclusion of literacy and student behaviour discussions in all class talks; newsletters and emails discussing Waldorf contexts for issues raised by parents, targeted talks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lakshmi parent talk in January</li> <li>- Lou Harvey-Zahra talk in February</li> <li>- Beethoven concert and involvement of Elaine's choir as well as guest singers and orchestra.</li> <li>- Michael Merle parent presentation</li> <li>- newsletters and emails discussing Waldorf contexts for issues raised by parents.</li> <li>- Most class talks have a section for parent communication around the development of the child in relation to well-being.</li> <li>- Productive term Parent/Teacher Circle meeting held in March</li> <li>- Indigenous PD and RAP development</li> </ul>
To essentialise the core Steiner initiative into 5 principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ongoing work with Steiner Education Australia in this initiative.</li> </ul>
<b>Facilities and Resources</b>	
<b>Improvement targets identified in 2018</b>	<b>2019 Progress</b>
Maintenance of aging facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ongoing</li> </ul>
Maintenance and development of School grounds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Year 9 Stair building project</li> <li>- Bush Tucker Garden extension and regular maintenance</li> <li>- New lunch tables and stools</li> <li>- Year 10 construction of a set of new music stands for the hall</li> <li>- Plans in progress for the revitalisation of the school grounds using sandstone blocks and extensive landscaping.</li> </ul>
Planning and building for the increasing size of the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Construction of a new building containing two general classrooms and one dedicated music classroom has been completed.</li> <li>- Landscaping plans include widening and flattening sports field</li> <li>- Bottom paddock and field is being revitalised for playing areas</li> <li>- Plans have been made for construction of Kindy dedicated play area</li> </ul>

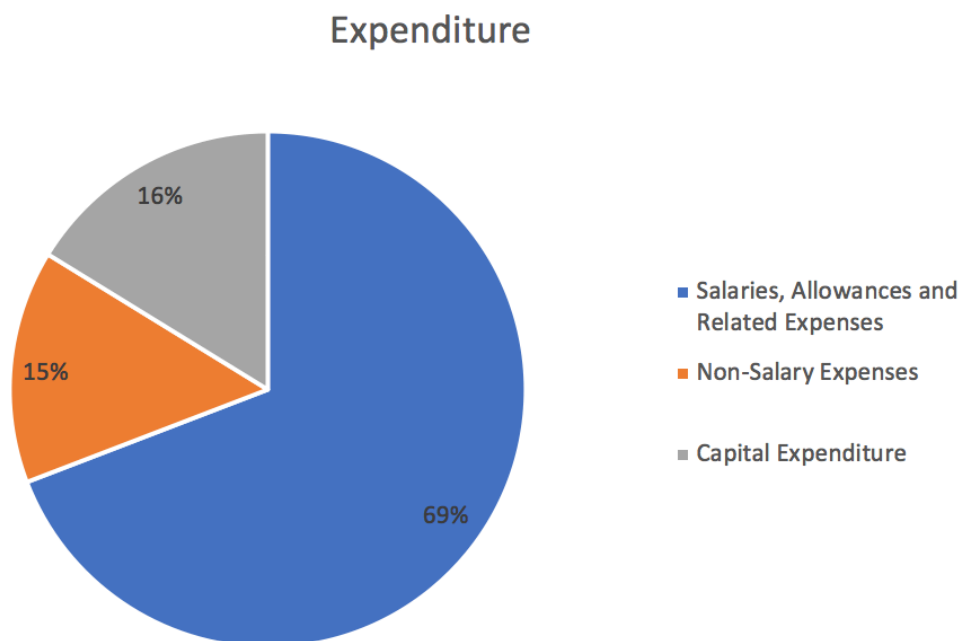
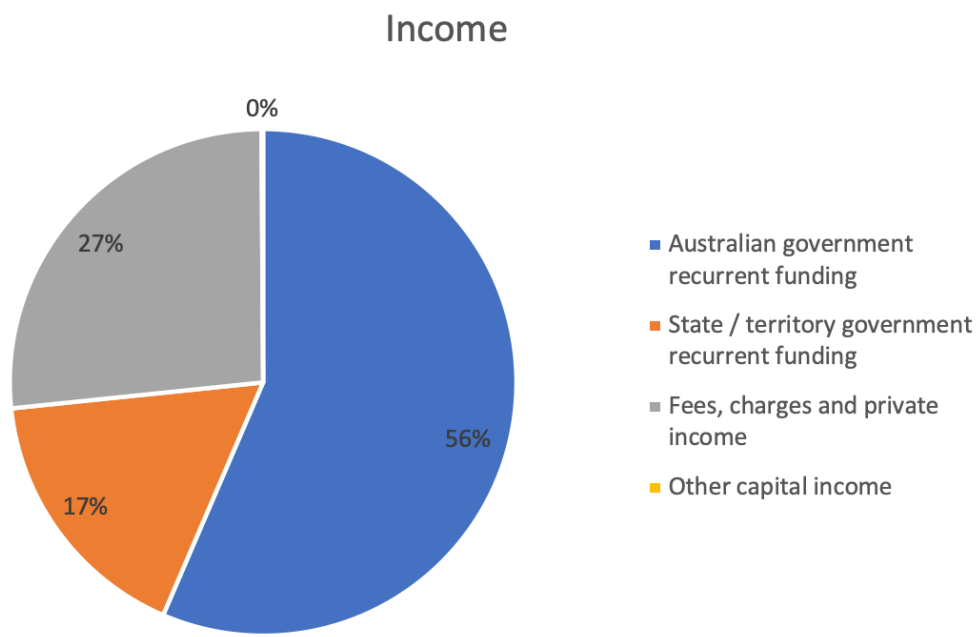
## Improvement Targets for 2020

This annual report identifies the following areas for improvement in 2020 based on the strategic planning document developed over 2019:

Teaching and Learning
To establish Before and After School Care and Preschool facilities
To continue to support new teachers in the development of their understanding of the education philosophy of Dr. Rudolf Steiner
To update governance and management policy and procedure
To constantly monitor individual and group needs across the school as well the process for identifying need and how those needs can be met.
To continue to review and plan for parent collaboration
To encourage student participation in suitable community events
To promote the school and our method of teaching to the wider community.
Facilities and Resources
To manage the growing maintenance of existing buildings and expand facilities for changing needs
To audit and replenish teaching resources, particularly through the high school.

## Summary of financial information

The Newcastle Waldorf School financial information is summarised in the following sector graphs of income and expenditure for the period of January 1 to December 31 2019, sourced from the School's audited accounts.



The large capital expenditure is due to the school completing works on new two-level building containing two general classrooms and one dedicated music classroom. All other figures are similar to previous years in percentages.