

Newcastle Waldorf School Annual Report 2017



Available online at 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 2017, the Newcastle Waldorf School Board commenced implementation of a long-term strategy to ensure the school continues to remain sustainable into the future. As part of this strategy, the Board approved a proposal to commence planning for a new building, which will provide a dedicated music classroom as well as additional classroom space to accommodate increased student numbers into the future. The Board also offered a new enterprise agreement for teaching staff, which was unanimously voted by teachers to proceed, and subsequently lodged with the Fair Work Commission. 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 acknowledges the contributions of the many parents who supported the School through a range of activities throughout the year. These efforts help created 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 other teachers, 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 Awabakal People, the traditional custodians of the land and pay our 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.

Characteristics of the student body

Characteristics of the student body can be viewed on the “My School” website under the school name “Newcastle Waldorf School” or found in more detail later in this report.

<http://www.myschool.edu.au/>

Student performance in state-wide examinations

NAPLAN

NAPLAN data is reported on My School website (<http://www.myschool.edu.au/>)

The school offers NAPLAN tests to all students in years 3, 5, 7 & 9. In 2017 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

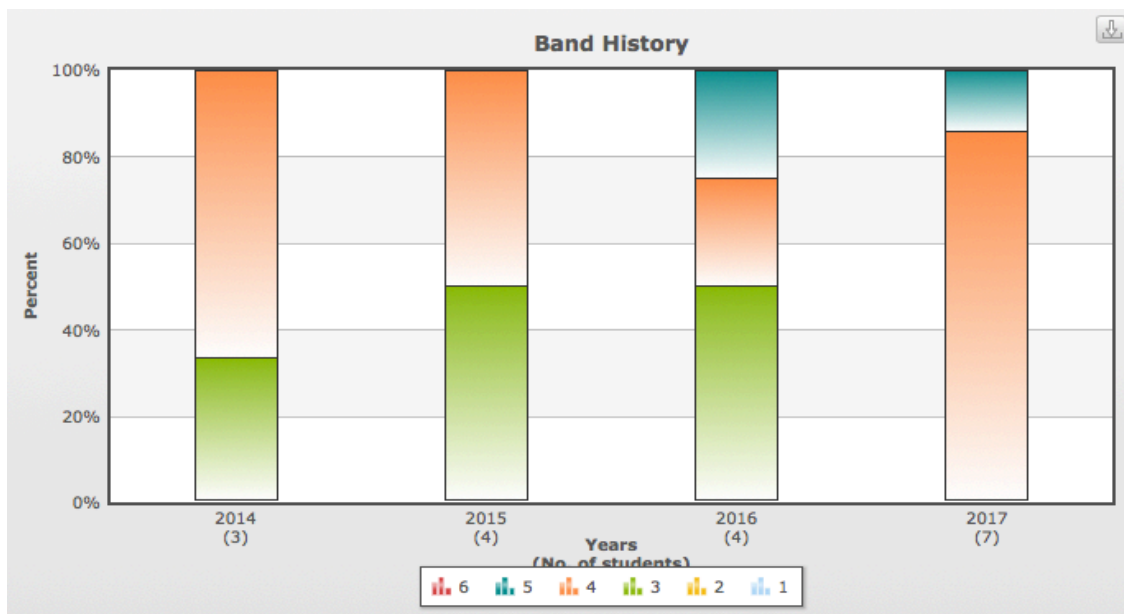
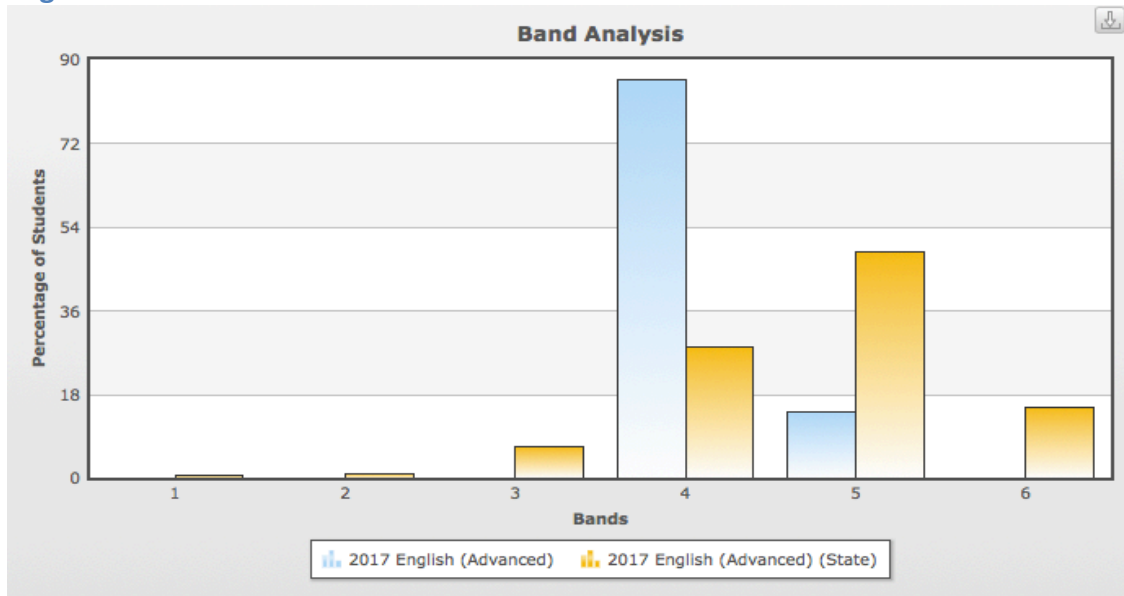
In 2017, 3 students left and were eligible for a ROSA.

Senior Secondary Results

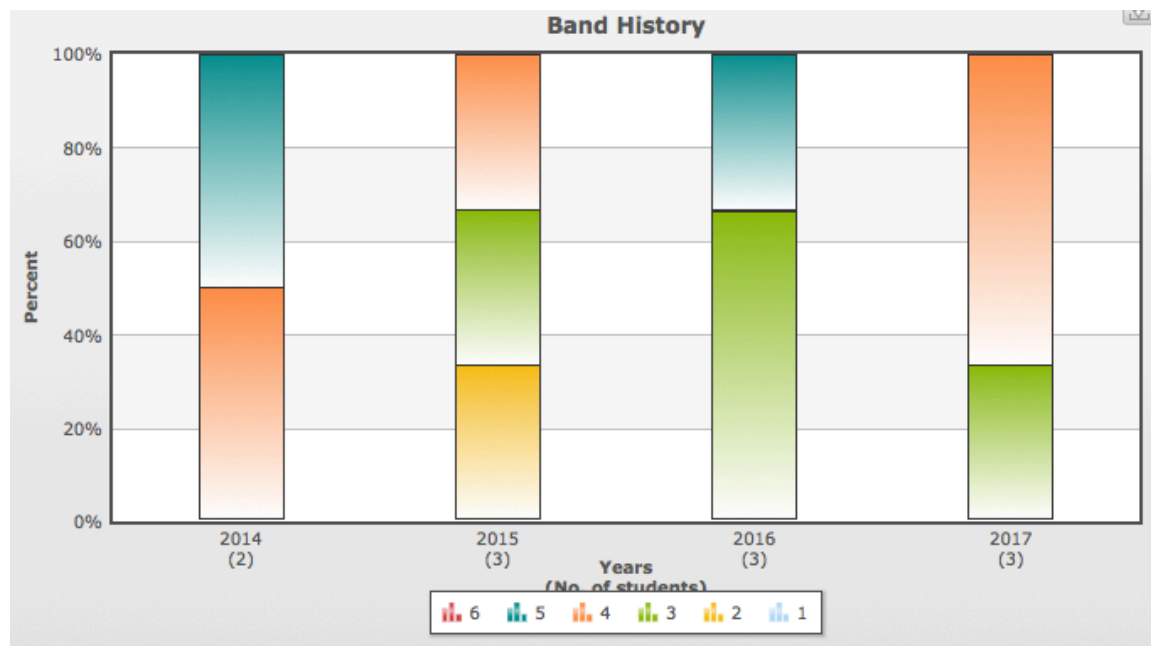
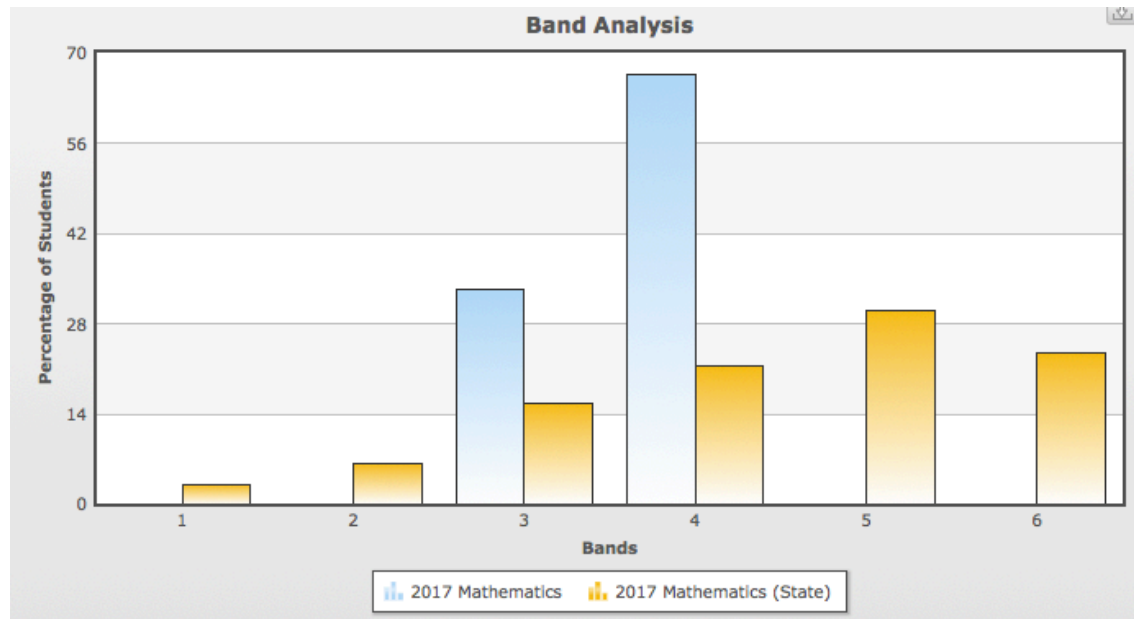
The following HSC results are displayed in two graphs for most subjects

1. in Comparison to State (Band Analysis)
2. and over time (Band History).

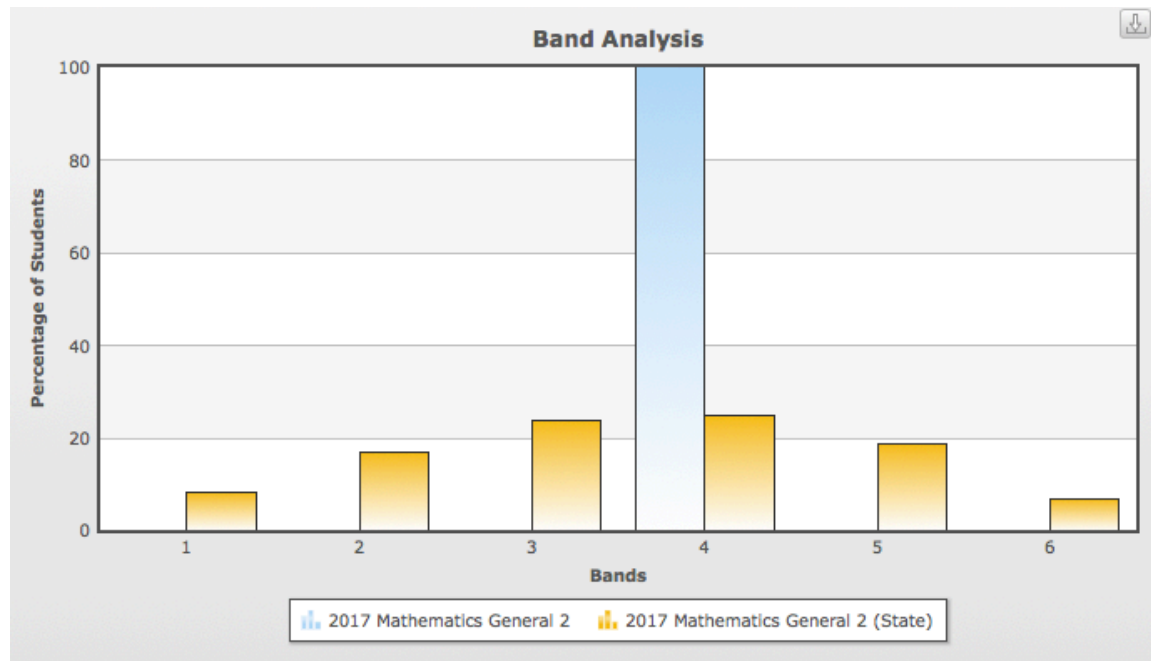
English Advanced



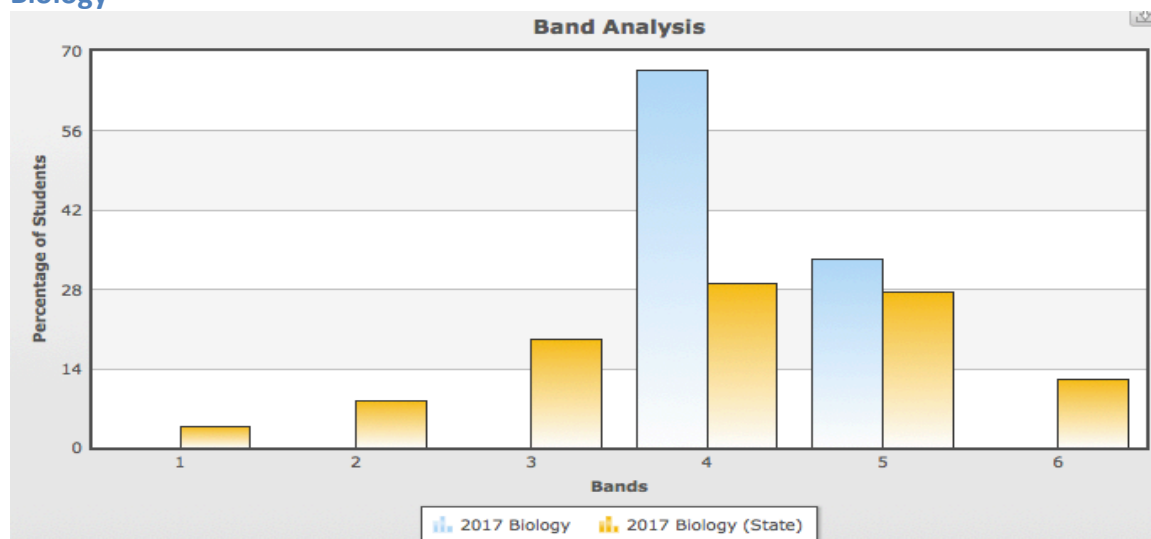
Mathematics



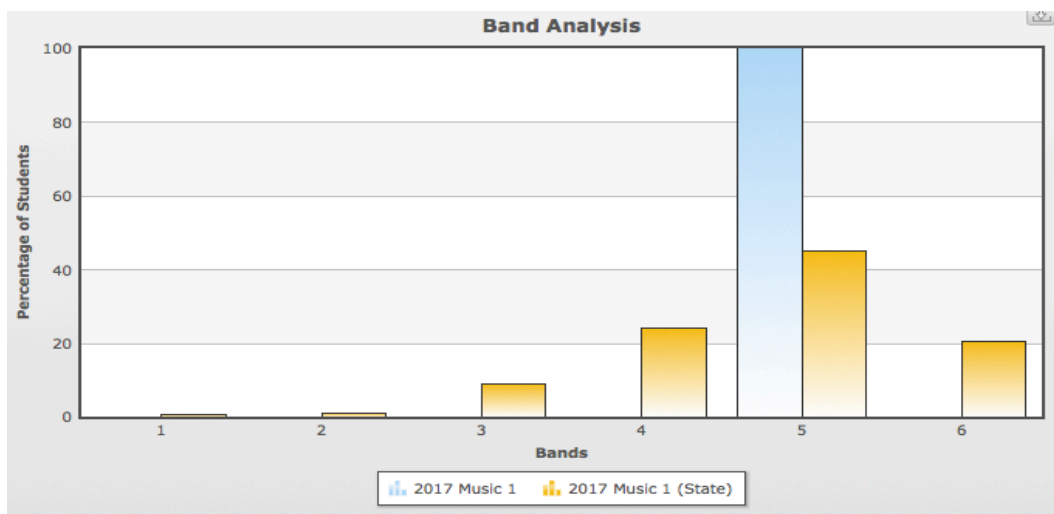
Mathematics General 2



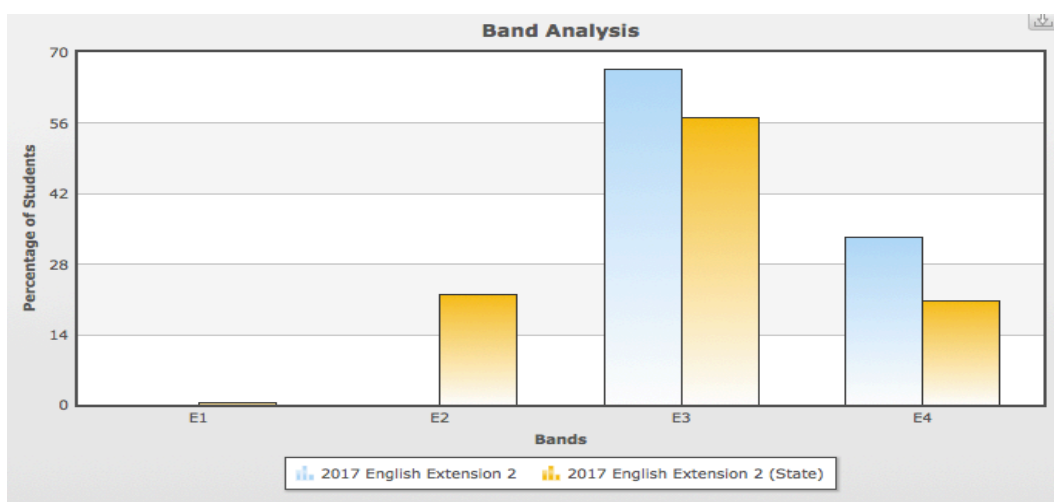
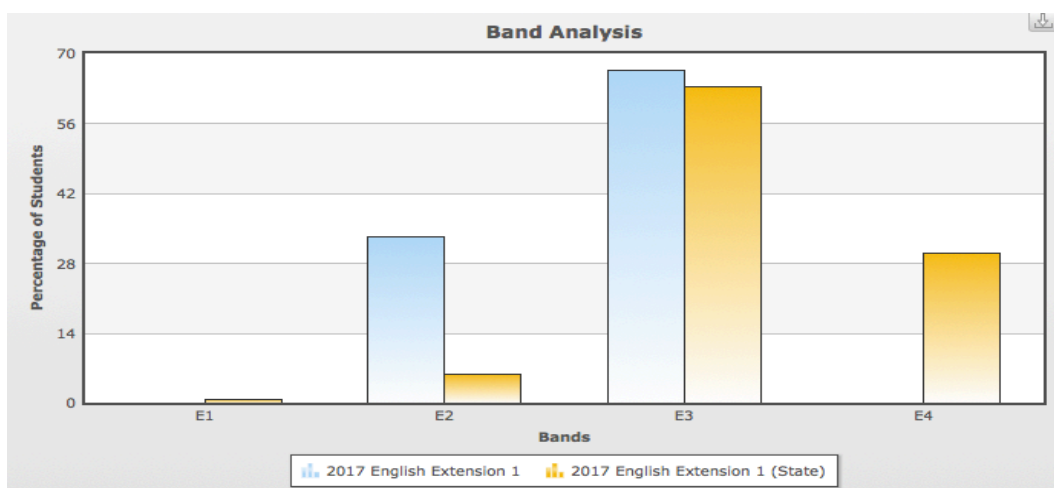
Biology



Music



English Extension 1 & 2



Comments

- The Newcastle Waldorf School encourages depth of interpretation, understanding and communication for a wide range of learners. We feel that the overall strengths of the student achievements are not limited to their exam results. However, most students in 2017 are at Band 4 or above.
- Advanced English results are just below the state average due to students being encouraged to take on this more challenging course. The School offered Standard English as well as Advanced English this year and we saw an improvement in the comparison to the state average.
- The 2017 English Extension 2 students performed very well showing their dedication to this elective subject.
- The School offered General 2 Mathematics as well this year. The students who chose this did well in comparison to the state average. Advanced Mathematics students were below the state average this year.
- Biology and Music students continue to show strong results.
- The School's results (the averages) are heavily influenced by the nature of the particular cohort each year because the classes have been small.

Vocational or Trade Training

In 2017, no students undertook vocational or trade training as part of their HSC course, and no year 11 students included trade training as part of their pathway.

In 2017, 88% of students who started the year went on to attain their HSC.

Professional learning, teaching standards and workforce composition

Professional learning

This list is not exhaustive but comprises the main PD activities undertaken by more than one staff member. Individual staff members also completed PD in areas of: team teach restraint, mental health (youth), National Learning Support Conference, School Communities Working Together, eEmergency Care, AIS briefings and Eurythmy.

Professional Learning Activity	Number of Teachers Participating
January, 3-day in school P.D. - Child Protection, Code of Conduct, Safe and Supportive Environment and medical treatment.	All staff
January, 5-day Glenaeon Intensives – Lectures, workshops and Primary Steiner Teacher collaboration run by Steiner Education Australia	4
January, 1 day, First Aid	All staff
Ongoing - Indigenous Cultural Group	2
March and August, 3 days each, Steiner Education Australia – Delegates Meetings	2
March, 1.5hrs, Dan Maslen - Steiner Biography Lecture	9
March, 4 sessions, Dan Maslen – Eurythmy Workshops	2
May, 2 days, Lakshmi Prasanna and Patries Orange - workshops in anthroposophy and eurythmy	3
July, SEA National Teachers Conference – lectures & workshops in Steiner Education	13
July, 4 hrs, Chris Duncan AIS – Governance Training	4
September, 1 day, in School PD – curriculum	All staff
Ongoing – Weekly College of Teachers meetings studying <i>The Foundations of Human Experience</i> – Steiner, and other texts.	All staff

Teacher Accreditation

Level of accreditation	Number of Teachers
<i>Pre-2004 teachers (accreditation not required in 2017)</i>	7
<i>Conditional</i>	0
<i>Provisional</i>	2
<i>Proficient Teacher</i>	8
<i>Total number of teachers</i>	17

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	17
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

(from My School website http://www.myschool.edu.au/)	
Teaching Staff	17
Full-time equivalent teaching staff	15.5
Non-teaching staff	15
Full-time equivalent non-teaching staff	5.3

There were no indigenous members of staff in Newcastle Waldorf School in 2017

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 10% from census 2016 to census 2017 and by a further 11% by the end of the year. There is enough interest in the primary school to consider offering single stream classes in future years.

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, play 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 2017, 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. This year we have welcomed more new teachers to the College to accommodate the increase in enrolments and the expansion of the Kindergarten and Primary.

Student attendance, retention rates and post school destinations

Student attendance rates

The following data is from the first semester of 2017

	2016	2017
K	94%	94%
1	95%	94%
2	88%	92%
3	92%	92%
4	94%	90%
5	92%	95%
6	95%	93%
7	94%	95%
8	95%	95%
9	92%	95%
10	93%	94%
11	92%	95%
12	91%	95%
School	93%	93%

Reporting period: ☒ Semester 1 ☐ Term 3

Student attendance rate	Percent ¹
All students	93%
Indigenous students	93%
Non-Indigenous students	93%

Student attendance level (proportion of students attending 90% or more of the time) ²	Percent ¹
All students	84%
Indigenous students	90%
Non-Indigenous students	84%

Reporting period: ☐ Semester 1 ☒ Term 3

Student attendance rate	Percent ¹
All students	91%
Indigenous students	91%
Non-Indigenous students	91%

Student attendance level (proportion of students attending 90% or more of the time) ²	Percent ¹
All students	62%
Indigenous students	58%
Non-Indigenous students	63%

Attendance in the second semester was not as good as the first semester.

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.

Poor Attendance and Unsatisfactory Attendance

- *The Class Teacher or Class Guardian will contact the student's parents/guardians to discuss poor attendance*
- *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*
- *HSC and Preliminary Students will receive formal warning letters as per the NWS HSC Assessment Policy*

Strategies for Improving Attendance

The Newcastle Waldorf School has an average attendance rate of 93%. This is due to the following ongoing strategies.

- *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.*
- *Principal has a discussion with parents when granting exemptions, especially with regard to mid-term holidays.*
- *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

The retention rate of students from year 10, 2015 through to completion of year 12 in 2017 was 80%. This is a much better retention than the previous year. Retention fluctuates from year to

year based on the dynamic of the cohort. Students who left at the end of year 10 either went to different schools or vocational training.

Post school destinations of students finishing their HSC in 2017 were:

- 63% gain university entrance through ATAR and non-ATAR pathways.
- 37% full or part time employment.

Policies

Enrolment policy

The following complete text of the Newcastle Waldorf School policy and procedures was current for 2017 and is now under review.

Policy

- 1. 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 Board of Studies.*
- 2. All applications are processed in order of receipt, and consideration is given to the applicant's support for the ethos of the school, siblings already attending the school, the applicant having attended another Steiner School and other criteria determined by the school from time to time.*
- 3. The School does not operate a waiting list. If classes are full, applicants are asked to contact the School regularly throughout the year.*
- 4. Once enrolled, students are expected to uphold the school's ethos and comply with the school's code of conduct as described in the NWS Prospectus and Handbook to maintain their enrolment.*
- 5. If the principal, or any person deputing for the principal, considers that a student is guilty of a serious breach of the rules or has otherwise engaged in conduct which is prejudicial to the school or its students or staff, the principal or deputy may suspend or expel the student permanently or temporarily at their absolute discretion.*
- 6. If the School Board, the College of Teachers or the Principal believes that a mutually beneficial relationship of trust and cooperation between a parent and school has broken down to the extent that it adversely impacts on that relationship, then the School may require the family to cease enrolment at the school.*
- 7. The school will only exercise its powers under these clauses to expel a student permanently if it has provided the student and the parents or guardians of the student with details of the conduct which may result in a decision to expel the student and provided them with a reasonable opportunity to respond.*
- 8. No remission of fees will apply in either case*

9. *The implementation of this policy statement will follow principles of procedural fairness.*

Procedures

1. *Process all applications within the school's enrolment policy.*
2. *Interview applicants if there is a vacancy in the class, or at the Class Teacher's discretion.*
3. *Accept an application form completed by the applicant.*
4. *Consider each applicant's interview responses and application form regarding their ability and willingness to support the school's ethos.*
5. *Consider each applicant's educational needs and requirements, by gathering information and consulting with parents/family and other relevant persons.*
6. *Identify any strategies or adjustments which may be required to accommodate the applicant before a decision regarding enrolment is made, taking into consideration the effect of the adjustment on the prospective student, as well as its impact on the School, its staff and other students.*
7. *Discuss the application at a College of Teachers Meeting.*
8. *Accept or reject the application.*
9. *Inform the applicant of the outcome.*
10. *The accepted applicant will receive a letter of offer, which they will sign to accept enrolment.*
11. *Applicant will fill in Data Collection form.*
12. *Applicant will pay the first term's fees on enrolment.*

Characteristics of the student body

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

<i>My School</i>	2014	2015	2016	2017
Total enrolments	147	142	145	160
Girls	75	75	76	82
Boys	72	67	69	78
Full-time equivalent enrolments	147	142	145	159
Indigenous students	3%	6%	6%	8%
Language background other than English	6%	8%	8%	8%

Total enrolments fluctuated throughout 2017, but were 177 by November 2017. The boost in enrolments has allowed us to tentatively start the first single stream class in 2018.

Other School policies

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

Policy	Changes in 2017	Access to full text
Supporting Positive Student Behaviour and Discipline Policy <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> <i>The School prohibits the use of corporal punishment in disciplining students attending the school.</i> <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> <i>For serious breaches of expectations it may be necessary to suspend or expel a student.</i> <i>The implementation of this policy statement will follow the principles of procedural fairness including parental consultation regarding suspensions and expulsions.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectations • Support • Consequences • Individual planning • Suspension, expulsion and exclusion • Bullying 	No changes	Full text available on request to the School Administration
Child Protection Policy, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention 	Minor changes to match legislation	Full text available on

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting • Risk assessment • Roles and responsibilities 		request to the School Administration
Student Welfare Policy: <i>Newcastle Waldorf School Provides a safe and supportive environment for all students</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security • Supervision • Homework • Dress Code • Pastoral Care, Communication and Support • Student Leadership • Individual Planning • Medical Treatment • Excursions • Communication and Support 	No changes	Full text available on request to the School Administration
Complaints and Grievances 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. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns • Complaints • Allegations • Procedures & flowcharts 	No changes	Full text available on request to the School Administration Full text available on the School's website

Determined Improvement Targets

Meeting 2017 target areas of improvement

The 2016 Annual Report identified the following areas for improvement in 2017:

(highlighted bits can be added to or amended)

Areas for improvement identified in 2016	Improved in 2017 by
Teaching and Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisiting expectations of students and how teachers effectively model, monitor and enforce these expectations. Reviewing the HSC program to promote student engagement and achievement in the senior high school and to make it viable in the long term. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning for possible introduction of single stream classes To continue to support new teachers in the development of their understanding of the education philosophy of Rudolf Steiner Continue to monitor and review the plan for parent collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular staff meetings, additions to student reports, more regular contact with parents. In progress. The 2018 year 10 cohort is larger and anecdotal information suggests that they will remain a larger cohort going into year 11 and 12. We have made changes to courses offered for years 11 and 12 and we have also kept our connection with the UON pilot program for accepting students without an ATAR through a presentation of a portfolio to a panel. Feedback from this has been positive and there is a gradual strengthening of the understanding that students do not necessarily need an ATAR to be offered a place at university. This gives our preferred pattern of study validity, and long term viability. Single stream year 1 starts in 2018. There is also a year 3&4 class and a year 2&3 class in 2018, which is, in numbers, another class. 2017 was a strong year for PD. We had visits from Steiner experts and almost every member of staff attended the 4 day National Steiner Teachers' Conference. We also have been undertaking weekly study of Steiner lectures in our College of Teachers' meetings and individual teachers have sought specific PD in areas relating to Steiner Education. There have been some opportunities for parent involvement in small groups working in and around the school; in particular, the Indigenous Cultural Group has made significant progress in making a visible difference in the School. We have increased opportunities for workshops

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To encourage student participation in suitable community events. • To promote our school more effectively to the wider community • Establish a scholarship or bursary system. 	<p>lead by teachers and visiting specialists. Our festivals have had more extensive consideration in terms of parent involvement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have started tentatively with this with most events being “interschool”: athletics, swimming, Greek Olympics, STEM challenges and chess. • Increasing the content and regularity of the website updates. Promoting open days through some local business. • Ongoing. A hardship policy is set to be implemented in 2018. Discussions at a Board level continue as we attempt to create an equitable policy for scholarships.
<p>Facilities and Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish Before and After School Care and Preschool facilities • Prioritising maintenance and repairs to ageing buildings. • Renewing animal enclosures. • Continuing discussion of potential facilities additions, such as kitchen, forging area and P&P storage and work area. • Planning facilities to potentially accommodate single streaming of classes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After School Care progressing slowly towards implementation sometime in 2018. In late 2017 the Board agreed to move forward with viability reports for a preschool with a view to possibly employing someone to project manage the initial stages of this rather large initiative. It is expected that this will continue at a board level for some time in 2018. We would hope to be able to establish a preschool in 2019 or 2020. • We have filled a regular maintenance position that is 2 days per week. We have also employed graduates working in gap years to attend to regular maintenance work. • This project is ongoing with little progress having been made in 2017. • No progress on any of these new facilities. • 2018 building projects will include enclosing an existing area under a classroom to become another room as well as designing a double story, 3 classroom complex for the area just north of the Design and Technology building. This has taken priority over the other facilities.

Improvement Targets for 2018

This annual report identifies the following areas for improvement in 2018:

Teaching and Learning:

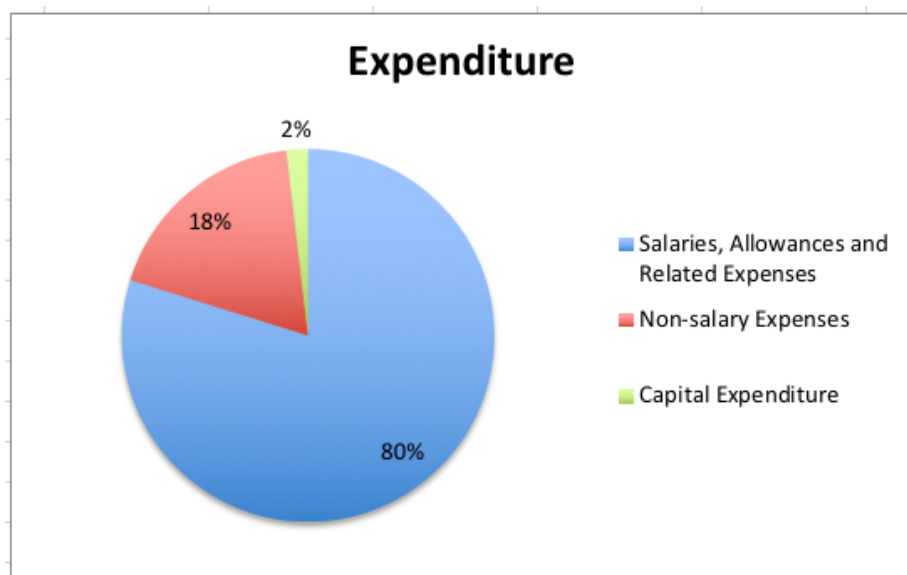
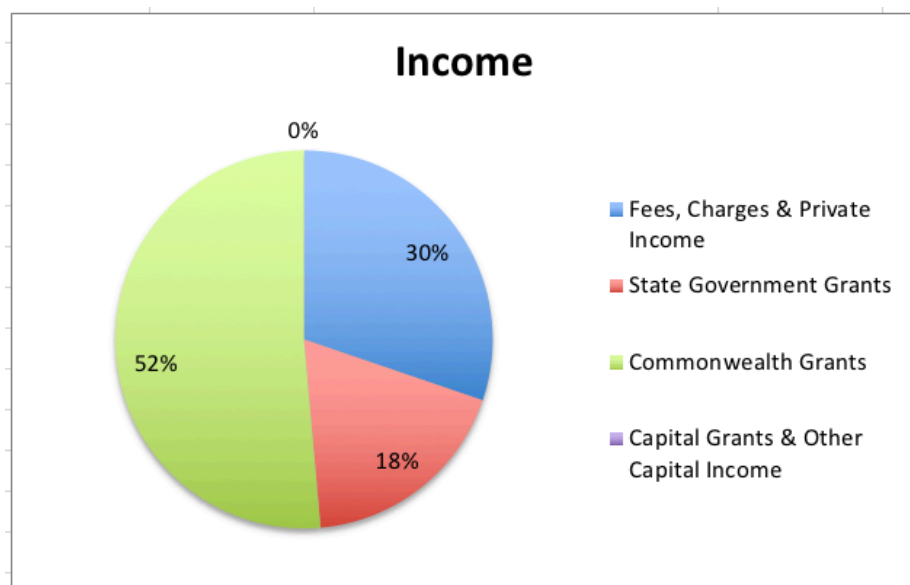
- Continue to develop and strengthen our practices around individual teacher goal setting and review in line with AITSL requirements and what is effective in our school.
- Build on the successes of last year in the area of individual teacher connection with the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner.
- Extend our work involving students in the wider community.
- Develop a Reconciliation Action Plan with support from the School community and local community.
- Increase our training and planning for students with special needs.
- Monitor and plan for the needs of an increasing teaching and support staff.
- Continue to establish an early childhood service.
- Continue to review and plan for parent collaboration.
- Continue to develop the way we promote the School to the wider community.

Facilities and Resources:

- Continuing to prioritise repairs and maintenance of aging buildings, infrastructure and grounds.
- Continuing planning and building for single streaming of classes year by year through the primary school.
- Preschool and afterschool care facilities.
- Revisiting plans for kitchen, forging and P&P storage facilities.
- Establish a scholarship and bursary support system.

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 2017, sourced from the School's audited accounts.



These Income and expenditure percentages are almost identical to 2016.