

Newcastle Waldorf School Annual Report 2021



Available online at www.newcastlewaldorfschool.nsw.edu.au or by contacting the School administration

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Ngayin bangayi Awabakal-a barayi-dha ngayin Ngayin ngarrakal yalawa-a, yalawa-n, yalawa-nan.

Today we are on Awabakal land we give respect to our ancestors, our elders and all of those who have gone before them, past, present and future.

Messages from key school bodies

Message from the School Board

During 2021, the Newcastle Waldorf School Board continued implementation of a long-term strategy to ensure the school works strongly and sustainably into the future. Part of the strengthening included the purchase of a new property 2 doors down from the existing campus. The plan for this property is to move and expand the kindergarten and possibly year 1, with a longer-term plan to develop a preschool.

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.

In 2021, flexibility was required from all staff and we particularly acknowledge the work that teachers put into the work from home packages and lessons developed during COVID lockdown.

COVID and its associated regulations, mandates and disruptions has been somewhat destabilising for teachers, students and families. It has been the overarching objective of the school to maintain inclusivity and consistency wherever possible. At times this has been difficult and beyond our control, but we hope that the years to come will show that there is a connection that has been maintained across the last few years that keeps the school strong into the 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 at 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 resumed in 2021 after COVID interruptions of 2020.

Participation from years 3, 5 and 7 was below the threshold allowable for publishing results.

The few students who participated in year 9 had results that were similar to students in other schools of similar backgrounds. Results were slightly above in reading, slightly below in writing and very similar in spelling, grammar and numeracy. These students represented only a small proportion of the class.

Newcastle Waldorf School offers NAPLAN to all students in years 3, 5, 7 and 9. The school does not practice NAPLAN style tests.

Further detail of the year 9 results can be found at

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

Record of School Achievement

At the end of 2021, 1 student left to pursue further studies at TAFE. They were eligible for a RoSA.

Senior Secondary Results

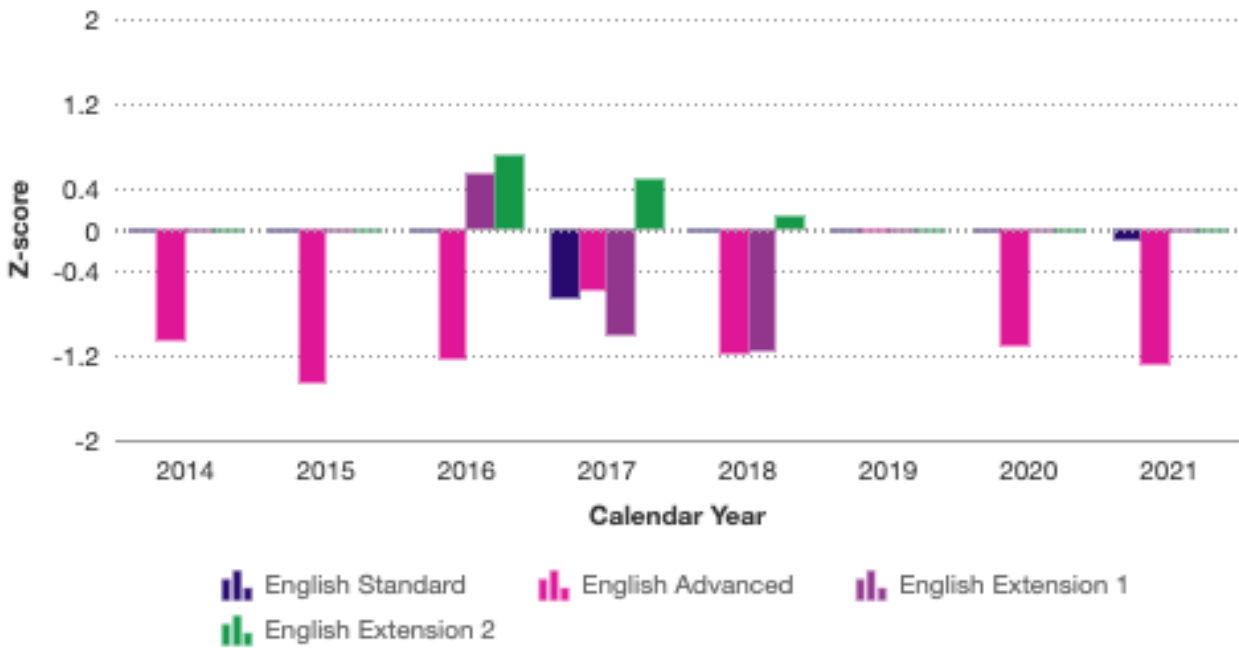
The following HSC results are displayed graphically to show the trend of student performance over time. One way to measure this is to use Z-Scores, which show the variation from the average for our school. Where the bar goes below the 0 line, on average, our students performed below the average student from the state.

2021 was the most difficult year we have had for consistency with HSC courses. We had a significant interruption from a 6 week lock-down due to a COVID outbreak in the region. Exams were delayed as a result of this, but many students suffered from the lack of face-to-face interactions or from difficult individual circumstances that significantly impacted their motivation and exam preparation and the delayed HSC exams compounded the challenges. The school utilised the illness and misadventure provisions provided by NESA, so some marks are awarded as part of that scheme.

We are proud of all our 2021 HSC students. It was a very difficult time in which to complete their final year of schooling as both their year 11 and year 12 studies were interrupted. The students who applied for further studies all gained admission.

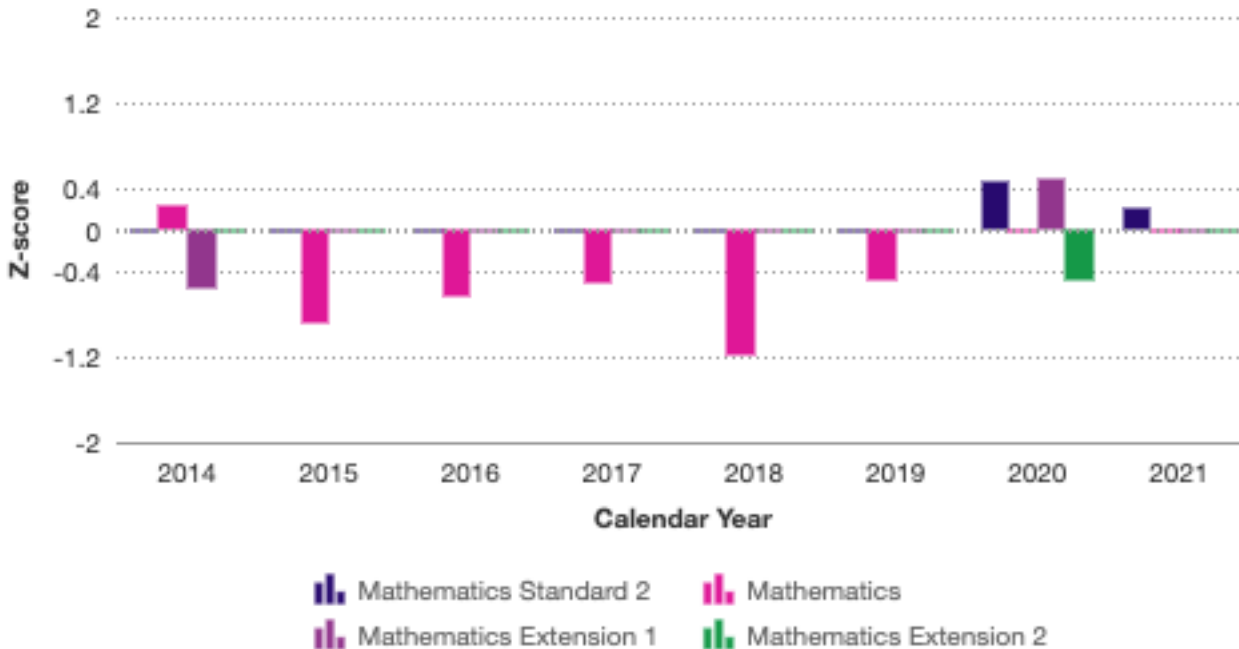
English Z-Scores

The English Z-Scores show that advanced English (which had been the only course offered except for in 2017) has been below the state average this year as in previous years. This year some students enrolled in English Standard and their results were close to the state average. Others chose English Advanced due to the quality of the course.



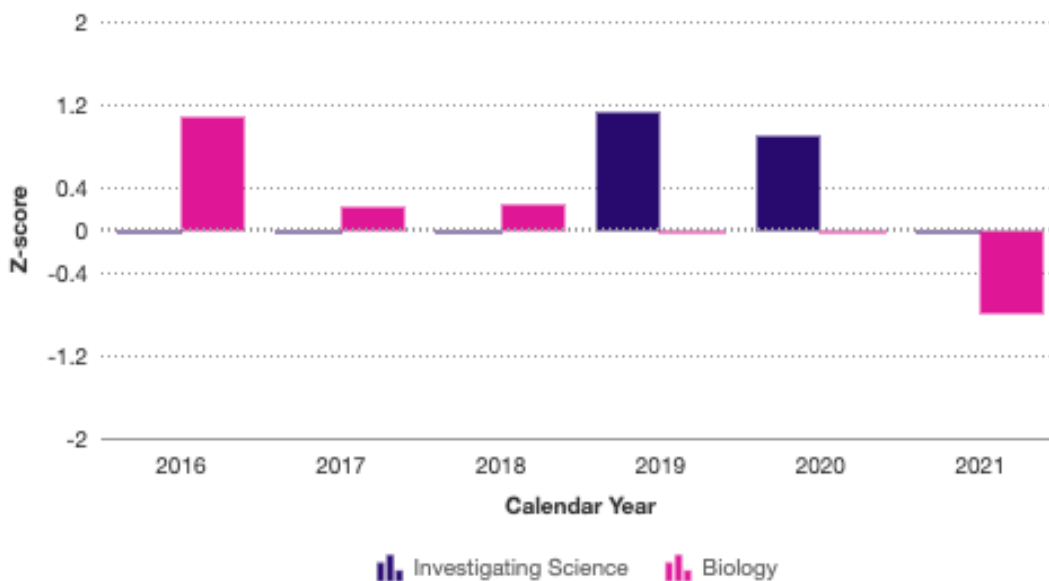
Mathematics Z-Scores

All students chose Standard Mathematics this year and averaged better than the state.



Sciences Z-Scores

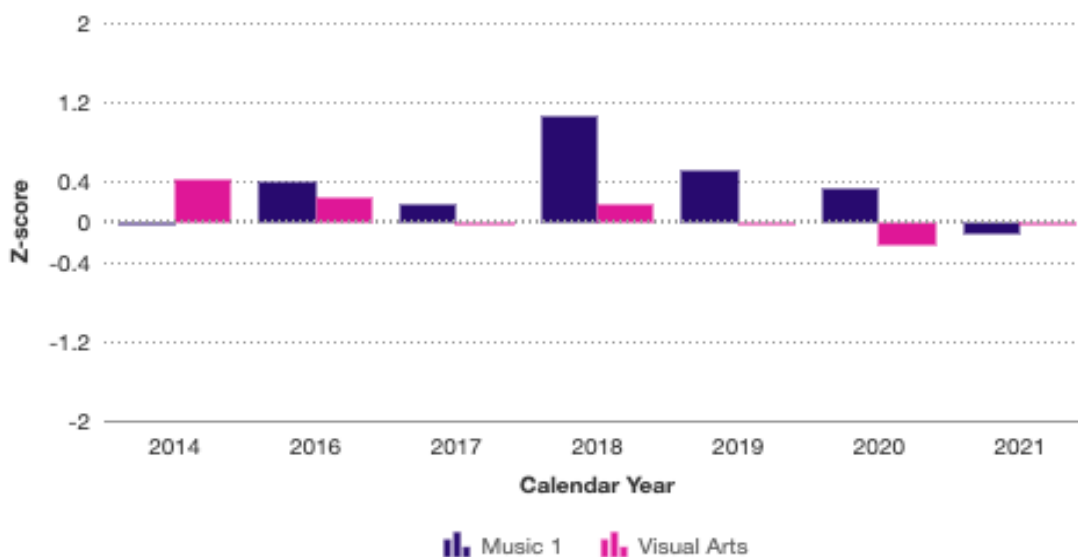
Students have consistently performed well in sciences over the years. This year, largely due to COVID interruptions for teachers and students, biology results were on average under the state.



Arts Z-Scores

Music students did well this year considering the lockdown interruptions to their rehearsal schedule, performing on average just below the state.

The Visual Arts course did not run in 2021 (it runs as a compressed course every second year)



Vocational or Trade Training

2 students undertook vocational or trade courses. Both did very well in their chosen course.

Professional learning, teaching standards and workforce composition

Professional learning

This list is not exhaustive but comprises a snapshot of the main PD activities undertaken by staff in 2021. COVID curtailed many opportunities for face to face group PD through the later part of the year especially, so there is a predominance of individual online PD.

Number of staff	course	duration	date
6	Glenaeon Steiner Teacher Intensives	20 hours	January
all	In-School PD Lisa Devine on Wellbeing	2 hours	January
all	Child Protection refresher	1.5 hours	January
2	Trauma Aware Teaching with Tom Brunzel	4 days	February
all	Educarado study	10 hours	February - August
2	SEA online Governance Modules	2 hours	February
1	Identifying and responding to children and young people at risk.	1 hour	March
all	First Aid Refresher	8 hours	March
3	Steiner's 3 Fold Social Order seminar	10 hours	March
1	STRATEGIC PLANNING PART 1 with Dr Julia Wolfson and Cath Lanigan	1.5 hours	April
1	STRATEGIC PLANNING PART 2: Mastering Difficult Conversations Course	2 hours	May
2	NSW Governance, Leadership and Management Conference	1 day	May
1	SEA Pedagogical Section zoom study sessions weekly		May - October
	Communication Strategies - building an individualised school narrative with Tracey Cain	1.5 hours	May
1	Enabling a whole school commitment to developing and implementing RAP with Stephanie Woerde, Narragunnawali	1.5 hours	June
5	Vital Years Early Childhood Conference	20 hours	July
4	National Teachers Conference	4 days	July
1	Christof Weichart Talk	1 hour	July
1	NCCD case study e-learning for secondary schools	2 hours	July
1	SEA Delegates Meetings	10 hours	August
1	Governance with John Somerset Seminar	2 hours	September
3	HSC marker support training	2 hours	September
2	Harmonising Trauma and Stress Disorders through the Arts	3 days	October
1	Trauma-informed Leadership Community of Practice session with Dr Tom Brunzell	2 hours	October
1	Leadership in a time of crisis	2 hours	November
1	ASD121 Autism Spectrum Disorder: Universal Supports	1 hour	November

Teacher Accreditation

Level of accreditation	Number of Teachers
<i>Conditional</i>	3
<i>Provisional</i>	3
<i>Proficient Teacher</i>	18
<i>Total number of teachers</i>	24

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	24
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	24
Full-time equivalent teaching staff	21.9
Non-teaching staff	31
Full-time equivalent non-teaching staff	13.5

The School employed one casual and one part time Aboriginal member of staff in 2021.

The seemingly high number of non-teaching staff includes many peripatetic music teachers

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.

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 significantly curtailed by COVID. Parents expressed their satisfaction through email correspondence relating to the standard of home learning support provided by the school during COVID.

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 8.5% from Census 2020 to Census 2021 (a greater increase than last year's 7%) 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 2021, most students continued to be actively engaged in the course work as well as extra-curricular activities, depending on their preferences.

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 each year since 2017.

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
K			91%	92%	
1	94%	93%	93%	93%	97%
2	92%	90%	94%	93%	94%
3	92%	93%	93%	87%	93%
4	90%	92%	92%	93%	91%
5	95%	90%	93%	93%	95%
6	93%	93%	91%	94%	91%
7	95%	91%	90%	94%	92%
8	95%	92%	85%	94%	88%
9	95%	86%	89%	87%	86%
10	94%	96%	85%	90%	89%
11	95%	97%	96%	95%	87%
12	95%	86%	98%	98%	83%
School	93%	92%	92%	92%	91%

High school classes are generally smaller than primary and there were a number of students with considerable health issues, especially in year 9. These factors influence attendance averages considerably. At least $\frac{3}{4}$ of all students attended more than 90% of the time.

2021 included various interruptions due to COVID that impacted attendance in a variety of ways from students not attending school through to students assumed to be attending school during lockdown.

Student attendance rate (based on years 1 to 10), semester 1 2021:

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

Student attendance rate (based on years 1 to 10), term 3 2021:

- All students 93%
- Indigenous students 93%
- Non-Indigenous students 93%

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, 2019 through to completion of year 12 in 2021 was 53%. The majority of the students who left did so at the end of year 10. 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 students finishing their HSC in 2021 include University, TAFE and paid employment. Most students achieved the results in their HSC that allowed them to access their chosen post school destination, be it further education or paid employment.

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>

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total enrolments	142	145	160	195	211	225	244
Girls	75	76	82	100	108	114	114
Boys	67	69	78	95	103	111	130
Full-time equivalent enrolments	142	145	159	189.7	204.6	216.6	236.6
Indigenous students	6%	6%	8%	7%	7%	9%	11%
Language background other than English	8%	8%	8%	7%	12%	12%	12%

The increase in enrolments is concurrent with a strong interest in Kindergarten and primary, we continue to see increases in second generation children (children of Alumni) and associated friends.

The increase in Indigenous students may be connected with the strengthening Indigenous program offered by the school supported by a strong parent/teacher Indigenous cultural group, some very active members of the College of Teachers, and our Indigenous Cultural Leader, Jarn Hodgson.

Policies

Enrolment policy

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 time, 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 2021	Access to full text
<p>Supporting Positive Student Behaviour and Discipline Policy</p> <p><i>This policy outlines the schools' approach to positive behaviour management, including guidelines to support and manage student behaviour. In Kindergarten honouring the mood of the world being Good we build a shared culture of Reverence. In the Primary within the mood of the world being Beautiful we build a supportive culture of Authority. In High School within the mood of the world being True it becomes worthy of Love. These developed moods and cultures within the classes across the stages support and nourish student's positive behaviour.</i></p> <p><i>We teach students positive behaviours across the different environments and different times of the school day. We teach values of, reverence, truth, goodness and creativity where students are encouraged to share in a vibrant learning community. The school environment is one in which students can explore, connect, make mistakes, grow, develop, and learn to be strong, ethical individuals who have the capacity to productively contribute within the school and wider community context.</i></p> <p><i>We 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. The development of human capacities and behaviour is purposefully integrated in our school learning program in a way that addresses student wellbeing throughout their school life.</i></p> <p><i>The school prohibits the use of corporal punishment in disciplining students attending the school. 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. Teachers are aware of their legal responsibilities and update their knowledge annually.</i></p> <p><i>Children all have a right and responsibility to work, play and learn in a friendly, safe and helpful environment. Teachers all have a right and responsibility to teach in a friendly, safe school, which is supported by the school community. Parents all have a right to be informed, feel welcome and know their</i></p>	<p>In November 2021 the school completed an extensive review of this policy. This had begun with a parent survey in late 2020 and included face to face parent collaboration sessions in 2021.</p> <p>The summary included here is from the final policy that was implemented in late 2021.</p>	<p>Full text available on request to the School Administration and at http://www.newcastlewaldorfschool.nsw.edu.au/school-downloads.html</p>

<p><i>children work, play and learn in a friendly, safe school environment.</i></p> <p>This policy addresses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expectations & Support ● Consequences for persistent behaviour issues ● Individual planning ● Suspension, expulsion and exclusion ● Anti-bullying 		
<p>Child Protection Policy, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prevention ● Reporting ● Risk assessment ● Roles and responsibilities 	<p>Changes made to reflect legislation changes</p>	<p>Full text available on request to the School Administration</p>
<p>Student Welfare Policy: <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"> ● Security ● Supervision ● Homework ● Dress Code ● Pastoral Care, Communication and Support ● Student Leadership ● Individual Planning ● Medical Treatment ● Excursions ● Communication and Support 	<p>No changes in 2021. Due for review in early 2022</p>	<p>Full text available on request to the School Administration</p>
<p>Complaints and Grievances</p> <p><i>Newcastle Waldorf School understands that from time to time parents and students may raise complaints in respect of services provided by the school or against staff members, which includes employees, contractors and volunteers. The following policy and procedures outlines the way in which complaints will be handled by the school.</i></p> <p><i>If parents raise concerns early, and they are addressed informally by class and subject teachers or a Co-Principal, the likelihood that they will turn into formal complaints may be greatly reduced.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Concerns ● Complaints ● Allegations ● Procedures & flowcharts 	<p>Changes in 2021 simplified the process while also providing flexibility for different types and levels of complaint.</p>	<p>Full text available on request to the School Administration</p> <p>Full text available on the School's website at</p> <p>http://www.newcastlewaldorfschool.nsw.edu.au/school-downloads.html</p>

Determined Improvement Targets

Meeting target areas of improvement

The 2020 Annual Report identified the following areas for improvement in 2021:

Teaching and Learning	
Improvement targets identified in 2020	2021 Progress
To establish Before and After School Care and Preschool facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - With delays to the plans for developing #64 reservoir Rd, we re-assessed and sought an external provider for after school care. This has commenced in early 2022 - Preschool is now on hold with priority given to a DA for a school following purchase of a new property late 2021.
To update governance and management policy and procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Significant updates in preparation for the NESA school inspection.
To constantly monitor individual and group needs across the school as well the process for identifying need and how those needs can be met. The focus this year is on the increasing diversity of support for individual needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employed Lisa Devine as school counsellor/psychologist operating 1-2 days per week. - Collaborative planning session in high school and primary school.
To support the wellbeing of teachers, students and families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employed Lisa Devine as school counsellor/psychologist operating 1-2 days per week.
To continue to support new teachers in the development of their understanding of the education philosophy of Dr. Rudolf Steiner education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Weekly mentoring of new teachers in primary school - PD opportunities for all staff with financial support
To continue to review and plan for parent collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Very difficult due to COVID and associated regulations.
To continue the work of Reconciliation by embedding Indigenous culture in the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ongoing work to create a relevant school RAP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Specific cultural work for all classes with Indigenous cultural leaders. - Consultation with local language expert to develop school acknowledgement and signage in the Awabakal language - Visits from Aboriginal experts to support Aboriginal groups within in the school.
Facilities and Resources	
To renovate or replace the administration building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Designed, but now on hold due to purchase of a new property
To purchase and install a school management system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Late in 2021 the school purchased Sentral. It will be rolled out over the course of 2022.
To continue to progress plans for utilising the school's second property to be part of the education facilities of the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The school purchased a 3rd property closer to the existing school with more suitable grounds to accommodate the Kindergarten and preschool in the future.

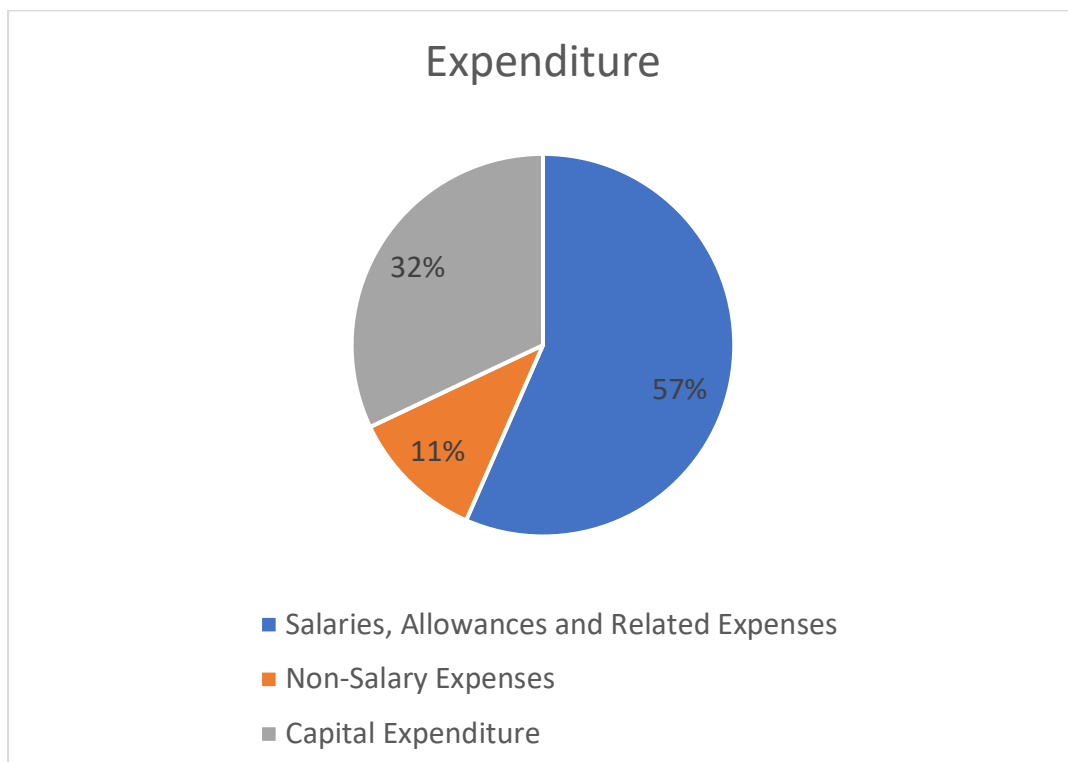
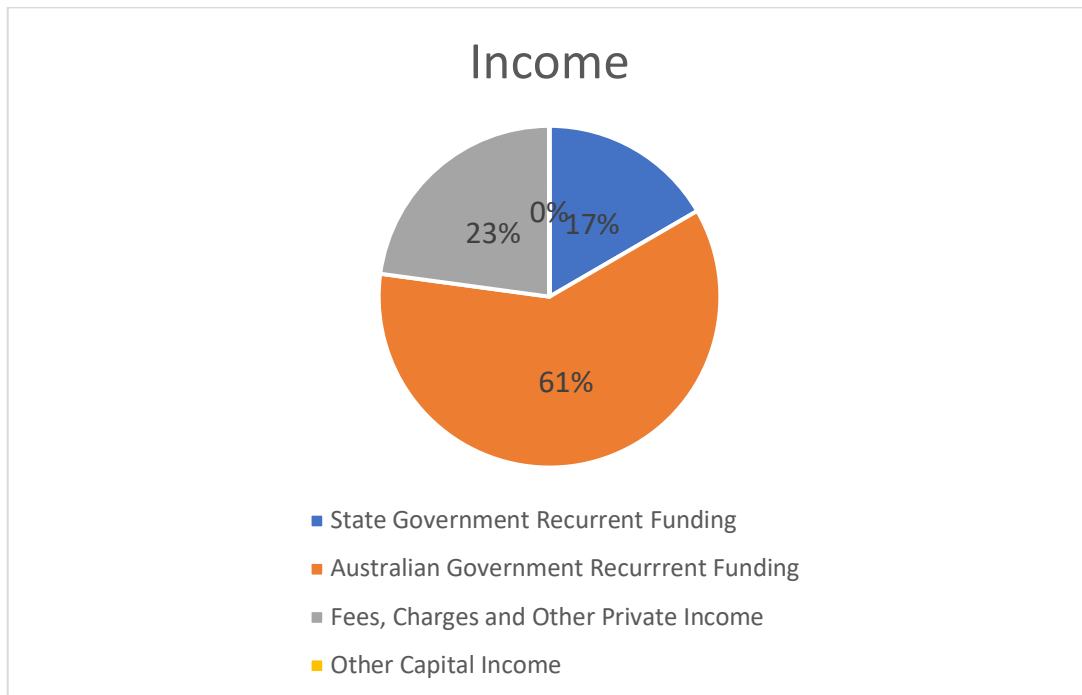
Improvement Targets for 2022

This annual report identifies the following areas for improvement in 2022 based on the strategic planning document developed over 2021:

Teaching and Learning
To develop sustainability practises across the school
To develop a more extensive camp program
To support the wellbeing of teachers, students and families.
To continue to support new teachers in the development of their understanding of the education philosophy of Dr. Rudolf Steiner
To continue to review and plan for parent collaboration
Facilities and Resources
To renovate or replace the administration building
To establish the Kindergarten at #46 and plan for Preschool or Long day care in future

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 2021, sourced from the School's audited accounts.



The large proportion of capital expenditure is the purchase of a second property in very close proximity to the existing campus.

The ratio of Salaries to Non-salaries expenses is lower than last financial year and slightly higher than 2019.