

# Annual Report 2020




## Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Acknowledgement of country .....  | 1  |
| A message from key school bodies .....  | 2  |
| Message from the Chairperson, School Board.....                                       | 2  |
| Message from the Principal .....  | 3  |
| Contextual information about the school and characteristics of the student body ..... | 5  |
| Student outcomes in standardised national literacy and numeracy testing .....         | 8  |
| Teacher professional learning, accreditation and qualifications .....                 | 9  |
| Workforce composition .....   | 10 |
| Student attendance .....  | 11 |
| Enrolment policies.....   | 13 |
| Other school policies .....   | 14 |
| School-determined priority areas for improvement .....                                | 16 |
| Initiatives promoting respect and responsibility .....                                | 17 |
| Parent, student and teacher satisfaction .....  | 18 |
| 2020 Summary financial information .....  | 19 |
| Recurrent/capital income .....  | 19 |
| Recurrent/capital expenditure.....  | 19 |



## Acknowledgement of country

At The Small School we acknowledge the traditional

respects to their Elders, past, present and future. 



connection to land, water, ways, sky and their culture. We pay our

Owners, the Bunjalung people, of this land. We acknowledge their

Artwork created by students at The Small School

## A message from key school bodies

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### Message from the Chairperson, School Board

This year, I was very happy to accept the nomination to act as Chairperson on the School Board. I had the opportunity to work with Paula Shaw on the Board for some months before she stepped down from her position. It was a great opportunity to work with Paula before stepping into the role myself. We are all very grateful to Paula for her contribution to The Small School for the past three years.

Our small school has continued to grow and to develop strong roots over the past year. We have bent with the wind when challenges such as distance learning have blown our way, fully relishing the return to the classroom. This is because we are nourished from the energy and support that shines from every one of the teachers, parents and students that make up our beautiful family. The Small School truly is a place that we love to be. Books are read, dishes are washed and in amongst the days that make up the term, people we enjoy being with surround us, nurture us, teach us and laugh with us. We are all following our passions and we share them openly, without competition or fear of judgement.

We are now proudly a fully registered Kindy to Year 5 school in 2020 and looking forward

to continuing our journey into Year 6 and beyond. We have also grown our number of enrolments which has strengthened our school community. The democratic philosophy of the school has grown stronger this year as the children have continued to develop their processes for having input into school life and for resolving conflicts.

On behalf of the Board, I extend heartfelt thanks to Carla Wilson our Principal, for a commitment to create a learning environment that is based on input from everyone, daily. Our soil has created passionate independent thinkers who care for each other. Or simply put, good humans.



**Arnie Green**

Chairperson, School Board

## Message from the Principal

We launched beautifully into our second year of operation in 2020. After another successful application to Council, we started the year with an increase in enrolments from 12 students to 25 and an approval from NESA to add Kindergarten, Year 1 and Year 5. Consequently, we branched into 2 classes: K-2 and Years 3–5 and modified our building a little to accommodate another classroom. The children named their classes the “Hummingbirds” and the “Kookaburras”, thus beginning an avian tradition for classroom names.

We were also extremely fortunate to begin the year with a new teacher, Ms Emma Wappett, who joined us after many years teaching and leading at Byron Community Primary School. All was going so well! But of course, little did we know then what was around the corner. And it wasn't only Covid-19.

Two weeks into Term 1 we had a partial school closure due to flooding. A particularly bittersweet flood as it came only weeks after Australia experienced its worst ever bushfire season. After that we had 5 awesome weeks of school! We found ourselves able to love 25 students as we had 12. There were many growing pains in the kitchen, as providing morning tea and lunch for 25 proved very different to 12. Regardless, all of our new students were settled in beautifully, with our younger students finding their stride at school for the first time, when the cold reality of what lay ahead with Covid-19 started to dawn upon us. Fire, flood and Covid: we could be forgiven for feeling under siege.

Staff spent 4 days together in mid-March developing a home learning program. This included a steep learning curve about video conferencing and online learning platforms. We sent out learning kits to children via snail mail with lessons and project assignments and tech instructions for parents. We also home delivered school devices to families who needed them.

By Monday morning of the following week, we were having our first of many Circle Times via Zoom to kick off the school day.

So much has been said about the role of teachers during lockdown. Personally, I feel a great debt of gratitude to our teachers for their contribution to the well-being of our children and school community during this time. Every morning at 9am, their smiling faces on Zoom lifted our spirits and anchored us together. We lost no enrolments due to COVID, our families stayed engaged, we made well-being calls to parents who needed them as part of our program and passed on our decrease in expenditure on school expenses directly to parents via a fee discount. Our school community survived lockdown intact.

We gradually returned to school in May, revelling in the experience of being together again. However, there was a long road ahead and we're still travelling it as I write this report over 12 months later. We have learnt so much, stretching ourselves in all kinds of new ways and having found a gratitude at simply being together that we didn't always have. We have also lived with the sadness – and at times utter despair – at the harrowing loss of life and livelihoods around the world and Covid's toll on mental health, particularly for young people. It told us something though (or reminded us) about the deeply important role school plays in the lives of children and their families, and indeed in the fabric of our societies.

We lived with Covid restrictions for 2 terms, with parents at the gate and no end-of-term celebrations. Although our school wasn't the same without parent involvement for much of the year, the children did very well and made great progress throughout the remainder of the year. Both classes familiarised themselves with many new classroom practices. A new forum for student involvement was initiated:





## A message from key school bodies *continued*

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the Nesting Ground, a fortnightly meeting to discuss children's ideas and concerns, with a decision-making process focused not on simple majority or consensus but on the value of voices being heard and acknowledged. I feel proud of our focus on democratic processes in a year that brought a renewed interest in the nature of democracies around the world.

We lodged and were ultimately successful with another Development Application with Council to provide for the school's growth into 2021. And as restrictions eased towards the end of the year, we were able to enjoy a wonderful whole school camp, with many parents joining us. Treasured memories for adults and children alike.

Incredibly, we also ended the year with another flood and we had to close the school on our second last day of the year. However, we woke up to sunshine on the very last day, allowing us to hold our end of year celebrations, with parents allowed to join for the first time since Term 1. It was a day I will always treasure.

I want to say a heartfelt thank you to Paula Shaw who stepped down from the Board after three years of service. Her contribution to our school will always have a special place in my heart.

And a final goodbye, to a very special person, Bindi Pursey, our teacher for a short while before her accident in 2019. Bindi died from complications of her injuries after living for many months with them. She managed to return home to her boys but tragically not for long. We miss you Bindi.

So, 2020 was not what we expected! After all the hard work of the preceding years getting our little school off the ground there was, I must admit, a tantalising thought that life might get a bit easier and allow us to catch our breath. It wasn't to be. But still, we reaped riches and found many things to be grateful for – just not the ones we were expecting. Consequently, we love our little school just a little bit more.

**Carla Wilson**  
Principal



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

The Small School is a new independent school in the heart of Murwillumbah, beginning operation in 2019 with 12 students in Years 2, 3 and 4 and one full-time teaching position. In 2020, we have grown to 25 students and two full-time teaching positions.

We are committed to the philosophy of democratic education, which prioritises children having a voice in their own school, and providing an environment where children feel safe and empowered to speak about their feelings and thoughts, and learn the skills and value of listening to others.

We have a focus on developing self-direction and self-ownership of learning, project-based learning, play-based and hands-on learning, self-reflection for both students and staff and the development of a community to support each other and our children to navigate our modern world.

We truly value and welcome parents and community mentors to participate in our school. We want children to experience being at school and learning at school in connection with their families and wider community as much as possible.

The Small School has a multi-age setting and in 2020 offered two classes for all students, K-2 and Years 3-5. Teachers modify or extend material commensurate to a child's capacity and readiness. Teachers have a strong focus on individualising students' learning programs and deliver the curriculum with flexibility, allowing for a wider spectrum of abilities not defined by age.

At the school's inception we chose to structure our philosophy based on guiding principles. The guiding principles provide firm ground and clear direction for the school while still allowing for the philosophy to continue to develop along with the school community, while the school is so young.

## **We have six guiding principles in our educational philosophy:**

1. Relationships with each other and with the environment are of paramount importance.
2. Learning is theme-based (integrated and emergent curriculum) and real-world focused (experiential).
3. Children thrive when they have some say in how they spend their day and what they learn (Democratic Education).
4. Families are part of the school (family-centred education).
5. We learn cooperatively not competitively (non-competitive environment).
6. Playing is learning too (free play and play-based teaching and learning).



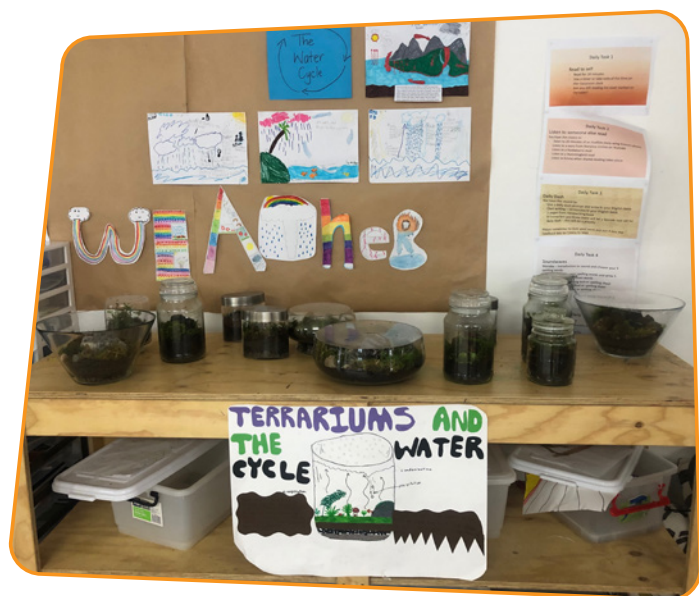
*Couchie Creek*

**There are three learning frames in The Small School (TSS) Educational Program. They are:**

### Frame 1

#### Focused Key Learning Areas (KLAs)

Focused KLAs include English, Mathematics, and Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE). Focused KLAs are taught in class groups by the classroom teacher with the exception of PDHPE which is taught on occasion by both teachers using a team-teaching approach to the whole school. The English syllabus is also taught through our whole school meetings (The Nesting Ground). The students learn to develop and apply contextual knowledge as well as understand and apply knowledge of language forms and features as they discuss new ideas for the school and problem solve together.



*Terrariums*

### Frame 2

#### Thematic Learning Units (Integrated KLAs)

One theme is selected for a school-wide approach to learning each term. Each thematic learning unit explores key concepts across multiple KLAs, including Science and Technology, History, Geography, Creative Arts and PDHPE. There is also a continuing focus for teachers to identify and use English and maths learning opportunities within thematic units.

Themes are chosen for their richness and breadth in a collaborative process between students and teachers. Each theme is broad enough to accommodate each individual child's interests and passions. This ensures that teachers can focus on real student engagement, a key benefit of this approach.

Themes also provide a focus for excursions. In Term 1 for Marine Life, students had excursions to the Hastings Point Marine Museum and rock pools and to the Ballina Sea Turtle Hospital (Australian Seabird Rescue). Both of which were hugely popular and fortunately scheduled before lockdown and remote learning began. Coincidentally, the theme for Term 2, Houses, Homes and Habitats proved very useful for project ideas during lockdown and provided a focus for at home art, with all children contributing a sketch of a habitat to be screen printed onto our first school t-shirt.

#### Themes for 2020

|        |                            |
|--------|----------------------------|
| Term 1 | Marine Life                |
| Term 2 | Houses, Homes and Habitats |
| Term 3 | Weather                    |
| Term 4 | My Self                    |



### Frame 3

#### Student-Owned Skills and Sustainability Program (Courses/Additional Activities)

Previously called the Core School Community Program (CSCP), the Student-Owned Skills and Sustainability Program (SOSS) is a result of a reviewing and refining the CSCP. SOSS includes four courses – 1. Electives, 2. Personal Interest Projects, 3. Sustaining The Small School (STSS) and 4. Investigations.

The courses in the SOSS program are authentic, purposeful, skills-based and sustainability-focused. The underlying pedagogical approach is aimed at promoting student choice and responsibility and engagement in school life.

##### 1. Course Title: Electives

Electives are offered by staff, parents and/or community members in areas of interest and/or expertise and are optional activities that the children elect to participate in. The variety and focus of the elective choices are guided by teachers who explore and suggest areas of interest which are either art/craft, science or sports based. As with all elements of the SOSS Program, Electives are hands-on, authentic, purposeful and involve student choice.

Examples include – circus skills, tie dying and an enduringly popular elective, Dungeons and Dragons (storytelling game).



*Couchie Creek*

##### 2. Course Title: Personal Interest Projects

Students have the opportunity to delve further into areas of personal interest by completing an individual project. These projects can be technology based, research projects, create and build or performance based. Students plan and complete their project throughout the course of the term and present it with a method of their choice on the last day of each Term to parents and interested community members on 'Community Day'.

The underlying pedagogical aim for the PIPs is to create awareness of the design and learning process through the development of planning and organisational skills and self-responsibility in learning.



*Dungeons and Dragons*

##### 3. Course Title: Sustaining The Small School (STSS)

Sustaining The Small School (STSS) is a weekly whole-school activity facilitated by teachers, as well as other staff members and occasionally parents. Activities are aimed at creating authentic, hands-on and purposeful experiences. These experiences often support children's learning of key concepts within Mathematics, English, PDHPE, Creative Arts and cross-curriculum themes, particularly Sustainability. Additionally, the underlying pedagogy in STSS is aimed at promoting responsibility, feelings of belonging and engagement with school life.

Students help to identify and create the STSS activities and choose which one to participate in. Examples of activities that may be offered within STSS include, but are not limited to, gardening and cooking projects, waste management projects, school beautification or improvement projects, fundraising projects, etc.

#### 4. Course Title: Investigations (Walker Learning Approach)

The Walker Learning Approach is an Australian holistic pedagogical approach. The aim of the Walker Learning Approach is to promote a sense of investigation, wonder, exploration, curiosity and interest with a rich range of materials, resources and opportunities in which students can engage. The Walker Learning pedagogical approach positions the child at the centre of their learning, considering their individual development and personal interests.

During Investigations, children have the opportunity to investigate and engage with learning areas of their choosing within the classroom. The classroom teacher plans, designs and creates a number of learning areas (Literacy, Numeracy, Collage, Construction, Dramatic Play, Tinkering, Sensory etc) to support the current learning intentions of the class



*School camp activities*

## Student outcomes in standardised national literacy and numeracy testing

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NAPLAN cancelled due to Covid pandemic in 2020.



*Tennis lessons*



# Teacher professional learning, accreditation and qualifications

Staff members Carla Wilson, Ellie World, Katie Power and Rachelle Longstaff all completed First Aid training in 2020 via the course, 'Provide an Emergency First Aid Response in an Education & Care Setting'. All staff completed training in Provide Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR).

All staff participated in child protection professional learning. Teachers, Katie Power and Emma Wappett completed Obligations in Identifying and Responding to Children and Young People at Risk. Carla Wilson completed NSW Child Protection Crossing Professional Boundaries training with AIS. Carla Wilson and Ellie World also completed the Child Safe eLearning Course with the Office of the Children's Guardian.

In response to COVID-19, teachers Katie Power and Emma Wappett participated in a webinar offered by the AIS- Effective teaching and learning when students are at home.

Katie Power, K/1/2 Classroom teacher, participated in Early Life Foundations 'Walker Learning Professional Development – 2 Day Intensive (NSW)'. This child-led and child-centred developmentally appropriate pedagogical approach aligns with the overarching school philosophy. Walker Learning balances explicit teaching with time for children to actively investigate a range of skills and social and emotional experiences, facilitating development of these skills through planned and purposeful play.

Years 3-5 teacher, Emma Wappett, participated in a Genius Hour online webinar. This professional learning was selected to support the development of the Personal Interest Projects program.

Classroom teachers, Katie Power and Emma Wappett, participated in Introduction to Soundwaves Spelling Program. Teachers developed their knowledge and skills in using the program in order to adopt Soundwaves as a school-wide approach to spelling instruction

*Ms Katie Power with the Hummingbird class on their first day of school in 2020.*





## Workforce composition

In our second year of operation, we had two full-time teaching positions. These positions were filled by Ms Katie Power and Mrs Emma Wappett, who joined our team this year.

We also had learning support from Mrs Cassie Callaghan, who has been a wonderful addition to our team.

Both Emma and Cassie have become much-loved by students, as much as our founding teacher, Katie, which we thought might not be possible. But it has been, and it is great to see the children have a broader spectrum of adults to call upon.

Ms Ellie World has continued in her role at the heart of our school, supporting teachers and students and managing gardens and kitchen. Ellie has been helped in her role by Ms Rachelle Longstaff who has contributed many hours to the kitchen and garden.

The role of School Manager, Carla Wilson, has continued to involve business and office administration, coordination of our school community, ongoing development of our school philosophy and responsibility for planning, reporting and compliance.

The role of one day per week administrative assistant is filled by Ms Monica Munro, who now works in a paid capacity after volunteering in the role for a year. Monica's responsibilities continue to grow with more duties being delegated by Carla, which has led to great improvement in the functioning of the school office.

The Small School Business Service provides for the financial management needs of small, independent schools, including ours. They have acted as outsourced financial administration to the school and have continued to bring expertise and rigorous expectations to our financial management.



*Ready for camp!*

# Student attendance

| Grade                            | Whole year attendance rates for 2020 by Year level |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Kindy                            | 84%  |
| Year 1                           | 85.4%  |
| Year 2                           | 83.4%  |
| Year 3                           | 89.7%  |
| Year 4                           | 92.87%   |
| Year 5                           | 91.3%  |
| Whole school attendance K-5 2020 | 87.8%  |



*Bamboo grove*

## The following excerpt from our Enrolment and Attendance Policy outlines our approach to non-attendance.

### Strategies for improving regular attendance

Resolution of attendance difficulties will be carried out in accordance with the school's commitment to early intervention and support for families and the school's Wellbeing and Safety Policy.

Early intervention is the most effective way to resolve irregular attendance. Mostly irregular attendance will be resolved through prompt follow-up with parents, face-to-face if possible, during drop-off or pick-up. If a face-to-face conversation is not possible then contact will be made by phone call, email or SMS (in that order of preference). This can be carried out by the School Manager or teaching staff.

Early intervention strategies are informal although they are recorded in the Student File by the School Manager or the teacher. Teachers and the School Manager must inform each other of discussions/contacts they have had with parents. This can be done informally or at staff meetings.

The discussions (or written contacts) will invite parents/guardians to discuss any concerns or barriers that may exist for the child and/or parents about the child being at school and offer to devise strategies to address them. Strategies could include:

- o Having an informal meeting with parents and if appropriate the child, to discuss any concerns or barriers that may exist.
- o Asking the child or parent if they know what might help them feel more comfortable at school.
- o Providing one-on-one time with the child and a trusted staff member at school.
- o Reminding a parent they are welcome to stay with their child at school while their child settles in.
- o Investigating a different teaching approach for the child.
- o Addressing concerns about a relationship with another child (if relevant) and facilitating the development of their relationship or if not possible, providing them with strategies to be separate at the school.

Where informal early intervention methods have not resulted in an improvement of a student's attendance

an Attendance Improvement Meeting will be arranged where a child is considered to have unsatisfactory attendance.

A child is considered to have an unsatisfactory school attendance when they have:

- o Regular absences without explanation/satisfactory explanation (despite follow-up from the school) for more than 15-20 days in a term.
- o Regular absences and explanations provided by parents which are not accepted by the School Manager.
- o An extended period of absence without an explanation or the explanation is not accepted by the School Manager. An extended period of absence may be consecutive or irregular patterns of non-attendance.

At Attendance Improvement Meetings:

- o Any matter discussed at an informal early intervention meeting will be reviewed.
- o A documented school-based Attendance Improvement Plan is developed.
- o Parents will be reminded of their legal obligation under the Act and the School Manager's obligations under the Act to keep accurate records of attendance, decide whether reasons given for absences are justified and to address issues of non-attendance, which could include the involvement of outside agencies.
- o Referral to outside support agencies is arranged where necessary.

Where Attendance Improvement Meeting strategies do not work to improve school attendance, the School Manager will work collaboratively with other government or non-government agencies including the NSW Association of Independent Schools to arrange for a Compulsory Attendance Conference if this is recommended.

The Compulsory Schooling Conference is the final school-based intervention that can be taken to address matters of unsatisfactory school attendance. The School Manager must explain to parents that the school may refer the case to the Department of

Education Legal Services to take further action where children of compulsory school age continue to have unacceptable unexplained or unjustified absences from school, despite attempted interventions at the school level.

If a child's attendance at school remains unsatisfactory the Department may apply to the Children's Court for a Compulsory Schooling Order. The Children's Court magistrate may order a Compulsory Schooling Conference to be convened.

The School and the Department legal staff will remain committed to working in partnership with parents to address the issues which are preventing a child's full participation at school. In circumstances where a breach of compulsory schooling orders occurs further action may be taken against a parent in the Local Court. The result of court action can be the imposition of a community service order or a fine.

Extended unexplained absences where it is believed that the child has left the school will be followed up in accordance with the requirements outlined in this policy, namely evidence that a Department of Education Officer with home liaison responsibilities has been notified of the child's full name, date of birth, last known address, last date of attendance, parents' names and contact details, an indication of possible destination, other information that may assist officers to locate the child, and any known work health and safety risks associated with contacting the parents or child.



## Enrolment policies

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The Enrolment Policies for Families is available on our website at: <https://www.thesmallschool.org.au/policies-procedures>

This provides families with a full description of the enrolment process.

The Enrolment and Attendance Policy is a policy which is for internal use, it is consistent with the Enrolment Policies for Families and describes in detail the school's procedures for enrolment and attendance. This policy is attached with this Annual Report to the NESA submission through RANGS Online.



*Having fun at camp!*

# Other school policies

TSS has policies concerning student welfare. They include:

- Behaviour Management Policy;
- Anti-Bullying Policy;
- Raising a Concern or Complaint Policy;
- Well-Being and Safety Policy.

As a democratic school we are committed to procedural fairness for children, parents and staff alike in all our day-to-day activities. We do not allow corporal punishment of any kind in our school and have policies to guide our actions to ensure that we uphold procedural fairness when disciplining children. This remains the case in the event of suspension or expulsion, where adherence to policies is critical.

*Our Behaviour Management Policy* is concerned with supporting a culture of relationship building and connection, with a view to always wanting to create a feeling of belonging in school life. Misbehaviour in most cases is seen as developmentally normal and usually responds to consistent, gentle and supportive redirection.

Participation of children in the development of the school’s behavioural expectations (rules) is critical. Agreements are reached through discussion of the what, why and how and of dissenting views.

Bullying occurs when we feel frightened, unsafe, embarrassed, angry or unfairly treated as a result of

someone’s behaviour towards us. It can be confusing and isolating. At TSS we talk openly about bullying – what it is, how it affects people and what we can do about it.

Staff understand that bullying can have complex dynamics and that children who display bullying behaviour may be experiencing difficulties in their lives outside of school or may be responding or retaliating to another undetected or unreported incident.

Special Circles provide a forum to address concerns about bullying. However, this is not a carte blanche approach. Each incident of concerning behaviour is different as are the feelings of the child affected. Some children may want to address issues in a Special Circle. For others this is too confronting, and teachers must support children to have their voice in a different way, usually by speaking on their behalf until they have the confidence to speak for themselves.

Our close relationships to children and consequent close observation of their relationships with each other, provides very strong protection against any systemic behaviour going unnoticed or unaddressed.

The following table provides further summaries of our policies relating to student welfare.

| TSS Policies   | Changes made during 2020          | Access to policy                    |
|--|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <p><i>Well-Being and Safety Policy</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Describes the culture and overarching principles TSS ascribes to for the well-being and safety of both children and staff.</li><li>• It references other TSS policies related to physical health and health plans, codes of conduct for children, parents, staff and child protection.</li><li>• It outlines the framework which supports the physical, emotional, intellectual and social safety of children. Similarly, for staff, it outlines the foundation of the rights of staff to work in a professional and safe environment and references the <i>Work, Health and Safety Policy</i>.</li></ul> | No changes were made during 2020. | On the school website, link below*. |

table continues over page

## Other school policies *continued*

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <p><b><i>Anti-Bullying Policy</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides clarification of what a safe environment is for children, what the effects of bullying can be, the responsibilities of staff, children and parents in relation to the prevention of bullying, how we monitor the nature of relationships at the school and how we address problems using principles of restorative justice as far as possible.</li> <li>Restorative justice principles include guided discussion and negotiations. This process is described more below in <b><i>Behaviour Management Policy</i></b>.</li> </ul>   | <p>No changes were made during 2020.</p> | <p>On the school website, link below*.</p> |
| <p><b><i>Behaviour Management Policy</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First and foremost, the <b><i>Behavior Management Policy</i></b> outlines the duty of care and kindness adults have to children, the responsibility of adults to model respectful behaviour and relationships in the school and it expressly prohibits the use of corporal punishment of any kind.</li> <li>It outlines the school's commitment to conflict resolution, procedural fairness and restorative justice as the basis for behavioural management.</li> <li>It references the codes of conduct and describes our priorities: modelling by adults; teaching methods which are responsive to individual needs, rule development as a collaborative and relationship-building exercise and an understanding that most misbehaviour is developmentally normal and responds to clear and calm redirection.</li> <li>It outlines the principles for responding to breaches in the codes of conduct: procedural fairness, record management, restorative justice and prohibition of corporal punishment.</li> <li>Restorative justice allows all affected parties of a social/behavioural problem, to have their experiences heard in a mediated process, to assist children to take meaningful responsibility for their actions. Restorative justice principles are used informally in Special Circles where non-serious breaches of the Code of Conduct are addressed. They are also used more formally in meetings between staff, parents and children to address serious or repeated non-serious breaches.</li> </ul> | <p>No changes were made during 2020.</p> | <p>On the school website, link below*.</p> |
| <p><b><i>Raising a Concern or Complaint Policy</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sets out the process for raising concerns or complaints about any aspect of the school's operations.</li> <li>States the goal of creating a culture of openness in receiving constructive complaints with a view to strengthening the school through their effective resolution.</li> <li>Provides the steps for making a complaint.</li> </ul>  | <p>No changes were made during 2020.</p> | <p>On the school website, link below*.</p> |

\* <https://www.thesmallschool.org.au/policies-procedures>



# School-determined priority areas for improvement

## Areas identified for improvement in 2020 and outcomes:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Parent Communication</b>   | <p>There was some improvement in the school newsletter but it remains a workload challenge for staff. The school messenger group has been used to provide parents with updates and photos of activities.</p> <p>Material is being collected for inclusion in a Family Handbook.</p> <p>Introduction for Parent Information sessions in the second week of each school term has been a successful way of providing information to parents.</p> <p>One confidential survey was implemented regarding returning to school after lockdown.</p>   |
| <b>Implementation of NCCD Guidelines</b>  | <p>A new teacher with considerable experience in NCCD implementation was able to provide peer training and support leading to a significant improvement in our capacity to meet NCCD obligations.</p>  |
| <b>Review of Educational Program Frame 3</b>                                    | <p>This review was carried out as part of our preparations for our NESA application for renewal of K, 1 and 5 and initial registration of 6.</p> <p>The program was renamed 'Student-Owned Skills and Sustainability Program'. It makes up the additional activities component of the timetable and includes 1. Electives, 2. Personal Interest Projects, 3. Sustaining TSS and 4. Investigations (Walker Learning approach for younger students). The purpose of the program and its offerings have been refined (as described above in Contextual information about the school).</p> |
| <b>Professional development for teachers</b>                                    | <p>There was a larger PD budget for teachers in 2020 and all staff participated in training. Training opportunities were discussed at our planning day and priorities and timing for training was determined.</p>  |
| <b>Learning support for children with additional needs</b>                      | <p>A part-time learning support teacher has been engaged to provide one-to-one support for children with additional learning needs and a quiet space has been set-up to provide for this. All children who see the learning support teacher have an individual learning program (ILP) developed and reviewed with their classroom teacher.</p>   |
| <b>More formal approaches to the development of social and emotional skills</b> | <p>Successful introduction of the Becoming A Teenager (BAT) Program with parent consent and input.</p>   |

|                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <b>In 2021, we intend to improve:</b> | The regular production of school newsletter and provide a Family Handbook.            |
|                                       | Parent survey for broad feedback about the school.                                    |
|                                       | Physical challenges inside and outside of school (more adventurous camps/excursions). |
|                                       | Our understanding and implementation of ATSI cross curricula priorities.              |

## Initiatives promoting respect and responsibility

Healthy conflict resolution is a large part of our culture at TSS. Staff regularly use restorative justice principles in Special Circles to guide children towards a better understanding of their own and others' behaviours.

A specific initiative introduced this year for the older students was called Becoming A Teenager (BAT), which had a primary focus on support networks and kind and respectful behaviour, both in oneself and what one should expect in their relationships with others. This will be continued each term and for the older children is moving towards concepts of consent.

The BAT Program was specifically discussed with parents at a Parent Information Session before it was introduced. A very broad range of topics was offered and the program was refined based on parents' feedback. The issue of consent was particularly important to parents.

The Parent Information Sessions was a new initiative in 2020. It takes place on the second week in each term and is an opportunity for teachers to inform parents of the details of the upcoming term and for parents to provide their ideas and suggestions.

Rights are balanced with responsibilities at TSS and there is an expectation that children will contribute to a tidy and well-functioning learning environment. Jobs are carried out according to a roster at the end of each day. This has become an important part of our culture and the children's capacity to engage constructively with these tasks in the last 10 minutes of the day before closing Circle has improved enormously.



*Frankie the dog, Ellie World and students*

## Parent, student and teacher satisfaction

Throughout 2020, teachers continued to develop ways of checking for student satisfaction and engagement. Both classroom teachers hold 'mat chats' each week to explicitly seek student feedback and input. A standing agenda item for 'mat chat feedback' has been added to staff meetings to ensure the flow of communication and facilitate the implementation of student ideas.

The fortnightly, whole school meeting, Nesting Ground, uses the same mechanism with a standing agenda item for feedback in staff meetings. It's critical for the process of student satisfaction and engagement that the process of obtaining their input is an authentic process. Mat Chat and Nesting Ground feedback goes via staff meetings and back to Mat Chats and Nesting Ground for implementation once staff have discussed any practical considerations. This way children see their feedback transformed into action, making it an empowering and authentic exercise. Where children's ideas cannot be implemented, reasons are provided to them. There have been many examples of children's ideas coming to fruition, one being running club which now happens every Friday morning as a result of a Nesting Ground discussion.

This year, parent feedback was particularly sought around the home learning program. This was done via email, a brief survey about returning to school and a dedicated Zoom session with parents and staff during lockdown. Parent feedback was overwhelmingly positive about the home learning program. There was a small amount of frustration for some parents who were finding it increasingly difficult to provide for their children at home. Following this feedback, staff provided for one child to attend school, although not the child of an essential worker, it was nonetheless needed for this family.

Staff at TSS operate in a collaborative, professional environment with many decisions being made together in staff and planning meetings. A culture of openness and mutual respect is very important at TSS. Teachers are seen as expert professionals who carry out a complex, vital and demanding job. The respect and autonomy afforded to teachers contributes greatly to their satisfaction and consequently the satisfaction of the children in their care. Specifically, feedback from staff is sought by the School Manager in annual staff reviews.

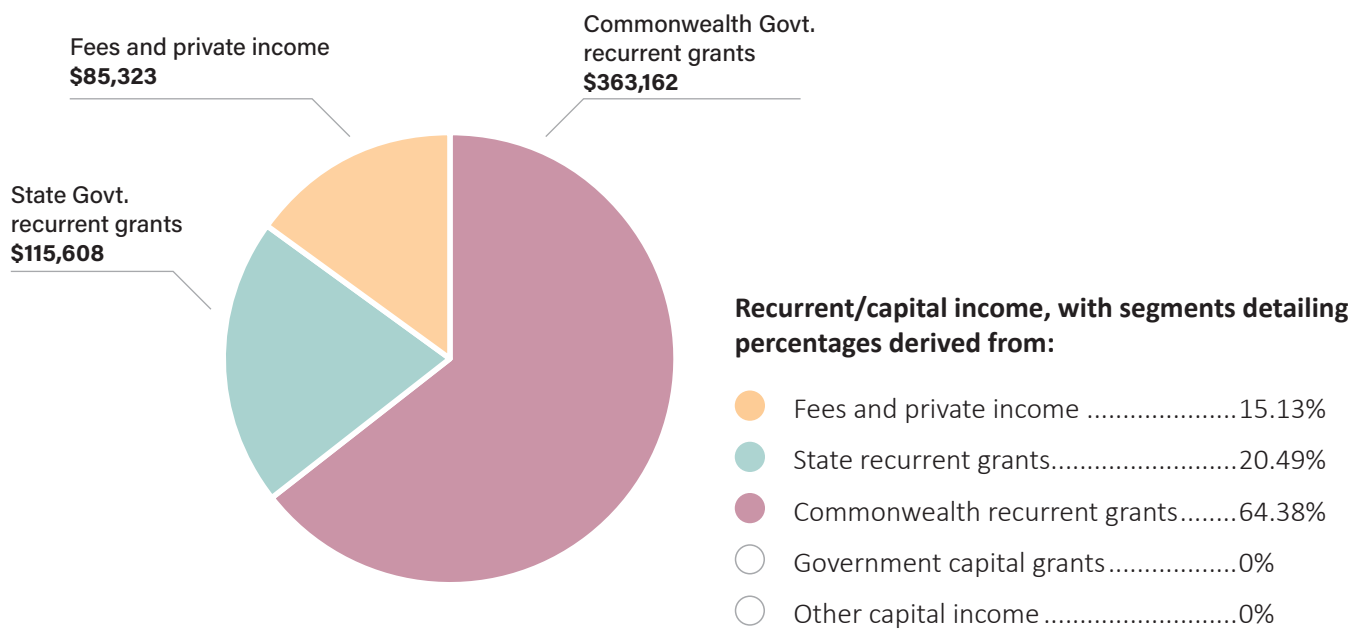


*Zoom classes during COVID-19 lockdown*

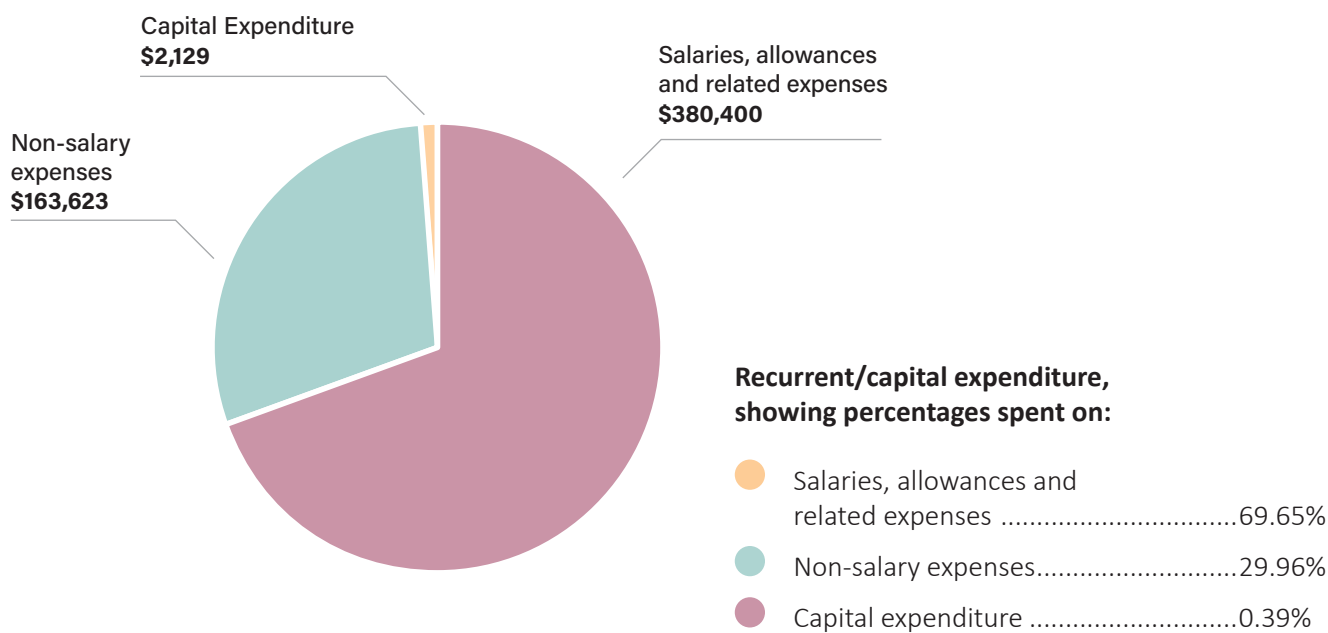


# 2020 Summary financial information

## Recurrent/capital income



## Recurrent/capital expenditure





The  
Small  
School

