



Annual Report 2019



The Currajong School is a registered independent specialist primary school for children with social, emotional and behavioural disorders.

We take a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and is fully committed to ensuring that its strategies, policies, procedures and practices meet all Child Safe Standards as specified in Ministerial Order No. 870 (2015).

Vision

To transform the lives of children experiencing social, emotional and behavioural disorders.

Mission

To provide a positive and therapeutic school environment for children whose social, emotional and behavioural needs are unable to be met within mainstream education.

Goal

To work intensively with children to develop the learning and coping strategies which will allow them to re-enter mainstream education with healthy self-esteem, established work habits, and acceptable behaviours. To achieve this goal, children are treated respectfully as individuals, given responsibility for their own behavioural choices, taught to be resourceful in solving problems, and accepted as valued members of the school community. Children are encouraged at all times to seek positive rather than negative ways of belonging.

Philosophy

The Currajong School is committed to providing a positive and therapeutic school experience for children presenting with significant social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The educational program at Currajong has been designed to meet the needs of these young students, with social-emotional learning as an integral component of the curriculum.

The Currajong School operates within the framework of a nurture approach, where learning is understood developmentally, and all behaviour is viewed as communication. The classroom offers a safe base for vulnerable children whose complex social and emotional needs have become a barrier to both their learning and their wellbeing. With the nurture approach students' social and emotional development and learning is supported and enhanced, and the opportunity provided for them to reach their greatest potential.

Values

In Term 4, 2019 the students and staff commenced a process to determine the attributes that we most value in our lives. Using a model of collaboration and consultation, the staff and students created an agreed set of values that we aim to always demonstrate:

Respect

Treating people kindly, in a way that shows you care about their wellbeing and how they feel. Sometimes it means doing things for them or listening to their instructions.

Responsibility

Being honest and fair, having courage, and owning your actions.

Resilience

Bouncing back from challenges and difficulties, giving things a go, and trying your best.

Governance

The Currajong School Limited is a company limited by guarantee. The Board of Directors forms the School Council which acts as the governing body, appoints the school principal, and establishes and monitors the strategic direction of the school. The operation of the school is delegated by the Board of Directors to the school principal.

Board of Directors

Mrs Deborah Negri (Chair)

Ms Connie Linney-Barber, BAppSc (RMIT), DipCommServices (Swinburne)

Ms Philippa Murray, BA (Monash), G-DipPubRel (RMIT), MEd (Primary)

Ms Elizabeth Pattison, BSc (Hons)

Mr Stephen Carey, BBsComm (Journalism)

Mr Ken Vaughan, DipBuilding

Company Secretary: Belinda Wright

Staffing

In 2019 the staff comprised 23 teaching, support and administrative staff, with a mix of full-time and part-time. No staff member identified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background.

Leadership team

Principal

Susan Coull (October →), BMus (Melbourne), MSpEd (Monash)

Jenine Pallent (Jan – Sept), BEd Prim (Vic College), MEd Studies (Welfare, Melb; Leadership, Monash)

Administrator

Belinda Wright

Assistant Principal

Sonia Dunne, BEd (Tasmania), MSpEd (Deakin)

Teachers

Paul Crick, Dip Tch (W Sydney), BSpEd (New England)

Kerri Ledingham, Dip Tch Prim (Christchurch College), MSpEd (Deakin)

Joanne Linsdell, BVisArt (Vic College of Arts), G-Dip Ed (Hawthorn Inst), MVisArt (Sydney College and Glasgow Schools of Art), MSpEd (Melb)

Ruth Mangan, BA (Melb), PG-Dip Transp Counsel

Cris Payne, DipTch Prim (Monash), G-DipSpEd (Vic College), BEd (Deakin)

Amy Russell, BA Tch (Kingston, London), P-G Cert Inclusion (OpenU), P-G Cert NASENCo

Michele Whitby, BA (Deakin), BEd (Deakin), MSpEd (Deakin)

Teaching Assistants

Jamie Choon, BAppSc (Deakin)

Noelle Collado, Cert III Education

Nicole Eykman, BFineArts (Monash)

Janine Hamilton, Cert III Education

Susan Hughes, BA (Monash), G-DipEd Sec (Monash), DipCouns, DipFamIntake

Sarah Hunt, BVisArt (Monash), BFineArts (Monash), G-DipEd Sec (Monash)

Georgia Koutina, Cert III Education Support

Frances Moon, BEd Mus (Deakin)

Nancy Moss, Cert III Education

Bernadette Young, BA (Caulfield) Cert Education (Deakin)

Matt Young

Zac Wright

Specialist Support

Psychology

Sharon Crowley, BA, G-DipAppPsych, MPsych – Child & Educational (Monash)

Speech Pathology

Suzanne Goldin, BASpHear (Witwatersrand, S Africa)

Aretha deKretser, BA (Psych), MSpPath, CPSP

Direct Instruction/ Transition Co-ordinator

Marnie Nyhuis, BTch (Deakin), G-DipSpEd (Deakin)

External Service Providers

Music – Hey Dee Ho Educational Services

Dance – Fit2Move

Swimming – Ashburton Pool & Recreation Centre

Strategic Development

Throughout 2019, the Board, Principal and key staff developed a Strategic Plan. This was endorsed in November 2019 and will be implemented until 2022. Five key areas were identified addressing the immediate needs of the school community:

Our Learning and Wellbeing – improving educational and allied health services; enhancing transition into and out of the school; introducing Positive Behaviour in Schools.

Our Staff – implementing a performance and development system with regular feedback; improving communication; documenting and increasing transparency of employment conditions.

Our Community – increasing opportunities for parental involvement; engaging with external stakeholders; sharing staff expertise back into the community.

Our Facilities – developing a master plan to improve school facilities; improving technology supports and offerings.

Our Governance – building the representation, skill sets and diversity of the Board members; planning for succession; ensuring turnover of Board members.

Programs

Curriculum

The Australian curriculum informs the pedagogical direction for all students. It “sets the goal for what all students should learn as they progress through their school life – wherever they live in Australia and whichever school they attend”. We teach seven of the eight learning areas: English, Mathematics, Science, Health and Physical Education (HPE), Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS), The Arts and Technologies. As a specialist school, we are exempt from teaching a language.

Social-emotional supports

An Individual Education Plan is designed in consultation between the school, parents/carers/guardians and external services for every student.

A psychologist and speech pathologist provide therapeutic services to individuals and small groups. The psychologist facilitates fortnightly shared meetings for parents. Raphi, a trained therapy dog, provides supports for students three to four days per week.

A program of supports and programs is individualised for each student’s needs to assist them managing and monitoring their behaviour.

Nurture School

The Currajong School is an accredited National Nurturing School, through Nurture UK. Nurturing schools embed a nurturing culture throughout their schools, enhancing teaching and learning, promoting healthy outcomes for children and young people. This is achieved by focusing on emotional needs and development as well as academic learning in a whole school environment. Nurture has a significant influence on social emotional skills, wellbeing and behaviour.

Improved School Facilities

A number of improvements were implemented according to the changing needs of the school community:

- ✓ Renovation of the resource room to provide an office for the Business Manager.
- ✓ Remodel of the staff room to create a resource-development space and relocate the curriculum resources.
- ✓ Installation of a second photocopier.
- ✓ Modifications to the front office.

A donation of \$5,000 from the Australian Hotels Associations provided additional resources and materials for our design and technology programs.

A donation of \$10,080 from the Rotary Club of Chadstone/East Malvern provided financial assistance bursaries to be provided to two students.

Student Progress

Each student works towards individualised goals which are included in their Individual Education Plan. Parents, external specialists and school staff work together to determine the student's needs and how they are best met.

All students are assessed at the time of enrolment and twelve-monthly thereafter on the Woodcock-Johnson IV Tests of Achievement for reading, mathematics and spelling.

Eligible students are entitled to undertake the annual NAPLAN assessments. As a specialist school, parents have the option to opt out. Due to the small number of students who undertook the test in 2019, we are not permitted to publicly report the results.

Staff and Parent Satisfaction with The Currajong School

Headline indicators in the 2019 Staff Opinion Survey showed high level staff satisfaction thus:

- Happy to recommend the school to others
- Students are well supported to help them improve the standard of their learning
- Employment of a variety of teaching strategies and learning activities to help students learn
- The provision of an excellent environment in which to learn
- Staff are dedicated to improving student outcomes

Headline indicators in the 2019 Parent Opinion Survey showed:

- ✓ High satisfaction with their decision to send their child to Currajong, with a rating of 9.3 out of 10.
- ✓ Extremely satisfied that the teachers understand the specific needs of their child and can teach accordingly.
- ✓ Significant confidence that "Teachers know and care about my child".

Student Attendance

The overall attendance rate for 2019 as measured during the DET collection period was 83.9%. The main reasons for non-attendance related primarily to illness and/or medical needs, external therapy services and counselling appointments.

Families are required to notify the school of an absence either in person or by telephone, email or note. Regular attendance is heavily promoted as consistent participation in programs is a key to ensuring progress.

Staff work closely with parents/guardians/carers, psychologists and other therapeutic support staff to enable regular school attendance for each student.

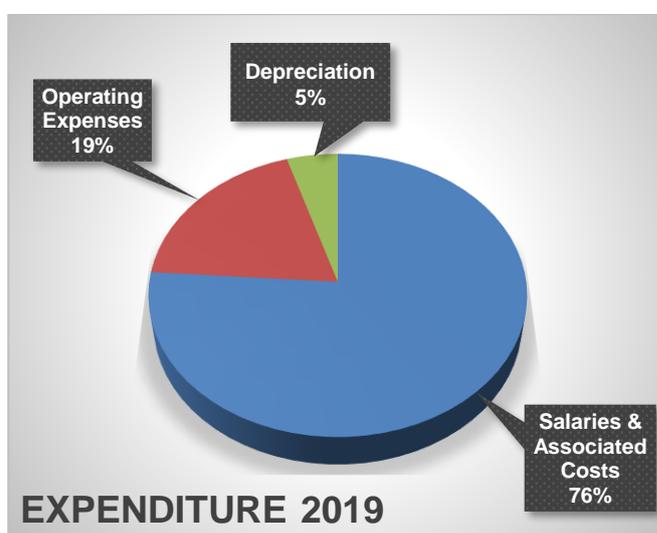
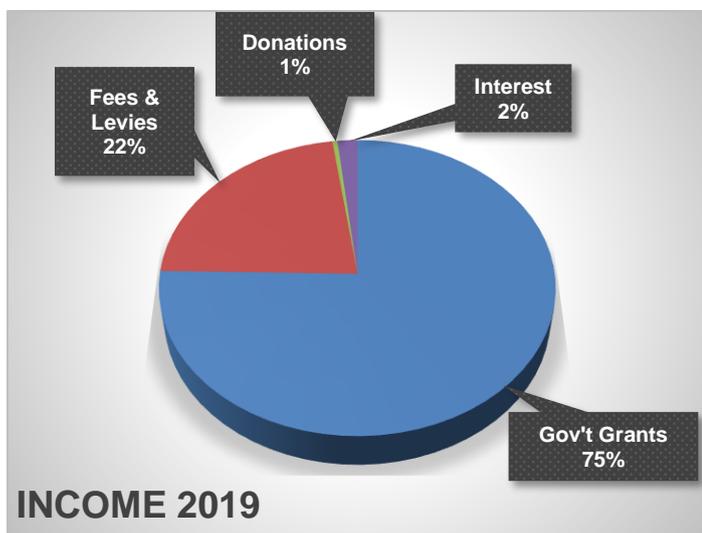
School Operations

Income 2019

Government Grants	1,660,981
Fees and levies	494,911
Interest	39,336
Donations	9,885
Capital Grants	0

Expenditure 2019

Salaries and Associated Costs	1,525,899
Operating Expenses	383,375
Depreciation	95,750
Contingency	255,176



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