

Waranara School

2020 Annual Report



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The Waranara School Annual Report (2020) provides parents and the wider school community with information about school performance and policies as determined by the NSW Minister for Education.

The Education Act 1990 (NSW) requires that the Waranara School Annual Report be publicly disclosed, published and made available online by 30 June 2021. This report is also available on the National Education Standards Authority (NESA) website. Hard copies are available from Waranara School.

About Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand

With the values of reconciliation, justice, zeal, audacity and the worth of each person at heart, Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand has for more than 150 years changed the lives of countless people and supported them to stay safe, strong, well and connected.

Good Shepherd was established to address the critical, contemporary issues facing women, girls and families. We work to advance equity and social justice, and to support our communities to thrive.

We listen to and walk alongside those with whom we work. We build partnerships that deliver holistic care and enduring impact. We focus on emerging needs and providing innovative, locally-tailored responses. Our services are complemented by research, advocacy and policy to address the underlying structural causes of injustice and inequality.

Everything we do is to ensure our vision that women, girls and families are safe, strong, well and connected. To ensure this vision for change is achieved, the people we work with remain at the centre of what we do.



We respect the living culture and heritage of First Nations Peoples. We will walk together with the First Peoples of Australia and New Zealand, acknowledging their stories and spiritualities, honouring their heritage and advocating for social justice for all.

Welcome message



Stella Avramopoulos,
CEO

Delivering access to education is one of the most powerful things we can do to promote equality. The United Nations names quality education as one of its 17 sustainable development goals.

At Good Shepherd, we know that keeping young people engaged in education can be the circuit breaker that changes lives. We are immensely proud of the team of dedicated teachers and education support workers at Waranara School.

Waranara is a unique school, with an approach that works, as the students, parents and teachers all confirm. The team provides personalised assistance and learning plans to students, to help them change their lives and turn around their educational experience.

We regularly hear from students and their families and carers that Waranara has been the best experience of education that they have had, and has helped them to stay connected to schooling.

I'm incredibly proud of the work Waranara School does, the team is making a powerful difference to the lives of young people.



Rachael Peet,
Acting Principal

At Waranara School we are continuing to adapt, change and develop ways to best support the needs of our students both academically and for their wellbeing.

2020 saw Waranara staff and students transition smoothly to online learning. I was incredibly proud of the way teachers overcame the challenges that COVID-19 forced on them. They developed techniques and strategies to ensure that they could provide the best teaching and learning for students at home and at school. With the already well established use of Google Classroom and by incorporating Google Meets, the teachers managed the simultaneous delivery of an online classroom and in-class face to face learning extremely well.

This year we were able to provide a new Stage 6 subject, Earth and Environmental Science and a new Stage 5 subject, Information Software Technology. This enabled us to offer a broader range of subject choices for students. In 2020 we created more lines of communication with our parents/carers through increased modes of contact and Principal updates.

Waranara School was also reaccruited for registration by NESA as a Special Assistance School for the next 5 years, with particular mention being made about the high standard of the curriculum for both Stage 5 and 6.

I would like to thank all Waranara staff, students, volunteers, parents, carers and the community for all their support and dedication to making Waranara a unique, supportive and caring school that provides individualised, student-centred education.

About the school



Waranara School is characterised by its personalised teaching and learning support.



At Waranara School we believe all young people have a right to access educational opportunities that positively respond to their individual life circumstances and personal attributes.

Our school supports young people, particularly those experiencing trauma or mental health challenges, to re-engage in education.

Context

Waranara School is an Accredited Special Assistance secondary school (Year 9 to Year12) based in Marrickville, NSW.

Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand opened Waranara School, formerly known as The Waranara Centre, in February 2015. Initially catering to Years 9 and 10, the school now includes a senior campus for Years 11 and 12.

Waranara School assists students to achieve the Record of School Achievement (RoSA), Higher School Certificate (HSC) and pursue careers through access to work experience, vocational courses and certificate courses at TAFE.

In particular, we assist young people experiencing anxiety or mental health challenges to stay connected to their education. Since educational outcomes are intrinsically linked to wellbeing, Waranara offers support to students across different aspects of their life. This includes individual teaching and learning support and specialised wellbeing support.

Waranara School is characterised by its personalised teaching and learning support. Young people benefit from small class sizes and a strengths-based, trauma-informed approach. Teachers work closely with students to identify their unique characteristics and skills, and develop learning strategies based on these strengths.

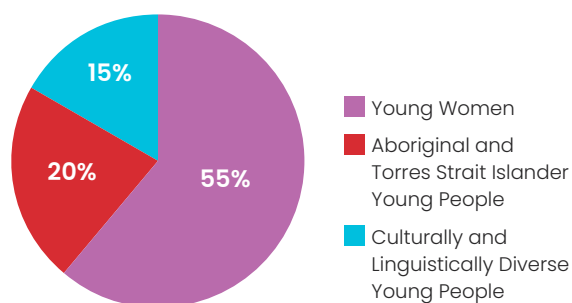
Our staff work alongside parents/carers, caseworkers, psychiatrists and psychologists to support students in addressing issues that may affect their education or wellbeing. Our students and their families also have the opportunity to access other Good Shepherd programs and services. These include ParentWise, a parenting program for parents and carers of adolescents, counselling services and the RISE Program, providing one on one support for young people in local schools who are showing signs of disengagement.

Characteristics of the student body

In 2020, 68 students were enrolled over the year, with 50–55 students being enrolled at any one time. Students transition out of Waranara School when they feel ready to move to a different educational setting.

Some students stay a number of years at Waranara while others return to their previous school or another educational setting after reaching their goals in a much shorter time. Across the year the total student enrolment consisted of:

Student body characteristics



Philosophy

Waranara School believes all young people have the right to access education in an environment that responds to their personal needs and circumstances. Its educational philosophy is underpinned by six key principles.

1. Holistic support

Students receive “wrap-around” support services to help them increase their wellbeing and engage with education.

2. “One person is as important as the whole world”

The school offers students tailored learning and wellbeing support based on their unique needs and circumstances.

3. Social justice

Waranara school supports young people experiencing mental illness or significant life challenges to re-engage in education through specialised education and wellbeing support.

4. Student collaboration

The school encourages students to identify goals and develop tailored, practical learning strategies in collaboration with their teachers. This empowers students to become the change-makers in their own lives.

5. Positive connections

Teachers and staff focus on developing strong, positive relationships with young people so they can become more comfortable, confident and responsive to the education and wellbeing support provided to them.

6. Strengths-based development

Waranara School is characterised by its strengths-based, student-centred approach. Teachers and staff work closely with students to identify and build on their strengths, inside and outside the classroom.



Each year, the Matana Foundation for Young People support Waranara School with a \$120,000 grant, which supports the Transition Support Coordinator role. This enables the school to support students for two years as they transition out of Waranara to higher education or the workforce. Also supporting this important role is The Collier Charitable Fund with a \$9,000 donation.

Along with government funding, these generous Grants ensure the continuity of the Waranara School.

Scholarship

Last year, the Lionel De Sousa fund awarded two deserving Waranara students with an education scholarship to pursue their ambitions in higher education.

Congratulations to the two recipients who resolved to turn their school experience into one of positivity, overcoming their challenges and demonstrating great resilience to complete their HSC.

The scholarship was used to cover the costs of a laptop and text books as they pursue their further studies.

Over the last ten years the Lionel De Sousa fund has donated over \$70,000 towards youth education through Good Shepherd services.

We thank the De Sousa family for their continued support and commitment to helping our Waranara School community stay safe, strong, well and connected.

Academic outcomes



We believe all young people have the right to access education in an environment that responds to their personal needs and circumstances.



The school offers the NSW Education Standards Authority's curriculum for Stage 5 (Years 9 and 10) and Stage 6 (Years 11 and 12), assisting students to achieve a Year 10 Record of School Achievement (RoSA) and HSC.

Record of School Achievement

In 2020, the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) awarded the RoSA to 18 Waranara students. This represents 95 per cent of students who completed Year 10 at Waranara School that year, an excellent outcome during a challenging year.

Year	Students granted RoSA	% of student cohort
2017	30	100%
2018	24	100%
2019	21	100%
2020	18	95%

Higher School Certificate

We also offer students the opportunity to work towards the HSC through a “compressed” model. Over a two-year period, students study three subjects per year from a choice of six subjects, covering both preliminary courses and the HSC course in each subject in a 12-month period.

2020 HSC outcomes

In 2020, 24 students sat for the NSW HSC in six courses offered at Waranara School. In total, 53 per cent of our students achieved Bands 1-2 (40-59 marks), with 47 per cent of all students being placed in Bands 3-6 (60-100 marks).

Year 12 students attaining Year 12 certificate or equivalent VET qualification

Waranara School delivers the compressed model for the HSC, whereby students undertake both the preliminary and HSC courses for three subjects a year, over two years. Eight students completed the required course load to complete their HSC in 2020. No students completed a vocational course through NSW TAFE.

Subject	No. of Students	Bands 3-6 (60-100)	Bands 1-2 (40-59)
Earth & Environmental Science	6	2 (33%)	4 (67%)
Modern History	10	5 (50%)	5 (50%)
Society & Culture	10	7 (70%)	3 (30%)
Work Studies	11	N/A	N/A
English Studies	4	1 (25%)	3 (75%)
Personal Development, Health & Physical Education	10	4 (40%)	6 (60%)

Note: Work Studies does not involve an HSC band ranking

Staff profile



We place a high value on the ongoing professional learning and development of our staff.



Teacher qualifications

In 2020, Waranara School employed five full-time teachers.

These positions were permanent and supported by:

- One full-time Acting Principal
- Two full-time Wellbeing Support Workers
- One part-time Learning Support Assistant
- One part-time Administrator
- One part-time Transition Support Worker
- One Diverse Learning Coordinator (teaching)

2020 Teacher qualifications

Qualification category	Teachers (no.)
(i) Teachers who have teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI- NOOSR) guidelines.	5
(ii) Teachers who have qualifications as a graduate from a higher education institution within Australia or one recognised within the AEI-NOOSR guidelines but lack formal teacher education qualifications.	0
Teachers who do not have qualifications as described in (i) or (ii) but have relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate knowledge relevant to the teaching context.	0

Professional learning and development

At Waranara School, we place a high value on the ongoing professional learning and development of our staff so young people can benefit from the best quality education possible.

2020 Professional learning and development

Professional learning activity	Participating staff (no.)
Child Protection Training	1 x Acting Principal 7 x Teachers 2 x Wellbeing Support Workers 1 x Transition Support Worker 1 x Learning Support Assistant 1 x Administrator
Trauma Responsive Practice in Education	1 x Learning Support Assistant
Fire Warden Training	1 x Acting Principal 2 x Teachers 1 x Wellbeing Support Worker
LGBTI Awareness training	1 x Acting Principal 2 x Teachers
Online modules – 1. Introduction to School Governance 2. School Governance 3. Legal compliance 4. NESA Registration & accreditation 5. Financial Compliance	1 x Acting Principal
Personalised learning for Aboriginal Students	1 x Teacher
Introduction to Autism Spectrum Disorder & whole school support	1 x Acting Principal
Autism Spectrum Australia	1 x Acting Principal 6 x Teachers 2 x Wellbeing Support Workers 1 x Learning Support Assistant 1 x Transition Support Worker
Reconciliation in Education: NSW	1 x Acting Principal 1 x Teacher 1 X Wellbeing Support worker 1 x Transition Support Worker
Bullying in Schools – how should teachers respond	1 x Acting Principal 1 x learning Support Assistant

Workforce composition

In 2020, Waranara School comprised 12 staff who worked closely with one another to support young people's education and wellbeing.

Our school was also fortunate to have the assistance of volunteer tutors recruited through The Centre for Volunteering, Sydney. In 2020, 4 tutors volunteered once a week to support students with their studies on a regular basis.

No staff of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background were employed.

2020 Workforce composition

Staff	Number (FTE)
Acting Principal	1
Diverse Learning Coordinator	1
Teachers	5
Wellbeing Support Workers	2
Learning Support Assistant	0.8
Administrator	0.6
Transition Support Worker	.8



Tania di Loreto, Learning Support Assistant with Will Lutwyche, Diverse Learning Coordinator

Attendance



In many instances, students join Waranara School following long periods of absence at their previous school.



Most students are referred to the school due to ongoing school refusal often caused by poor mental health or other issues such as bullying, family problems and complex trauma.

School attendance is viewed as fundamental for improved educational outcomes. Our staff work closely with students and their support networks to develop strategies that assist them to improve and maintain their attendance.

If a student's attendance declines, the Wellbeing Support Worker develops a re-integration plan for the student.

This may include alerting their parents, arranging flexible school hours or extensions, and linking them to relevant support services (see p12 for the full attendance policy).

Where possible, Good Shepherd's specialist adolescent counsellors also work with students to address issues that may affect their wellbeing and school attendance.

The table provides a detailed breakdown of school attendance rates.

2020 School attendance rates

Campus	Year group	2018	2019	2020
Junior campus	9	46%	45%	37%
	10	50%	52%	54%
Senior campus	HSC (Years 11 and 12)	60%	51%	58%
Overall school attendance rate (junior and senior campuses)		52%	52%	53%

Note: Attendance rates include partial absences, i.e. when a student arrives after 10.00am or leaves school early. In this case, a student is deemed as having attended school for half a day.

Retention



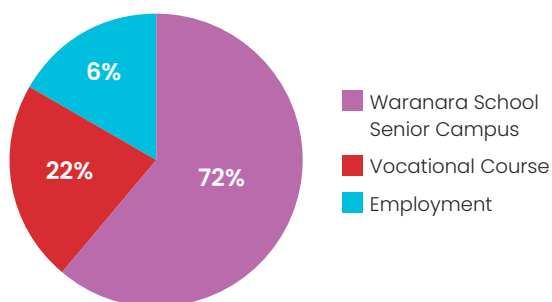
In 2020, 72% of students who completed Year 10 at Waranara School continued on to senior study at the school.



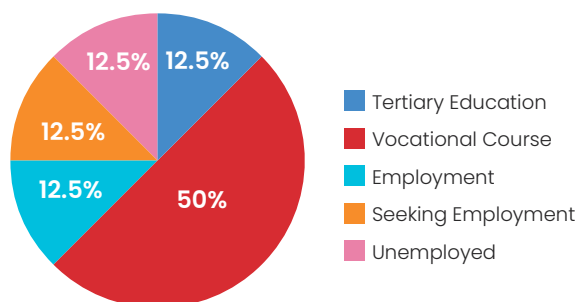
Seven junior students and eight senior students withdrew from Waranara School throughout the 2020 school year for various reasons, including returning to a mainstream educational setting or to pursue a vocation.

Of the 18 students who received their Year 10 RoSA in 2020, their post-school destinations were as follows. Of the 8 students who received their HSC, their destinations were as follows.

Post-school destinations of Year 10 graduates



Post-school destinations of Year 12 graduates



Enrolment



In 2020, 35 students enrolled in Years 9 and 10, and 33 in Years 11 and 12.



Enrolment process

Referral process

Young people who wish to enrol at Waranara School can self-refer or can be referred by another school, community agency, family member or carer. Staff may receive referrals by phone or through the school's Student Referral Form.

Enrolments	Year 9	Year 10	Years 11 and 12	Total 2020
Junior and senior campuses	13	22	33	68

Referral form

Young people and their parents/carers are required to complete the Waranara Student Referral Form prior to a formal intake interview. The form includes a series of questions about the young person's education history and personal background and provides staff with information that can be discussed in more detail at a formal intake interview.

The form enables staff to evaluate whether a candidate qualifies for enrolment at Waranara School which, as a Special Assistance School, specifically supports young people with a history of demonstrated social, emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Intake interview

Once the Referral Form has been submitted, a young person and their parents/carers are invited to attend an intake interview.

This serves a number of purposes, including to:

- Gather information about the young person's previous education and learning experiences
- Evaluate the young person's personal support needs and resources
- Understand the young person's education goals and aspirations
- Inform the young person and their parents/carers about the school
- Provide the young person and their parents/carers with the opportunity to ask questions about the school.

Stakeholder consultation

To understand more about a young person's education and personal wellbeing needs, staff will seek further information about the prospective student's academic history, attendance and behaviour from their former school(s).

In addition to assisting staff to understand a young person's educational needs and resources, consulting with the prospective student's former school will enable staff to decide whether more detailed risk assessment strategies may be required to achieve the best outcomes for the individual young person and Waranara School's learning environment.



Student progress and trial period

Students are offered a 3 week trial while they remain enrolled at their current school. Staff meet weekly to review the progress of each current student and students on a trial. In these meetings staff discuss the progress of students, both academically, socially and their wellbeing. Parents of students on a trial receive weekly text messages outlining the progress of their student.

School acceptance and formal enrolment

Young people are advised within seven days of their intake interview if they have been accepted into Waranara School. After completing the required enrolment forms, students are then invited to begin their studies.

Information recorded on the enrolment forms is entered into Waranara School's Student Enrolment Register. This register is confidential and maintained by the school's administrator. All Good Shepherd staff are bound by strict confidentiality policies and procedures.

Individual Learning Support Plan

The Individual Learning Support Plan canvasses a student's education- specific goals and the strategies that may assist them to achieve their desired learning outcomes. It also identifies specific barriers to student engagement, including risk factors such as behavioural or mental health concerns. It also enables staff to design a personalised learning support program for all students.

School policies



Young people's holistic wellbeing is a key element of Waranara School's educational philosophy.



Waranara School Administrator
Michelle Pollock, Acting Principal
Rachael Peet and Wellbeing Support
Worker George Voulgaropoulos

School policies can be provided to interested parties or individuals upon request. There were changes to the following school policies throughout the year:

- Student Conduct Policy
- Whistleblower Policy
- Learning Support Policy
- Uniform Policy
- Sun Protection Policy

Student welfare policy

Young people's holistic wellbeing is a key element of Waranara School's educational philosophy. The school endorses Article 26 of the United Nations' Declaration of Human Rights and the assertion that education should enter domains related to "the full development of the human personality".

In line with this, the school views pastoral care provisions for individual students and family welfare support strategies as fundamental to the efficacy of its educational activities.

Anti-bullying policy

Respectful relationships are fundamental to the success and effectiveness of Waranara School, alongside student safety, inclusivity and equity. Bullying, discrimination, verbal/physical abuse and violence are rejected under all circumstances as they are fundamentally at odds with the school's values regarding the right of all individuals to respect and dignity.

It is therefore viewed as unacceptable for any student, employee, parent/carer or other stakeholder to experience bullying in any form.

In line with a restorative practices framework, Waranara School views the prevention of bullying as a shared responsibility of the entire school community, including staff members, students and parents/carers.

Student Conduct Policy

In order to provide young people with the best possible opportunities for success within a safe environment, Waranara School uses a restorative practices framework as its foundational approach to behaviour management.

This ethos emphasises the importance of:

- Co-operative problem-solving structures directly navigated by parties involved in conflict
- Consistent invitations/opportunities to take personal responsibility and to participate in developing restorative solutions
- An emphasis on safety and fairness
- "Teachable moments" and restorative opportunities arising from a young person's behavioural choices
- Constructive rather than punitive consequences, as such external directives about behaviour will be "reasonable, respectful, related, restorative and re-integrative"
- Encouraging young people to acknowledge injustice and articulate agreements/intentions that promote personal accountability.

The seven restorative practices, which form a foundation for effective reconciliation and restoration of relationships, include:

1. Restorative basics: relational focus; staff model restorative attitudes/ behaviour; strengths-based language/ conversations; supportive attitudes; clear, firm boundaries/ expectations to minimise harm.
2. Community circles.
3. Positive collegial relationships at work.
4. Restorative language and conversations: use of affective "I" statements and reflective strategies, as opposed to shame-generative discussion.
5. Brief restorative interventions.
6. Classroom conferences.
7. Formal restorative conferences.

Ongoing improvement

All students can expect to be consistently treated with dignity and respect in a non-judgemental and professional environment. Where students have concerns or feedback about their experiences at Waranara School, the school is committed to providing an appropriate forum for the expression and acknowledgement of these views. The school will deal with any complaint received according to social justice principles in a fair and accountable manner.

Where concerns are raised, the school is committed to providing a timely and proportionate response to students and parents/carers or other community members.

This approach is in line with the participatory principle that all people have a right to raise concerns about incidents which have adversely impacted their education opportunities or personal health and wellbeing.

Further, Waranara School seeks to maintain a school environment of openness to feedback as a critical mechanism for ongoing improvement and quality assurance within its education program.

If you wish to obtain a copy of the full policies please contact Waranara School on 02 8571 7800.

School-identified areas for priority improvement

In 2020, Waranara School identified and addressed the following priority areas for improvement.

Priority areas for improvement

Focus area	Strategies utilised
Improve understanding and strategies on disabilities	Professional development conducted on Autism Spectrum Disorder to develop staff knowledge further around the areas that ASD students find difficult and how to best support them at school. Introduction of problem plans.
Improved learning support for students with learning difficulties and disabilities	Increased case conferences with students' health team leading to increase data on student. Introduction of Progressive Achievement Testing.
Improved avenues for parent communication in the school	Monthly letters to parents from principal, mobile phone contact with principal, students conduct parent meetings, attendance plan meetings, conduct parent-teacher interviews via phone.
Student Attendance and conduct	Changed the term "student behaviour management" to "student conduct process" and included a flow and process for intervention, different levels of communication and involvement and consequence. Creation of attendance plan meetings and documented with follow up reviews.



Initiatives to promote respect and responsibility

In 2020, students participated in a number of initiatives that highlighted the importance of respect and responsibility.

These included:

- NAIDOC Week celebration with guest Indigenous artist and professional footballer. Students also participated in an art workshop
- Renaming of classrooms to Indigenous names chosen by students - Goodes, Bilma and Yidaki
- Wear It Purple Day – a day of celebration of the LGBTIQI community
- Participation in Remembrance Day service
- Making of Christmas hampers for gifting to underprivileged families at St Merkorius Charity.

Student, parent and teacher satisfaction



Student satisfaction

Exiting students were surveyed in 2020 about their experience of Waranara School. Students were asked in a questionnaire, "Please describe how your life has changed since attending Waranara School."

Some responses were:

"I am proud of myself and my achievements and I can't believe I'm finishing school."

"I'm not getting in as much trouble now."

"I feel like I have control over my learning and it is nice having extra support"

"I've gained so much more confidence, formed some great relationships, felt as though I can grow and have done so without judgement. I have also seen that people do care and life can get better."

"My life changed for the better when I moved to this school, as I finally got back to a school routine as I was out of school for over a year beforehand".

Students were also asked the question "Did you feel well supported with your schoolwork during your time at Waranara School?"

Below are some of their answers.

"Everyone was willing to support me in any struggle I was going through."

"All the teachers were amazing and helped me keep up to date with work."

"No matter what there was always someone to support you when stuck in any situation."

"Teachers always helped if I was struggling. They were always kind and understanding if I was having a hard time. They were most helpful when needed."

"Everyone takes care of each other and I knew I could always talk to the teacher when I needed support"

Parent satisfaction

There are many informal opportunities for parents to engage with the Principal, teachers and staff, as well as regular parent/teacher and orientation evenings.

At the 2020 graduation ceremony, parents were asked to complete a survey. One question was "What are the school's greatest strengths?" Below are some of the comments:

"Waranara fulfills its mission well and truly. Its greatest strength is attention to detail and excellent communication. Caring, well qualified staff"

"The support and attention given to the students is outstanding."

"The school works for the whole person, supporting them to achieve their best."

"The staff have a great love for what they do and show a commitment to the students' wellbeing, are compassionate, kind and consistent."

"Promoting inclusivity, accepting diversity, emotional and wellbeing support."

"A very high level of support from a social wellbeing perspective. The fact that they were willing to come to my home to ensure my son attended his HSC exams was extremely helpful."

"Being a boutique operation is Waranara's greatest strength. Having small classes where students can't disappear is vitally important. I don't know what kind of growth would improve things. Facilities can always be better, but the heart of the school is the staff."

Teacher satisfaction

Waranara School is a safe, positive, supportive and collegial environment where issues can be raised and addressed professionally. The Principal meets with each staff member fortnightly to discuss staff wellbeing and any staff concerns, as well as to monitor their level of satisfaction. Staff turnover at Waranara School is low. Only one teacher resigned in 2020 to move back to their home country in the United Kingdom.

This year staff were surveyed to determine their level of satisfaction in their role. This included the question "What do you like best about working at Waranara School?" Some of their answers were:

"The best thing for me working at Waranara School is that I am able to give my all to empower and encourage these kids to be the very best versions of themselves and to always believe they can achieve their dreams through the quality within a supportive place of education".

"Working at Waranara allows me to individualise strength-based learning for each of my students to help them reach their goals."

"Waranara School allows me to teach young people in a holistic manner, striking the right balance between academic and personal growth."

"I believe it is a privilege to work with our young people and build trusting relationships. To support each individual with their education and emotional wellbeing makes working at Waranara a special place to be!"

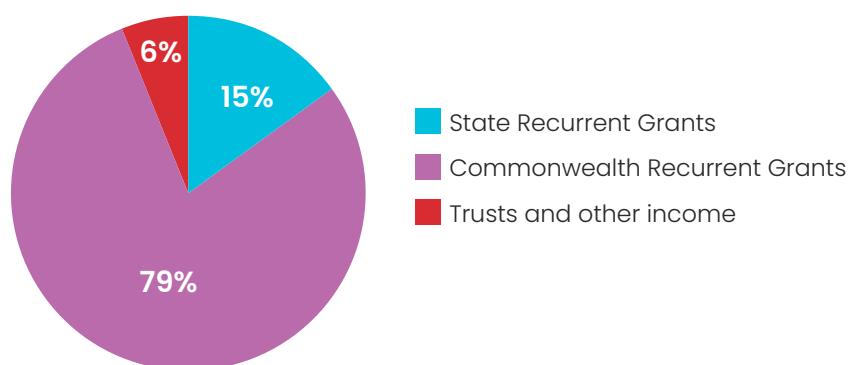
"Waranara School is a special place. A place where young people are nurtured, supported and cared for in a way that a sense of safety is beautifully cultivated. A kind, inclusive, diverse and warm culture. It feels like a privilege to be a part of a special assistance school."

"I really enjoy working with the young people at Waranara School. Many of them have made such great progress throughout the year within their learning, wellbeing and confidence and are constantly striving to improve. It is great to be a part of an amazing school and seeing the progress that each individual student makes here".

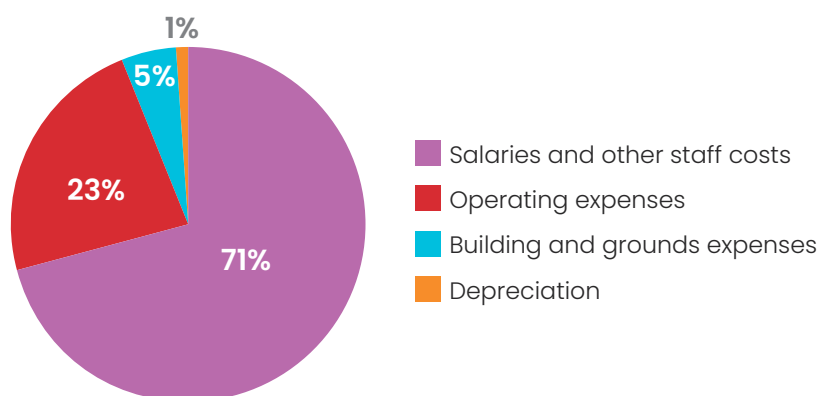
Summary of financial information



Waranara School – Income 2020



Waranara School – Expenses 2020





**Waranara
School**