

Waranara School

2021 Annual Report



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The Waranara School Annual Report (2021) 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 2022. 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**

At Good Shepherd, we know that educational outcomes are intrinsically linked to wellbeing. We are immensely appreciative of the team of dedicated teachers and education support workers at Waranara School for the support they provide to students across different aspects of their lives

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

I'm incredibly proud of the work Waranara School does to support students by providing a flexible, personalised and responsive environment to support students to achieve their best learning and life outcomes.



**Rachael Peet,
Principal**

2021 saw Waranara staff and students transition to online learning yet again, however this time with no face-to-face learning for a term and a half and the whole school online.

The staff at Waranara School were incredible teaching every lesson as per the timetable via Google Meet and Google Classroom as well as wellbeing workshops. This was a huge feat. Students were encouraged through Olympic competition, wellbeing packs and positive messages and phone calls.

This year we were able to provide a new Stage 6 subject, Investigating Science and a new Stage 5 elective, Aboriginal Studies, again broadening our range of subject choices for students and establishing a stronger connection with community.

Waranara School also welcomed two new positions, Aboriginal Learning Support Assistant and another Learning Support Assistant. These two roles have been a fantastic addition to our school, enabling us to provide more support to our students.

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 2021, 64 students were enrolled over the year, with 52-57 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

Of the total enrolment of 64 students in 2021:

58% were young women

19% were of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background

9% were of a culturally and linguistically diverse background



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.

Holistic support

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

“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.

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.

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.

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.

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 supports 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. In 2021 the school also received a \$16,000 grant from the NSW Government to employ a Covid Support Worker. Along with government funding, these generous Grants ensure the continuity of the Waranara School.

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 2021, the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) awarded the RoSA to 16 Waranara students. This represents 100 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
2018	24	100%
2019	21	100%
2020	18	95%
2021	16	100%

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.

2021 HSC outcomes

In 2021, 27 students sat for the NSW HSC in six courses offered at Waranara School. In total, 15 per cent of our students achieved Bands 1-2 (40-59 marks), with 85 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. Fourteen students completed the required course load to complete their HSC in 2021.

No students completed a vocational course through NSW TAFE.

Subject	No. of Students	Bands 3-6 (60-100)	Bands 1-2 (40-59)
Community & Family Studies	10	9 (90%)	1 (10%)
English Studies	9	5 (55%)	4 (45%)
Geography	10	7 (70%)	3 (30%)
Investigating Science	12	12 (100%)	0
Studies of Religion	15	15 (100%)	0
Sport, Lifestyle and Recreation	11	N/A	N/A

Note: Sport, Lifestyle & recreation does not involve an HSC band ranking

Staff profile



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



Waranara School Staff

Teacher qualifications

In 2021, Waranara School employed five full-time teachers.

These positions were permanent and supported by:

- One full-time Principal
- One full-time Deputy Principal (teaching)
- Two full-time Wellbeing Support Workers
- Two part-time Learning Support Assistants
- One part-time Administrator
- One part-time Transition Support Worker
- One part-time Aboriginal Support Worker

2021 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.	7
(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.	2
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.

2021 Professional learning and development

Professional learning activity	Participating staff (no.)
Child Protection Training	1 x Principal 7 x Teachers 2 x Wellbeing Support Workers 1 x Transition Support Worker 1 x Learning Support Assistant 1 x Administrator
LGBTI awareness Training	1 x Learning Support Assistant
-Suicide prevention workshop -Engaging Young People	1 x Transition Support Worker
-Constitutional Change for the classroom -Autism Spectrum Disorder	1 x Teacher
-Behaviour support management -Behaviour response planning and intervention	1 x Learning Support Assistant
Supporting students with trauma in schools – Birchtree	7 x Teachers 1 x Principal 1 x Transition Support Worker 2 x Wellbeing Support Workers 2 x Learning Support Assistants
-Mental Health first aid -Risk factors for Alcohol and other drug use: -Implications for Prevention	1 x Transition Support Worker
-The Science of Language and Reading -The Science of writing	1 x Deputy Principal
-Enabling Exceptional Education -Creating Trauma informed strength based Classrooms -Global Village School Forum	1 x Principal
-Prevent, Teach, reinforce behavioural intervention strategies -Adapting healthy lifestyle interventions for people with intellectual disabilities -Specific mental illness for carers and education support staff -Intellectual disability/mental health e-learning for carers and education support staff	1 x Learning Support Assistant

Workforce composition

In 2021, Waranara School comprised 13 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 2021, 4 tutors volunteered once a week to support students with their studies on a regular basis.

One staff member of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background was employed.

2021 Workforce composition

Staff	Number (FTE)
Principal	1
Deputy Principal	1
Teachers	5
Wellbeing Support Workers	2
Learning Support Assistant	0.8
Learning Support Assistant	.2
Administrator	0.6
Transition Support Coordinator	.8
Aboriginal Support Worker	.4



Tania di Loreto, Learning Support Assistant
with Will Lutwyche, Deputy Principal

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.

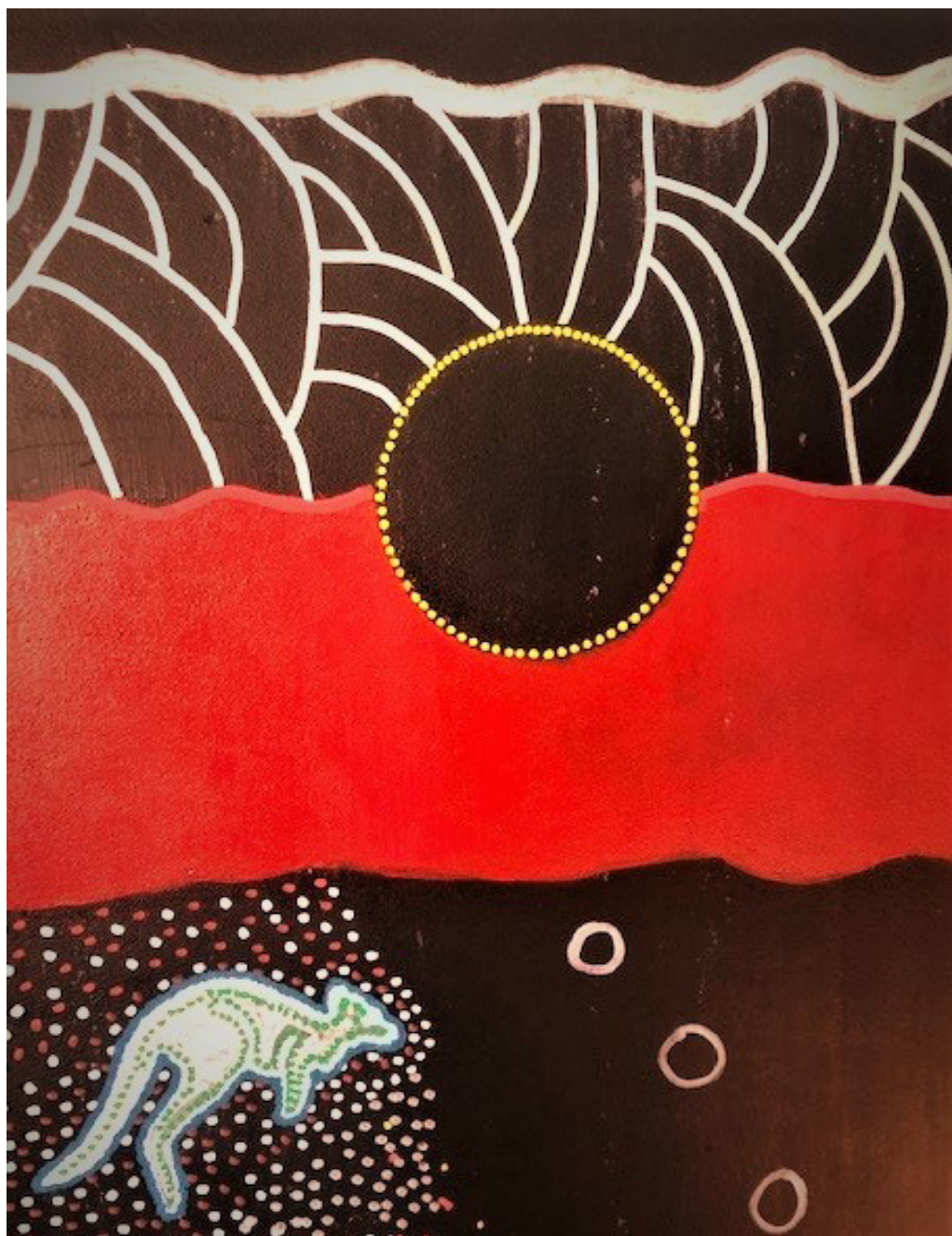
This may include alerting their parents, arranging flexible school hours or extensions, and linking them to relevant support services (see p12 for the full attendance policy).

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.

2021 School attendance rates

Campus	Year group	2019	2020	2021
Junior campus	9	45%	37%	54%
	10	52%	54%	71%
Senior campus	HSC (Years 11 and 12)	51%	58%	71%
Overall school attendance rate (junior and senior campuses)		52%	53%	68%



Aboriginal Studies Students' Artwork

Retention



In 2021, 82% of students who completed Year 10 at Waranara School continued on to senior study at the school.

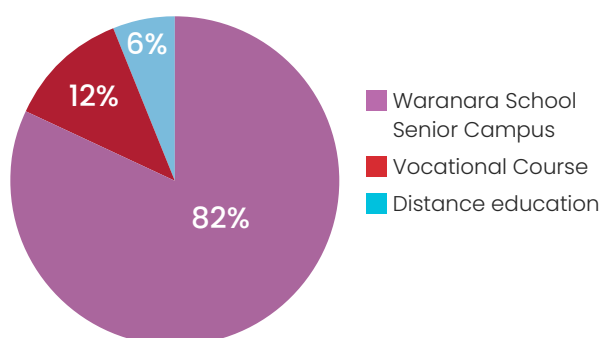


Seven junior students and eight senior students withdrew from Waranara School throughout the 2021 school year for various reasons, including returning to a mainstream educational setting or to pursue a vocation.

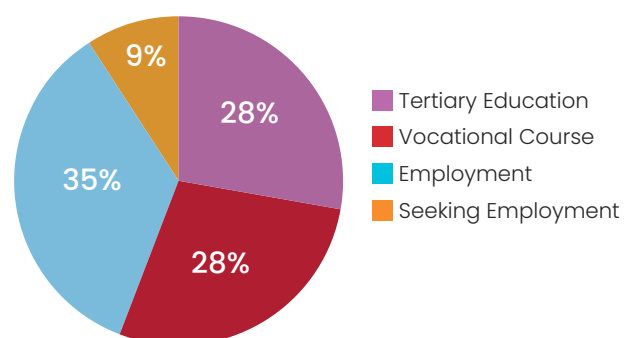
Of the 16 students who received their Year 10 RoSA in 2021, their post-school destinations were as follows.

Of the 14 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 2021, 32 students enrolled in Years 9 and 10, and 32 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 2021
Junior and senior campuses	13	19	32	64

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.



Leadership Team; Will Lutwyche, Deputy Principal, Rachael Peet, Principal, Nicky Wells, Transition Support Coordinator

School policies can be provided to interested parties or individuals upon request.

There were changes to the Offsite Recreation Policy during the year.

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.

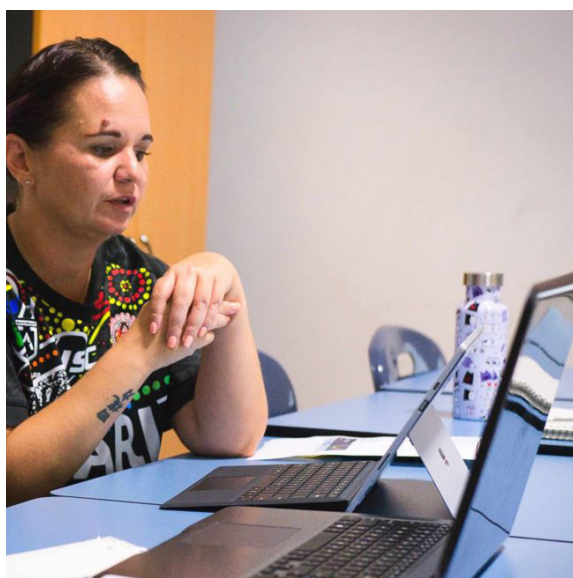
If you wish to obtain a copy of the full policies please contact Waranara School on 02 8571 7800.

School-identified areas for priority improvement

In 2021, Waranara School identified and addressed the following priority areas for improvement.

Priority areas for improvement

Focus Area	Strategies utilised
Improve Trauma informed practices	Professional development conducted through Birchtree Centre to further develop staff knowledge around the impacts of trauma in young people, how it impacts their learning and strategies used to support students with trauma in the classroom.
Implement MTSS for Attendance	Multi-tiered System of Support was developed in Term 4 2021 to improve attendance for students by creating a tiered support structure based on data that included incentives and supports.
Improve Student IT skills and support	Online learning prompted the school to improve its use of Google Classroom and Google Meet whilst also improving students' IT skills such as online submissions, online exams and online group work.
Implement Student Case Conferences	School redeveloped its student progress meeting to become student case conference where an in-depth look into 8 students each week discussing their history, diagnosis, professional reports + strategies, current status, classroom and wellbeing strategies.



Initiatives to promote respect and responsibility

In 2021, students participated in a number of initiatives that highlighted the importance of respect and responsibility.

These included:

- NAIDOC Week celebration
- Reconciliation Week Celebration
- Wear It Purple Day – a day of celebration of the LGBTQI community
- Participation in Anzac Day Remembrance Day service

Student, parent and teacher satisfaction



Student satisfaction

Exiting students were surveyed in 2021 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 have had long lasting friendships at Waranara and my mental health has improved since my last school."

"Increased self-confidence."

"Peer relations, more friends, made me want to try academically"

"I am more confident and more capable of completing academic tasks."

"You guys always went above and beyond to help me".

"I've stopped drugs, I'm more focused on school and I have an idea of what I want to do. I'm nicer and not as angry as I used to be."

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.

"At my previous school I couldn't manage myself well and refused to focus on work. At Waranara I can."

"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."

"There was always a teacher or staff member around that I could fall back on when I needed it. The only reason I didn't do it all the time was that they were busy helping other students in need, which shows how dedicated they are."

"I felt that I had teachers that understood circumstances that made learning hard for me. They were there to help whenever and were like a shoulder to lean on"

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 2021 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:

"High level of support, small classes, better understanding of mental health issues than mainstream schools"

"Focus on wellbeing first, connection between teachers and students."

"Understanding of student's situations and difficulties."

"Adapting and making provisions for my daughter's learning. She feels valued as a person and feels school is a welcoming safe place to be."

"The high level of individualised support and care shown by the staff. Feedback to parents."

"Individual acceptance, attention, support and social development. The staff has improved my daughter's focus and self esteem."

"When my child began at Waranara it was our third school in 2 years. I was extremely fearful for his life and he had not attended formal learning for 12 months due to anxiety and depression. Since attending this year, his mood, attendance and academic focus have improved outstandingly. I will be eternally grateful for the high level of support, inclusivity and patience from 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.

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:

"Working at Waranara is great, having the opportunity to work in a small setting that has a high focus on the individual is fantastic. The staff are very supportive of each other and there is always a focus of continual improvement within the school".

"Waranara School is a great as it gives opportunities to young people who need both support and faith that they can make changes to improve in their lives. This is only possible because of the shared goals and supportive nature of the team of both staff and students"

"What I love about working at Waranara School is that I can see what a difference the school is making to the lives of its students. I look forward to coming to work each day"

"As a team we are passionate about what we do, not only in educating our young people, but to nurture them and give them hope"

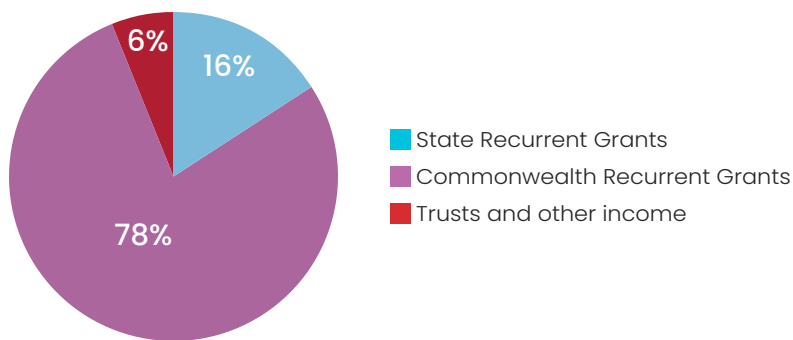
"I love teaching at Waranara because we build real rapport with our students and it's rewarding when you get to see them achieve positive outcomes, both academically and in their personal lives. We have such a close team that supports each other's wellbeing and professional development".

Summary of financial information

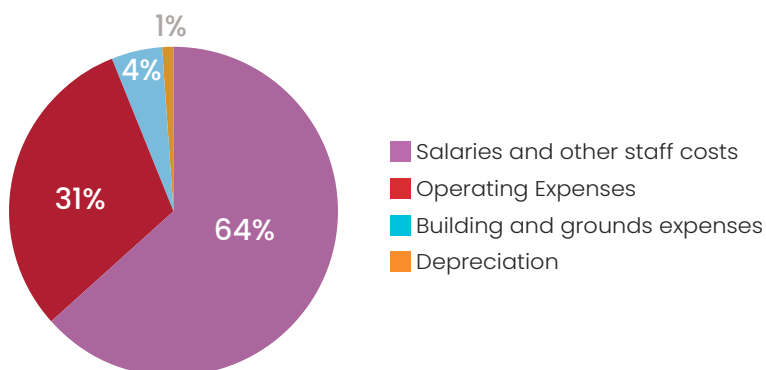


Waranara School – Income and Expenses 2021

Waranara School – Income 2021



Waranara School – Expenses 2021





**Waranara
School**