

# Waranara School

## 2022 Annual Report



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**The Waranara School Annual Report (2022) 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 2023. 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

**For 160 years, Good Shepherd has been supporting women, girls and their families to be safe, well, strong and connected.**

Since 1863, we have been responding to the emerging needs of those we serve through innovative and locally tailored responses including education as a support to overall wellbeing.

Waranara, whose early 'seeds' began as a Study Support Program at our Rosemount Services, continues to be an incredible example of delivering specialist education to students who have disengaged from mainstream schooling. We are indebted to the dedicated staff for the support they provide the students. It is an immense privilege to be a part of the school's journey and to support Waranara students to thrive.



**Rachael Peet,**  
Principal

**2022 was the first time in 2 years that we had a full year of face-to-face learning. Whilst there were Covid restrictions within the school, we were able to remain in the classroom. 2022 did still present some challenges, with the state-wide teacher shortage, however we were still able to deliver outstanding curriculum and wellbeing support for our students.**

This year we introduced a new Stage 6 subject, Aboriginal Studies, which further broadened our range of subject choices for our senior students and established a stronger connection with the community. The school also established a Multi Tiered System of Support for Attendance which has enabled us to implement more tailored support and interventions for attendance and resulted in an increase in whole school attendance for 2022.

Waranara also welcomed two new learning support assistants. This has enabled us to increase our learning support within the classroom, ensuring that we are now able to support more students both in small groups and individually.

One of the most exciting additions to the school has been Isaac, our school Therapy Dog. Isaac has brought much joy, support and love to the school.

I would like to thank the Waranara staff, students, volunteers, parents and carers and the community for their continued hard work and support of the school and its students. It is a team effort that ensures that we are continuing to make Waranara a unique, supportive, caring school.

# 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 Year 12) 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 2022, 75 students were enrolled over the year, with 57-60 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

**50%** Young Women

**13%** Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders

**12%** Culturally and Linguistically Diverse

# 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 \$50,000 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.

Inner West Council donated 10 Laptops for students' use.

Vivcourt donated \$10,000 to be spent on psychometric testing.

Along with government funding, these generous grants ensure the continuity of 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 2022, the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) awarded the RoSA to 19 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
2019	21	100%
2020	18	95%
2021	16	100%
2022	19	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.

### 2022 HSC outcomes

In 2022, 28 students sat for the NSW HSC in six courses offered at Waranara School. In total, 35 per cent of our students achieved Bands 1-2 (40-59 marks), with 65 per cent of all students being placed in Bands 3-6 (60-100 marks).

12 students completed the required course load to complete their HSC in 2022.

No students completed a vocational course through NSW TAFE.

Subject	No. of Students	Bands 3-6 (60-100)	Bands 1-2 (40-59)
Aboriginal Studies	10	7	3
English Studies	12	8	4
Earth & Environmental Science	16	10	6
Modern History	12	10	2
PDHPE	7	2	5
Work Studies	10	N/A	N/A

*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.



2022 Waranara School Staff

## Teacher qualifications

In 2022, Waranara School employed five full-time teachers. These positions were permanent and supported by:

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

## 2022 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.

### 2022 Professional learning and development

Professional learning activity	Participating staff (no.)
Child Protection Training	1 x Principal
CPR Training	1 x Deputy Principal
Therapy Dog Training	7 x Teachers 2 x Student Wellbeing Advisors 1 x Transition Support Worker 2 x Learning Support Assistants 1 x Administrator
Managing Team Wellbeing	1 x Transition Support Worker
MTSS conference	1 x Principal
Australian Education Conference	1 x Deputy Principal
AIS NSW Principals conference	1 x Principal
PDHPE Conference	
Suicide Prevention	1 x Transition Support Worker 1 x Principal
Workplace Mental Health	7 x Teachers 1 x Principal 1 x Deputy Principal 1 x Transition Support Worker 2 x Student Wellbeing Advisors 1 x Learning Support Assistant
K-10 Conference STEM	1 x Teacher
Stage 6 Science	
Great teachers give great feedback	
Supporting students with disability	1 x Deputy Principal
CAFS resource exploration	
NESA Disability Provisions	
YARC Training	
Tier 3 Interventions	
AIS Maths Conference	1 x Teacher
Moving Beyond Numbers	
Making Your Numerical Data Work	
ANSTO: Teaching Stage 5 Science	
Teaching SOR Stage 6	1 x Teacher

## Workforce composition

In 2022, 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 2022, 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.

## 2022 Workforce composition

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



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 Student Wellbeing Advisor 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.

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.

### 2022 School attendance rates

Campus	Year group	2020	2021	2022
Junior campus	9	37%	54%	72%
	10	54%	71%	63%
Senior campus	HSC (Years 11 and 12)	58%	71%	78%
Overall school attendance rate (junior and senior campuses)		53%	68%	72%



Aboriginal Studies Student's Artwork

# Retention



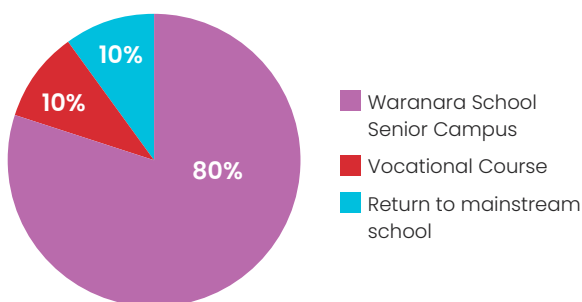
In 2022, 80% of students who completed Year 10 at Waranara School continued on to senior study at the school.



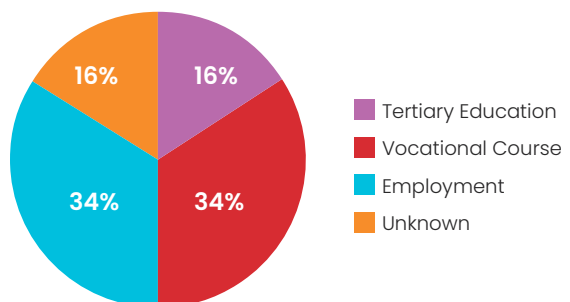
Seven junior students and six senior students withdrew from Waranara School throughout the 2022 school year for various reasons, including returning to a mainstream educational setting or to pursue a vocation.

Of the 16 students who received their Year 10 RoSA in 2022, their post-school destinations were as follows. Of the 12 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 2022, 42 students enrolled in Years 9 and 10, and 33 in Years 11 and 12.



## Enrolment process

### Referral process

Young people who wish to enroll 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	16	26	33	75



### **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.



Isaac, the school's therapy dog

### **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 student 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 for the 3 week trial. After completing the required enrolment forms, students are then invited to begin their studies.

Information recorded on the enrolment form is entered into Waranara School's management system, Sentral. This 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.



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

There were changes to the Anti-Bullying and Learning Support Policies 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 2022, Waranara School identified and addressed the following priority areas for improvement.

### Priority areas for improvement

Focus area	Strategies utilised
Improve Mental health at work	Professional development conducted through The Black Dog Institute to further develop staff knowledge around the impacts of mental health in the workplace, how it impacts all staff and strategies used to support each other.
Implement MTSS for Wellbeing	Multi-tiered System of Support was developed in 2022 to improve wellbeing for students by creating a tiered support structure based on data that included incentives and supports.
Therapy	In 2022 to improve wellbeing we successfully applied for a therapy dog through Guide Dogs NSW. Isaac has helped calm and settle students enabling them to regulate and attend school more whilst also bringing joy.
Student Case Conferences to include student interview	School redeveloped its student progress meeting to include a student interview where students get to express their needs and concerns and set goals.



### Initiatives to promote respect and responsibility

In 2022, 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
- Harmony Day Celebration

# Student, parent and teacher satisfaction



## Student satisfaction

Exiting students were surveyed in 2022 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:

*"Waranara is better than any other school that I have attended.*

- interaction between staff and students is more positive*
- I get a lot of support with my schoolwork*
- It is a school that is safe and drama free."*

*"Peer relations, more friends, made me want to try academically. It was great to have Isaac, the therapy dog, to help me when I was feeling low."*

*"Before attending Waranara school I was not coming to school at all and I was failing behind on all subjects. I was also getting suspended so often that I lost hope in school. My life has changed since attending Waranara because I started attending every day, rocking up on time, trying my best to attend all lessons. I have completed 3 HSC subjects, I have learnt basic numeracy and literacy skills, how to use coping strategies and manage my emotions. I have better mental health. I now enjoy coming to school - I used to hate school."*

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.

*"The main reason is the flexibility and freedom I have to do schoolwork the way I want to. Being able to work independently has made it easier for me to finish my work."*

*"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."*

*"I feel really supported with my schoolwork at Waranara. When i first came I had intervention and learning support which caught me up on my literacy and numeracy skills. I get 1 on 1 support in class as well as teacher support during lessons. There's not a day that I don't have learning support in class to help with school work."*

*"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 2022 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:

*"Patient and caring staff- the learning support is very good, emotional support and understanding incredibly high."*

*"Caring, inclusive, flexible, LGBTQ+ positive."*

*"Individualised care and flexibility around mental health and communication."*

*"Staff are brilliant at relating to and connecting with students. Real concern for and respect of their needs and passions."*

*"Improved school attendance and great communication."*

*"Great support – a desire to see your child attend and finish school."*

*"Individual plans designed to meet the needs of my daughter. Holistic support: food, learning plans, wellbeing staff."*

*"Tolerance of difference, acceptance of diversity, patience, results!"*

*"The culture of Waranara has saved my child's academic future from despair."*

## 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:

*"Being part of the Waranara family provides me with the opportunity to give back to students within the community as well as to provide positive learning experiences for them."*

*"This feels like a second home to me; having first come here as a prac student in 2018 and returning to teach at the end of 2022! I knew it was the place I wanted to work, and that our students are the young people I want to teach and I hope they can find the same comfort and support here as students that I have as an employee."*

*"The staff are all committed to ensuring the best outcomes for every single student. There is a shared understanding that we all can contribute to lifting our students through our individual and collective effort and expertise."*

*"This is a very special place to work, a close-knit team supporting young people trying to achieve their best. An all-round inclusive environment that strives to cater to the individual needs of their students."*

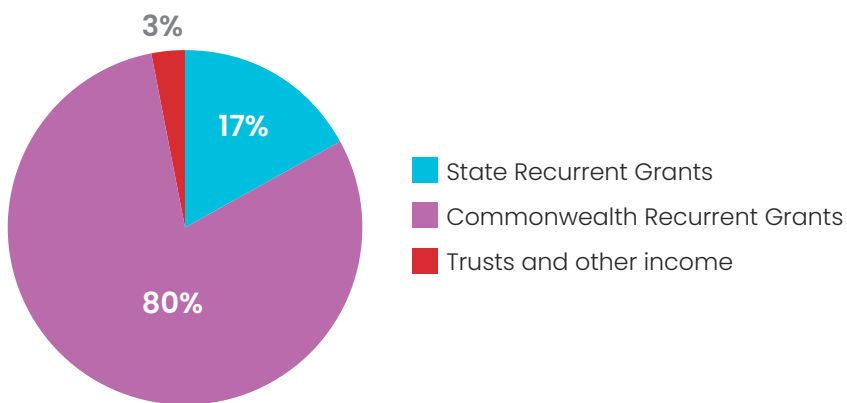
*"The school allows all staff to thrive in their own capabilities. The gem moment is when we all see our young people make it to their end of year graduation day and we all see their enormous efforts come to fruition. For all the daily challenges and perseverance we all put in, it is so worth seeing how each young person beams with pride and a sense of achievement in their learning and wellbeing."*

# Summary of financial information

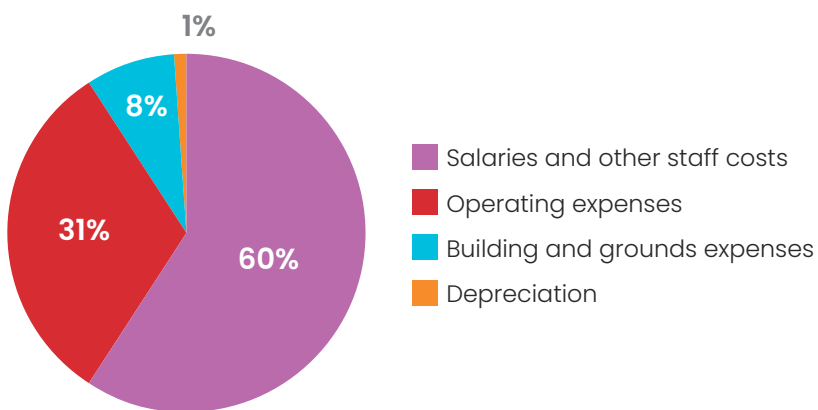


## Waranara School – Income and Expenses 2022

### Waranara School – Income 2022



### Waranara School – Expenses 2022





**Waranara  
School**