



Annual Report 2023

The Currajong School is a registered Independent Specialist School for children with social, emotional and behavioural disorders.

We take a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and is fully committed to ensuring that its strategies, policies, procedures and practices meet all Child Safe Standards as specified in Ministerial Order No. 1359 (2022)

All teachers at the school meet the registration requirements of the Victorian Institute of Teaching (www.vit.vic.edu.au).

The school meets prescribed minimum standards for registration as regulated by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) in accordance with the *Education and Training Reform (ETR) Act 2006*.

About our school

The Currajong School invites a community atmosphere, with an inclusive and positive learning environment. At The Currajong School we have proud tradition in providing excellence in specialist education for students with additional learning needs around social, emotional and behavioural disorders and maximise every learning opportunity to shape our students' future through high quality, values enriched inclusive teaching and learning.

As a Victorian Independent Specialist School, The Currajong School has a clear vision and purpose. The school is renowned for fostering student excellence with the support and involvement of our learning community. The staff at The Currajong School are dedicated and committed professionals who are experts in their field of education.

At The Currajong School, the school community works together to ensure every child has a positive, happy and rewarding school experience. Parents and teachers are genuine partners in the learning process, ensuring students are encouraged to participate, strive to achieve their best, be considerate and supportive of others, be independent and to value the pursuit of knowledge.

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

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

Student enrolment for 2023 at the time of Census was 38 students (growing to 41 by the end of the school year) with results across formative and summative testing and growth against levels of the Victorian Curriculum showing students achieving growth in all outcomes.

We are confident our focus on individual needs and abilities will be achieved through maintaining strong partnerships with parents, allied health professionals and the wider community. This, in turn, provides a comprehensive approach to challenging our students to achieve their best and build self-confidence in their personal abilities. This holistic approach of building the foundations of academic, physical, social and emotional learning capabilities of our students, reflects our school's ethos.

The Currajong School caters to students that meet the following criteria for enrolment:

Severe Emotional Disorder

Children who require special education provision as well as psychiatric or psychological treatment or monitoring in relation to the social, emotional and behavioural problems they are experiencing.

Age

Children should be the ages to attend primary schooling during their placement at Currajong. They should be no older than 11 years of age at the time of enrolment. The Currajong School now offers enrolment for Foundation/Prep to Year 6 students.

Intellectual Ability

Children need to be functioning within or above the normal range of intelligence (as measured on a standardised test), in order to be able to benefit from the programs offered at Currajong. As the level of intelligence may be difficult to determine in very young children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, such children may be referred on to a more appropriate school placement following periodic review.

Prognosis for Change

There should be positive indicators of children's ability to sustain changes made and to reintegrate into mainstream education following placement at Currajong.

Vision

The Currajong School believes in providing an inclusive and engaging environment which enables students to embrace learning and achieve their full potential. We do this by transforming the lives of children experiencing social, emotional, and behavioural disorders.

Mission

The Currajong School's mission is to provide a positive and therapeutic school environment for children whose social, emotional, and behavioural needs are unable to be met within mainstream education.

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

We nurture our students to develop self-belief, and a growth mindset that empowers them to live an abundant and successful life.

Moral Purpose

We support students to become confident learners who achieve to their full potential. To accomplish this, we offer an education approach based upon the High Impact Teaching Strategies.

- We support all students to become literate and numerate.
- We foster curiosity by immersing students in problem solving and providing opportunities for invention and innovation.
- We empower students to discover their potential by offering a personalised learning approach, this means educational programs are tailored to individual abilities and accommodate students' interests.
- Our staff work collaboratively, in professional learning communities, to design and deliver education programs that are engaging and challenging.
- We nurture empathy and compassion through listening and sharing experiences.
- We promote honesty, trust and personal responsibility.
- We create relationships that are caring, supportive and encouraging.

Values

Using a model of collaboration and consultation, the staff and students created an agreed set of values that we aim to always demonstrate:

Respect

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

Responsibility

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

Resilience

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

Governance

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

Staffing

The school attracts experienced, caring and innovative staff who work to provide a range of high-quality learning opportunities to stimulate and challenge the individual needs and talents of students. This is done within a collaborative culture, creating a strong sense of community and team spirit.

In 2023 the staff comprised 21 teaching, support and administrative staff, with a mix of full-time and part-time. One staff member identified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background.

The table below provides a breakdown of staff numbers by category as at the end of the 2023 school year:

Category	FTE
Principal Class	1
Administrative	1.8
Teaching Staff	6
Teaching Assistants	8.6
Allied Health	1.8

Professional Development

All registered teachers at The Currajong School are required to engage in at least 20 hours of professional development (PD) activities each year in order to renew their registration. All Staff participated in staff briefings, staff meetings, team meetings, whole school professional development and individualised and targeted PD that aligns to the School Strategic Plan. Staff have accessed PD delivered by ISV and other organisations that are experts in their relevant fields.

Teaching and Learning

Curriculum

Our school uses the Victorian Curriculum as the basis for all programs. The Victorian Curriculum has been developed to ensure that curriculum content and achievement standards enable continuous learning for all students.

At The Currajong School, all staff ensure students experience a secure and supportive place to learn. All classrooms foster an environment that is positive and productive. Through a curriculum that is supported by an integrated therapy team, positive behaviour support system and various specialist programs, all children are encouraged to develop their communication and independence skills, attempt new challenges and to accept responsibility for their learning and their behaviour.

The academic program adheres to the belief that all students have a right to an education and all students will flourish with a comprehensive and strategic approach to

support their individual learning needs. Our teachers follow differentiated teaching and learning strategies to tailor their methods effectively to reach every student, giving all students the opportunity to succeed.

Curriculum programs have been developed reflecting VCAA policy and organised according to the Victorian Curriculum Learning Standards and Levels F-10 of the curriculum. We also recognise the very individual needs of our students. Specific programs have been developed in each domain. Through these programs the Teachers at The Currajong School develop the skills identified in students' Individual Learning Plans (ILP).

At The Currajong School, literacy and numeracy skills are aimed at the level of each child through a differentiated program. Teachers reflect and evaluate programs to make sure they are directed appropriately to each child. Across the School learning is structured around Literacy (speaking, listening, reading and writing) and Numeracy programs. This involves a daily teaching block and ongoing assessment in subject areas, highlighting best practice and innovative and stimulating activities.

Our environmental model of allied health supports the classroom teachers and assistants with strategies and recommendations to apply a therapeutic model to learning along with interventions to assist all students in accessing all teaching and learning programs.

In 2023, we continued to embed the implementation of a whole school approach to Inquiry based learning. Every term, all classes engage in the same Unit of Inquiry. The investigations, activities and learning outcomes are levelled and age appropriately targeted to the students across the school. The units of inquiry are planned to incorporate a rotation of the various learning domains from the Victorian Curriculum and have an integrated approach to include outcomes from multiple learning areas.

Furthermore, 2023 saw our school focused on implementing a consistent teaching pedagogy across all classes with Reading to Learn (R2L), teachers have implemented R2L to improve skills such as comprehension, word recognition, spelling, letter formation, sentence construction and story writing. These skills are learnt in meaningful, engaging context of shared reading books which has assisted in student engagement.

Every student has an Individual Learning Plan, this results in very high engagement in the learning process of all students. Staff set realistic learning goals for each student. Student results reflect the teacher's capacity to plan thoroughly and use appropriate pedagogical practices with continual monitoring.

Teachers have been working on building student capacity by providing differentiated learning, where the students are working and engaged in planned activities/tasks which are both enjoyable but challenging for every student. By developing teacher knowledge through professional development & meetings, the school has been able to implement consistent and sustained high-impact teaching strategies.

Wellbeing and Engagement

An Individual Learning Plan (ILP) is designed in consultation between the school, parents/carers/ guardians, and external services for every student. The ILP has specific goals developed that are aligned to personal and social capabilities.

Individualised supports are implemented to cater to each student's needs, to assist them managing and monitoring their behaviour. Every student has a Behaviour Support Plan (BSP) at The Currajong School. This provides a consistent proactive approach for staff to manage students' unmet needs as they may arise, implement strategies to assist students in regulation and then re-engage with social, emotional and academic learning.

Inclusion, engagement and equity are imperative to The Currajong School. This is achieved through promoting our school values of Respect, Resilience and Responsibility. All the students who come to Currajong have a right to learn. Having high expectations for our students, we are constantly striving towards improvement in student learning, with the focus on social and emotional learning we see growth in the personal and social capabilities of our cohort of students.

The Currajong School consolidated the use the School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) to promote student safety, wellbeing and to support students to manage their behaviour. Although in its infancy, a developed matrix of whole school expectations, weekly focuses are clear for all students and SWPBS is becoming consistent across the school.

Respectful Relationships supports school settings to promote and model respect, positive attitudes and behaviours. At The Currajong School, we have on ongoing commitment to ensure our students and school community are taught all components of the Respectful Relationships program. We have found it teaches our children how to build healthy relationships, resilience and confidence.

There has been a whole school focus on upskilling staff in Trauma Informed Practices with training beginning in the Berry Street Educational Model. This has seen staff refine their practices, increasing student sense of belonging, student wellbeing and engagement in the classroom.

The Currajong School's Allied Health Team is a multidisciplinary team that provides school-based therapy services that supports students, as well as family and teacher professional learning.

The team consists of three passionate staff:

Occupational Therapist and two Social Workers.

They provide the highest quality school-based intervention services to our students to support their emotional, social, behavioural needs so they can access personal goals and achievements with their learning.

Student Progress

As a registered Special School, each student works towards individualised goals which are included in their Individual Learning Plan (ILP). Parents, external specialists and school staff work together to determine the student's needs and how they are best met.

The Currajong School Curriculum is informed by the Victorian Curriculum. The Essential Assessment Platform is used to assess student progress in English and Mathematics. The Currajong School strives to continually maintain and challenge a high level of participation and achievement for students within the Victorian Curriculum. Teachers use both formative and summative assessment resources to support this process and record achievement.

Eligible students are entitled to undertake the annual NAPLAN assessments. NAPLAN testing was undertaken in 2023, a total of seven students participated. Due to the low number of participants, reporting results are not a meaningful measure. Many students are eligible and are granted exemption from the NAPLAN testing.

Student Attendance

The overall attendance rate for 2023 as measured during the DET collection period was 88.58%. The main reasons for non-attendance related primarily to illness and/or medical needs, external therapy services and counselling appointments.

In 2023, families were required to notify the school of a student absence by using the Sentral Parent Portal, telephone, email or note. Regular attendance is extremely important as consistent student participation in the academic, social and emotional learning program is key to ensuring progress.

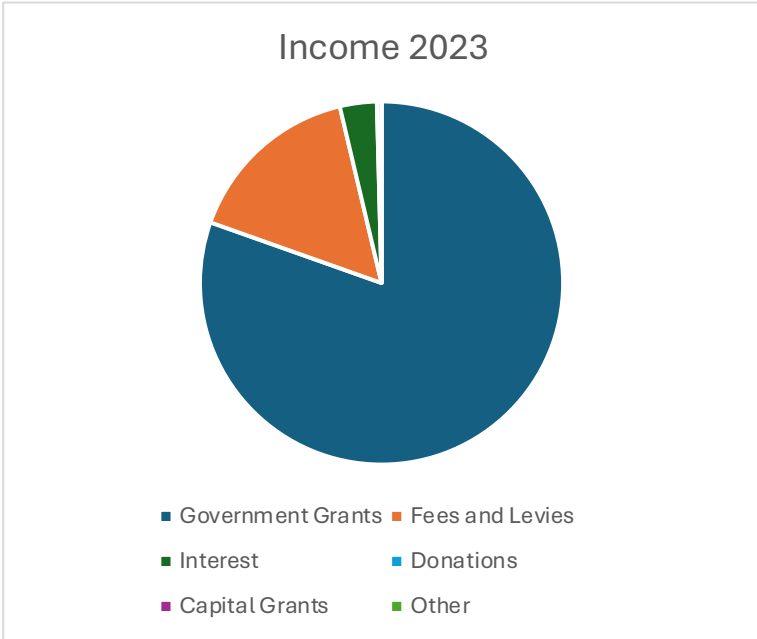
Student non-attendance across the school is predominantly due to the external Allied Health intervention, medical appointments that are required for our cohort of students, as well as illness and/or medical concerns.

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

School Operations

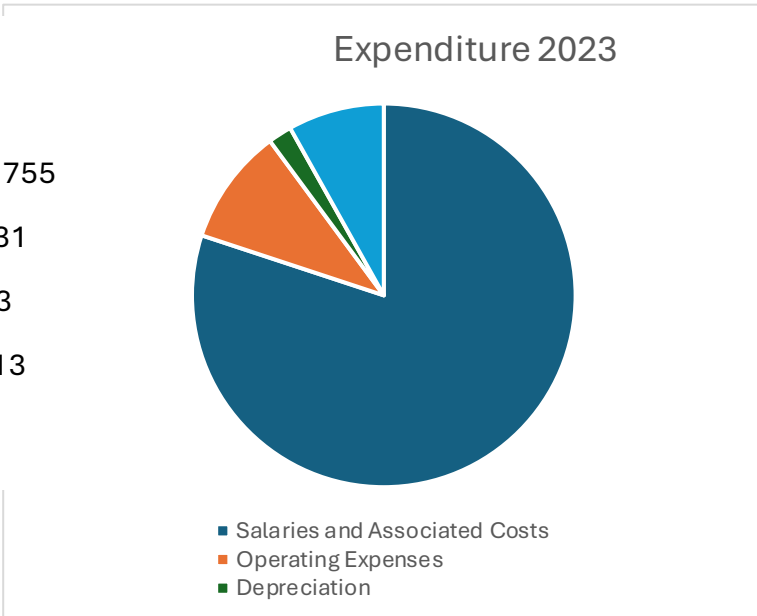
Income 2023

Government Grants	\$2,172,293
Fees and Levies	\$428,982
Interest	\$88,820
Donations	\$11,050
Capital Grants	\$0
Other	\$0



Expenditure 2023

Salaries and Associated Costs	\$1,932,755
Operating Expenses	\$237,031
Depreciation	\$48,113
Contingency	\$196,013



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