




The Armidale
Waldorf School
and Boongaia Preschool
FOR RUDOLF STEINER EDUCATION

NESA ANNUAL REPORT

Education and Financial Reporting

2024



“Receive the children in
reverence, educate them
with love and send them
forth in freedom.”

Rudolf Steiner

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Acknowledgement of Country

Ilaan nyaka raakya-ti-na kyunta Anaiwan

Today we stand on Anaiwan ground

Niitika ayitika nakutika ruunpa ilaan

Let's sit, look and listen well today

Developed in collaboration with members of the Anaiwan language revival group

We acknowledge that our School stands on the Country of the Anaiwan people. We respect and acknowledge that here, people are surrounded by a sense of belonging, both ancient and contemporary, bestowed on us by one of the world's oldest living continuing cultures. We will share in caring for this Country together with the Anaiwan, Gumbaynggirr, Kamilaroi, and Dhunghutti Nations. We would like to pay respect to the Elders, past and present, of these Nations, and to those who are yet to come.

Context

Origin

The Armidale Waldorf School began in February 1985 as Boongaiai School, meaning 'shaded place'. It opened as a Preschool, with Kindergarten and Primary classes added in the following years. Thanks to the generosity of benefactor Kit Wyndham, the school acquired its current bushland site, transforming existing buildings and adding uniquely designed classrooms. With ongoing community support and donated labour, the campus has flourished into a natural, nurturing learning environment. In 1993, the school adopted its current name and now offers education from Preschool to Class 12.

Study Body

We are a co-educational, non-denominational Steiner school—the only one in the New England region. Our students come from Armidale city and the surrounding region. 9.5% identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, and 13% speak a language other than English at home.

"Our highest endeavour must be to develop free human beings who are able, of themselves, to impart purpose and direction to their lives".

Rudolf Steiner.

Vision

The Armidale Waldorf School provides a comprehensive education from early childhood through to secondary school, that works clearly out of anthroposophy and the indications of the late Dr Rudolf Steiner, providing children and youth with a foundation for life and inspiring them toward fulfilment of their destiny. It is a school where students are educated to take their place in the world in a meaningful way for humanity, secure in their earthly existence, with their souls nourished and their creative spirits liberated.

An integral part of the School is the College of Teachers, which has the purpose, responsibility and authority to lead the School on pedagogical matters; to maintain and develop the quality of the educational programs and experiences; and to enrich the spiritual heart and purpose of the School.

The School's dynamic approach to education permeates every aspect of school life, with students, teachers, parents and friends all being recognised and valued as the unique spiritual beings that they are. The school community seeks to nourish and support this vision. The School has clear structures and processes to facilitate trust, objectivity and communication.

We empower each other with the mandate to take responsibility for the tasks identified, and to work together with an attitude of openness, honesty and trust.

We strive to make decisions through consensus, with honest and respectful discussion, and to ensure that all the voices in our school community have the opportunity to be heard.

We, the School community of students, teachers, parents and friends, interact with the world with courage and love; truth, beauty and goodness stand as an inspiration for all.

Chair of School Board Report

Introduction

2024 has been a challenging year of significant growth and change, bringing with it new and exciting opportunities for The Armidale Waldorf School as we look ahead to 2025. Throughout the year, we have continued to offer a comprehensive education from early childhood through to high school, working clearly out of the anthroposophy of the late Dr Rudolf Steiner—enabling our students to find their place in the world in a meaningful way for humanity.

I am pleased to report that in 2024 we benefited from stable and reliable staffing, particularly within key leadership roles. We also welcomed several new teachers and student learning assistants, who have supported our growth into the Senior Years and enriched our Steiner education offering.

Whilst we welcome new faces, we farewelled a much-loved pillar of our school community—Karen Jenkins. After nearly twenty years at The Armidale Waldorf School, most notably as our Kindergarten Teacher, Karen has retired to embrace a new chapter as a grandparent. Karen's nurturing presence has guided many children through their adolescence, helping shape confident young adults. Her deep commitment to Steiner Education was also felt in her leadership of the College of Teachers, where she mentored staff and supported the school's pedagogical direction with care and integrity. On behalf of the Board and our community, I extend heartfelt thanks to Karen. We wish her all the very best and remain deeply grateful for her lasting contribution.



2024 Achievements

This has been a year of achievement and preparation for future growth. 2024 Key achievements I am most proud of include:

Strategic Growth

- Completion of the TAWS Strategic Plan 2024–2027.
- Enrolment EOIs remained strong throughout the year, with some families relocating to Armidale specifically to access Steiner education for their children.
- School Infrastructure
- Completion of TAWS grounds lighting and security upgrades, signage enhancements, and general landscaping improvements.
- Establishment of access pathways to the High School Agriculture Plot.
- Office refurbishment of the Early Childhood building (Boongaiai Preschool), including upgrades to the surrounding fence.
- Capital works on the TAWS Teaching and Learning Centre are on track, with furnishings and fit-out projected for completion by Term 1, 2025. This space will provide additional rooms for meetings, learning support, wellbeing, and other educational purposes, as well as improved working conditions for admin staff.



Senior Years & Learning Innovation

- The successful commencement of the Stage 6 Senior Years program (condensed curriculum Year 11/12) in Term 4 2024.
- Provided new learning opportunities and engagement with the local academic community through establishing our UNE Visiting Academics Program for the Senior Years students.
- Increased adoption of laptops and tablets in high school learning, including the commencement and implementation of the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) program in Senior Years.



Financial Stewardship & Governance

- Commencement of the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement and negotiations with the Independent Education Union to formalise pay and conditions for all staff through a new TAWS Teaching Award.
- Completion of the TAWS 2025 Budget, supporting future preparedness and oversight.
- Successful completion of the 2024 TAWS Annual General Meeting, ensuring engagement with all company members.
- Worked closely with families to reduce outstanding fees from 15.6% of billables at the end of 2023 to 9.4% by the end of 2024.
- Successful completion of the NESA audit.
- Successful completion of the Financial Audit 2023–2024.

Community Engagement

- The establishment of the High School Agriculture Plot has enabled meaningful partnerships between TAWS and neighbours, creating hands-on learning opportunities for students, future community-based projects, and potential land lease arrangements. School staff and students continue to engage with the Rotary and
- Community events at the Ag Plot (e.g. Community BBQ) have supported growth of a collaborative partnership between Rotary, Ezidi Armidale, and TAWS, while also aiding in raising awareness of projects (e.g. visit from Costa Georgiadis, Armidale Mayor, and the New England Garden Festival).
- The Spring Fair was organised by a staff working group, resulted in successful participation, community engagement and increased expected profit/earnings.
- The board continued to engage with TAWS families through the Annual Community Conversation in September, with good engagement and participation by the executive staff, Board Directors and parents.



Thank You

These are all outstanding achievements for 2024, and they would not be made possible without the dedicated staff. Thank you for all the incredible work, dedication and passion that you each bring to your roles- thus enabling TAWS to be what it is.

On behalf of the Armidale Waldorf School Board of Directors, I would especially like to thank our Principal, Zana, for guiding the school with clarity and care; our Business Manager, Will, for his commitment and clear vision; and our Board Directors- Kip, Susanna and Peter- for your governance, insight, and dedication to the school's ongoing strength and future.

Our school continues to succeed because of the people and the community that surrounds and nurtures it. To quote Rudolf Steiner "When human beings meet together seeking the spirit with unity of purpose then they will also find their way to each other."

As family, parents, teachers, managers, volunteers, friends, and community members, we collectively continue to transpire the integral values of gratitude, collaboration, inclusivity, responsibility – instilling in our students self-identify for their place in this world as the leaders of tomorrow.

You are all integral, valued and so greatly appreciated for continuing to feed and nourish the heart, body and soul of The Armidale Waldorf School.

Thank you.

Mattias Grasselli

Director and Board Chair



Principal Report

Overview Whole School

2024 was year of expansion as we welcomed our first year 10 class at the beginning of the year and then our first Senior Years Program class (Year 11 and 12) at the end of the year. The senior year programme offers the compressed curriculum placing the Armidale Waldorf School proudly forefront as a unique educational offering in the Armidale and the wider community.

Most of the year saw the construction of the Learning Centre which was built to offer the much-needed spaces for our growing school including dedicated spaces for student learning, meetings spaces for wellbeing and student support plan meetings as well as office space for staff.

In February, we started the year with 141 students from Kindergarten to Class 10 and 148 at August census. Our classes were stand-alone Kindergarten, combined Class 1/2 and Class 3/ 4, stand-alone Class 5, 6, 7, and 8, and a combined Class 9/10. During the year, primary class sizes ranged from 10-29. Boongaiai Preschool began at 70% capacity and reached 83% capacity in Term 4. Playtime ran two sessions each week throughout the year.

Focus Areas 2024

The focus for 2024 was in the following key areas:

- Working towards the addition of the Senior Years (Y11/12)
- Increase enrolments in the high school to build numbers for the introduction of the Senior Years at the end of 2024
- Continued work in Numeracy and Literacy to improve student outcomes in numeracy and literacy in the early years.
- Continuation of Student Learning and Wellbeing Assistants across all classes to assist students to access and engage with the curriculum and school life.
- Keeping our Reconciliation Action Plan at the forefront of everything we do.
- Excellence in Teaching through increased resources and professional development.

Expanding the High School

In 2024 we began our first Year 10 class and continued our work towards offering our first Senior Year's Class in term 4 2024 with the compressed HSC model. The first subjects for our first the Senior Class were Ancient History, Earth and Environmental Science and Mathematics. The NESA curriculum, including **initial** registration for year 11 and 12 and **renewal** of registration for year 10 were also undertaken.



Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)

As part of the RAP team's 2024 strategy, members were welcomed to attend the first Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG) community meeting. This meeting served to introduce The Armidale Waldorf School and the RAP team to the AECG committee, helping to strengthen our connection with other schools and the broader community.

We marked National Reconciliation Week with a Smoking Ceremony and Welcome to Country, led by a local Anaiwan community member. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags were proudly displayed at the front of the school. This year's theme, "Now More Than Ever," underscored the importance of learning about shared histories, cultures, and achievements, and continuing the work of reconciliation. Students created a banner for the local Bridge Walk with the message "The Armidale Waldorf School Supports Reconciliation" and their handprints, symbolising our commitment to working together. Class activities included storytelling, discussions about reconciliation, and a shared morning tea.

NAIDOC Day*, themed *Keep the Fire Burning – Loud and Proud* began with a smoking ceremony, a Welcome to Country by a local Anaiwan Elder, and heartfelt speeches from Aunty Sharon and Aboriginal students. In honour of the theme, a central fire was kept burning throughout the day at our Yarning Circle. NAIDOC Day continues to enliven the strong cultural spirit within our school. This year, Elder Darrell Ahoy led a fascinating workshop on traditional artefacts and their uses, while the workshops painting bookmarks engaged the senses. Students also created over 270 individual buntings, which will be proudly displayed each year during NAIDOC Week. A highlight of the day was a visit from local Aboriginal woman Dorothy Roberts, who shared the inspiring story of her father—the first Aboriginal man to attend the Olympic Games in 1964. Students had the privilege of viewing and holding his treasured memorabilia, making this story more tangible and memorable.

The RAP team will bring together a special day each year and will continue to build and strengthen understanding and inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures at The Armidale Waldorf School, fostering powerful, positive, and harmonious relationships within the school and the wider community.

*The school celebrates NAIDOC with a dedicated day in September, aligning with the school calendar and the milder weather suited to outdoor activities.





Community, Events and Festivals

Seasonal Festival and Community events are a vital part of our school life. They offer opportunities for connection, celebration, and shared purpose—bringing together students, families, staff, and the wider public. Festivals, in particular, are an integral aspect of Steiner education, marking the turning points of the year with beauty, reverence, and joy. They help establish a strong yearly rhythm for our children. Each Festival will include a creative activity, cooking, singing, and sometimes dancing and/or instrumental performances. These gatherings nourish social warmth and foster a deep sense of belonging amongst students, staff and families.

Highlights for 2024 include:

Internal Events

- **Autumn Festival** (Term 1) – harvesting produce and preparing for winter.
- **Winter Festival** (Term 2) – Finding inner light with a sense of reverence. Featuring a Welcome to Country, singing, lantern spiral, high school fire performance, and community bonfire.
- **NAIDOC Day** (Term 3) – Welcome to Country and smoking ceremony, Elders storytelling, and hands-on cultural education activities.
- **Spring Festival** (Term 3) – floral wreath making and energetic songs and dancing.
- **Summer Festival** (Term 4) – a celebration of Summer and end of year.
- **Spring Fair** – fundraising event with volunteer run activities, games and food stalls.

External Events

- **Armidale Show** (Term 1)– entered artworks, scarecrow, and produce in the local show (overall winner).
- **Art Show Fundraiser** (Term 1)– a silent auction style event that raised money for cellos.
- **Armidale Council Lights Festival** (Term 2) – High School students performed their Winter Festival fire performance to a crowd of hundreds of local residents.
- **DaVinci Decathlon** (Term 1) – teams self-selected to take part in this academic event. Our Year 7 students placed first in science and legacy.

Library

Our library not only provides resources for our students and community but is a much-used space for meetings, plays and other small classes.

Tuck Shop

We offer wholesome food every Friday which is often created from produce grown in our own vegetable garden.

Working Bees

Working bees were held once per term to contribute to tasks that are important to the school's maintenance and educational support. Participation offers the opportunity to contribute to the warmth and sense of place that parents feel for the campus and school community.



Summer



Autumn



Winter



Spring

Early Childhood Playtime and Preschool

Playtime

Playtime continues to be a cherished part of our community, offering a Steiner playgroup for children aged 0–3 years and their parents. In 2024, Playtime saw an increase in popularity, bringing families together and providing opportunities for social connection. With two sessions per week, it offers a space where families can enjoy nature-based play while getting to know others in a relaxed, supportive environment, creating a sense of belonging in the community.

Preschool

Our preschool program in 2024 continued to nurture the social, emotional, and cognitive development of children in alignment with Steiner principles and the Early Years Learning Framework: Belong, Being & Becoming (ACECQA, 2023), meeting the five areas of the National Quality Standards. In 2024, we maintained a deliberate focus on balancing enrolments to ensure the preschool environment supported the best outcomes for all our students. We prioritised spaces for 4–5 year-olds transitioning to kindergarten in 2025 and Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children in alignment with Start Strong funding requirements. This approach ensured that the preschool remains an accessible, diverse, and inclusive environment.

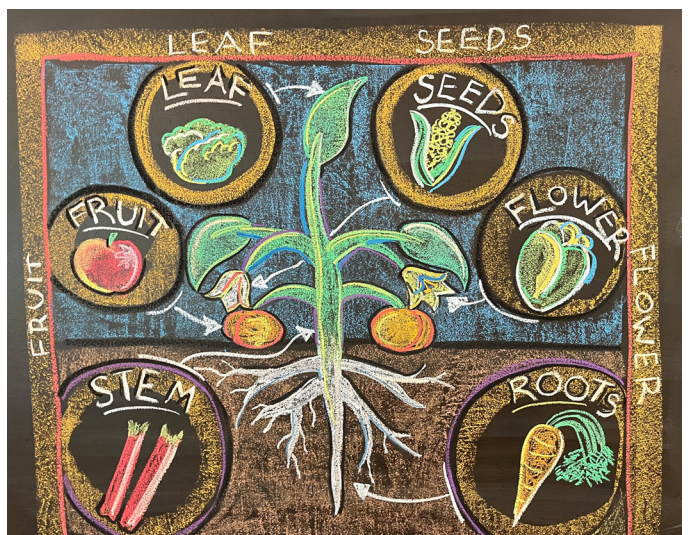
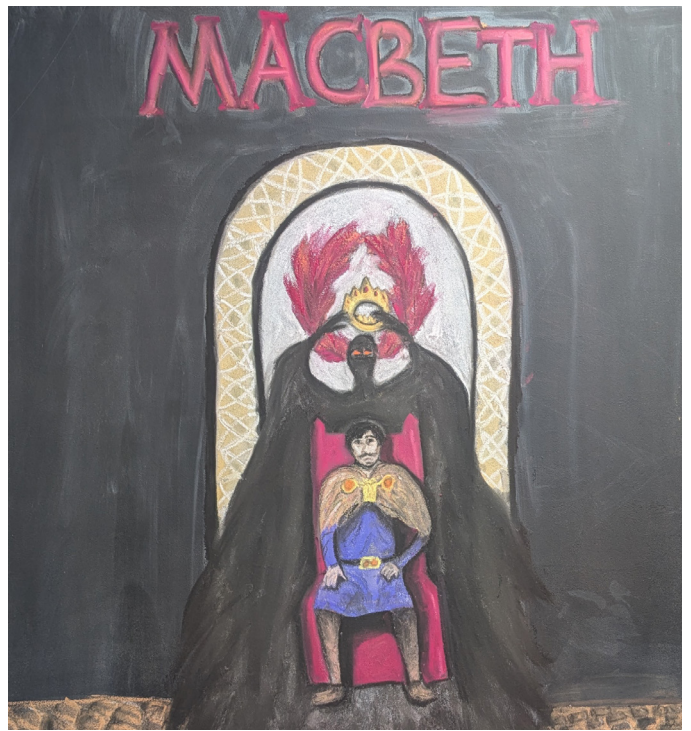
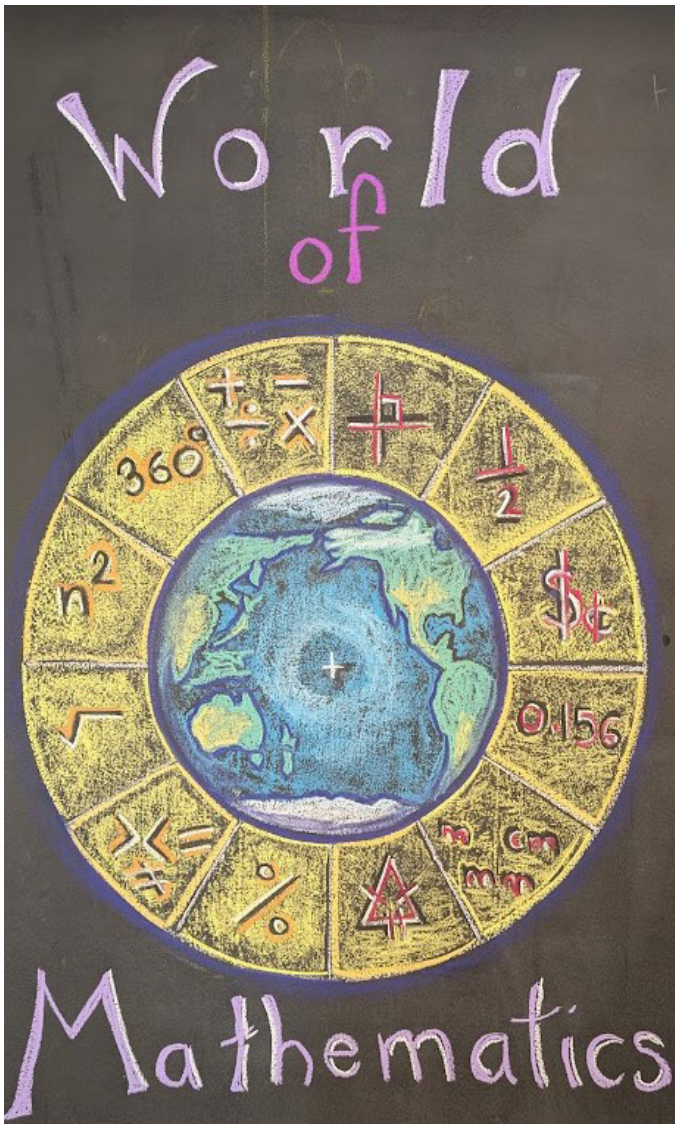
Community Engagement and Events

Community involvement continues to be at the heart of what we do at Boongaia. In 2024, we placed an even greater emphasis on building and strengthening these connections. Through a range of events, festivals, and collaborative initiatives, our preschool has played an active role in bringing families together.

Key Events in 2024

- **Seasonal Festivals:** Each term, we celebrated the changing seasons with festivals that brought together children, families, and the wider community. These celebrations were a wonderful opportunity to connect with nature, through storytelling, songs, and creative activities. The festivals are a key part of our rhythm, allowing children and families to engage with the natural world in a way that feels joyful and meaningful.
- **Open Day (Term 2):** We welcomed prospective families for 2025 enrolments to experience what our preschool has to offer. The Open Day provided families with a chance to visit the preschool, meet educators, and learn about our approach to education through the Steiner philosophy.
- **Senior's Week Festival at NERAM (Term 1):** This intergenerational event was a highlight of the year, with grandparents and "grand-friends" joining our preschoolers for art appreciation and hands-on artmaking. This event nurtured strong connections between the generations and offered a meaningful way to share in creative experiences.
- **Whole-School Events:** The preschool also took part in the school's broader celebrations, including seasonal festivals, NAIDOC Day, and Parent Information and Fundraising Nights. These events gave our preschool families the chance to come together as a community, building deeper connections and a sense of shared purpose.





Primary & Secondary Kindy to Class 11

Student Wellbeing Programme

In 2024 we expanded our wellbeing program.

This included:

- Additional wellbeing support in both the primary and high school.
- A daily breakfast program was introduced to support nutrition and offer informal wellbeing check-ins for students each morning.
- Our additional wellbeing support in the classrooms allowed student learning assistants to offer supervised, targeted movement breaks or supervised projects in the garden for students who require interventions to support their emotional regulation
- Staff received further training in Restorative Practices which were used to support and manage behaviour in a way that fosters a respectful and supportive school culture.
- In the Primary school, weekly personal development circles were held to build respectful relationships, self-management and interpersonal skills. In addition, the wellbeing team increased their presence in the playground, offering activities and supporting social interactions to assist students who struggle to navigate the social demands of the playground
- We introduced targeted group sessions to address specific social issues that arose such as the friendship circle in the primary school
- One to one wellbeing support sessions were provided to children facing specific challenges.
- Class Guardians provided daily mentorship in each the high school class.

Student Support

The student support team played a critical role in supporting student learning and well-being. The team, which includes Student Learning Assistants and Wellbeing staff, provided in-class and one-on-one support for students from Kindergarten to Class 10. Support included:

- The screening of critical literacy and numeracy skills was collected at the start, mid-point and end of the year. The results informed targeted interventions and adjustments to teaching programs and strategies and indicated focus areas for Individual Education Plans.
- PAT Testing were held in Term 4 for Class 4 and 6; these tests were part of a national research project, and the data gathered will guide future teaching practices and support ongoing student development.
- Individual Education Plans (IEPs) were collaboratively produced with parents and students to support students' learning and wellbeing outcomes.
- We organised literacy and numeracy learning groups to cater for the diverse ability levels and learning needs across both stage 2 and Stage 3. The groups allowed us to deliver more targeted instruction where immediate feedback and intervention can be more easily provided. Working in these smaller groups has allowed the students to deepen their engagement and improve their confidence across literacy and numeracy strands.
- We worked with the NSW centre for Effective reading to provide individualised and comprehensive reading programs to identified students.
- Assistive technology: Voice-to-text and text-to-voice devices were introduced for students with specific learning difficulties, offering them increased independence and access to the curriculum.
- Our reading dog, Haven, a trained assistant dog, joined Class 1/ 2 to support the development of reading skills and build student engagement and confidence with reading.

Educational Programs and Curriculum

Music

Music is central to our curriculum, with students participating in a variety of activities including class music, singing, recorder, the string programme, instrumental programme and ensemble playing, fostering creativity, rhythm, and social connection.

Individual lessons were offered by a range of teachers from the community including the New England Conservatorium of Music. We continued to offer Fiddlers Club as an afterschool activities for students wanting more playing opportunities.

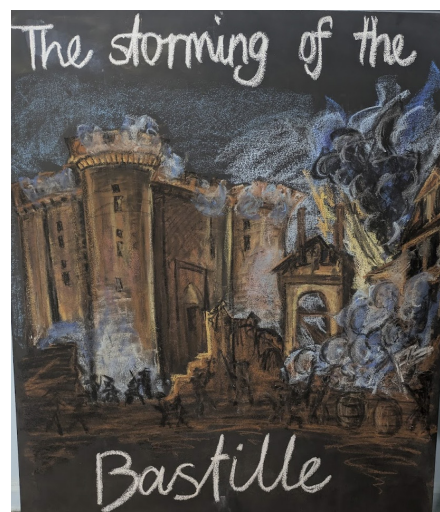
There were a range of concerts through the year for students to share their musical journey with families and the wider school community. The opportunity to perform is a source of great joy for the students and provides them with the motivation to continue to practice and work towards mastery of their chosen instrument.



French

Classes from K-8 enjoyed weekly French lessons. In the junior years the students learnt basic French through song and games while the high school students learnt a more practical application of French through developing their grammatical skills. As the year progressed, students built on the vocabulary learnt in each lesson through the different topics:

- **Kindergarten** learned basic greetings, colours, how to describe animals and how to describe people.
- **Class 1/2** built upon their French understanding through the fairy tales of Goldilocks and the Three Bears, The Billy Goats Gruff, The Giant Turnip and Little Red Riding Hood
- **Classes 3/4** applied French through practical applications such as returning to school, food and weather, while also learning through the story of Snow White and the Seven Dwarves.
- **Class 5 and Class 6** similarly applied French through practical applications including returning to school, clothing and meal times, while also learning through the story of Cinderella.
- **Class 7** looked at describing themselves, greetings and social language, offering and accepting drinks and describing family members and friends.
- **Class 8** learnt how to express their opinion of zoos and how to describe their pets, the different meals of the day and how to order food and drinks. Class 8 also learnt about the French revolution and the impact it had on the world.



Practical Arts

Craft, textiles, and applied arts are used to help students build fine-motor skills and develop skills in perseverance. During the year students create many projects that range in complexity. Projects are selected for their purpose, age-appropriateness, and build upon their skills from year to year.

2024 core projects undertaken:

- **Class 1** embroidered name tag for chair bags, and wove recorder bags in a rainbow pattern.
- **Class 2** knitted animals and hand-sewed bags.
- **Class 3** embroidered camp bags and crochet cushion cover.
- **Class 4** cross-stitched pen pouches and pin and needle pouches.
- **Class 5** crafted leather compass pouches carved wooden eggs and embroidered treble recorder cases.
- **Class 6** knitted beanies, embossed leather bookcover, carved bone pendants, and embroidered playing card pouches.
- **Class 7** wooden boxes, lanterns, sewn pants.
- **Class 8** dodecahedron wooden lanterns, crocheted cushion cover, wooden stool.
- **Class 9/10** cooking (C9 only), silver smithed bracelet and ring, mountain bike riding (C10 only), linocut lanterns, ceramic portrait, school magazine.





Physical Education, Games and Sport

In addition to regular lunchtime activities, PDHPE lessons, and movement exercises in classrooms; all classes end the week with Friday afternoon games (in the primary) and sport. We provide a varied program that gives students exposure to unique sports and those which support the development of coordination, stamina and teamwork. We do not encourage competitive sports in the primary school, instead, we use movement to develop social skills and an embodied sense of personal capability.

Sports held this year:

- **Swimming** (Terms 1 & 4) Swimming lessons for Classes 1–3. Life Saving course for High School students.
- **Mountain Biking** (Term 1) Class 9 participate in mountain bike courses around the Pine Forest and up to UNE.
- **Skating** (Term 2) High School roller-skating at the Armidale Recreation Centre.
- **Rock Climbing & Tennis** (Term 3) Classes 3–6 participated in weekly sessions at Sport UNE
- **Gymnastics** (Term 3 & Term 4) High School gymnastics and ninja training at Armidale City Gym. Followed by Classes 4–6 gymnastics at Sport UNE
- **Mixed Games** (Term 4) High School students participated in football, soccer, and frisbee at Charleston Willows
- **Whole-School Sporting Events-** Participation is through self-nomination and performance is and tracked for personal achievement. High School students support younger students and help to facilitate events.
 - Swimming Carnival (Term 1)
 - Cross Country (Term 2)
 - Athletics Carnival (Term 3)
 - End of Year Swimming Day (Term 4)

Environmental Education and Gardening

Our school continues to retain Eco School Green Status. 2024 saw the development of a Scope and Sequence for Environmental Education to be implemented in 2025. A small grant from the IEU Environmental Education Project supported the rehabilitation of part of the school grounds, encouraging students to collect biodiversity data and support birdlife habitats.

Our large vegetable garden is tended by the primary classes, with each student spending regular time weeding, making compost, planting, and harvesting. The produce is then used in our Class cooking and sold at the Spring Fair.

In high school, our Agriculture and Food Science teacher has led a project to develop ag plots on the neighbouring property. By Term 3, high school classes begun designing, preparing beds, and planting them out with herbs and vegetables. Developing these ag plots and expanding our environmental education program in high school will continue to be a focus for 2025.



Class Plays

Class plays are an integral part of Steiner education, known as pedagogical dramas. They support both social and emotional development while deepening students' connection to the curriculum. Plays foster class cohesion, creativity, and individual growth, with each performance carefully chosen to align with students' developmental stages and Main Lessons.

- Class 1/2 (Term 4): **Briar Rose** – performed in Term 4, complementing the Fairy Tale Main Lesson
- Class 3/4 (Term 3): **Moses and the Exodus** – linked to their Old Testament Main Lesson
- Class 5&6 (Term 2): **The Ramayana** – aligned with the Ancient India Main Lesson
- Class 7&8 (Term 1): **A Midsummer Night's Dream** – aligned to English Main Lesson.
- Class 9/10 (Term 3): **Macbeth** – aligned to English Main Lesson, performed at the Armidale Playhouse, students took on backstage and front-of-house roles, gaining insight into the full scope of theatrical production

Camps

Camps are a rich part of our curriculum, offering students meaningful experiences that support identity, community, and connection to the natural world. Designed to match each developmental stage, camps foster independence, collaboration, and self-reflection through hands-on learning in nature.

In Primary School, camps gradually increase in length and challenge. From a first sleepover to longer outdoor adventures, students develop resilience, class unity, and personal responsibility through shared tasks like tent setup and campfire cooking.

In High School, camps introduce greater complexity. Students take ownership of planning, gear management, and group dynamics. These experiences link academic learning with real-world skills, building confidence, adaptability, and environmental awareness.

Camps this year:

- **Class 1/2** (Term 3): Sleepover in the library followed by an overnight camp at Thalgarrah Environmental Centre.
- **Class 3/4** (Term 2) Three-day music camp at Thalgarrah. (Term 3) A four-day camp to Port Macquarie.
- **Class 5** (Term 1) Camp to Yuraygir and Dorrig National Parks studying botany.
- **Class 6** (Term 1) Camp to Gibraltar National Park and Station Creek, observing landscapes and environmental studies.
- **Class 7&8** (Term 1) Joint camp to Sydney, visiting museums, theatres, art galleries, and historical sites to support learning across science, art, English, and history
- **Class 7** (Term 3) hiking camp along the Yuraygir Coastal walk observing landscapes and botany.
- **Class 8** (Term 3) Camp to the Warrumbungle's, deepening their understanding of natural science and geography.
- **Class 9/10** (Term 2) multi-location to Urunga, focused on biodynamic farming and sustainable agriculture. (Term 4) Camp in Sydney focussed on providing service to community.





Professional Development

Staff had many opportunities to engage with professional development. We host dedicated professional development days every term, as well funding regular professional development opportunities throughout the year as required.

Whole School professional development:

- Aboriginal Cultural Awareness “Frontier Wars and Place Names” with Dave Widders (Term 1)
- Child Protection training with Tim Axtens from AIS NSW (Term 2)
- Fire Training with Brian from Armidale Fire and Safety (Term 2)
- Bothmer Gymnastics- Education for adults with Katherine Ellis (Term 3)
- Environmental Stewardship- team collaborative exercises (Term 4)
- First Aid/CPR/Anaphylaxis Training (Term 4)

Teacher-focussed professional development:

- Therapeutic Movement with Marianne Nichols (Primary School)
- Restorative Practices at Noosa Pengari Steiner School and through internal mentoring.
- Mathematics and Steiner pedagogy with Greg Noakes (Primary School)
- Child Developmental Stages with Melanie Deefholts
- High School Steiner Pedagogy and professional mentoring with Kelly McGlashan
- Gestalt Language Processing Workshop with PEDAL Early Intervention (Early Childhood)
- Steiner Early Childhood Meeting for peer collaboration (Early Childhood)
- Study of the 12 Senses (Early Childhood and Primary)

External Compliance

- We had a total of 23 students sitting NAPLAN this year. Two from class 3, seven students from class 5, five from class 7, and nine from Class 9.
- NCCD (National Consistent Collection of Data) The school completed its yearly submission entering data on disabilities and student’s needs.
- Child Protection. All staff undertook child protection training during the year in the form of the AIS Identifying and Responding to Children and Young People at Risk Online Course.
- Report Writing. The Armidale Waldorf School sends out two formal reports to parents; one mid-year and one at the end of the year. This is supplemented by parent-teacher meetings offered twice a year.

Conclusion

2024 saw The Armidale Waldorf School offer its first year 10 class as well as running our first Senior Year class beginning in term 4. This was a very exciting step that now allows TAWS to offer a full Steiner education from Playtime to year 12 for students and families of our region.

Our teaching and educational and wellbeing support staff did an amazing job of supporting students throughout the year offering many rich educational experiences. In the beautiful school setting, we acknowledge and have deep gratitude for the traditional lands on which we work, learn and play – the cultural richness that surrounds us and, in particular, the beautiful bush setting that nourishes the children, the adults guiding them and to all those that visit our school.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mattias Grasselli (Board Chair) and to the Board, for their guidance and support; Will Winter (Business Manager)

and Rosy McGrath (Early Childhood coordinator), Michelle Hollands, (Head of Primary) and Chris O'Neill (Head of Secondary) for working so strongly as a leadership team; the College of Teachers for their commitment to inner work, and their work with child study; all the teaching staff for their dedication to teaching and love of the children; the administration staff for their behind-the-scenes support of the children, parents/carers, teachers and Leadership team.

As one year closes, and another is about to begin, I acknowledge and appreciate with sincerity the strengths and gifts each one brings to our school community. It is the children, the parents and carers, the teachers, the support staff, and the Board all working together that allows the school to continue to grow, meet the challenges presented and provide the richness of a Steiner education – for all the children in our care now and into the future.



Zana Clarke,

Principal

"Receive the children in reverence, educate them in love, and send them forth in freedom."

Rudolf Steiner.

Outcomes and Results

Student Outcomes in Standardised National Literacy And Numeracy Testing

Below are results from our Class 5 & Class 9 2024 NAPLAN results. There are no outcomes available for Class 3 and Class 7 due to low participation rates.

	Class 5	Class 9
Reading	496	614
Writing	482	548
Spelling	514	631
Grammar	516	620
Numeracy	467	578

*Sourced from [MySchool.edu.au](https://myschool.edu.au)

Senior Secondary Outcomes

Not applicable.

HSC results

Not applicable.

Post-School Destinations

In 2024 we welcome our first Year 10 Class. We are pleased that 7 (of a total class of 8) students from Year 10 2024 opted to follow this further education into Senior Years 2025.

Our Senior Years class is designed for students who are eager to pursue their education in a Steiner setting within a familiar and close-knit cohort. Through the high school expansion, we have found that some students—due to their career aspirations, curiosity, or desire to develop new social networks—may choose to attend an alternative high school within the Armidale community to complete their studies. This is expected, and we are pleased that our students have these options available to them.

Staffing

Accreditation Status

Accreditation status of all teaching staff delivering the curriculum.

Accreditation Status	Number of Teachers
Proficient Teacher	16
Provisional Teacher	1
Conditional	0

Workforce Composition

Composition of all permanent staff.

	Head Count	FTE
Teacher	16	13.56
Non-teacher	19	15.13
Preschool	4	2
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	2	1.65

Attendance

Attendance Rates by Year Level

Year	Attendance Rate %
Kindergarten	90
Year 1	90.63
Year 2	91.6
Year 3	92.22
Year 4	91.8
Year 5	88.35
Year 6	89.41
Year 7	90.78
Year 8	89.48
Year 9	82.88
Year 10	91.6
Year 11	83.29

Management of Non-Attendance

The school implements procedures for the management of student non-attendance in accordance with the Attendance Policy. An SMS message, phone call or email is sent to parents of students who are absent. The school follows up where the explanation of absence is not received.

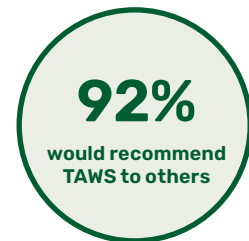
Absences are monitored and interviews are held to find means of support with parents where there is cause for concern. Mandatory reporting procedures apply where absences are extended, or the student may be at risk.

School Policies

Key school policies are accessible via our website: www.waldorf.nsw.edu.au/policies/

Policy	URL
Child Protection (TAWS)	https://waldorf.nsw.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Child-Protection-Policy-and-Procedures-2025.pdf
Anti Bullying	https://waldorf.nsw.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/TAWS-Anti-bullying-web.pdf
Behaviour Management (Discipline)	https://waldorf.nsw.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/TAWS-Behaviour-Management-Policy-web.pdf
Managing Complaints	https://waldorf.nsw.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Complaints-or-Grievance-Policy-2025.pdf
Enrolments	https://waldorf.nsw.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Enrolment-Policy-2025.pdf
Attendance	https://waldorf.nsw.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Attendance-Policy-2025.pdf

Stakeholder Satisfaction



Students

This year we saw a strong enrolment rates, reflecting the strength of the school in retaining and attracting new families. Satisfaction in our offering is also reflected in the high number of teachers who choose to enrol their children at our school.

This year we welcomed 88% of Class 10 into our inaugural Senior Years (Class 11/12) cohort. This high conversion rate of students into our Senior Yeats programs demonstrates a strong trust, engagement, and satisfaction in our school.

Staff

Staff satisfaction can be measured in various ways, including retention rates. 2024 staff retention rates, including casual positions, were teachers 87% and all staff 80%. Our high retention rate is supported by providing engaging and creative professional development programs each term, maintaining effective communication through fortnightly staff meetings, encouraging collaboration during weekly faculty meetings, and pairing new teachers with experienced mentors.

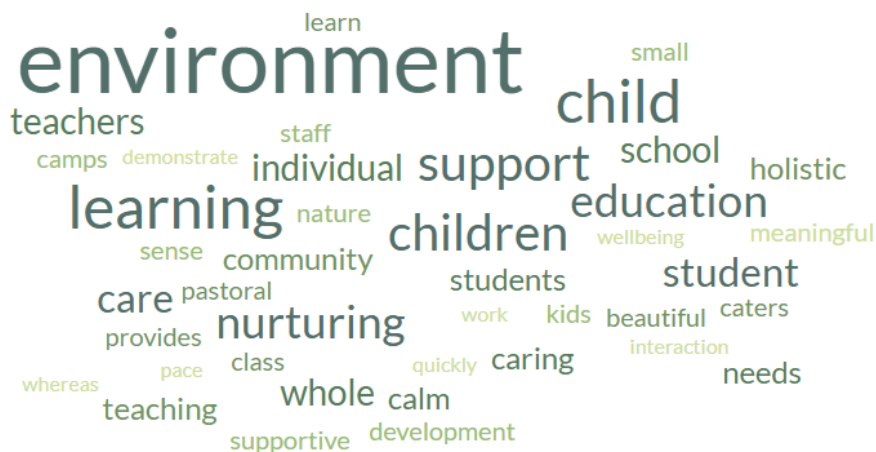
Parents

In May all parents had an opportunity to provide feedback to the school. We received a response rate of 64%.

Key results from feedback were:

- 8.6/10 was the overall satisfaction score.
- 92% of Parents would recommend our school to others.
- When asked to describe what the school does well, feedback centred on: providing individualised education, supporting the whole child, a nurturing approach, and fostering a positive community environment.
- When asked to describe what the school can improve upon, sentiment focussed on: ensuring alignment of the school to Steiner Education philosophy, optimising class sizes, enhancing digital communications, and adequate notice for school events.

Wordcloud Parent Responses to "What do you feel the school does well?"



School Priorities

2024 Priorities Updates (identified in 2023 report)

Area	Development Priorities 2024	Progress
Facilities	Construct a Teaching and Learning Centre (admin building extension) to provide additional teaching, administrative and meeting spaces.	Project began construction in Term 3, 2024 and was finished mid-Term 1, 2025
	Develop a high school physical exercise and play area.	Compaction and drainage works completed in Term 1, along with terraced seating around the edges of this amenity. Basketball hoops were installed Term 2. Ongoing development is being considered in longer term strategic plans.
	Augment shade areas in primary and high school outdoor areas.	Preliminary plans and cost estimates concluded in Term 4, 2024. A large shade area in central communal space will be constructed in Term 2 2025.
	Upgrade School entrance and signage	Construction underway, due for completion in Term 3 2025.
	Finish Kindergarten and Early Childhood perimeter fence.	Completed over the summer term break, 2024. Playtime fencing to be a focus for 2025.
	Develop a high school ag-ricultural and natural re-source stewardship pre-cinct on a designated 10-hectare area adjoining the School campus. In con-junction with Rotary, neighbours, Ezidi and other community stakeholders.	The first vegetable and herb plots were successfully developed and harvested by High School students in 2024. Continuing priority in 2025.
Class 11	Preparations for year 11 students to begin in 2025. This includes curriculum design and set up of appropriate learning spaces.	NESA Accreditation for Stage 6 educational program delivery was completed in 2024. Inaugural Senior Years (Class 11/12) students began studies in Term 4. A new Senior Years learning space will be completed in Early Term 1 2025.
Student Wellbeing	Build and augment student wellbeing programmes through the appointment of suitably qualified staff, ongoing attention to staff/student ratios, and further staff training for delivery of restorative practices	Continued to formalise our wellbeing program with student assistants providing in-classroom and one to one wellbeing support for students. Restorative practise training was provided for staff via internal and external facilitators. A new wellbeing facilitator/private counselling office to be completed in Early Term 1 2025.

Area	Development Priorities 2024	Progress
Teaching and Learning	Continue the development of the 'TAWS way'. This ongoing approach includes educational programs such as camps augmented by School camping equipment; morning circle; literacy and numeracy and indeed most of the educational offerings.	<p>Faculty, College and School Leadership meetings include a regular 'study' of Steiner Education subject matter designed to prompt discussion and reflection upon teaching practices.</p> <p>Regular visitations from facilitators and mentors have aided in teacher and parent education of Steiner Education.</p> <p>Staff are encouraged to continually provide high quality camps, morning circles and Main Lessons, supported by financial investment in teaching materials.</p>
Music	Expand the music pro-gramme, with a focus on participating and situating the School as a strong contributor toward musical vitality, and in fostering youthful musical talent within the regional setting.	<p>A new full-time music teacher has nurtured our music program which includes singing, recorder, strings, and musical theory.</p> <p>Our contracting of New England Conservatory of Music instructors allows students access to specialised instruments and individualised lessons.</p>
ICT	The School will continue to review bandwidth, storage, cyber security and internet distribution networks during 2024 and beyond, ahead of expected growing use of ICT for teaching and learning, particularly in the high school as student numbers swell across these year groups in coming years.	<p>Delivered an upgrade of WiFi and routers, enabled by Starlink, which has increased bandwidth, improved speed, reliable signal and supported cloud-based storage.</p> <p>This upgrade has allowed better emergency communications, and in-classroom applications such as increased usage of iPads in high school, and the adoption of google classrooms for Senior Years.</p>
Organisational Efficiency	Upgrade of digital platforms for digital compliance, digital school records, school policies, administrative efficiency and stakeholder engagement.	<p>Commenced and completed an RFI for a new School management system, ready for adoption in Term 1 2025.</p> <p>Adopted SharePoint as the primary cloud-based system for administrative tasks.</p>
Staff Development	Provide ongoing teacher support through mentor-ship programmes, offsite training opportunities and peer support programmes. Continue to foster Steiner-based pedagogical skills, particularly with emerging leaders within the School.	The school offered a number of training opportunities through Steiner Education Australia and other external providers, including AISNSW child protection training.
School Leadership and Management	Continue to develop organisational structures for devolution of key leadership roles, supported by administrative functions where possible, aligned with current and future expected growth in School student numbers.	Further strengthened and formalised the school leadership team through leadership development, clarifying leadership roles and updated titles to reflect responsibilities.

School Priorities

2025 Priorities

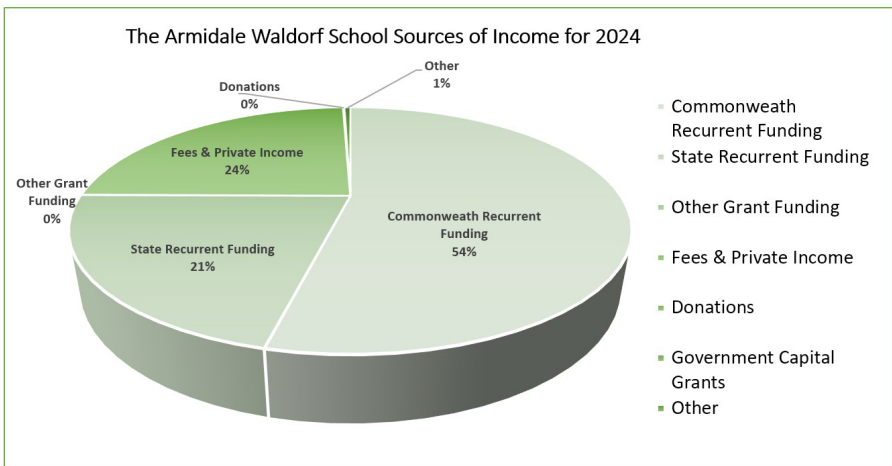
Area	Development Priorities 2025
Facilities	Finish and fit out learning spaces to increase enrolment capacity through the completion of a new Teaching and Learning Centre and Stage 6 classroom.
	Landscape surrounding Teaching and Learning Centre and disability parking for certificate of occupancy.
	Upgrade of front carpark including lighting, repair bitumen, and rehabilitation of gardens.
	Establish new shade areas for play and outdoor learning purposes in primary and high school areas, including new outdoor furniture and landscaping for Senior Years (Stage 6) precinct.
	Upgrade School entrance and signage.
	Upgrade Playtime area with new fencing, play equipment and landscaping.
	Electrical upgrades including rewiring of C1-4 buildings and upgrade of school switchboards.
	Continue developing high school agricultural and natural resource stewardship precinct in conjunction with Rotary, school neighbours, Ezidi and other community stakeholders.
Student Wellbeing	Refresh child protection policy and implement a new visitor identification process.
	Introduce a wellbeing facilitator to oversee the wellbeing teams throughout the school, to ensure all students can access the curriculum in a safe and supportive environment.
Teaching and Learning	Consolidate high school staffing for Stage 6 delivery.
	Hire a camp facilitator to efficiently and safely manage the organisation and facilitation of school camps.
ICT	Set-up and staff training for the roll out of new school management system (Zunia).
	Complete IT connectivity across the campus for improved fire safety, lockdown, and after-hours security.
Organisational Efficiency	Update organisational chart to reflect devolution of key leadership roles.
Staff Development	Continue to support Steiner Professional Development throughout all areas of the school. Strengthen studies in Steiner pedagogy and reading throughout all faculties.
School Leadership and Management	Establish a second-tier leadership group to support leadership growth, business continuity and succession planning.

Summary of Financial Information

Financial Performance

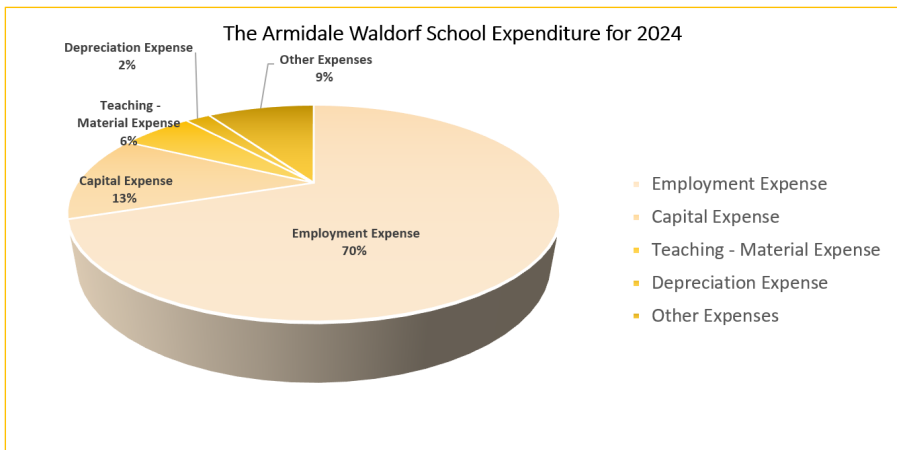
Our school continued its ten-year growth trajectory in 2024, with enrolments growing more than eight percent over the twelve months to August 2024. In anticipation of continuing strong demand the School invested significant resources in 2024 to strengthen enrolment capacity over the next five years for all year groups. This involved extension of Senior Year (HSC) offerings; construction of a new Teaching and Learning Centre for improved student support and administrative purposes; strengthening the school’s digital infrastructure, and development of new and improved recreational facilities for students. 2024 was also a year in which we expanded the number of teaching and classroom support staff, while also adding to the student wellbeing and administration team.

Graph 1. Sources of Income



The School continued to rely heavily on Federal and State revenue (54% and 21% respectively) in 2024, as well as parental fees (24%).

Graph 2. Expenditure





Maintenance worked on improvements to school grounds, including fencing, landscaping, playgrounds and refurbishments.



Teaching and Learning Centre was designed to seamlessly extend an existing building, limiting impact to surrounding trees and environment wherever possible.



Capital Works and Maintenance

The School made substantial investments into buildings, facilities and grounds in 2024. These included near-completion of a new Teaching and Learning Centre (TaLC) which will house rooms for enhanced student learning support, wellbeing and administrative spaces. Concurrently with construction of the TaLC, at the end of 2024 we began the refurbishment of existing learning spaces to create a Stage 6 classroom, learning support classroom, music room, and staff room.

Further enhancements included the establishment of a High School outdoor play and learning area; new fencing, office refurbishment and painting in the Early Childhood Centre; painting and uplift of the class 1-4 building; and development of a new High School Agriculture and Environmental studies area in collaboration with School neighbours, Armidale Rotary and local Ezidi families.

TAWS maintains a regular building and maintenance programme, including upkeep of play equipment, buildings, fire and other hazards, and public health considerations. Policies and systems are regularly reviewed and updated to comply with local council requirements, federal and state legislation, environmental and land use guidelines, and national disability standards.

Forward investments outlined above were internally funded from operating reserves. This included retirement of a small outstanding term loan relating to construction of the 9-10 classroom in 2021/22. Consequently, the School posted a small operating deficit (Earnings Before Interest, Tax, Depreciation and Amortization - EBITDA) of 4.5% in 2024. This result includes an increase in staffing ratios to build capacity for growth in enrolments across all year groups over the next three years, building on the school's consistent annual growth trajectory since 2015.

Administrative Efficiency

During 2024 the TAWS management team undertook a comprehensive review of alternative School Information Systems to replace the longstanding SchoolPro system used for more than fifteen years. As a result, late in 2024 the School committed to converting school data over to a new system – Zunia. This new system is currently under implementation in 2025 and showing early signs of improved efficiency and functionality for the school across multiple user groups including teachers, administrative and student wellbeing staff. These new systems, combined with the establishment of XERO accounting software in 2024 with a revised structure for accurate and timely management data, will assist the ongoing administrative efficiency and sophistication of decision making for years to come.



ICT Improvements have enabled digital learning within High School.

Fees

As always, parent and caregiver fees form a vital part of the ongoing delivery of Steiner Education. We were founded as a community school- remaining accessible and inclusive to a broad spectrum of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds is important to our school ethos. Our current student cohort includes 9.5% Aboriginal students and 13% students who speak a language other than English at home.

Effective 2024, we changed to an all-inclusive fee structure which included all camps, music tuition, learning resources, excursions, events etc. Any levies or once-off charges are clearly identified in the fee schedule. This was a significant change to our previous fee structure that separated curricular activities. The aim of this new structure is to ensure all students can fully participate and have equitable access to activities, to increase transparency of fees, and to aide parents in budgeting expenses.

As cost-of-living challenges continue, we endeavour to collaboratively work with parents to ensure they are supported in paying school fees sustainably. We have several strategies to do this including an open-door policy for parents to confidentially discuss changes to their financial circumstances, offering parents means-tested fee assistance where needed and warranted. We also offer work-for-fees programs where parents can craft educational resources and clean school facilities in return for fee reductions. Finally, in 2023 we implemented EdStart (a free to parent fee agency), in 2024 >30% of families utilise payment plans via this portal. The school will be encouraging further uptake of this service in future years. Keeping fees to a minimum while assisting families in financial need is made possible by government top ups and targeted funding programmes, supported by a continuing commitment to improving the efficiency of School operations.

Summary

The Armidale Waldorf School continues to grow steadily with the addition of Years 11/12 in Term 4 2024. The School continues to benefit from the astute input of a skills-based and committed Board and active finance sub-committee. The Board meets regularly and schedules strategic planning days twice each year. Operational and strategic objectives implemented by a highly skilled and dedicated workforce, overseen by a dedicated leadership group and with input from College. Systems are constantly reviewed and developed where practicable to improve efficiency, grow enrolments and strengthen Steiner-based pedagogy. Over the coming years, a key

focus for management will be to plan responsibly for growth (including new classrooms, performing and manual arts facilities), while preserving the natural environment that forms such a beautiful backdrop for learning and personal growth journeys of the entire School community.



Will Winter

Business Manager





The Armidale
Waldorf School
and Boongaia Preschool
FOR RUDOLF STEINER EDUCATION

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