

## 2019 Aetaomah School Annual Report

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### REPORTING AREA 1: A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN/PRINCIPAL

2019 saw us go from the huge floods of the previous year to the impact of fire around us. Whilst the floods resulted in some minor damage to the school beneath the hall, the fires, which began in August, just 2 kilometers away, and continued to the south around Mt Nardi, were a constant presence with their veil of smoke and smell and constant potential threat. One of our school families lost their house in the first fire.

From a positive standpoint, we had the pleasure of Natalie taking Class 1 and Thomas commenced as our new BD gardener/teacher. Both have contributed to the well-being of the school in their individual roles.

Having not had a year 7 and 8 group (Stage 4) recently it was good to resume that stage, with Margaret continuing with her Class 5/6 of 2018 into years 6 and 7 in 2019. This involved a NESA school inspection to re-establish Stage 4, which was successful.

The school numbers increased slightly, which enabled us to make a small profit for the year. first time for a few years.

As I write this we are looking out upon a 2020 coronavirus infested world to follow up on the fires and floods. It has been a challenging time in the community, but the school feels full of promise.

Let me finish with a quote, written by some students of a Steiner school in Argentina.

*'Message to young people,*

*In the current circumstances that humanity is going through, we have this message: let's not lose our motivation. We trust in humanity and in the future even if everything seems to be full of uncertainty. Stay still, we will soon be out. May the stillness be in the body and may the soul be ready to take the leap. Let the soul tense up like the bow before releasing the arrow, like the athlete who bends down before jumping. In the arrow are our dreams. If new difficulties come, new dreams will come as well. The point of greatest tension is called resistance. Let's become that resistance. Let's plan the jump.'*

*By Manuela Smolovich, Sol Cerolini, Jazmín Pivetta and Laila Mackern, students of the Waldorf/Steiner School in Córdoba, Argentina*

- [www.casadelosjovenes.org](http://www.casadelosjovenes.org)

## REPORTING AREA 2: CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Aetaomah is a Kindergarten to Year 8 school based on the educational work of Dr. Rudolf Steiner.

We strive to develop in the children individual inner strength imbued with moral, ethical and social skills, a sense of wonder and a desire to learn and understand the world and humanity. We unite imagination with the sciences, expressed through the visual and performing arts and the skeleton of our syllabus and values are brought to life through wonder and creativity.

This is the heart of our educational approach, enriched by the science, art and practicality of biodynamic agriculture (we have two gardens worked by the children) and outdoor activities such as sports and excursions.

The development of life skills is fostered through handwork and hard and soft crafts. An open, artistic outlook, penetrated by thought, reason, knowledge and hope with a sense of spirituality weaving through all things and a capacity and determination to work through life's challenges are all priorities we endeavour to share with the children.

At present there are 60 children from the Murwillumbah town area, Uki village and rural areas surrounding the school.

Visit the school website [www.aetaomah.nsw.edu.au](http://www.aetaomah.nsw.edu.au)

And Myschool website <http://www.myschool.edu.au>

### REPORTING AREA 3: STUDENT PERFORMANCE IN NATIONAL AND STATEWIDE TESTS AND EXAMINATIONS.

In 2019 no students participated in the National Assessment Programme - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). All other parents excluded their children.

We place little value on these tests, (a view shared by most of the parents) so we do not waste valuable education time specially preparing the children for them. In spite of this, in past years, most of the children who have done it have been above the national average in most areas.

Information is reported on <http://www.myschool.edu.au>

### REPORTING AREA 4: PROFESSIONAL LEARNING & TEACHER STANDARDS

#### Details of all teaching staff

Category	Number of Teachers
Teachers who have teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognized within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) guidelines.	8

1. Diploma of Education, Northern Rivers College of Advanced Education 1987
2. Diploma of Teaching, Lismore Teachers College 1974
3. Bachelor of Arts - La Trobe university 2005; Dip Ed Southern Cross Uni 2007
4. Diploma of Education – Uni of Canberra 1999; B. App. Sci. Health Ed. Uni of Canberra
5. Bachelor of Arts (Fine Arts) (Honours) Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology

1999; Graduate Diploma in Education University of Melbourne 2002

6. B. Ed. Southern Cross, Lismore NSW
7. B.Ed. -QUT Brisbane
8. Dip. Teach. Catholic College, Sydney, 1983

All but one of teachers are at Proficient level and one is on Provisional. Each, as required covers their 10 hours per year of approved training with a registered educator, addressing the National Professional Standards for Teachers, AIS and Rudolf Steiner College being the main contributors.

All of the teachers participated together with teachers from other schools in a k to 8 music day, a k-8 English language day, a K-8 children-with-learning-difficulties day and a class management day. These were NESA-approved courses provided by Rudolf Steiner College.

All teachers at Aetaomah participate in regular meetings weekly where ideas in education are discussed, drawing from all relevant sources and areas. Ideas on how to help individual children are discussed drawing on the experience within the teaching group and qualified resources from without.

We all participate in artistic speech and movement activities at these meetings. This is important as the most used tools of teaching are the voice, facial expression gesture and posture. Instantly a teacher will gain or lose a child's interest through his or her uninspiring speech or sloppy movement.

For several days at the end of each holiday break, education sessions are held with experienced teachers. All Staff participate.

REPORTING AREA 5: WORKFORCE COMPOSITION.

Teaching Staff=8

FTE teaching staff = 5.6

Non-Teaching staff = 3 (Principal, Business Manager, Business Assistant/Maintenance)

FTE of non-teaching staff = 1.6

At the moment we have no Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander staff.

See Myschool website: <http://www.myschool.edu.au>

## REPORTING AREA 6: STUDENT ATTENDANCE

90% of students attended school on average each school day in 2019.

Kinder.....92%

1<sup>st</sup> Class.....94%

2<sup>nd</sup> Class.....90%

3<sup>rd</sup> Class.....86%

4<sup>th</sup> Class.....91%

5<sup>th</sup> Class.....90%

6<sup>th</sup> Class.....91%

7<sup>th</sup> Class.....

8<sup>th</sup> Class.....

X% of students attended school on an average day, which is similar to last year.

Aetaomah only goes to year 8.

### **Management of non-attendance:**

Parents are expected to ring the school before school-time if their child is not attending school on a given day. This is to be followed within 5 days by a note explaining the absence. The school follows up where this procedure is not followed, and the parents may be required to meet the school if necessary.

Mandatory reporting procedures apply where absences are extended, or the student may be at risk.

See Myschool website: <http://www.myschool.edu.au>

## REPORTING AREA 7: ENROLMENT POLICIES & PROFILES

### Enrolment Policy

Aetaomah is a comprehensive co-educational K-8 school providing an education underpinned by spiritual values, based on the educational work of the late Dr Rudolf Steiner and operating within the policies of the *NSW NESA*. All applications will be processed in order of receipt and consideration will be given to the applicant's support for the ethos of the school, siblings already attending the school and other criteria determined by the school from time to time. Once enrolled, students are expected to support the school's ethos and comply with the school rules to maintain the enrolment.

All enrolments comply with the Disability Discrimination Act. There is no discrimination on sexual, racial or religious grounds.

Students enrolling in 7-8 classes are accepted on 1 month probation when their behaviour is reviewed.

### ENROLMENT PROCEDURE

- (1) All applications should be processed within the school's enrolment policy.
- (2) The Principal will meet the parents/carers and child first to discuss overall school qualities and to find any particular needs of the child and family.
- (3) Class teacher will conduct a formal interview with the prospective parent to resolve
  - (i) School details and expectations.
  - (ii) Child and family situation
  - (iii) Any special circumstances: family, medical, religion, diet, disabilities, allergies, special gifts and talents, particular interests etc.
  - (iv) Consider each applicant's supporting statement/interview responses regarding their ability and willingness to support the school's ethos.
  - (v) Consider each applicant's educational needs and identify any strategies which need to be put into place to accommodate the applicant.
- (4) The child needs to be seen and talked with by the teacher at some point before being offered a position or being accepted by the school.



- (5) Details of requirements outlined in the Parent Information section of the enrolment pack to be pointed out. The parents need to be clear on fees and on the school's standards and conditions of enrolment such as regular attendance and being on time for school.
- (6) Parent to be given Enrolment Pack if considering enrolling a child.
- (7) All enrolments comply with the Disability Discrimination Act. There is no discrimination on sexual, racial or religious grounds.
- (8) Parents need to inform the school of any health-care and disability needs and liaise with the teacher in relation to any medical issues the child may have and if necessary develop a management plan. If there is a disability question the parents and teacher will discuss the necessity and feasibility of adjustments to meet the child's needs. This will need to be brought to the College of Teachers if the adjustment is to be significant or will impact upon other students.
- (9) If the Class Teacher has any doubts or concerns he/ she must refer to the principal, or a delegated authority and the College of Teachers
- (10) Upon agreement by the parents and student with the class teacher conducting the interview an enrolment form is filled in and signed by the parents.
- (11) Students enrolling in 7-8 classes are accepted on 1 month probation when their behaviour is reviewed.

#### STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

In considering such enrolments we will comply with "The Disability Standards For Education 2005". The standards require that we treat students with disabilities on the same basis as students without disabilities.

A collaborative approach between school and parents is essential and we will need to demonstrate flexibility towards making a genuine effort to meet the student's needs.

The teacher keeps objective notes of any meeting with parents in such a situation.

The teacher refers the application to the College of Teachers or if urgent, in the first place to the Principal.

### STUDENT POPULATION:

The school population was around 61 over the year. There are about equal numbers of boys and girls.

We accept students from all backgrounds. This area provides a stimulating diversity of outlooks.

All of our students speak English as their first language at present, and 2 students speak a language other than English at home.

Students come from Murwillumbah area, farms, rural properties, semi-suburban situations, villages and alternative communities.

It is a mixture of low to average socio-economic area, but a philosophically stimulating one.

## REPORTING AREA 8: SCHOOL POLICIES

**POLICIES****A. Policies for Student Welfare**

The school seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment which:

- Minimizes risk of harm and ensures students feel secure.
- Supports the physical, social, academic, spiritual and emotional development of students.
- Provides student welfare policies and programmes that develop a sense of worth and foster personal development.
- Provide for early intervention for students at risk.

To ensure that all aspects of the school's mission for providing for a student's welfare are implemented the following policies are in place.

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Changes in 2019</b>	<b>Access to full text</b>
Child Protection Policy encompassing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definitions and concepts</li> <li>• Legislative requirements (Principal is H.O.A. – reporting in line with N.S.W. Ombudsman's policy 2004)</li> <li>• Preventative strategies – undertaken for both staff and community.</li> <li>• Reporting and investigating "reportable conduct"</li> <li>• Investigation Processes</li> <li>• Documentation.</li> </ul>	No change	Issued to all staff and members of the school board and retained in Policies and Procedures Booklet at the school.  Parents may request a copy by asking their class teacher.

**Policies cont'd**

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Changes in 2018</b>	<b>Access to full text</b>
Security Policy encompassing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procedures for security of the grounds &amp; buildings.</li> <li>• Use of grounds &amp; facilities.</li> <li>• Emergency procedures.</li> <li>• Travel on school-related activities.</li> </ul>	No change	Issued to all staff and members of the school board and retained in Policies and Procedures Booklet at the school. Parents may request a copy by asking their class teacher.
Supervision Policy encompassing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duty of care &amp; risk management.</li> <li>• Levels of supervision for on-site &amp; off-site activities.</li> <li>• Guidelines for supervisors.</li> </ul>	No change	Parents may request a copy by asking their class teacher.
Codes of Conduct Policy encompassing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Code of conduct for staff and students.</li> <li>• Behaviour management.</li> </ul>	No change.	Parents may request a copy by asking their class teacher.
Pastoral Care Policy encompassing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The pastoral care system</li> <li>• Availability of and access to special services such as counseling.</li> <li>• Health care procedures.</li> <li>• Critical accident policy.</li> <li>• Homework policy.</li> </ul>	No change	Parents may request a copy by asking their class teacher.
Communication policy encompassing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal and informal mechanisms in place for facilitating communication between the school and those</li> </ul>	No Change	Parents may request a copy by asking their class teacher.

with an interest in the student's education and well-being.		
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## Policies cont'd

### B. Policies for Anti Bullying and Harassment

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school policy provides processes for responding and managing allegations of bullying and harassment through creative working with those involved.</li> <li>Details of contact information for the Tweed police school Liaison Office are included.</li> </ul>	No change	On school website. Parents may also request a copy by asking their class teacher.
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### C. Policies for Student Discipline

Students are required to abide by the school's rules and to follow the directions of teachers and other people with authority delegated by the school. Where disciplinary action is required penalties imposed vary according to the nature of the breach of discipline and a student's prior behaviour. The school expressly prohibits corporal punishment and does not explicitly or implicitly sanction the administration of corporal punishment by non-school persons including parents, to enforce discipline at the school.

All disciplinary action that may result in any sanction against the student including suspension, expulsion or exclusion provides processes based on procedural fairness and would involve parents in the processes of procedural fairness for suspension and expulsion.

The full text of the school's discipline policy and associated procedures is provided to all members of the school community through:

- \* The school Policies and Procedures Booklet.
- Requesting a copy via class teacher or Principal of the school.

The school's discipline policies are always under review.

#### **D. Policies for Complaints and Grievances Resolution**

The school's policy for dealing with complaints and grievances includes processes for raising and responding to matters of concern identified by parents and/or students, the first approach by the complainant is made to the Class Teacher. If this is not satisfactory, the Principal and College of Teachers are called upon. These processes incorporate, as appropriate, principles of procedural fairness.

The full text of the school's policy and processes for complaints and grievances resolution is on the school website and is provided in the school Policies and Procedures Booklet available via a Class Teacher or the Principal.

## REPORTING AREA 9: SCHOOL-DETERMINED IMPROVEMENT TARGETS

Area	Priorities	
Teacher Development	Improved basis in Steiner education for all teachers, especially in understanding child development & understanding & skill in individual child observation and assessment. This is especially related to the 1 <sup>st</sup> of the Professional Standards for teachers. This has been a priority in recent years and will continue to be into the future.	This has been worthwhile in teachers gaining a deeper understanding of the children. This continues to be a top priority.
Staff Development	Deepening penetration into science, especially science in nature, continuing from last year.	This continues as a priority from last year. The children are learning to become more observant.
Lesson Content and Artistic Presentation in Relation to Board of Studies Outcomes	To develop more fully, lesson presentation artistically integrating Key Learning Areas to enable better use of time. This is an ongoing task so that time can be used more effectively and to further develop effective teaching and learning.	This is slowly evolving each year.
School Vegetable Gardens	We aim to develop the bio dynamic qualities of the vegetable gardens. This also relates to the science aspect above.	Many of the children are enthusiastically planting gardens at home.

These will continue to be priority areas.

## REPORTING AREA 10: RESPECT & RESPONSIBILITY

This is, always has been and always will be an integral part of our school's social, ethical and moral education programme.

This is approached first and foremost in the presentation of lessons. Stories are told picturing social situations and a variety of ways of dealing with them. In general, one story a day over 9-10 years of schooling gives a thorough coverage.

We present all of the subjects in such a way that they picture a moral/social aspect. This requires close observation of the social workings of the children and use of stories to help correct problems.

Teachers set the tone of respect and responsibility through the way that they relate to each other, the children and the parents.

Social events such as Class Trips away where the children need to work together, and in a situation where they need to respect others (eg. A Camping Ground) are vital and are an integral part of the school year for all students.



### REPORTING AREA 11: PARENT, STUDENT & TEACHER SATISFACTION

We have regular meetings with our parents: meetings after school and formally arranged meetings, and the reports are of satisfaction. These are important opportunities to deal with any problems that may be simmering. The door is always open for parents to come to the school and view the children's work and talk to the teachers. The feedback is positive and appreciative of what is happening at the school.

Parent –teacher events give a good response, gardening days where the children, parents and teachers all work together in the school garden have had enthusiastic results.

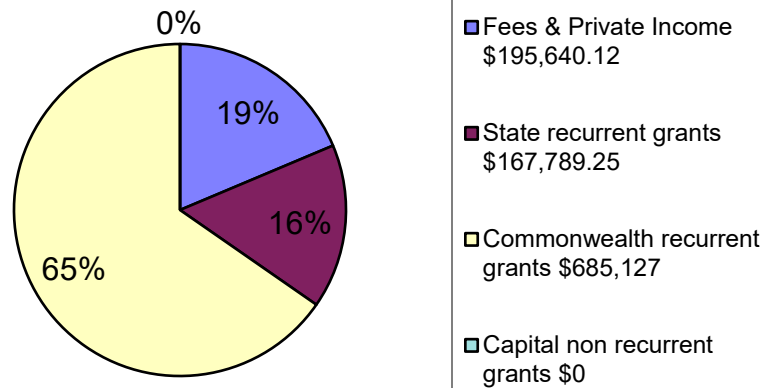
Creativity is a key aspect of the school and the children are enthusiastically involved. The students perform major play presentations several times a year and these provide an artistic-creative focus through drama, movement and music. Some of the parents are involved in costume creation.

Seasonal festivals bring the whole school and parents together where the children give a short presentation (music, speech, drama, movement or a talk). The children's bookwork, craft etc is displayed.

These are all opportunities for student & parent feedback.

The teachers work harmoniously together and are able to express attitudes and raise problems as they wish.

School morale continues to be high.

**Graphic 1: Income****Graphic 2: Expenditure**