

DANDENONG RANGES STEINER SCHOOL

# ANNUAL REPORT 2022

[www.drss.vic.edu.au](http://www.drss.vic.edu.au)

ABN 16 320 548 184



## Contents

DRSS Board of Governors 2022 .....	3
Chairperson's Report .....	4
College of Teachers Report.....	4
Publicity Fundraising Report .....	7
Finance and Administration Report.....	9
Management Team Report.....	12

## DRSS Board of Governors 2022

Kenn Clark	Chairperson – Marketing and IT expertise
Aaron Harvey (until September)	General Member – Business and Environmental Planning expertise
Chris Key	Treasurer – Health and Safety expertise
Glenn Rawlinson	General Member - Steiner Education/Anthroposophy (until June)
Jessica Lothian	General Member – Legal expertise
Suzie Brannelly	Deputy Chairperson/General Member – Property expertise
Wolfgang Maschek	General Member – Steiner Education/Anthroposophy (until May)
Cath Lanigan	Ex-officio Member (Secretary)
Dana Jindra	Ex-officio Member (College representative)

## Chairperson's Report – 2022

*Our highest endeavour must be to develop free human beings who are able of themselves to impart purpose and direction to their lives. The need for imagination, a sense of truth, and a feeling of responsibility—these three forces are the very nerve of education.*

*Rudolf Steiner*

Firstly, our school would not be here without the children and teachers, so I thank you for creating this wondrous canvas for our children's artistic impressions. The College of Teachers, assistants and aides have created such a wonderful learning environment, providing the children the nurturing guidance to build relationships, develop skills and enrich their imagination. I am always humbled when I walk around the campuses and see the ingenuity of their play. It warms my soul to hear happy voices laughing and chirping like birds flocked in a tree at sunset.



An enormous thank you to Cath Lanigan, Dana Jindra, Tamsenne Grogan and Emily Hehir as our Management Team. They have provided the school with clear direction and leadership in the aftermath of lockdowns and new government regulations. Thanks to our finance, administration and operations teams led by Cath and Dana. We are very fortunate to have their professional experience and enthusiasm at the helm, ensuring the financial management and compliance is in good hands.

Growth and expansion are high on our agenda moving forward. As you may be aware, we are two years into our 2025 strategic plan and achieving positive outcomes on most of our 'Golden Arrow' goals to date. With a higher-than-expected number of enrolments, our school's financial status is very healthy which allows us to continue working on our strategic and master plan goals. A new landscape masterplan to increase play space and upgrade campus facilities commenced with a broad consultation with staff, parents and Board members.

Free kindergarten is an incredible incentive from the state government, so we are grateful for the opportunity to offer this to our families in 2023 and beyond, hopefully easing some financial burdens. With the commencement of our Before and After School Care program, we initially rented a bus to trial before acquiring our own at the end of the year. The bus made transport between campuses more efficient and safer, while also being used for camps and excursions.

I would like to thank our past and present Board members for their continued commitment and dedication to the sustainability of our school. We are custodians of these positions charged with ensuring the school has a solid financial foundation, compliance framework and growth path. It is a privilege to help guide the school during this period of evolution as we venture together into the future.

The Board of Governors at the close of 2022 consisted of Kenn Clark (Chairperson), Suzie Brannelly (deputy Chairperson), Chris Key (Treasurer) and Jess Lothian, with Cath Lanigan attending in her role as Business Manager and Board Secretary, Dana Jindra as Educational Facilitator/College Representative and Robyn Jacobs as minute taker. It was with much regret that the Board accepted resignations from Aaron Harvey, Wolfgang Maschek and Glenn Rawlinson. We thank them for their contributions and commitment during their time on the board.

Finally, thank you to all the volunteers who have contributed during the past year, we are a better community when helping hands work together. We are not a large school, although you wouldn't know it from the turnouts to our working bees, festivals, performances and fairs. This community is an eclectic, joyful and vibrant reflection of our families and I feel blessed to be a part of it.

Kind regards

*Kenn Clark*





## College of Teachers 2022 Annual Report

The College of Teachers has continued its work over the past year, discussing a wide range of topics in our weekly meetings. Fortnightly Child Studies have continued to be a major focus for the College, and our study of Christopher Schaefer's book 'Partnerships of Hope' has continued to provide an enriching stimulus with many opportunities for reflection. Topics for discussion have also included review of policy, deepening pedagogical development, collective leadership and staff professional development. During 2022 the College of Teachers returned to regular face-to-face meetings, with Tamsenne Grogan continuing as College Chair.

In early 2022, many teachers participated in a professional development seminar on Assessment in Steiner Schools, facilitated by Matthew Cunnane, and supported by Steiner Education Australia (SEA). Our school hosted the Victorian Steiner Schools Curriculum Day in Term 3 2022, which saw the gathering of staff from many of the Victorian Steiner schools in a day of lectures and workshops. Guest speakers included Robert Martin who discussed the role of College in the school. Barbara Baldwin also visited the school to present strategies on supporting children with additional needs.

College has continued the ongoing work of reviewing and updating pedagogical related school policy and has worked to refine the reporting cycle and the timing and format of parent-teacher interviews, with a written report in each semester and the opportunity for parent-teacher interviews in Term 3. College discussed Term Dates for 2023 and worked to determine suitable dates in line with other Victorian independent schools.

Staff appraisals were held early in Term 4 and after a meeting with College outlining the process, Wolfgang Maschek was welcomed into our classrooms. The time spent with Wolfgang was both encouraging and confirming of our current practices. Class Teachers and Specialist Teachers were provided with a detailed report which gave helpful feedback and supportive suggestions. The appraisal process was followed up with College members sharing their experience and individual meetings with Dana. Where possible, opportunities for professional development in line with the outcomes of the appraisals were discussed.

College continued work on the Respectful Relationships program and Child Safe standards, implementing new initiatives and documenting the DRSS integrated approach to bringing the required content within our rich curriculum. Dana commenced work on supporting documentation and has liaised with SEA to seek support in the development of our school policies.

College reviewed College membership and looked at a broadening of the staff who are invited to attend. Our Business Manager, Cath Lanigan became a College member in 2022.

At the close of 2022, College reviewed teaching roles and the school introduced some new roles including a Bushcraft teacher role, mentoring role, the reintroduction of a Eurythmy teacher and increased German classes for 2023. An additional Learning Support position was created, and a number of teacher aide roles were also added for 2023.

*Emily Hehir, On behalf of the College of Teachers*

## Publicity Fundraising Report 2022

The Publicity and Fundraising Group is an active working group of the school currently made up of five volunteers, including staff and parents. We had a very successful year, being able to once again host all of the events that we have run in the past designed to help bring the community together.

The members of the group dropped to five members across the year. Uri Cohen resigned and Hellen Andalis becoming an honorary member of the group, not attending meetings but remaining active with the Indigenous Literacy Foundation Fundraising - raising \$955 in the last six months.

### Events hosted by the Publicity Fundraising Group in 2022

- Easter Fundraiser
- Mother's Day Stall
- Education Week including Early Childhood Open Day, Primary Campus Open Day and Taste of Steiner Curriculum Day. Education Week attracted many visitors to the school resulting in newly lodged applications and enrollments.
- Bush Dance (run by Class Three)
- Spring Fair/Market Day (We would like to highlight that Market Day will now be called Spring Fair moving forwards).
- Father's Day Stall
- Christmas candle fundraiser
- Alumni and Steiner Education talk
- Continuous fundraising for the Indigenous Literacy Fund



We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those parents whose immense time and energy go into creating these wonderful events.

The funds that came in are as follows:



Event	Profit
Bushdance	\$1196.10
Father's Day Stall	approximately \$500.00
Market Day	\$12,298.52*
Christmas Candles	\$53.20
Easter Fundraiser	\$1425.65
Mother's Day Stall	\$386.20
<b>Total Profit for year</b>	<b>\$18,859.57</b>

\*(took over \$17,000, the highest we have ever taken)

*Michaela Tory*



# Finance and Administration Report

## 2022 Finance Overview

2022 was another good operational year, with income of almost \$3.5m, up on almost \$3.1m in 2021. Of this \$2.5m was received in government grants and 956k in fees. It was a year of expanding our programs and facilities in line with our Master Plan and Strategic Plan and ensuring that everyone was paid fairly for the work they do after reviewing teacher and aide hours, meeting time and time release.

On paper, expenses almost equalled income, with a very small surplus of \$8,190. However, importantly, our cash reserves increased by more than \$200,000 giving us current assets of \$1.4m, which our auditors considered a very good result.

Thanks as always to Finance Officer, Belinda Mackley, for her excellent work in maintaining our accounts.

## Asset improvement

In 2022 we made a number of minor improvements totalling almost \$70,000 including providing playground equipment in the Class Three and Four area, creating a staff working area at the primary campus, installing air-conditioners at Early Childhood and in the school hall, installing sound insulation in the hall, commissioning a landscape masterplan for the primary campus as well as purchasing a ride-on mower and upgrading the electricity board at Early Childhood. A big thanks to Alex McHutchison and Norm Matthews, for their work helping facilitate – and in some cases doing - these projects.

## Enrolments

In 2022, at the August census, DRSS had total enrolments of 144 students in Prep to Class Six, compared to 139 in 2021. This represents a steady increase in enrolments since 2019. Early Childhood enrolments were similar to 2021 with Big Kinder having 25 children and Little Kinder with 22 children. We were pleased to have playgroup starting up again after missing so much of it in 2021. A big thanks to our Enrolments Officer, Karen Frazier-Walsh, who manages our Kindergarten and School enrolments so well, and to Kelly Madden who has taken on coordinating Playgroup enrolments.

## Attendance

Student attendance in Semester One was 88%, below government expectations of more than 90%. Attendance records showed that only 47% of students attended more than 90% of the time. In Term 3, this decreased to 84%, with only 40% of students attending more than 90%. We reviewed these figures, with a significant amount being due to illness, family

holidays, and some other Covid impacts. This prompted a review and update of our Attendance policy which was circulated to parents. We're expecting better attendance rates in 2023 😊.

## NAPLAN

No Class Three students and two Class Five students undertook the NAPLAN tests in 2022. The small number of students means the results are too limited to report on.

*Cath Lanigan  
Business Manager*



## Management Team Report

At the start of 2022 we welcomed Emily Hehir as a College representative to the Management Team, after Karin Penny finished on the Management Team. Following on from the stresses of managing the pandemic, we spent the earlier part of the year reviewing how the Management Team can work together more effectively. We clarified which items can come directly to either the Education Facilitator and Business Manager rather than needing to come to the whole Management Team. This allowed us to disband the [management@drss.vic.edu.au](mailto:management@drss.vic.edu.au) email address, which significantly decreased the number of emails we were all receiving. We also reviewed the process for electing Management Team representatives with the College of Teachers.

Managing the pandemic took up much of the Management Team's focus for the first half of 2022. The vaccine mandates resulted in significant staffing shortages which required a lot of coordination on our end, and flexibility from teachers as they were asked, often with little notice, to change hats. It was a very welcome relief when the mandates were dropped and some of our much-missed staff could return, our casual teacher register increased to a healthy number and we were able to offer a much fuller program to our students.

Meeting all items identified in our rectification plan from our 2021 VRQA review took up much of Cath and Dana's time in Term 1. We were very excited later in Term 2 to hear that all requirements had been met and the school was now compliant with all minimum standards for registration in Victoria. The College of Teachers and Management Team are all united in an agreement that what is essential from this point forwards, is that all processes and policies submitted to the VRQA are now embedded into our daily practice. This will allow us to not only offer the best education possible to the children, but also ensure that we remain compliant at all times resulting in a much simpler and less stressful VRQA review process in 2026.

Not surprisingly, after two years of teaching during the pandemic in Victoria and undergoing our VRQA review, workload was a common concern expressed by teachers. This led to a process that Dana undertook with Class Teachers where major stressors were identified and teachers were asked to help identify what strategies may be needed to remedy these. The outcome of this process was that teacher time-release was reviewed, time was made available for some of the time-consuming requirements for NCCD funding and meeting times and schedules were re-evaluated. As teacher requirements for the NCCD program was identified as the greatest stressor, a subsequent meeting with Elspeth Adamson from the ISV was organised so that she could help to clarify requirements of this program so that a more streamlined approach could be implemented at DRSS.

July 1st saw the introduction of the new 11 Child Safe Standards in Victoria. The school was already well on its way with compliance in these areas having just passed the VRQA review. However, further adjustments to policies and processes were required, and the Board were very involved in reviewing and approving all of the new changes. The school had applied for and been accepted into the Respectful Relationships program. Teachers undertook a curriculum review to see how learning aims of the program are already met, and where concepts need to be included to ensure all children receive appropriate



education around protective behaviours, violence and how to access help. Susan Laing, a well-regarded psychologist who has worked in Steiner education for many years, shared her expertise with staff and parents in a series of webinars.



An incredible amount of work was put into meeting departmental requirements to have the school registered as an approved Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) facility. After a long search, the school eventually appointed Annelies Goold as the OSHC Coordinator, and the program began in August. A special mention must go to Cath for persisting with the many layers of bureaucracy required to receive accreditation for this program which continued to grow in enrolments throughout the second half of the year.

Emily was instrumental in getting some new play spaces created in the Class Three and Four play area. For a period of weeks, while a new sandpit was built, and then later, a new play structure, there was much excitement as nine- and ten-year-olds sped through the front gate in the mornings to see the new developments in their play space. The school also engaged Andrea Proctor and her team to undertake a site evaluation with the view of developing a Landscape Master Plan. Although we are limited by the size of our play areas and very restrictive bushfire regulations, there are still creative ways that we can make our play spaces beautiful and functional. There was extensive consultation with students, staff and parents about the landscaping and play needs at DRSS, and we look forward to seeing what plans Andrea and her team come up with.

In addition to new policies required for our VRQA review and the new Child Safe Standards, the school also updated/created new policies in the areas of behaviour management, animals at school, staff leave and punctuality and attendance. The latter policy saw a dramatic improvement in children's punctuality which we continue to work on with parents on.

DRSS proudly hosted their first Victorian Steiner Schools Curriculum Day in August and were very excited to welcome over 100 teachers from Melbourne Rudolf, Ballarat, Wild Cherry, Ghilgai, Sophia Mundi, Briar Hill and Mornington Park Steiner schools/streams. Robert Martin gave a wonderful address on the role of College in Steiner schools which sparked an interesting sharing between schools about the make-up of their College and how this works within their leadership structure. Workshops offered included charcoal drawing, painting therapy, Bothmer gymnastics, singing, storytelling and circle time (early childhood and primary). We were proud to have Ellise Peart and Gillian Ray facilitate two of these sessions. In addition to much valuable networking and sharing, another wonderful outcome was the establishment of various teacher networks in addition to the establishment of the Victorian Steiner Schools Leadership Network. DRSS hosted the first of this group's meeting in Term 4 with Mansfield, Wild Cherry, Freshwater Creek, Ballarat, Castlemaine and Melbourne Rudolf Steiner Schools attending. The focus of this group is collaboration between network schools so that resources, ideas and wisdom can be shared and smaller or struggling schools can be supported. We have formed a close relationship



with Wild Cherry Steiner School and continue to collaborate and share resources to support each other. We are also deepening our relationship with Melbourne Rudolf Steiner School as discussions continue as to how we can best meet the growing demand for secondary school places in Steiner schools.

Staff relished Barbara Baldwin's visit to us in Term 3. Her classroom observations, and then later talk and workshop, provided us with not only many insights into how we can understand children with additional needs from an anthroposophical perspective, but also many tools on how we can work to help balance and bring them into greater harmony within themselves. Barbara's talk to parents on what they can do to support their child's education was also well attended and very well received.

After the disruption from the pandemic, we had a bit of work to do to catch up on appraisals and this formed a major focus of Term 4. We were very fortunate to be able to secure such experienced evaluators with Carol Litnaitzky and Wolfgang Maschek working with Early Childhood and Primary Teachers respectively. The majority of the feedback has been positive acknowledging the strength of a staff who is largely trained in Steiner education and quite experienced. Suggested areas for whole school development have been brought to College for a discussion and consideration.



Dana and Cath have represented the school at SEA Delegates' Meetings where a large focus for 2022 was trauma-informed practices, a national assessment strategy and reconciliation.

The school conducted a number of parent and staff surveys throughout the year which have continued to provide us with insights into how parents and staff experience their time at DRSS. We were very heartened to hear from staff how much they enjoy working at DRSS, that they feel valued and supported and are glad that we are their chosen workplace. Parents indicated that they are largely happy with the school, its teachers and management, are wanting to learn more about Steiner education, feel we welcome all forms of diversity in our school and that they want us to open a secondary school! Areas we can improve on are knowing how to respond to issues better when they are raised, ensuring students behave respectfully and have clearer communication around who parents can go to if they have a concern.

	2018	2019	2020/21	2022
<b>Parent Survey responses</b>	<b>% agree or strongly agree</b>	<b>% agree or strongly agree</b>	<b>% agree or strongly agree</b>	<b>% agree or strongly agree</b>
I am satisfied with my choice of school	93	94	94	95
The quality of classroom and resources is high	88	92	98	90
Teachers know how my child has progressed	85	92	89	85
The school is committed to Steiner philosophy	91	90	100	93
The quality of teachers is strong	81	86	91	88
My expectations as a parent are fulfilled	84	73	94	85
The school provides regular feedback about my child	78	70	64	85
Staff respond effectively when issues are raised	62	70	84	68
Students behave respectfully towards one another and teachers	85	67	75	68
There is appropriate learning support for students	56	67	78	83
The community is supportive and unified	76	59	86	83
The school is well run by management	62	59	87	90

On a similar note, it was heartening after losing 15 enrolments at the end of 2021 due to the pandemic, to grow our enrolments from 132 at the beginning of the year to 144 at

census in August. In addition, we also had 48 children enrolled in Kindergarten and another 60 in Playgroup. It is an exciting time in the school's history where we are projecting full enrolments to Class Four in 2023.

Our Staff in 2022 were:

### Teachers

Class 6 Teacher	Martina Kuhse
Class 5 Teacher	Mara Lupieri
Class 4 Teacher	Tamsenne Grogan
Class 3 Teacher	Emily Hehir
Class 2 Teacher	Marianne Bollmann
Class 1 Teacher	Casey Meyen
Prep Teacher	Ellise Peart, with Paula Ewington
Big Kinder Teacher	Karin Penny, with Katy Baker
Little Kinder Teacher	Rebecca Rassavong
Playgroup Leader & Administrator	Kelly Madden

### Specialist teachers/instructors

Craft Teacher	Michaela Tory
Extra Lesson Teacher	Lisa Levick
German Teacher	Cornelia Klinger
Learning Support Teacher	Carol Farmer
Music Instructors (Cello)	Charlotte Jacke
Music Instructor (Violin/Viola)	Hiro Mukai
Music Instructor (Violin/Viola) and Orchestra	Judy Hamilton
Tutor Teacher	Gillian Ray
Woodcraft Teacher	Susan Birch

### Assistants and Aides

Class 6	Kyra Miller
Class 5	Alex Albanis
Class 4	Bree Thomas, Kyla Seipp, Heidi Butts
Class 3	Laura Magill, Luana Steinbeck
Class 2	Narelle Key, Sophia Wilcox
Class 1	Denali Wraith-Tenson, Eireann Lawson
Prep	Katherine Beggs, Paula Ewington, Coral Johnson, Tansy Rocco
Kindergarten	Katy Baker, Wendy Baiguerra, Janine Thompson-Stokell, Swati Srivastava

## Administration and Support Services

Administration Officer	Wendy McMahon
Business Manager	Cath Lanigan
Cleaner (Early Childhood)	Megan Quinsee
Contract Cleaner (Primary School)	David Rixon
Education Facilitator	Dana Jindra
Enrolments Officer	Karen Frazier-Walsh
Finance Officer	Belinda Mackley
Librarian	Hellen Andalis
Maintenance Officer (Primary Campus)	Alex McHutchison
Maintenance Officer (Early Childhood Campus)	Norm Matthews
Outside School Hours Care Co-ordinator	Annelies Goold
Outside School Hours Care Finance Officer/Mentor	Valme Jacobs
School Assistant/Human Resources Officer	Robyn Jacobs



- Dana Jindra, Cath Lanigan, Tamsenne Grogan and Emily Hehir