

Annual Report



Samford Valley Steiner Annual Report 2024 (Based on 2023 data)

VISION

Advancing social and cultural renewal through sound anthroposophical application

COLLEGE OF TEACHERS MISSION

That Samford Valley Steiner School be a living and contemporary embodiment of the spiritual, cultural, and educational impulse of anthroposophy that contributes towards social renewal in the world.

BOARD MISSION

To provide the welcoming environment and stable framework (encompassing the Board's four pillars) that encourages the maximum number of children to enjoy an education underpinned by the principles of Anthroposophy as given by Rudolf Steiner, whereby, our highest endeavour is to develop free human beings who are able of themselves to impart purpose and meaning to their lives.

CORE PRINCIPLES

- SVSS values teachers' inner willingness to teach out of Steiner's human developmental picture in order to deliver a living pedagogy.
- SVSS teachers deliver a rigorous and balanced curriculum through the inclusion of the arts, movement and academics; inspired by the unique nature of the main lesson.
- Professional development in the light of anthroposophy is provided and expected to be pursued with an ongoing commitment.
- Staff and students learn through lived experiences in a beautiful and nurturing natural and built environment.
- SVSS's structure provides a stable framework through collaborative heart leadership.
- SVSS values and respects the uniqueness and dignity of each student, nurturing and supporting each individual's potential to emerge as a resilient, ethical human being.
- Clear, transparent communication which fosters warm, caring relationships and recognises individual contributions, encouraging community growth.

OUR SCHOOL

Our school respectfully acknowledges Traditional Custodians of the land on which our school lives, we also acknowledge a continuous connection to land and culture for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

Samford Valley Steiner School offers an inspiring and comprehensive Steiner education for children from Pippis through to Year 12. Our school is located on 20 acres of leafy, natural bushland, in the semi-rural Samford Valley. This picturesque destination is approximately 24km/35 minutes' drive from Brisbane, in Southeast Queensland, Australia.

Samford Valley Steiner School is an inclusive, sustainable and beautiful school with a community of passionate people who are committed to learning, supporting each other and working together. We provide a nurturing environment where children can thrive and have opportunities on many levels to find their inner and outer potential.

Steiner/Waldorf education is now over 100 years old and is the fastest growing education movement in the world, in over 65 countries. It is an education for global citizenship; that provides students with the opportunity to foster

courage, imagination, resilience and enthusiasm to be positive and effective contributors to society and the environment.

We value mutually supportive relationships for students, staff and families. Each staff member strives to be the best role model they can be for the young people in our community. We strongly uphold the philosophy, ethos and child developmental principles given to us by Dr Rudolf Steiner who was a scientist, philosopher, architect and social reformer. He gave the world a framework of spiritual science which helps us to deeply understand the essence of being human. Out of his developmental picture, a whole school movement and curriculum was born, which is increasingly more relevant for the world today, as we need to urgently develop change agents who will have the skills, knowledge and agency to ensure an ethical future.

We hold a spiritual view of the human being as body soul and spirit, and in everything we do, we hold the child in the centre, as we strive to develop the three soul faculties of thinking, feeling and willing. We are not of any religious denomination, but neither are we secular, we are not rigid, but neither are we a free school where children choose their own learning path.

We value truth, beauty, goodness, wonder, reverence, imagination, inspiration, intuition, experiential learning, respect towards each other and the environment, and a commitment to celebrating together as a community with festivals and community events.

At SVSS we view ourselves as a community of learners; teachers, parents, and students, striving to achieve individual, communal and global growth and understanding.

COLLEGE OF TEACHERS

The School operates from a well-established and strong base in Anthroposophy. The College of Teachers (COT) sits in the centre of the SVSS Organisational Structure to ensure that SVSS always retains at its core the inspiration of Rudolf Steiner and the Anthroposophical insight that is needed to deliver a comprehensive Steiner education to students. It is through the shared responsibility of the teachers and staff and their joint contribution, via membership of the COT, that SVSS will be highly regarded by its worldwide peers.

The COT's role is to be the "Heart" of the school, to build the vision for Steiner education as it is applied locally at SVSS, and to develop and maintain the rhythms of school life over the year.

There are two key elements to the role of COT:

1. Develop the broad pedagogical picture at SVSS across K-12

The development of this picture across all the classes will be based upon the teachings of Rudolf Steiner (Anthroposophy). This may include matters outside the classroom where pertinent. It is accepted that there is often no definitive answer to many of the aspects and variables that make up Steiner Education. The answers are found from the collective insight of the College members who must set aside their ego to develop a local, current, and cooperative interpretation of the vision that Steiner inspired.

The COT will work diligently to develop their shared knowledge to ensure that all members are able to contribute to the efficient and informed development of the pedagogical visions needed at the time.

This shared common vision contributes to the Intentionality (Spirit body) of the school.

2. Oversee and maintain the three-fold nature of Steiner education

The three-fold life of the school covers:

i) Cultural

The COT is at the core of the organisation and thus should concern itself with monitoring and supporting the educational well-being of the teaching and whole school community. This includes developing and maintaining the rhythms of the school community as a whole.

As a deeply intuitive body, the COT will ensure that the pedagogical vision, developed through the Anthroposophical workings of the group, will be understood and delivered by all members of the teaching staff.

All members of staff will be welcomed and encouraged to participate and research, through COT, the role of Anthroposophy in education. This is an integral part of the professional development of a teacher at a Steiner school and is a key component in ensuring the delivery of a highly valued Steiner education to the students.

ii) Economic

The financial position of the School is vital in determining the feasible allocation of resources and the College should remain appropriately informed of the School's financial status and the budgetary timing process. However, conscious pedagogically-based recommendations (e.g.: in relation to staffing, resourcing, strategic planning, etc), that are viable either now or at a defined future time frame, should be made by College regardless of financial considerations. This will ensure that the best possible recommendation is put forward to the School Director and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), who can then consider the best way to achieve the desired outcomes.

iii) Rights

The recommendations of COT must support and be consistent with the School's legal commitments as well as the rights and responsibilities of the children, staff, Board and parents within the School environment. The COT also contributes to and works with the School's policies. Cognisance of these issues will help to ensure COT is working on relevant vision-building and fulfils the key aspects of its role.

Every year the College and the Board meet to work together for the good of the school. In 2023 the Board and College worked together looking at the need of the students in our school.

Imbue thyself with Imagination

Have Courage for the Truth

Sharpen thy feeling for responsibility of Soul

EARLY CHILDHOOD

The preschool years, the kindergarten years, are the most important of all in the education of the child ... It is absolutely essential that before we begin to think, before we so much as begin to set our thinking in motion, we experience the condition of wonder. Rudolf Steiner

We strive to create a warm and loving environment for our early years' program which honours the young child's need for connectedness to this world, with nurturing rhythms, quality sensory experiences and engagement in the real work of childhood: play.

In the kindergarten, the children go through the day in alternate periods of concentration and expansion, as if in a breathing rhythm where there is inhaling and exhaling. In the inhaling or breathing-in phase the child directs his attention to an activity that basically relates him to himself. For little children each breathing-in period (drawing, water painting, knitting, eating...) is very short, because little children can only concentrate for short periods of time. In the exhaling or breathing-out period, the child relates mainly to the surrounding world (free play, free running etc.). For each breathing-in period the child needs a breathing-out period and so a pattern is established.

In 2023, we officially began a playgroup in our early years. The Early Childhood faculty work with both the ACECQA framework and the Australian Steiner Curriculum Framework.



THE PRIMARY YEARS CLASSES 1 TO 7

At Samford Valley we value the traditional Waldorf School practice of having one teacher accompany the children through their Primary School years as far as is practicable. Over this extended period the teacher and children develop a meaningful relationship that fosters an environment of trust and security within which the child can relax into their learning. Teachers really come to know each child and as such are better able to meet their individual needs and honour and support their unique learning and development journey. Over the years a true partnership, based on trust and mutual respect, is also able to be forged between parent and teacher so that the needs of the child is collectively served.

The Primary School child lives and thinks in a world of images. In an ever-changing world, the most powerful tool a person may have at their disposal is a highly developed imaginative faculty that provides foundation for the kinds of creative thinking, problem solving and innovation that are more and more a requirement for life in our times. Our Primary School teachers work consciously in all they do to first and foremost protect and develop this imaginative capacity. Academic learning is enlivened through an artistic approach and embedded in practical experience and activity. Every day children are immersed in story, art, music, movement, and verse along with the more traditional academics.



The Main Lesson is a key point of difference in Steiner Schools. The first two hours of every morning are dedicated to study of the same topic or theme for a period of three or four weeks. The central theme of the Main Lesson is progressively explored through a broad spectrum of integrated activity; each day building on the previous.

Main Lesson blocks may be focused on Mathematics, Language, Humanities, Science however each will encompass a variety of experiences including movement, singing, painting, drawing, modelling, drama, narrative, practical activity and formal academic work. The children

create their own Main Lesson Books which serve as a personal record and recount of their learning through drawings, words and other visual representations.

In 2023 the school continued its *ongoing* double streaming program with two class ones, two class twos, two class threes, two class fours, two class fives, two class sixes and a single class seven. The ongoing double streaming is

supported by four early childhood classes so that each year two new class ones will continue to support the ongoing growth of the school.

HIGH SCHOOL

The aim of our High School is to provide an education for teenagers that inspires love of learning, develops freedom of thought, and fosters self-confidence in an atmosphere of academic rigor and artistic fulfilment.

Adolescence is when the student really begins to take hold of their independent thinking. In the early years they played, in the Primary School they lived in imagination and now in High School they have a will to scrutinise the world and those around them; to judge, to 'weigh up' and to seek out the truth. We encourage them to think independently, to observe, to research, and then to come to conclusions and judgements.

To retain the integrity of the main lesson program in the senior years, we deliver the Certificate of Steiner Education (CSE) as our senior assessment program with Levels 1, 2 and 3 from Classes 10 to 12. Assessments were moderated and linked to main lesson programs as well as other areas, including the Senior Research Project.

As students come into the High School, their care and guidance is passed from the Class Teacher to a group of specialist teachers; one or two of which will be their Class Guardian/s. Unlike the Class Teacher, the Class Guardian does not take every main lesson but only those for which they are a specialist. This new emphasis on specialist teaching means that the young person meets a range of experienced and passionate Specialist Teachers who can bring the full depth of their subject matter in an enlivened and extended way.



The High School curriculum is designed to encourage the emergence of world citizens. The Main Lesson Structure established in the Primary School years is preserved throughout the High School and students continue to explore a full range of academic subjects in an integrated and creative way. The work of the High School teacher is to unfold for the students Main Lessons that are thematic, experiential and that develop discernment and independent, lively thinking within the discipline of the subject.

After Main Lesson the rest of the day is dedicated to practice and studio lessons. These lessons include:

Mathematics; English; laboratory lessons in physics, chemistry and biology; visual, sculptural, dramatic, musical and movement arts; foreign language; sport and physical education; gardening and workshop lessons in handwork and manual crafts.

EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Our exchange program went back to full capacity in 2023. Our students were able to travel to various Steiner Schools, whilst in return we hosted exchange students at our school.

LEARNING ENRICHMENT – an inclusive education

The vision for Learning Enrichment at SVSS is:

- To establish a strong therapeutic program and centre that will embrace and support the pedagogical needs of students from all backgrounds and, with a diversity of special learning needs.

- To support students to integrate into their own class with guided support for both students and teachers.
- To maintain a committed team of professionals, working together out of an anthroposophical developmental picture of the child/adolescent that will bring a range of therapies and learning enrichment programs within a holistic Steiner educational context.
- To practice from the acknowledgment of the wholeness of the spirit in each human being and a respect for the working of individual destiny.

Rudolf Steiner gave lenses through which to observe the children. He advocated observing and 'seeing what is'. Through close observation, teachers are able to see how children learn, to see their gifts and through observing their behaviours, see their challenges. The Learning Enrichment Team work closely with the teachers to support the diverse needs of the students.

Therapeutic exercises are designed to work with the 12 senses, balance the gifts and challenges, inhibit retained reflexes and support the tasks of academic learning.

The role of the Learning Enrichment Team is to help support students with additional needs, identify which adjustments are needed, or targeted programs to enable students to access our rich curriculum. The Learning Enrichment Team collaborates with teachers and assistants, work with the Faculty Director and support teachers with adjustments that need to be made. They help to monitor and review and meet with parents when required.

The NCCD process also requires significant oversight and coordination, providing support for teachers who are collecting the data as evidence.

The Learning Enrichment Team space, Boombana continued to function as a multipurposed space. It is widely utilised with students from the primary classes benefiting from specialised movement programs, reset and withdrawal as necessary in small group.

FESTIVALS

Festivals play an essential role for the school community. Celebrating festivals brings a sense of rhythm and anticipation. Celebrating festivals together is also a way of keeping time. They help students to increasingly find orientation in time.

Throughout history, festivals have been interwoven with life and the cycles of nature. Rudolf Steiner presents the annual festivals in a seasonally and globally encompassing context. He describes processes, which are taking place in nature during the four seasons spring, summer, autumn and winter and during their corresponding Christian annual festivals Easter, St. John's, Michaelmas and Christmas. He describes festivals as a breathing process, not of air but of forces, the inhaling and exhaling of forces, about which he says one can gain a partial representation when one considers the plant growth in the course of a year. Steiner states that the earth is a living organism, which is performing a rhythmic life together with the seasons. For the description of this rhythmic life, he uses two metaphors connected to human life. On the one hand, he compares it with the processes of sleeping and waking, and on the other with those of inhaling and exhaling. He relates these processes to one another, thus creating a differentiated picture of the global seasonal processes together with the spiritual significance of each season and festival.

At SVSS we have created our own traditions as we celebrate the seasons and their different qualities in our own meaningful way.

Rose Festival

In January 2023, we celebrated the arrival of the two new classes of class one children in the hall. Parents gathered to watch their children receive roses from students of Class 12. The children were then led by their new teachers to their classrooms and the parents attended a morning tea. This culminates in the Class 12 Graduation Ceremony at

the end of the year where the Class 1 students give each Class 12 student a rose to send them on their post school journey.

St Michael and the Dragon

As Archangel Raphael works through the earth from the Northern hemisphere, St. Michael works in the Southern hemisphere in the heavens and as the bearer of the Consciousness Soul. The festival of St Michael with the play of 'St Michael and the Dragon' was performed to the community on the last day of our term. Even with a smaller audience, it was still exciting to have our community back at our festivals.

The Winter Festival

The Winter Festival was held over three night for the first time in the school's history. Students in the Kindergarten completed their spiral and lantern walk by Tuesday night, the early years of the Primary School, had a shared story and lantern walk on the Wednesday night and Classes 4 to 12 celebrated on the Thursday night. There was a light, that was lit by Class 7 on Tuesday with the winter sun that was carried through the three nights to connect the three nights of winter celebration.

Ascension

The Class 7s travelled south to camp overnight in order to climb a mountain in the early hours of the day. With only some headtorches, they watched the sun rise after ascending the mountain in the dark, marking the date of Ascension.

Spring Festival

Our Spring Festivals brought back even more community to celebrate the turning of the seasons once more. The Kindergarten children could dance and sing, and the Primary and High School students danced the maypole and competed in the rainbow relay. Leading up to the festival, it is always hard to imagine the heat of the day, but our Spring Festival sunshine always is at its best.



End of year Primary and High School

The school gathered in the school on two consecutive days to celebrate and acknowledge the Graduation of the Grade 12s and the transition of Grade 7s. These are always moving occasions as Class Guardians, Class Teacher, parents and students spoke of the school journey of these classes, acknowledging all students.

MUSIC

"Music is an art imbued with power to penetrate into the very depth of the soul, imbuing man with the love of virtue." Rudolf Steiner

PRIMARY SCHOOL MUSIC

Primary Classroom Music begins from Class 1 as a weekly specialist lesson. In Classroom Music at Samford Valley Steiner School, this takes shape and direction through Kodály methodology, using songs and games to help gradually develop the child's response to pitch and rhythm. The timing around the introduction of each new musical concept is considered and sequential, so that by the time the children reach Class 3 and are entering the next stage of development, they are ready to take on the physical learning of an instrument with well-prepared aural skills and the reading and writing of music notation. As well as developing strong musical skills, the program seeks to instil in the

children a love of music and allow them to experience joy in music making that is the birthright of every human being.

From Class 3 through to Class 7, students have the opportunity to experience rehearsing and performing as part of a string ensemble alongside their classroom music lessons, daily singing and individual or small group instrumental lessons. Each class string ensemble has the opportunity to perform at an assembly throughout the year, and from time to time will combine with another class to make up a larger ensemble. The Primary School gathers each year for a Music Concert where the class string ensembles and extension ensembles all perform for each other and for parents.

Students all begin on the violin in Class 3 for a foundation year of string learning. In Class 4 and 5, some students are given the opportunity to switch to the viola, cello and double bass to form a full string ensemble.



HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC

Classroom Music in the High School builds on the foundational music skills introduced in the Primary School. Students may continue their instrumental studies, now out of their own interest, to develop their theoretical knowledge and ability to write and perform in a variety of genres. The core skill of singing is practiced and maintained throughout the high school years, giving substance and depth to both the theoretical and practical elements of music exploration.



Although the compulsory instrumental program continues for Class 8 students, they are given a choice which instrument they would like to learn. Class 8 instrumental lessons are conducted in paired lessons and the cost of these lessons is included in the compulsory charges of the school parent contributions. All students in the High School participate in a music ensemble once per week. The High School ensemble programs are structured vertically, giving multi-age ensemble experiences tailored to the instrument of choice. Ensembles include a String Ensemble, Vocal Ensemble, Jazz Ensemble, Guitar Ensemble and Percussion Ensemble which performed at many school events throughout the school. Thank you to the very talented tutors who guide our students to become such skilled musicians.

“Through an integrated and holistic music program we seek to create and encourage a school culture in which joyous, enlivened musical activity is embedded into the daily experience of every student and teacher across the whole school.”

DRAMA

Drama is important throughout the school and each class participates in a class play every year and performs to their parents and friends, or to a small audience of other classes. As the years progress, the plays get longer and more complex, culminating in amazing performances in the high school, under the lead of experienced Drama teachers.

Pedagogical theatre is a discipline as important as any other pursued in school. It entertains, inspires and instructs in a way that is only possible when the human being, as an enactor, performs a story before other human beings. It creates moments of artistic communion that lead us to clearer understandings of what it means to be a becoming human being, both individually, and in community. In 2022, all Primary School Classes and Classes 8, 10 and 12 produced exceptional dramatic productions and performed to eager audiences including a epic school and community production of the Odyssey.

OUTDOOR EDUCATION PROGRAM 2023

The Outdoor Education program forms an integral and inclusive aspect of all our students' education, starting in Class 3 and continuing all the way through to Class 12. (We even have program options for our parents to participate in). As much as possible, the classroom teacher, or Main Lesson teacher attends camp with the students, and it is expected that all students attend camp and participate as fully as possible unless there is a medical reason that they cannot attend.

A lot of time and effort goes into tailoring the elements of each camp so that they best meet the individual needs of our students so they can participate to their fullest ability. During camps our students eat, sleep, work and play together; the camps are a complex dynamic of effort and reward, fun and challenge. Through our Outdoor Education program, students are presented with a wide variety of experiences to help with their overall growth and development. It is hardly surprising that these experiences often feature as a highlight in our senior students' recollections of their schooling lives. In 2023, we were successfully able to run 33 programs throughout the year.



LANGUAGE

At SVSS we acknowledge the importance of learning a second language and German is taught from Class 1 through to Class 12. Rudolf Steiner spoke of the importance of learning another language to enrich the child's inner life, to expose children to other cultures in a living way and to counter-act the one-sidedness influence that the mother tongue may exert on the developing child. Teachers use story, song and immersion methods to instil a love of learning another language.

VET PROGRAM

Vocational Education and Training (VET) is a new addition to our Senior High School offerings (since 2018), where students can elect to undertake one of our offered Certificate II programs. VET, by its nature, is a practical and

hands on approach that delivers skills and knowledge required for specific industries. Samford Valley Steiner School is a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) in its own right. The qualifications we offered in 2022 were Certificate II in Outdoor Recreation and Certificate III in Outdoor Leadership.

SOCIAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

For children to develop in a healthy way there needs to be a steady and progressive movement of authority from outer to inner. The aim of our approach to student health and well-being is to support the development of a strong, inner moral compass in all students that allows them to make ethical behavioural choices as adults.

There is initially, with very young children, a need for constant and consistent positive and gentle guidance from adults who are steeped in personal discipline. Gradually we begin to expect children to develop self-discipline and to take more responsibility for their behaviour and actions. Teachers support this process and movement by using specific behaviour management techniques at different stages of children's development.

Teachers work to support each individual's development towards their full potential by helping free the student from encumbrances; by challenging and stimulating them and by offering the resistance that they need in order to grow independent and inwardly sturdy and strong. Students learn social skills in different ways at different ages. Their individual level of skill will depend on their experience, environment and developmental maturity and the teacher's response to inappropriate behaviour needs to reflect this and be differentiated accordingly.



Samford Valley Steiner School School Director Report Year ended 31 December 2023

**Theme for the year – social and cultural renewal through sound anthroposophical application
(SVSS VISION)**

Our school respectfully acknowledges Traditional Custodians of the land on which our school lives, we also acknowledge a continuous connection to land and culture for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

In 2023 we rolled out our new School Improvement Plan, with many new initiatives and improvements on the horizon. We began the year with a steady Senior Leadership Team, room for all our double streamed Primary School and Kindergarten and looking ahead to our next building project as well as preparing for double streaming in our High School. Overall, we had a successful year, with our staff delving into the vision as the year's theme and building community.

Students

Our Kindergarten program continued to grow in strength. After having a few staff turnovers in previous years the Kindergarten staff stabilised, allowing great collaboration. The Early Childhood's biggest addition was the development of a playgroup on site. This has been a wish for many years so it was delightful to see this come to fruition. Starting with one session, it was quickly booked, and by the end of the year had expanded to two sessions. The Pre-prep enrolment numbers were lower than normal, but the Preps were full and the Pippi program had a longer waiting list.

After the graduating class of Pacifica College of Eurythmy finished in 2022, we were lucky to have two Eurythmy teachers join our staff. This allowed us for the first time in many years to offer Eurythmy to our students, from Kindergarten right through to Class 12.

Our Primary School had its forever home for all the classes. The students participated in two interschool events, the Ancient Greek Olympics held at Birali Steiner School and the Music Camp held at Samford Valley Steiner School. These interschool events remain a priority to develop connections with neighbouring Steiner schools, and for our students to build community a little further afield. These interschool events continued into the High School.

Our High School team worked incredibly collaboratively and intensely to create our Odyssey festival. We had a festival week, culminating in a performance led by Class 10. The result was an outstanding quality performance, with flexible and creative thinking going far beyond what the school, teachers or students had done before. Working with Independent Schools Queensland and researchers from Griffith University, our staff also had the opportunity to develop their parent engagement skills and embed these skills into the project.

Learning Enrichment was the focus of a College of Teachers annual review. A group of teachers, teacher aides and specialist staff engaged in a year long process, gathering information from students, parents, and staff to ascertain the needs within the school. The outcome of the review gave the group the opportunity to work with the resources that we currently have to maximise our assistance. Carried over into 2024, the Learning Enrichment team continues to need to adjust and adapt to the changing needs of our students.

Our graduating Class 12 brought many gifts to the school last year, including their inspirational Senior Project Presentations and their final Class 12 production.

In terms of academic results:

- 100% CSE students awarded Certificate of Steiner Education Level 3 with University Entrance
- 25% of CSE students achieved our top selection rank

- 100% of CSE students achieved over selection rank of 71
- 12% of Grade 12 students were awarded a VET course

Some graduate successes include:

- Bachelor of Drama (QUT)
- Bachelor of Theatre (Acting) (USQ)
- Carpentry Apprenticeship
- Bachelor of Science (UCQ)
- Bachelor of Arts – Mandarin - (UQ)

Staff

As we transitioned back to in-person conferences, teachers were given choice on how to develop their professional capacities. Faculty meetings continued to have Anthroposophical study and child study in their rhythm. Our school organised professional development days and whole school faculty meetings had a high-quality Anthroposophical guest.

This year, the annual staff survey was adjusted to become the Wellbeing and Engagement survey. With this new survey, the overall engagement and wellbeing was measured, with a benchmark year so following years improvements can be measured. Some of the results included 94% of respondents think that the work that they do is interesting and 90% are proud to work at Samford Valley Steiner School. Results from the survey and completing a Psychosocial risk assessment for the school led to a Wellbeing and Engagement committee being formed and meeting weekly, to develop a strategy and action steps to increase staff wellbeing.

2023 was the second year of our Independent Schools Queensland research grant. Our team developed the Teacher Growth and Development Plan, which was expanded to administration and leadership staff. This included new induction processes, individualised goals, support, and professional development, mentoring or collegial partners and one-on-one conversations. Meetings at the end of the year were informed by the Wellbeing and Engagement survey feedback and the annual parent survey feedback.

Part of the professional learning in 2023 was an Anthroposophical Leadership course and Mentoring the Mentor course, a step for the school's succession planning. Through consultation, an updated organisational chart was completed to account for the expansion of staff that will be needed as we move towards a fully double streamed school. As we continue to grow, some roles have been redefined and some administrative tasks that were outsourced, brought back in house. The average service time in 2021 was 3.7 year. In 2023 to this increased to 4.7 years average per staff.

The basis for our Social Health and Wellbeing policy is restorative practices. After staffing changes in the last year, staff were given the opportunity to refresh or learn new restorative practices skills to deepen this practice within our school.

Strategy, Direction and Governance

In 2023, our Senior Leadership Team implemented the new School Improvement plan. This was reviewed several times through the year, to check in with how the 'quick actions' were travelling at the end of term 1 and the 'medium' goals that were expected to be reached by the end of the year. Our Strategic Plan also continued to be reviewed throughout the year and feedback communicated to the Board. The end of the year's audit reports showed a surplus.

Our fundraising plan began to take shape with the first action completed with a Fundraising Officer employed for two days a week to make our goals a reality. New policies, procedures and reporting structures were put in place to ensure the longevity of the plan. It is a two-fold approach to assist with keeping current parent contributions down and to assist those families who may be experiencing financial difficulty. There are two main fundraising goals:

- Community Bursary Fund – to raise adequate funds to support families to attend SVSS who may have otherwise not been able to
- Building Fund – to assist in the costs of the future building projects

Our Fundraising Officer was also employed as our external Marketing Officer, to bring our online presence up and be present in the general education sector.

Planning and strategic direction continued to be developed over the year, and into 2024, to ensure that the High School is ready for double Class 8s in 2025. The updated constitution was passed at the AGM.

Our Master Plan's phases continue to be executed, with some adjustments. The cost of the Primary School carpark could not be justified so a new maintenance plan was developed. Our Waste Water Treatment plant and dispersal system project began in 2023 and along with the new Stop Drop and Go expansion in the High School, will be completed in 2024.

Preparation for our next two buildings was key in 2023. The MADFLA building (GLA classrooms and new consolidated admin space) and the new High School Arts Precinct, were both in the design and application phases in 2023.

Community and Environment

Leaving the days of Covid behind, 2023 saw a new PAFA group step forward. Friday Foodies was held every term, becoming a larger and larger event each time, bringing joy into our community on a Friday afternoon. Very excitedly, we held our first reunion, with a turnout of over 100 returning staff, parents and students.

In 2023, we invited delegates from Steiner schools all over Australia, to the biannual delegates meeting organised by Steiner Education Australia. Although a heat wave brought high temperatures during this week, it was still a success and an honour to host leaders from around the country.

Our Sustainable school goals persisted, some small such as moving to online workbooks in the High School, investigating sustainable, plastic free afternoon teas, composts and students working with waste management (eg putting bins out weekly for collection to bring awareness of waste on the school property).

To engage in the national education landscape, staff maintained registrations and connections with Australian Head of Independent Schools Australia (AHISA), Aspirant, Independent Schools Queensland, Steiner Education Australia, enabling our delegates to be actively involved in curriculum updates, core assessment principles and the national marketing project.

Within the Outdoor Education program happening throughout the year, our Outdoor Education Team made authentic connections with First Nations peoples whose land we were travelling on. We also connected with families and elders who are people from the land on which our school is based. We are very grateful and welcome ongoing and deeper connections to this land and its traditional custodians.

As our community grows, so do the community offerings that are given to staff, parents and families. This year a community choir reformed, performing at the Winter Festival, community Eurythmy and painting classes offered, and tuckshop was served nearly every Friday.



Rudolf Steiner Education Group Brisbane Inc.



RSEGB President Report For the year ended 31st December 2023

The Board's mission is to provide the welcoming environment and stable framework (encompassing the Board's four pillars) that encourages the maximum number of children to enjoy an education underpinned by the principles of Anthroposophy as given by Rudolf Steiner, whereby, our highest endeavour is to develop free human beings who are able of themselves to impart purpose and direction to their lives.

The four pillars upon which the Board focuses our attention are:

- Financial
- Performance
- Compliance
- Stakeholder Management.

2023 – A Review

This was another exciting year for the Board, with several notable achievements across each of the Board's four pillars.

1. **Financial:** A successful 2023 with continued financial sustainability and growth (refer to the Treasurer's Report for details).
2. **Performance:**
 - Since her appointment in June of 2022, the Board's sole employee, Carly Sheard as School Director, continues to impress us. Carly embodies the school's core principles and values as she demonstrates effective leadership through honest and caring communication, humility and hard work. The Board is truly grateful for the enthusiasm, competence and resilience that Carly has shown this year.
 - On the 20th and 21st of October we were once again reminded of the extraordinary children that attend our School as we were captivated by the Class 12 Senior Research Project (SRP) presentations. This was a small but remarkably capable class of students that will no doubt be advancing social and cultural renewal. As always, it was a privilege and an honour to witness these presentations and heart-felt thanks to the students, their SRP supervisors and mentors, and all of the staff that have played such an important role in guiding these fine people.
 - A key focus area for the Board is to ensure that we have robust planning around the resources required to support a fully double streamed school. We continued to work with Carly and the SLT on the school's organisational chart and ensuring it is fit for purpose to meet full school staffing requirements, as well as progressing essential infrastructure projects such as the wastewater treatment plant, high school stop-drop-go (SD&G)(which will also improve the traffic flow in the primary school carpark by relocating the bus service to the high school SD&G), widening of the high school carpark entrance, and the high school multi-purpose building (this new building will provide centralised administration offices and additional high school teaching rooms to support double-streaming as it enters the high school in 2025 – see Attachment A).
 - The Board withdrew the planned upgrade to the primary school carpark (bitumen surface and additional parking spaces) on receipt of a revised cost estimate that increased the project cost from approximately \$960,000 to \$1,750,000. Some maintenance work will occur in the primary school carpark in 2024 to maximise carparking spaces and repair the surface.
3. **Compliance:**

- Every five years the Queensland Non-State Schools Accreditation Board (NSSAB) assesses whether each non-state school in Queensland has met the legal obligations required for accreditation. The School submitted our final report to NSSAB in February 2023 and received accreditation in July 2023. The Board wishes to thank all those staff members that participated in the collection of information and interviews with NSSAB and congratulates the School on demonstrating our ongoing compliance.
 - The Board continues to review and update as required the School's policies and procedures in the areas of governance, risk management, student learning and welfare, people and culture, and administration.
4. **Stakeholder Management:** The SVSS Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA) took effect on 1 July 2022 and has effect through to 30 June 2025. This agreement provides clear and transparent employment conditions for our staff. The EBA provided clarity with regards to staff remuneration for the 2022-23 financial year plus a 2.5% wage increase for the 2023-24 financial year. The opportunity to review and negotiate a wage increase for the 2024-25 financial year was included in the EBA. In June 2023, the Board supported the position of the Single Bargaining Unit (SBU) for a 7% wage increase for the 2024-25 financial year (effective from 1 July 2024). This decision was made with appropriate due diligence and in recognition of the excellent work and tireless efforts of our staff.

2024 – The Year Ahead

The Board's focus, as always, is on good governance in providing a strong Steiner education to our students and consolidating our position as a model of Steiner education in Australia.

Key focus areas for the Board in 2024 are:

- ***Measuring our progress against the Strategic Plan 2021-2025:*** The focus areas within our Strategic Plan are Students, Staff, Community and Environment, and Governance. Within each of these we have identified a goal, strategies to put in place to achieve the goal, and measures of success to understand our progress towards achieving the goal. Advancing each of the goals within our Strategic Plan will provide an environment that enables all of our students to reach their highest potential.
- ***A clear resource model for a fully double-streamed school:*** our focus remains on robust planning for a fully double-streamed school by 2029. We remain committed to implementing the vision provided in the School's Master Plan. The next major infrastructure in this respect is the High School Arts Building. A Block Grants Authority (BGA) application has been prepared and submitted for this wonderful space.
- ***Compliance:*** Recognising that a fully double-streamed School would enable SVSS to educate more than the maximum 650 students authorised by our current Development Approval, we have just kicked off studies to support an application to increase the maximum allowable student numbers. Based on our current projections we may exceed 650 students in 2026 and would exceed 650 students by 2027.

Acknowledgements

As always, I would like to take this opportunity to reinforce the Board's gratitude to our school community. We wouldn't have the school we do without the community that surrounds it. A big thank you to:

- Our staff – committed, energetic, loyal and professional.
- College members – deeply committed to Anthroposophy and its practice in our School, and for taking on responsibilities additional to their normal workload.
- PAFA and Volunteers – thank you all for your ongoing commitment of time and energy. Our cultural and community life is a mirror of your involvement.

Board Membership

Every member of the Board is a volunteer who devotes countless hours to promoting efficient governance for the school - my sincere thanks to you all. These roles require ongoing commitment and work at a professional and strategic level, taking on a workload as well as legal and financial responsibilities that are quite significant.

This year saw the departure of our Treasurer and long-term Board member, Christiane Platzer. Christiane joined the Board in 2017. She served as a Non-Executive Director for four years and the Treasurer for three years. As a financial modeller and analyst, Christiane provided invaluable reviews and feedback on the school's monthly financial reports and 10-year financial model. As a Steiner graduate herself, she provided honest and thoughtful input to all matters discussed. Thank you very much Christiane for all you have contributed over the last 7 years, we truly appreciate your participation and good humour over some challenging years!

As Christiane resigned from the Board in November of 2023, we are very grateful for Rob Hewitt (RSEGB life member and Treasurer for 12 years) has filled a casual vacancy position on the Board and will be presenting the Treasurer's Report at this AGM – no words describe how thankful we are for Rob helping us out once again!!

In late 2023 the Board actively recruited for new members and we received a fabulous response from our community, with four members of the RSEGB nominating for positions. This placed us in the unusual position of potentially exceeding the maximum of nine members authorised by our Constitution. Mercedes Logan will be resigning her position on the Board but remaining as the Board Secretary as per the provision provided in Rules 14.2.2.2 and 14.3.1 of the RSEGB Constitution. Thank you so much Mercedes!! The following table provides a summary of the intentions of current Board members for the May 2024 AGM.

The following table provides a summary of the intentions of current Board members for the May 2024 AGM.

Role	Board Member	3 Year term expiry	Intentions at May 2024 AGM
President	Michael Ryan	2023 AGM	Resigning as President - nominating for Non-Executive
Treasurer	Rob Hewitt	Casual Vacancy	Resigning the position of Casual Vacancy
Anthroposophical Representative	Carla Deiana	2025 AGM	Continuing term
Non-Executive	Tim Dunn	2026 AGM	Continuing term
Non-Executive	Matt Hanson	2026 AGM	Continuing term
Non-Executive	Cherrie Wilson	2024 AGM	Nominating for President
Non-Executive (Secretary)	Mercedes Logan	2025 AGM	Resigning as Non-Executive Continuing as Secretary
Non-Executive	Cherrie Wilson	2024 AGM	Nominating for President

Further to the current Board members noted above the Board are pleased to support the nominations of Julia Abramova (for Treasurer) and Lynda James (for Non-Executive), Miranda Wilson (for Non-Executive) and Ivan Woodcock (for Non-Executive). The RSEGB Association members will vote on their nominations at this AGM.

Michael Ryan
President RSEGB

Samford Valley Steiner School Annual Report

(Based on 2022 data)

Contextual Information¹

School Sector: *

Independent

Year Levels Offered:

P-12

Co-educational or Single Sex: *

Co educational

Characteristics of the Student Body:

The student body was made up of 271 girls and 225 boys

Of the student body 15 students identified as indigenous. There were a range of nationalities: Chinese, Dari, Dutch, Fijian, French, German, Hebrew, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin, Persian, Portuguese, Russian, Serbian, Spanish, Tamil, Vietnamese.

Total Enrolments:

Total enrolments included in the State Census were 496 students

Workforce Information

Staff Composition, Including Indigenous Staff:

37 Full Time Staff and 74 Part Time Staff

48 Teaching staff and 63 Non-teaching staff

There were two Indigenous staff members employed in 2023

¹ Australian Education Regulation 2013 s60 (1)(a)

Qualifications of Teachers and Standards:

Qualification	Standards
The qualifications of teachers include Doctorates Masters, Bachelor, Diploma and/or Certificate. There was also a teachers QCT Permission to Teach	All teachers uphold the standards of the Queensland College of Teachers to maintain their registration, including actively engaging in professional learning and the three domains of teaching (professional knowledge, professional practice and professional engagement) and seven standards within these domains.

Funding Information

School Income Broken Down by Funding Source ^{*2}

2023 School Revenue

	\$
Commonwealth Recurrent Grants	4,894,105
State Recurrent Grants	907,100
Queensland State Govt ISQ Grants	259,322
Queensland State Govt Textbook Grant	21,728
Queensland State Govt Capital Grant	-
Tuition Fees	4,385,122
Outside School Hour Care Fees	220,694
Conference Revenue	-
Sale of Goods	28,587
Sundry	28,314
Donations	7,597
	<u>10,752,569</u>

Social Climate

Parent, Teacher and Student Satisfaction with the School ^{*3}

An annual parent survey was undertaken in 2023 and the reports and an Executive Summary shared with the Senior Leadership Team and the Board

The survey covered areas such as Curriculum, Curriculum Delivery, Student Conduct and Pastoral Care, Learning Enrichment, Community Interactions and Relationships, Communications, Leadership, Buildings, Grounds and Facilities, Parent Education Opportunities at SVSS, PAFA, and School Culture. Overall, the results were positive and those areas to be worked on were discussed with the College of Teachers and the Senior Leadership Team and feed into our School Improvement Plan.

Overall, the parent survey was very positive with some constructive feedback for improvements in the school. This feedback was also used by Faculty Directors to assist in providing strategic direction in the three faculties.

We have strong policies that are consistently updated to ensure our staff and community are able to respond to bullying effectively. The school has also been involved in a parent engagement whole school improvement for the last three years with Independent School Queensland. As well as this, there is a strong parent education program that teachers and leadership are engaged with. To ensure adequate professional development, all teachers, leadership and general staff are given many opportunities to participate in individualised school paid professional development. The school also has a school run

² Australian Education Regulation 2013 s60 (1)(g)

³ Australian Education Regulation 2013 s60 (1)(f)

professional development program that is developed in collaboration with the College of Teachers. There was just over \$50,000 allocated to professional development in 2023.

Satisfaction Data:

The School had a teacher retention rate of 93% in 2023.

Student Outcomes

Average student attendance rate (%) for the whole school: *⁴

Total number of students	Number of possible attendance days	Total number of days absent	Total attendance days
453	85,164	8,499	76,665
The average student attendance rate for the whole school in 2023 was 90%			

Average student attendance rate for each year level: *⁵

Year levels	Average attendance rate for each year level as a percentage in 2023
Prep	89%
Year 1 Group	91%
Year 2 Group	91%
Year 3 Group	92%
Year 4 Group	91%
Year 5 Group	89%
Year 6 Group	90%
Year 7 Group	91%
Year 8 Group	90%
Year 9 Group	91%
Year 10 Group	87%
Year 11 Group	84%
Year 12 Group	90%

⁴ Australian Education Regulation 2013 s60 (1)(d)(i)

⁵ Australian Education Regulation 2013 s60 (1)(d)(i)

A description of how non-attendance is managed by the school: *⁶

SVSS expects consistent and punctual student attendance during school hours at all school run lessons and compulsory curricular and extra-curricular activities.

When a student is absent notification must be made by parents to school administration prior to or prior to 8.30am on the morning of the absence, detailing the reason for the student's lateness/absence.

Where notification is not received SVSS will send out SMS notification to parents of students marked as absent and a same day response is required from parents to explain the absence.

Parents must seek approval from the School Director for any extended absences from school.

A medical certificate is required in the following circumstances:

- If the student is absent for more than 3 consecutive days
- For all medical absences once the child has been absent for more than 10 non-consecutive days in a school year
- If the student is absent from a camp, a camp exemption form must be approved by the Faculty Director

NAPLAN results for Years 3, 5 and 7 and 9 in 2022 *⁷

Details of the NAPLAN results may be found at the My School website <http://www.myschool.edu.au/>

Privacy and Interpretation of Data

The fundamental principle for reporting performance information is to support school improvement throughout Queensland and to provide a profile of all schools to the community. While the reporting initiative is a valuable move towards sharing education information, it brings with it responsibilities in the areas of personal information and privacy. The reporting of student achievement information needs to be managed according to appropriate privacy provisions and needs to ensure that publicly available information is accurate and easily interpreted.

There are many Queensland schools that have small enrolment numbers, particularly at individual year levels. For this reason, care needs to be taken not to identify individual students. Care also needs to be taken in the interpretation of information where trends may be volatile. When reporting on small numbers or 'cohorts' of students, an annual variation in enrolment of just one or two students can have a significant effect on data from one year to the next. This is where setting information in context is of prime importance.

When publishing information on student achievement and school performance:

- Careful consideration should be given to the nature of reporting where there are fewer than five students in a group, cohort or reporting field;
- Information should not be published where all persons in a particular group have achieved identical results, irrespective of group or cohort size.

All published information must:

- Maintain the privacy of individual student information;
- Minimise the likelihood of false assumptions and conclusions being inferred from the data.

School principals may decide that it is not possible to report certain data publicly in ways that maintain student privacy or minimise misinterpretation of performance. Where a decision is made not to report specific data for these reasons, a narrative or descriptive comment on student achievement or school performance would meet the requirements of the Annual Report.

⁶ Australian Education Regulation 2013 s60 (1)(d)(ii)

⁷ Australian Education Regulation 2013 s60 (1)(e)

Year 12 Outcomes: *⁸

*Schools provide secondary education are required to report senior secondary outcomes including percentage of year 12 students undertaking vocational training or training in a trade and the percentage of year 12 students attaining a year 12 certificate or equivalent vocational education and training qualification *⁹*

Schools may choose how to do this. The table below provides one example of how you could meet the requirements.

Outcomes for our Year 12 cohort 2023	
Number of students awarded a Senior Education Profile	9
Number of students awarded one or more Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualifications	2
Number of students who completed Level 3 NZCSE with University Entrance requirements and received a Selection Rank	8
Percentage of Year 12 students who are completing or completed a SAT or were awarded one or more of the following: NZCSE, VET qualification	88%
Percentage of Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) applicants receiving a tertiary offer	100%

Post-school Destination Information *¹⁰

At the time of publishing this School Annual Report, the results of the 2022 post-school destinations survey, *Next Steps – Student Destination* report for the school was not available. Information about these post-school destinations of our students will be uploaded to the school's website in September after release of the information.

⁸ Australian Education Regulation 2013 s60 (1)(h)(i)

⁹ Australian Education Regulation 2013 s60 (1)(h)(ii)

¹⁰ Australian Education Regulation 2013 s60 (1)(h)(ii)