

Annual Report 2026

Reflecting on the 2025 school year





From the Board Chair

The year was marked by both progress and preparation. Construction commenced on Wattle House, planning continued for future site development, and work progressed on the school's next Strategic Direction. These initiatives reflect a shared commitment to ensuring the school remains well placed to meet the needs of current and future students while remaining true to its educational purpose.

Alongside these visible projects, the Board continued its work overseeing the financial, governance and strategic responsibilities of the school. Particular attention was given to enrolment trends, workforce planning, capital investment and the continued growth of the High School.

One of the strengths of Samford Steiner is the willingness of people across the community to contribute to something larger than themselves. Throughout the year, parents volunteered their time, staff brought skill and dedication to their work, students embraced opportunities and challenges, and community groups continued to support the life of the school.

I would like to thank my fellow Board members for their service and commitment throughout the year. In particular, I acknowledge Cherrie Wilson for her leadership and dedication during her time as Board Chair. Cherrie has made a significant contribution to the school over many years, helping guide the organisation through a period of growth and development. I also thank Ivan Woodcock for his service to the Board and the school community.

I acknowledge the contribution of the College of Teachers, the School Director, the Senior Leadership Team and all staff for the care, professionalism and dedication they bring to the school each day.

Most importantly, I thank our students. Their curiosity and growth remain the reason for all that we do.

Tim Dunn
Board Chair



From the School Director

Schools do not stand still. The start of each year brings new students, new families, new opportunities and new challenges. The 2025 school year was no exception.

Construction commenced on Wattle House, planning continued for future growth and work progressed on the school's next Strategic Direction. Alongside this, the daily life of the school continued through lessons, camps, performances, projects, festivals and the relationships that shape a healthy school community.

Like many schools, we continued to see increasing complexity in student learning and wellbeing needs, movement in enrolments and broader pressures affecting families. These realities required us to consider how we organise ourselves and how we respond to the needs of a growing community.

While much attention was given to planning and future growth, the heart of the school remained unchanged. Each day, students arrived ready to learn and participate in the life of the school.

They camped, performed, built, researched, questioned and discovered. These experiences continue to shape the culture of the school and the character of the young people who move through it.

One of the privileges of working in a school is having a front-row seat to the growth of young people over time. Throughout the year, I saw students persist with challenges, discover new interests, develop confidence and surprise themselves with what they could achieve. I also saw the skill, patience and commitment our teachers bring to this work every day. The relationships they build with students remain one of the school's greatest strengths.

I am grateful to every member of staff for the care and professionalism they bring to their work. I also thank our families, the College of Teachers and the Board for their ongoing support and contribution to the life of the school.

Most importantly, I thank our students. They remind me daily of why this work matters, now more than ever.

Carly Sheard
School Director



Vision, Mission and Values

Vision

Advancing social and cultural renewal through sound anthroposophical application.

Mission

Samford Valley Steiner School seeks to provide an education that supports young people to grow into capable, thoughtful and purposeful adults. Through a curriculum grounded in Steiner education, students are encouraged to engage deeply with the world, develop practical skills, think independently and contribute positively to their communities.

Values

- **Authentic Connection:** Building respectful relationships with ourselves, one another and the wider world.
- **Sacred Wonder:** Approaching learning and life with curiosity, reverence and openness.
- **Courageous Integrity:** Acting with honesty, responsibility and care, even when the path is not straightforward.



Our school

About Samford Valley Steiner School:

Samford Valley Steiner School offers Steiner education from Kindergarten to Year 12 on 20 acres of bushland in the semi-rural Samford Valley, north-west of Brisbane.

Samford Steiner is the largest Steiner school in Queensland. Students follow the Australian Steiner Curriculum Framework through the primary and middle years before completing the New Zealand Certificate of Steiner Education (NZCSE) in the senior years.

The school's natural setting forms part of the learning environment. Students experience the changing seasons, work with the land, participate in Outdoor Education and contribute to the shared life of the school community.

As part of the international Steiner/Waldorf education movement, the school seeks to educate the whole child. Students are supported to develop clear thinking, imaginative feeling and purposeful action through a curriculum that brings together academic learning, artistic work, practical activity and community participation.



2025 in reflection

Wattle House was the most visible sign of change during 2025, but it was only one part of the story.

Across the school, children continued to learn through lessons, camps, performances, festivals, projects and practical work. Class 3 students explored ancient cultures by building irrigation channels and creating sundials. Class 6 students tracked the movement of the sun and observed patterns of light and shadow. Older students undertook work experience placements, completed Senior Research Projects and prepared for life beyond school.

Music remained woven through the life of the school. Students learned instruments, rehearsed together and performed for families and the wider community. Outdoor Education continued to provide opportunities for challenge and growth, with students camping, paddling, hiking and working together in unfamiliar environments.

Families contributed to the life of the school through festivals, community events, volunteering and the work of the Parents and Friends Association. The return of the Spring Fair was a particular highlight, bringing together students, families, alumni and the wider community for the first time since the pandemic.

At the same time, the school continued to respond to the realities facing many communities. Student learning and wellbeing needs continued to grow in complexity. Families faced increasing financial pressures and schools across the sector experienced workforce challenges. These conditions required the school to make clear, timely decisions while maintaining a focus on long-term sustainability.

Work also progressed on the school's next Strategic Direction. More than 165 members of the community contributed their perspectives through consultation, helping to shape priorities for the years ahead.

By the end of 2025, there was a strong sense of momentum. Construction continued and planning for what comes next was well underway. Through it all, the daily work of teaching and learning remained at the centre of school life.



Learning and development

Learning at Samford Valley Steiner School begins with experience.

During 2025, students tracked the movement of the sun, built irrigation channels, learned instruments, undertook work placements and developed research projects from early ideas through to public presentation. Across the school, learning was grounded in observation, practice and participation.

Early Childhood

The youngest children learned through rhythm, play, story and purposeful work. Gardening, cooking, handwork and seasonal activities formed part of the daily experience of the class. These repeated experiences helped establish a sense of security and participation in the life of the kindergarten.

Primary Main Lessons

In the Primary years, students encountered the curriculum through story, artistic work, observation and practical activity.

Class 3 students explored ancient cultures through stories and practical projects. They built irrigation channels in the sandpit to understand the challenges faced by early farming communities and created sundials as they investigated how people measured time before modern technology.

By Class 6, students were recording patterns of light and shadow and constructing their own sundials. Through careful observation over time, they developed an understanding of astronomy grounded in what they could see unfolding around them.

Writing grew from a similar process. During a "Wonder and Wisdom of Words" main lesson, students worked with poetry, metaphor, simile and haiku. Lessons often began with observation before students translated what they noticed into language.

History was rarely confined to a textbook. Students mapped the Roman Empire, drew architectural forms and explored ancient cultures through stories, song and practical work. Learning was brought to life through activity and participation.

Music and Performance

Music remained part of the rhythm of school life. Students began with song and recorder before progressing to instrumental learning and ensemble performance. By Class 3, children were learning violin and performing for family audiences. Older students participated in chamber groups, choirs and collaborative performances.

“Learning to play the violin this year has been fun. I would like to do it again. If I had to describe the feeling of playing the violin as a colour, it would be orange!”
- Student, Class 3

Students also had opportunities to experience music beyond the school grounds.

“Our visit to the Queensland Symphony Orchestra was the first time I’ve seen a full orchestra playing. I have never seen such raw talent before.”
- Student, Class 4

Outdoor Education

Outdoor Education formed an important part of learning across the year levels.

Class 3 children begin close to home, sleeping at school before later camping at Gleneden Farm as part of their growing confidence in the world beyond the classroom. By Class 7, students are travelling by canoe through Cooloola and gathering at Ballina to mark the completion of their Primary years.

In the High School, the journeys become increasingly demanding. Class 8 students sail at Lake Wivenhoe and ride the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail. Class 9 students walk the Yuraygir coast, travel by river on the Nymboida and live and work at Kumbartcho Farm. Older students undertake fieldwork on K’gari and Wallanginji.

These experiences ask students to take responsibility for themselves and contribute to the group. They learn to prepare meals, navigate unfamiliar environments and work through challenges as they arise.

The school's natural environment also remained an important place for learning. Students worked with tools, built structures, explored traditional technologies and connected classroom learning with practical application.

High School and Pathways

As students moved through the High School, learning increasingly connected with the wider world. Class 10 students undertook work experience placements across a range of industries, gaining insight into possible future pathways.

“I am very grateful that I got this work experience placement, and it has really given me a clearer understanding of what I want to do when I graduate.” - Student, Class 10

Senior students completed year-long Research Projects based on areas of personal interest. Topics in 2025 included solar innovation, sustainable architecture, music composition and community health. Students carried these projects from an initial question through research, making, mentoring and public presentation.

“I’ve learned how to pursue what I’m passionate about, how to love hard work. I’ve developed real self-discipline.” - Student, Class 12

Learning Enrichment and student wellbeing remained an important part of the school's work. Students were supported through targeted programs, classroom adjustments and collaboration between teachers, assistants and families. Throughout the year, the school also continued to strengthen the ways adults respond when students need support, guidance or repair.



School life and community

Throughout the year, students, families and staff came together for festivals, performances, community events and milestones that mark the passage of the year. These occasions provide opportunities to pause, celebrate and reconnect with one another amid the busyness of daily life.

The Winter Festival remains one of the most anticipated events on the school calendar. Held during the shortest days of the year, it offers a reminder that light can still be found during darker times. Families gathered around the bonfire while lanterns illuminated pathways across the school grounds. For many families, it is a tradition that becomes woven into their experience of the school.

The Rose Ceremony continued to mark an important moment in the life of the school. As younger students are welcomed, older students take on the role of guide and companion. The ceremony reflects the connections that exist between year levels and the sense that students are part of something larger than their own class.

The return of the Spring Fair was one of the highlights of the year. Held for the first time since the COVID pandemic, the event represented months of planning and an enormous contribution from staff, parents and volunteers. The school grounds were transformed with stalls, activities, performances and displays. Former families returned, current families connected with one another and students experienced the excitement of seeing their school become a gathering place for the wider community.

The Parents and Friends Association (PAFA) continued to make a significant contribution to school life throughout 2025.

One of the highlights of the year was the Harvest Long Lunch, which raised approximately \$5,000 and brought families together in support of the school. Throughout the year, PAFA also organised events including Friday Foodies, the school disco and the Bush Dance, creating opportunities for families to connect and participate in the life of the community.

Alongside these events, PAFA contributed directly to school priorities through support for the library and building funds, assistance with equipment purchases and ongoing fundraising efforts. Members also played an important role in supporting the return of the Spring Fair, helping bring to life one of the school's largest community events.

The contribution of PAFA extends beyond fundraising. Through its work, the association helps create opportunities for families to become involved in the school, support one another and contribute to the shared life of the community.

Across the year, performances, assemblies and class celebrations provided opportunities for students to share their learning with others. Parents and carers were able to witness not only what students had learned, but also how they had grown in confidence and capability.

None of these events happen by accident. Behind every festival, concert, working bee and community gathering are people who contribute their time and energy. Families volunteered in countless ways throughout the year, often behind the scenes and without recognition. Their contribution remains an important part of school life and helps sustain the traditions that make the community what it is.



People and leadership

Schools are built on relationships - every lesson, camp, performance, conversation with a family and student support meeting depends on the work of people who bring discernment and care to what they do each day.

As the school has grown, so too has the complexity of the work. Supporting students requires close collaboration between teachers, support staff and leaders. Communication with families has become increasingly important. Planning for future growth requires us to consider workforce needs, succession planning and organisational capacity.

Throughout 2025, considerable effort was directed towards ensuring the school remained well positioned to meet these demands. Leadership structures continued to evolve, responsibilities were clarified and planning progressed for future staffing needs.

Professional learning continued throughout the year, with teachers and support staff participating in learning related to curriculum, wellbeing, child safety and professional practice. Staff also continued to contribute to the reflective culture that remains an important part of Steiner education.

While organisational structures matter, the strength of a school is ultimately found in the quality of the people within it. Across classrooms, offices, workshops and outdoor spaces, staff brought expertise and commitment to their work.

Many of the contributions that shape a school are rarely visible beyond the people directly involved. A teacher preparing lessons after hours. A support staff member helping a student navigate a difficult day. Grounds staff preparing the campus before students arrive. Administration teams assisting families and supporting the daily operation of the school. Taken individually, these moments may seem small. Together, they form the foundation of school life.

The school remains deeply grateful for the contribution of every staff member and for the care they bring to the community each day.



Stewardship and growth

Throughout 2025, significant work was undertaken to ensure the school remains well placed to meet the needs of future students and families.

The most visible example of this was the commencement of construction on Wattle House. As the building began to take shape, students and families were able to see years of planning becoming a reality. Once completed, Wattle House will provide new learning spaces, covered outdoor areas and a central home for administration and leadership.

Work also continued on the school's next Strategic Direction. More than 165 members of the school community contributed through consultation and feedback, helping to identify priorities for the years ahead. The process provided an opportunity to reflect on the school's strengths, consider emerging challenges and discuss what future success might look like.

Planning for future growth extended beyond buildings and strategy documents. Consideration was also given to enrolment trends, workforce needs and the changing expectations of families. Like many independent schools, Samford Valley Steiner School operates within a rapidly changing environment. Responding to these changes requires thoughtful decision-making and a willingness to adapt while remaining grounded in the school's purpose.

Throughout the year, the Board and leadership team worked closely together to balance immediate needs with longer-term priorities. This included oversight of major projects and financial planning.

The practical demands of a growing school were also evident throughout the year. Early Childhood demand remained strong, while increased movement in other parts of the school reflected the pressures many families were experiencing, including financial strain, learning support needs and changing personal circumstances.

In response, the school worked to understand why families stay, why some leave and how prospective families come to know the school. This included closer analysis of enrolment trends, regular family feedback, consideration of class sizes and support structures, and more targeted enrolment communication.

Planning for the physical environment also continued. The school was successful in securing Block Grant Authority funding to update the Master Plan. This work will build on previous planning while considering future enrolment patterns, refurbishment priorities, infrastructure needs, playgrounds and shade, sustainability initiatives and the ongoing stewardship of the bushland environment that forms such an important part of the school.



Financial stewardship

The audited financial statements show that the school maintained a stable financial position throughout 2025 while continuing to invest in facilities, staffing and the resources required to support future growth.

Total revenue increased to \$14.17 million during the year, with the school recording an operating surplus of \$1.10 million. Cash and cash equivalents stood at \$1.09 million as at 31 December 2025.

A significant focus during the year was the commencement of construction on Wattle House. As a result, borrowings increased to support the project and the Board maintained close oversight of liquidity, debt levels and long-term financial sustainability throughout the construction period.

Employee expenses remained the school's largest area of expenditure, reflecting the central role of teachers and support staff in delivering the educational program. During the year, the school continued to invest in teaching, learning enrichment and student wellbeing while also managing the Enterprise Agreement process and preparing for future staffing growth.

Financial stewardship at Samford Valley Steiner School extends beyond annual budgets and financial results. It requires balancing immediate needs with longer-term priorities, ensuring that today's students are well supported while also planning responsibly for future generations.

As the school moves into 2026, key areas of focus include enrolment stabilisation, cost management and continued investment in learning enrichment capability. These priorities will sit alongside completion of Wattle House and ongoing planning for the next phase of the school's development.

Detailed financial information is provided in the accompanying audited financial statements.



Student outcomes

Many of the qualities families value most in a Steiner education emerge gradually and reveal themselves over time. Nevertheless, student outcomes provide one important lens through which to understand the impact of the school's work.

Attendance

Student attendance remained consistent with previous years and reflects the ongoing engagement of students and families in school life.

Senior Secondary Outcomes

Students in Classes 11 and 12 completed the New Zealand Certificate of Steiner Education (NZCSE), an internationally recognised qualification that supports entry into tertiary study in Australia and overseas.

The 2025 graduating cohort continued the school's strong record of post-school pathways. Students pursued university study, vocational education, employment and other opportunities aligned with their interests and aspirations.

The school was pleased to maintain strong university entrance outcomes while continuing to offer a broad senior curriculum that includes academic study, practical learning, Outdoor Education, artistic work and independent research.

Beyond the Numbers

Senior Research Projects, work experience placements and community engagement opportunities continued to provide students with opportunities to apply their learning in real-world settings.

Looking ahead

By the end of 2025, the school was working from a steadier base. Leaders had clearer ways to plan and follow through, support systems were becoming more consistent, and the school had a more accurate picture of the pressures that come with growth. In 2026, the endorsed Strategic Direction will guide the next stage of work across educational quality, sustainability, parent engagement, wellbeing, staffing, enrolment and the updated Master Plan.

The year also highlighted areas that require continued attention, particularly student wellbeing, learning support systems, enrolment stability, workforce sustainability and clear, consistent communication across the community. These priorities will shape the next stage of the school's development, as Samford Steiner continues to hold together care for the individual child, confidence in the educational task and practical stewardship of the organisation.

→ Required annual reporting information

Based on 2025 data

Contextual information

School Sector:*

Independent

Year Levels Offered:

K-12

Co-educational or Single Sex: *

Independent

Characteristics of the Student Body:

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

As Total Enrolments:

Total enrolments included in the State Census were 516 students, with total enrolments of 549 including Early Childhood.

Workforce information

Staff Composition, Including Indigenous Staff:

117 staff members were employed across the School.
56 teaching staff and 61 non-teaching staff.
Total workforce equivalent of 85.7 FTE.
One Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff member was employed

Qualifications of Teachers and Standards:

Qualification	Standards
The School's teaching staff hold a range of qualifications, including Doctoral, Master's, Bachelor's, Diploma and Certificate qualifications. The School also employed a teacher under Queensland College of Teachers (QCT) Permission to Teach while they progressed towards full teacher registration.	All teachers uphold the professional standards of the Queensland College of Teachers (QCT) as a condition of maintaining their registration. Teachers actively engage in ongoing professional learning and demonstrate the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers across the three domains of Professional Knowledge, Professional Practice and Professional Engagement, encompassing the seven professional standards.

Funding information

School Income Broken Down by Funding Source ^{*1}

2025 School Revenue	
Commonwealth Recurrent Grants	6,117,878
State Recurrent Grants	1250895
Queensland State Govt ISQ Grants	575,244
Queensland State Govt Textbook Grant	34,712
Queensland State Govt Capital Grant	542,132
Queensland State Govt Independent Schools Grant	29,892
Tuition Fees	5,124,974
Outside School Hour Care Fees	359,411
Conference Revenue	0
Sale of Goods	38,543
Sundry	26,352
Donations	70,287
	14,170,320

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

Social climate

Parent, Teacher and Student Satisfaction with the School ^{*2}

Satisfaction Data:

Samford Valley Steiner School continued to maintain a stable workforce throughout 2025, with a strong focus on attracting, developing and retaining high-quality staff. As at the end of the reporting period, 46 staff members had more than five years of service, 17 staff members had more than ten years of service, and seven staff members had served the School for more than twenty years.

Student outcomes

Average student attendance rate (%) for the whole school: ^{*3}

Total number of students	Number of possible attendance days	Total number of days absent	Total attendance days
549	91,822	8,099	83,723

The average student attendance rate for the whole school in 2025 was 91.18%

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

³Australian Education Regulation 2013 s60 (1)(d)(i)

Average student attendance rate for each year level: *4

Year levels	Average attendance rate for each year level as a percentage in 2025
Prep	92.02
Year 1 Group	91.9
Year 2 Group	91.36
Year 3 Group	91.08
Year 4 Group	91.5
Year 5 Group	92.05
Year 6 Group	88.47
Year 7 Group	92.27
Year 8 Group	90.5
Year 9 Group	89.65
Year 10 Group	91.71
Year 11 Group	90.79
Year 12 Group	87.85

A description of how non-attendance is managed by the school: *5

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 9:30 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

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

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

NAPLAN results for Years 3, 5 and 7 and 9 in 2025 ^{*6}

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 Education Regulation 2013 s60 (1)(e)

Year 12 outcomes

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 ^{*7}

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 2025	
Number of students awarded a Senior Education Profile	11
Number of students awarded one or more Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualifications	1
Number of students who completed Level 3 NZCSE with University Entrance requirements and received a Selection Rank	9
Percentage of Year 12 students who are completing or completed a SAT or were awarded one or more of the following: NZCSE, VET qualification	91%
Percentage of Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) applicants receiving a tertiary offer	100%

Post-school destination information

- Bachelor of Law/Bachelor of Arts - Australian Catholic University (ACU)
- Bachelor of Outdoor Recreation/Bachelor of Education - University of Sunshine Coast (UniSC)
- Bachelor of Behavioural Science (Psychology) - Queensland University of Technology (QUT)
- Bachelor of Occupational Therapy - University of Southern Cross
- Bachelor of Musical Theatre - Brent Street Performing Arts

⁷Australian Education Regulation 2013 s60 (1)(h)(ii)