

# Waranara School

## 2023 Annual Report



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**The Waranara School Annual Report (2023) provides parents and the wider school community with information about school performance and policies as determined by the NSW Minister for Education.**

The Education Act 1990 (NSW) requires that the Waranara School Annual Report be publicly disclosed, published and made available online by 30 June 2024. This report is also available on the National Education Standards Authority (NESA) website. Hard copies are available from Waranara School.



We respect the living culture and heritage of First Nations Peoples. We will walk together with the First Peoples of Australia and New Zealand, acknowledging their stories and spiritualities, honouring their heritage and advocating for social justice for all.

**About Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand**

With the values of reconciliation, justice, zeal, audacity and the worth of each person at heart, Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand has for more than 150 years changed the lives of countless people and supported them to stay safe, strong, well and connected.

Good Shepherd was established to address the critical, contemporary issues facing women, girls and families. We work to advance equity and social justice, and to support our communities to thrive.

We listen to and walk alongside those with whom we work. We build partnerships that deliver holistic care and enduring impact. We focus on emerging needs and providing innovative, locally-tailored responses. Our services are complemented by research, advocacy and policy to address the underlying structural causes of injustice and inequality.

Everything we do is to ensure our vision that women, girls and families are safe, strong, well and connected. To ensure this vision for change is achieved, the people we work with remain at the centre of what we do.

**Cover artwork by Allana Taylor,  
Aboriginal Learning Support Assistant**

# Welcome message



**Stella  
Avramopoulos,  
CEO**

**Waranara, a Gadigal word meaning 'to seek,' embodies the school's approach to education and community. Through Good Shepherd's stewardship, Waranara has sought innovative paths, connections, and holistic support for its students.**

We have actively guided its growth from a Study Support program at our Rosemount Services, to a fully operational school established in 2015. The school has provided an alternative student-centred educational environment for young people, who would have otherwise disengaged from schooling.

Over the past eight years, approximately 400 young people and their families have been a part of the Waranara journey and have been positively impacted by the programs and service provided.

To ensure enhanced outcomes for every child and young person at Waranara, and to provide more opportunities for students to thrive, Good Shepherd is proud to announce the transition of the school to Mackillop Family Services.

We are confident that Mackillop's educational expertise, learning partnerships, and commitment to equity and access to learning in their schools, provides a seamless continuation of Waranara's mission. We are looking forward to our continued partnership with Mackillop in the coming years, that will leverage our collective and complementary skills and services.

Good Shepherd continues to seek and form strong partnerships with sector allies who possess specialist expertise. We are deeply proud of all that the Waranara team has achieved for its students and community over the past eight years of operation, and look forward to seeing it go from strength to strength under the stewardship of Mackillop Family Services.

We wish Waranara's young people and their families every success in the future.



**Rachael Peet,  
Principal**

**2023 has been our most academically successful year at Waranara School. For the first time in our history we have had all bar 1 HSC students receiving a band 2 or higher for their HSC final Mark.**

For the first time in our history we have had the highest percentage of students at 46% receiving a band 4 or higher in their HSC final Mark. For the First time in our history we had 3 students receive all band 4 and 5's for every subject for their HSC.

For our year 10's we have had the highest number of C Grade or above for all compulsory RoSA subjects than ever before in our history, with 73% of students receiving a Grade C or above. These are fantastic results and demonstrate the dedication of our staff and hard work of our students. We have now created a school that has real academic rigour and has developed a curriculum that differentiates and supports students to access learning and subject content and enables them to then thrive and achieve great results.

This year we implemented the Flourish program. This program was used for students to rate their own wellbeing in 6 different domains. It then opened up a platform for wellbeing staff to discuss the students' different domains and for the students to access an array of different resources to support them in the various wellbeing domains. This has been a really useful tool for students and for staff to support the wellbeing of our students.

We implemented more rigorous literacy testing of our students to then enable us to provide specific adjustments in the classroom and, for those with higher needs, specific one on one literacy intervention programs.

I would like to thank the Waranara Staff, students, volunteers, parents and carers and the community for their continued hard work and support of the school and it's students. It is a team effort that ensures that we are continuing to make Waranara a unique, supportive and caring school.

# About the school



Waranara School is characterised by its personalised teaching and learning support.



**At Waranara School we believe all young people have a right to access educational opportunities that positively respond to their individual life circumstances and personal attributes.**

**Our school supports young people, particularly those experiencing trauma or mental health challenges, to re-engage in education.**

### **Context**

Waranara School is an Accredited Special Assistance secondary school (Year 9 to Year 12) based in Marrickville, NSW.

Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand opened Waranara School, formerly known as The Waranara Centre, in February 2015. Initially catering to Years 9 and 10, the school now includes a senior campus for Years 11 and 12.

Waranara School assists students to achieve the Record of School Achievement (RoSA), Higher School Certificate (HSC) and pursue careers through access to work experience, vocational courses and certificate courses at TAFE.

In particular, we assist young people experiencing anxiety or mental health challenges to stay connected to their education. Since educational outcomes are intrinsically linked to wellbeing, Waranara offers support to students across different aspects of their life. This includes individual teaching and learning support and specialised wellbeing support.

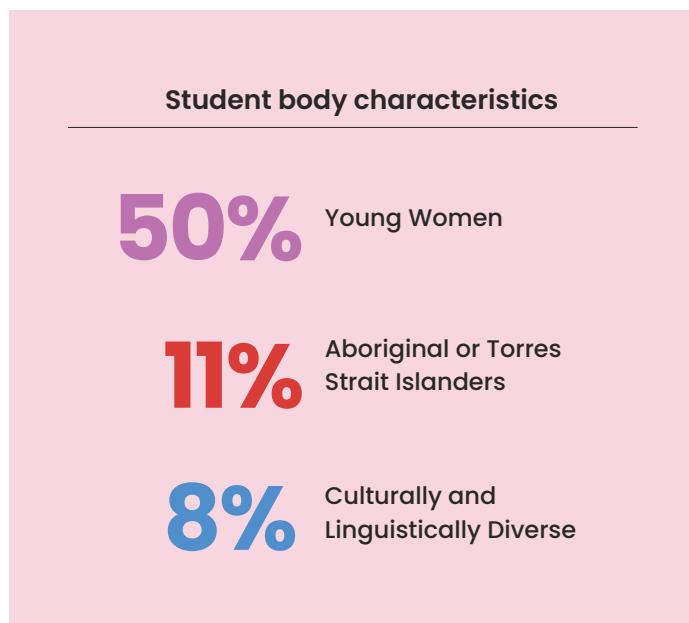
Waranara School is characterised by its personalised teaching and learning support. Young people benefit from small class sizes and a strengths-based, trauma-informed approach. Teachers work closely with students to identify their unique characteristics and skills and develop learning strategies based on these strengths.

Our staff work alongside parents/carers, caseworkers, psychiatrists and psychologists to support students in addressing issues that may affect their education or wellbeing. Our students and their families also have the opportunity to access other Good Shepherd programs and services. This includes counselling services and ParentWise, a parenting program for parents and carers of adolescents.

### **Characteristics of the student body**

In 2023, 77 students were enrolled over the year, with 57-60 students being enrolled at any one time. Students transition out of Waranara School when they feel ready to move to a different educational setting.

Some students stay a number of years at Waranara while others return to their previous school or another educational setting after reaching their goals in a much shorter time. Across the year the total student enrolment consisted of:



# Philosophy



Waranara School believes all young people have the right to access education in an environment that responds to their personal needs and circumstances. Its educational philosophy is underpinned by six key principles.



## Holistic support

Students receive “wrap-around” support services to help them increase their wellbeing and engage with education.

## Student collaboration

The school encourages students to identify goals and develop tailored, practical learning strategies in collaboration with their teachers. This empowers students to become the change-makers in their own lives.

## “One person is as important as the whole world”

The school offers students tailored learning and wellbeing support based on their unique needs and circumstances.

## Positive connections

Teachers and staff focus on developing strong, positive relationships with young people so they can become more comfortable, confident and responsive to the education and wellbeing support provided to them.

## Social justice

Waranara school supports young people experiencing mental illness or significant life challenges to re-engage in education through specialised education and wellbeing support.

## Strengths-based development

Waranara School is characterised by its strengths-based, student-centred approach. Teachers and staff work closely with students to identify and build on their strengths, inside and outside the classroom.

Each year, the Matana Foundation for Young People supports Waranara School with a \$50,000 grant, which supports the Transition Support Coordinator role. This enables the school to support students for two years as they transition out of Waranara to higher education or the workforce.

Along with government funding, this generous grant ensures the continuity of Waranara School.



# Academic outcomes



We believe all young people have the right to access education in an environment that responds to their personal needs and circumstances.





**The school offers the NSW Education Standards Authority's curriculum for Stage 5 (Years 9 and 10) and Stage 6 (Years 11 and 12), assisting students to achieve a Year 10 Record of School Achievement (RoSA) and HSC.**

### NAPLAN

Year 9 students participated in NAPLAN in 2023. For results, follow the link: [myschool.edu.au/school/51460/naplan/results](https://myschool.edu.au/school/51460/naplan/results)

### Higher School Certificate

We also offer students the opportunity to work towards the HSC through a "compressed" model. Over a two-year period, students study three subjects per year from a choice of six subjects, covering both preliminary courses and the HSC course in each subject in a 12-month period.

### 2023 HSC outcomes

In 2023, 27 students sat for the NSW HSC in six courses offered at Waranara School. In total, 24 per cent of our students achieved Bands 1-2 (40-59 marks), with 76 per cent of all students being placed in Bands 3-6 (60-100 marks).

13 students completed the required course load to complete their HSC in 2023. No students completed a vocational course through NSW TAFE.

Subject	Year	No. of Students	Bands 3-6 (60-100)	Bands 1-2 (40-59)
Studies of Religion	2023	8	5 (62%) Statewide (95%)	3 (38%) Statewide (5%)
	2021	15	15 (100%) Statewide (90%)	0 Statewide (10%)
	2019	14	9 (65%) Statewide (93%)	5 (35%) Statewide (7%)
English Studies	2023	5	5 (100%) Statewide (20%)	0 (0%) Statewide (80%)
	2022	12	8 (66%) Statewide (18%)	4 (34%) Statewide (82%)
	2021	9	5 (55%) Statewide (22%)	4 (45%) Statewide (78%)
Community & Family Studies	2023	13	8 (62%) Statewide (91%)	5 (38%) Statewide (9%)
	2021	10	9 (90%) Statewide (92%)	1 (10%) Statewide (8%)
	2019	11	5 (46%) Statewide (88%)	6 (54%) Statewide (12%)
Investigating Science	2023	12	10 (83%) Statewide (90%)	2 (17%) Statewide (10%)
	2021	12	12 (100%) Statewide (91%)	0 Statewide (9%)
Society & Culture	2023	8	7 (88%) Statewide (95%)	1 (12%) Statewide (5%)
	2020	10	7 (70%) Statewide (94%)	3 (30%) Statewide (6%)
Sport, Lifestyle & Recreation*	2023	16	N/A	N/A
	2021	11	N/A	N/A
	2019	7	N/A	N/A

\* Sport, Lifestyle & Recreation does not involve an HSC band ranking

# Staff profile



We place a high value on the ongoing professional learning and development of our staff.



In 2023, Waranara School employed five full-time teachers. These positions were permanent and supported by:

- One full-time Principal (teaching)
- One full time Deputy Principal (teaching)
- Two full time Student Wellbeing Advisors
- One part-time Learning Support Assistant
- Two full-time Learning Support Assistants
- One part-time Administrator
- One part-time Transition Support Worker
- One full-time Aboriginal Learning Support Assistant

Qualification category	Teachers (no.)
(i) Teachers who have teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI- NOOSR) guidelines.	7
(ii) Teachers who have qualifications as a graduate from a higher education institution within Australia or one recognised within the AEI-NOOSR guidelines but lack formal teacher education qualifications.	0
Teachers who do not have qualifications as described in (i) or (ii) but have relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate knowledge relevant to the teaching context.	0

Level of teacher accreditation	Teachers (no.)
Conditional	0
Provisional	0
Proficient teacher	7
Highly Accomplished teacher (voluntary accreditation)	0
Lead teacher (voluntary accreditation)	0

## Workforce composition

In 2023, Waranara School comprised 15 staff who worked closely with one another to support young people's education and wellbeing.

Our school was also fortunate to have the assistance of volunteer tutors recruited through The Centre for Volunteering, Sydney. In 2023, 1 tutor volunteered once a week to support students with their studies on a regular basis. 4 volunteers assisted students with Disability Adjustments in HSC exams.

One staff member of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background was employed on a full time basis.

## 2023 Workforce composition

Staff	Number (FTE)
Principal	1
Deputy Principal	1
Teachers	5
Student Wellbeing Advisors	2
Learning Support Assistants	2
Administrator	0.6
Transition Support Coordinator	.8
Aboriginal Learning Support Assistant	1
Learning Support Assistant	.8



Maral Deukmedjian and George Voulgaropoulos, Student Wellbeing Advisors

# Attendance



In many instances, students join Waranara School following long periods of absence at their previous school.

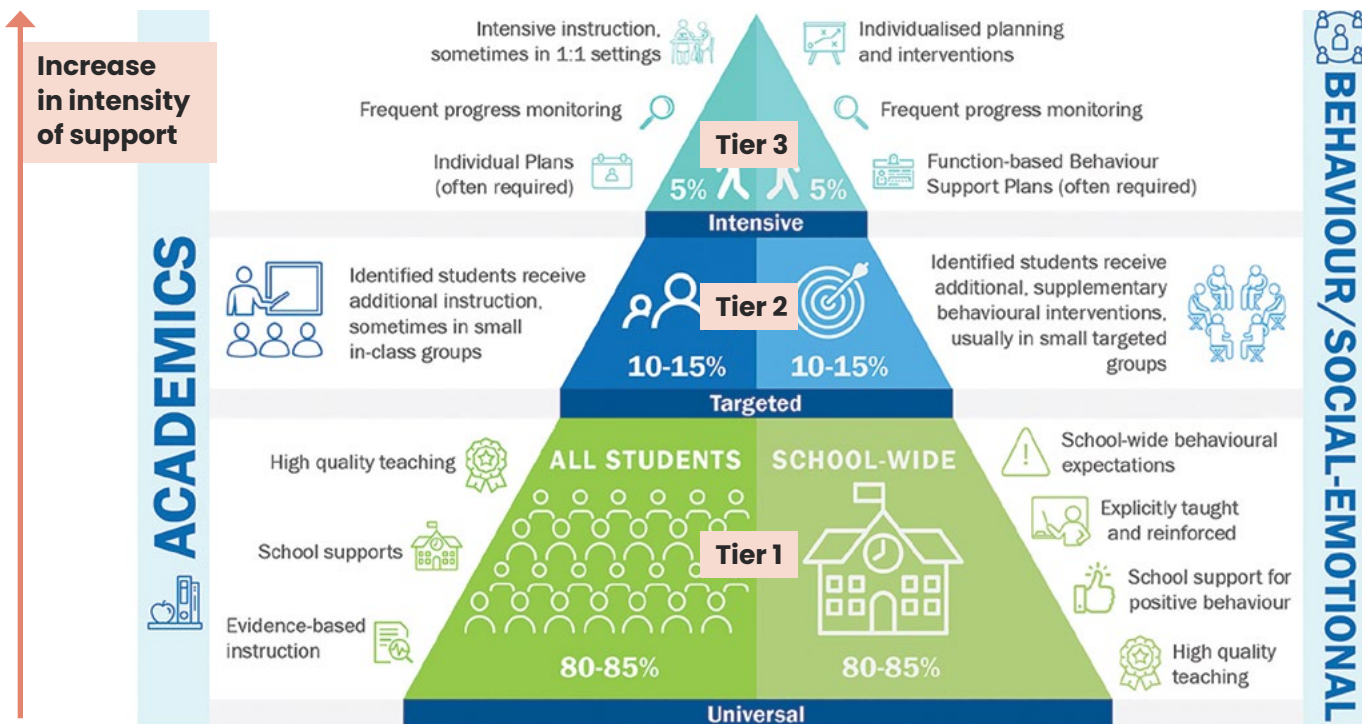


Most students are referred to the school due to ongoing school refusal often caused by poor mental health or other issues such as bullying, family problems and complex trauma. School attendance is viewed as fundamental for improved educational outcomes. Our staff work closely with students and their support networks to develop strategies that assist them to improve and maintain their attendance.

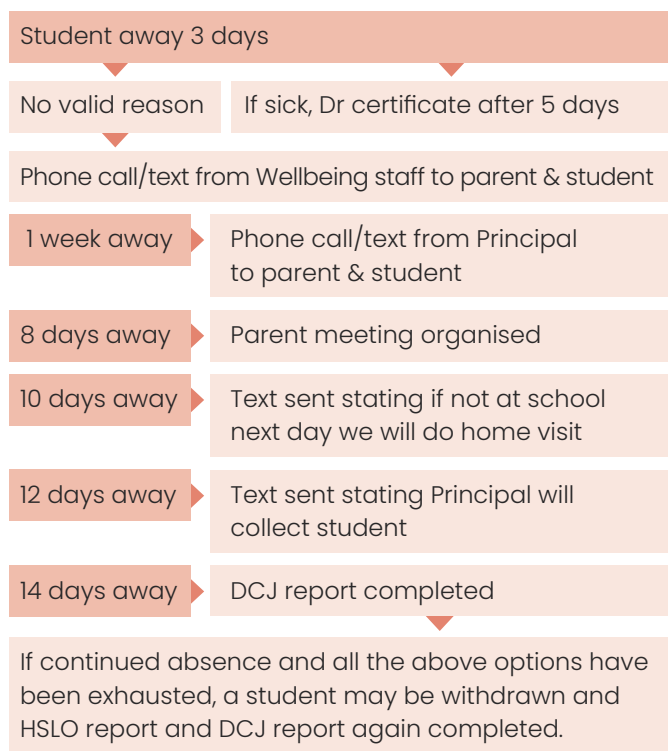
### Managing non-attendance

Every fortnight the two student wellbeing advisors, Principal and Deputy Principal meet and use the Multi Tiered System of Support (MTSS) to monitor school attendance (see flowchart below).

### Multi Tiered System of Support (MTSS)



### Waranara School Attendance flowchart:



### 2023 School attendance rates

Campus	Year group	2021	2022	2023
Junior campus	9	54%	72%	62%
	10	71%	63%	69%
Senior campus	HSC (Years 11 and 12)	71%	78%	73%
Overall school attendance rate (junior and senior campuses)		68%	72%	68%

# Retention



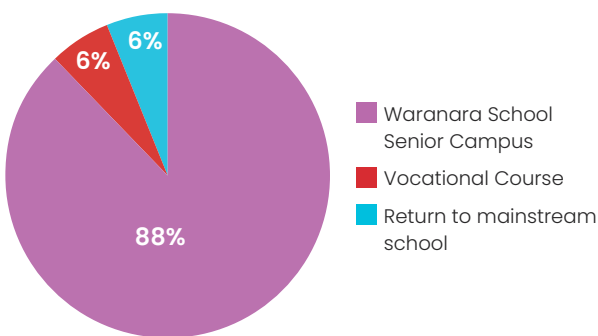
In 2023, 88% of students who completed Year 10 at Waranara School continued on to senior study at the school.



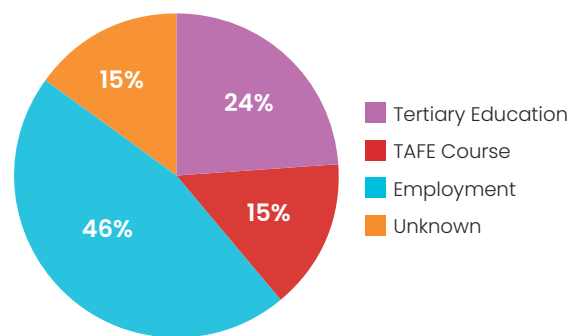
Four junior students and eleven senior students withdrew from Waranara School throughout the 2023 school year for various reasons, including returning to a mainstream educational setting or to pursue a vocation.

Of the 17 students who received their Year 10 RoSA in 2023, their post-school destinations were as follows. Of the 13 students who received their HSC, their destinations were as follows.

**Post-school destinations of Year 10 graduates**



**Post-school destinations of Year 12 graduates**



# School policies



Young people's holistic wellbeing is a key element of Waranara School's educational philosophy.



The following school policies are publicly available on the school's website:  
[goodshep.org.au/services/waranara-school](https://goodshep.org.au/services/waranara-school)

Complaints grievances and  
dispute resolution policy

Enrolment policy

Attendance policy

Wellbeing policy

Student Conduct Process

Anti-Bullying Policy

Procedures for  
handling allegations

# Student satisfaction



Exiting students were surveyed in 2023 about their experience of Waranara School. Students were asked in a questionnaire, "Please describe how your life has changed since attending Waranara School."

Some responses were:

*"I have started going to school regularly. I am also a lot more open with my friends."*

*"I've become much more independent than when I first started. I'm very able to control aspects of my life such as using public transport, messaging friends, doing schoolwork, sleep schedule etc."*

*"My life has changed positively because I have a lot more self-confidence. It has also changed me academically."*

*"Given me time to grow. Due to this, I feel less socially awkward."*

*"My self confidence has increased. Not feeling uneasy in social situations".*

***"I have discovered my true self and I turn up to school on time every day. I have created connections with people and have come a long way in reading and writing."***

Students were also asked the question "Did you feel well supported with your schoolwork during your time at Waranara School?"

Below are some of their answers:

***"Everything has changed – I feel comfortable in who I am, I'm able to attend school and do well."***

*"All the teachers have really supported me while at Waranara, from helping me with classwork and assessments to just making sure I'm fine and also for pushing me so hard to complete my HSC, for which I am really grateful."*

***"Friendly, helpful environment."***

*"Always receiving adjustments I need, leniency around my attendance."*

*"I Feel mostly supported at school. It is really helpful with the smaller ratio of students in class which means the teachers can work more one on one with students. Having learning support in the classroom helps us feel even more supported."*

*"The teachers are always there to explain things, answer questions and help with whatever I needed."*



# Parent satisfaction



There are many informal opportunities for parents to engage with the Principal, teachers and staff, as well as regular parent/teacher evenings.

At the 2023 graduation ceremony, parents were asked to complete a survey. One question was "What are the school's greatest strengths?"

Below are some of the comments:

***"We appreciate everyone's wonderful care of our son. He comes home so happy and proud of himself when he does his work. He loves to secretly brag that he finishes before others and this is awesome. The change in how he feels about education comes down to the Waranara Team and his care and support on a daily basis. We are incredibly grateful."***

*"The overall architecture/framework set up to support kids first and foremost."*

*"Teachers who love figuring out what makes each kid tick."*

*"Small class sizes, supportive staff and great communication."*

*"Strong positive relationships between staff and students. Acknowledgement of positive steps and strong communication with parents."*

***"Flexible and student tailored attention, caring environment and relaxed atmosphere."***

*"Open communication with student and family. Staff persistence with students."*

*"The school's greatest strength is the staff. They are amazing! Their care, support and encouragement are exceptional."*

***"The culture of Waranara has saved my child's academic future from despair."***

# Teacher satisfaction



Waranara School is a safe, positive, supportive and collegial environment where issues can be raised and addressed professionally.

The Principal meets with each staff member fortnightly to discuss staff wellbeing and any staff concerns, as well

as to monitor their level of satisfaction. Staff turnover at Waranara School is low.

This year staff were surveyed to determine their level of satisfaction in their role. This included the question "What do you like best about working at Waranara School?"

Some of their answers were:

***"I have worked at Waranara for over 9 years. We work as a team to ensure that each student feels safe, heard and encouraged with their learning and sense of self. I am proud of what they achieve and their courage."***

*"Waranara is a place where we are trusted as teachers and our expertise is acknowledged and valued. We are encouraged to use our professional judgement to adapt the curriculum to suit the needs of the students and are supported to do that."*

***"Our wellbeing and happiness are seen as essential to the effective provision of support and high quality education to our young people."***

*"Waranara offers a unique place for young people to thrive, whether it's in learning or wellbeing. To continually nurture a young person's strengths and support their areas of growth from a trauma informed framework makes a lot of sense. Seeing everyone's efforts come to fruition especially on graduation day shows the power of learning with an alternative school."*

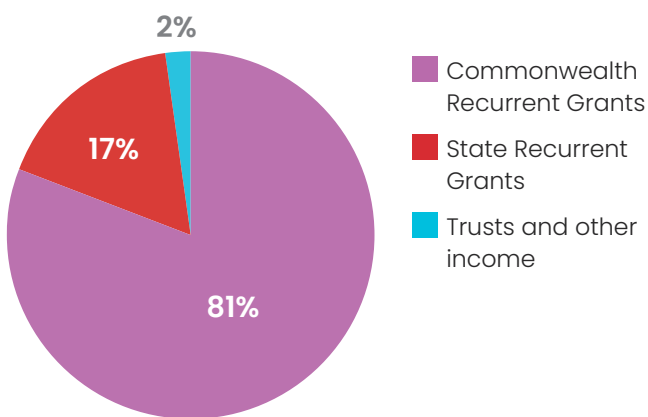
***"Waranara provides the most supportive and inclusive environment that assists students to thrive academically, emotionally and socially. It is a setting where I feel I can have a very positive impact on young people and help guide them through the start of their adult life."***

# Summary of financial information

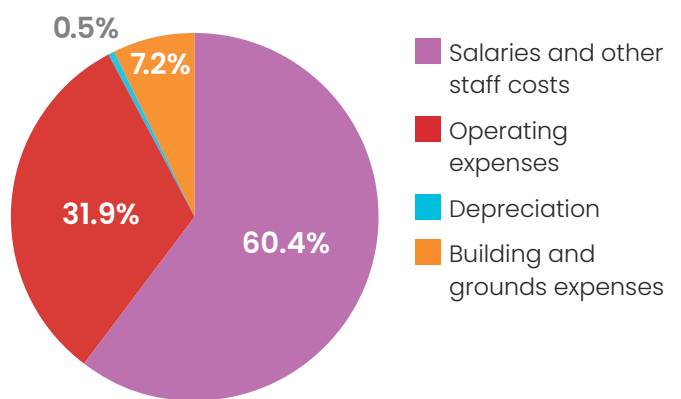


## Waranara School – Income and Expenses 2023

Waranara School – Income 2023



Waranara School – Expenses 2023



Aboriginal Studies Student's Artwork



**Waranara  
School**