



**SOPHIA MUNDI STEINER SCHOOL**  
Steiner Education and IB World School

# **Chronicle & Annual Report 2016**

# Principal's Report



We welcome you to Sophia Mundi Steiner School's Annual Report for 2016. Sophia Mundi continues in the core task of educating its students using the pedagogy of Dr Rudolf Steiner and the International Baccalaureate Organisation, preparing them to take their place in our modern world. Our vision is to educate individuals who can meet the future out of a sense of inner freedom and purpose.

We strive to create a community that equips young people for their engagement with the world and the challenges of this century. I believe we are on the way to achieving our vision for Sophia Mundi. The fruits of Steiner teachers' work are seen in our graduates. When you meet them, there is a "uniqueness; a confidence in who they are, they can look you in the eye with truth and impart a moral and ethical outlook to life that I have never experienced from other students". This message is repeated time and time again by those families who have engaged with Steiner graduates.

Together with the Board, I have worked to review, develop and implement the strategic directions from the School Improvement Plan (SIP) that will guide the organisation into the future.

Our focus during 2016 was on expanding our early childhood, festival development, diversifying our educational offering and ensuring our staff undertake relevant professional development opportunities.

2016 was a pivotal year for Sophia Mundi, particularly with our first IB Diploma 5-year review. We received numerous commendations, two recommendations and no matters to be addressed! This was an impressive endorsement of our School, the work of Ashley Dufty who co-ordinated the review and our IB teaching staff.

The SIP goals chosen by teaching staff and parents focused our work towards strengthening the cultural life through festivals and building the beautiful 'Heart Courtyard'. The mentoring and teacher appraisal programme was expanded, forming part of the annual teacher performance against Australian Institute for Teaching School Leadership (AITSL) standards. The mentoring overhaul was undertaken with Gerd Kellermann from Germany when Steiner Leaders from across Australia came to Sophia Mundi to participate. The Tobias Programme was also introduced to support students struggling to be in the classroom and to extend students creatively in innovative projects.

As a society, through the use of technology, we are exposed to inappropriate material. It is a concern for us all, particularly as it affects our children. We made significant changes to our mobile phone practice as a result of Parent College and focussed community discussions.

A heartfelt thank you to our community for your response to our Parent Survey. This feedback is vital to the communication links within our community. Our students continue to feel the love and care of a 'village'. This 'village' approach is what makes us unique, so thank you for your contributions and for striving to support all our families and students. The recent community survey reflected that you now have a greater appreciation for Sophia Mundi with 95.65% of the community actively promoting us as compared to 82.75% in 2012.

During 2016, Karen Pino-Leyton also joined our team. Karen leads Support Education across the School working in Literacy, Numeracy and Welfare. We thank Karen for her work in spearheading the Individual Educational Plan (IEP) roll out which is a focus of her role in 2017.

Ben Darby was appointed to the position of Head of Middle School in 2016, working as part of the Management Team. His presence has facilitated the smooth transition for our Primary families into Secondary School. With a clearer direction, we have experienced greater retention rates from Primary to Secondary. Ben has also introduced the Inspired Learning Programme and has been working with Behaviour Management across the upper Primary and Middle School. He was influential in the implementation of cultural change around mobile phone practices.

Our Class 10 Exchange Programme continued in 2016. The formal Memorandum's of Understanding (MOUs) we have with our sister Steiner schools, underpin the incredible opportunities for our



students. The experiences that this programme provides to our students develops their emotional resilience, which carries them out into the world. The relationships with their international hosts and counterparts can of course, be life-long.



*Student Exchange – Class 10 (absent Solomon Harvey)*

Artistic, academic and sporting excellence continues to flourish in the School's non-competitive environment. We have many students participating in Local, National and International arenas in their chosen field. Sophia Mundi students are free to explore their outside interests and over the past year have achieved outstanding achievements in Kayaking, Table Tennis, Skiing, Volleyball, Lacrosse, Canoe Polo, Judo, Dance, Circus, Gymnastics and Acting. In the above mentioned pursuits, our students have represented themselves (and the School) in International competitions and performed on the National and International stage.

Our students are also active in community and service pursuits. The service activities are often not celebrated in the same manner as sporting achievements but for us, these community connections are important. A few examples of experiences which students participate in as part of their School programmes and personal interest include; hospice care, Interact Arts, Collingwood Children's Farm, sports coaching, fund-raising for causes such as

Shave for a Cure and the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre and environmental issues. The students are inspiring and I hold the vision that we are in good hands in the future.

In 2016 we improved the operational facilities for educational staff. We now have staff social, academic and office spaces with appropriate facilities. A 5% pay increase was also given as we work towards parity with teachers in Victorian Government Schools. Preparations for the refurbishment and IT upgrade commenced and the Arts Wing was improved to meet the requirements of the Middle School Music Programme.

The Professional Development (PD) focus in 2016 was clearly targeted to the Music and IB Diploma programmes. Of the total PD budget 60% was spent on workshops provided by Independent Schools Victoria (ISV) with a focus on: Special Needs, School Governance and the review and development of the Music Programme. Music is central to the academic and soul development of our students, so I envisage a significant improvement in the standard and quality in the years to come. Further PD budget (11.8%) went towards upgrading the qualifications of our IB staff. Teachers attended the International Steiner/Waldorf Teachers Conference in Europe and others participated in Steiner Intensives for class teachers. All staff undergo annual First Aid training and updates (9.7%).

In conclusion, Sophia Mundi as an organisation is always growing and reflecting the needs of our students and community.

The Department of Education and Training also requires that the School meet (ever-changing) educational standards and accountabilities. We will continue to meet these requirements and prepare for future challenges. We will also continue to listen to our community, assess the needs of our students, work closely with teacher training centres and universities to provide the best possible education and meet your expectations as parents.

On behalf of the College of Teachers, I want to express appreciation and gratitude for the teachers' exceptional depth of understanding of Steiner Education and their commitment to furthering educational delivery in Steiner and IB education. Thank you to all the members of our community and particularly to the School Board, for what you bring to Sophia Mundi.

*Fiona Cock*  
PRINCIPAL



# Sophia Mundi Board of Directors' Report

In 2016, we have continued to strengthen the foundations of Sophia Mundi in many areas, as well as placing building blocks for the future. From the Board's perspective, this has been manifest in our governance responsibilities. Goal 2 of the School Improvement Plan is:

*The School is a stable and well-run institution, with clearly defined structures and mechanisms of communication to support all the children, teachers, parents/carers and administration, enabling them to excel in their capacities and to achieve expectations.*

We have started a major review of all School policies, dividing these into those managed by the Board of Directors and those managed by the Management Team. This work will continue through 2017. Policies must reflect current legal requirements, but must also be practical to implement and abide by, keep abreast of technological change, and most importantly, reflect our values and ethos.

This is a significant piece of work for all those concerned and is just one of the things that goes on behind the scenes of your children's days at School. There are over 30 policies; they cover a whole range of important areas, including anaphylaxis management, disputes, complaints, emergency and critical incident management, financial needs bursaries and academic honesty.

During 2016, the Board worked hard to understand and implement at a governance level the Child Safe Standards, which are an important Victorian initiative arising from the Victorian Government's Betrayal of Trust Inquiry in 2013. We are very supportive of the philosophy of care, integrity and transparency underpinning those standards, and will continue to work to integrate those standards, and the principles they represent, into our policies and ways of life at Sophia Mundi.

Our risk register has received a significant overhaul and is now a comprehensive documentary tool that is reviewed as a matter of course at each Board meeting. An effective risk management process, that works to effectively identify and communicate risk throughout the School, is fundamental to the Board's ability to ensure a resilient and healthy School.

The risk register covers every significant area of risk for the School, including such diverse matters as state and federal government funding, educational affordability, IT failure, poor teacher performance, playground management, and

reputation management. Over 40 key risks are identified and analysed. Each of the key risks is broken down into further detail. The causes and effects identified and the existing controls, consequence, likelihood and controls effectiveness assessed.

We have also received funding approval from the Independent Schools Victoria (ISV) Block Grant Authority for a government funding contribution towards the Sophia Mundi library refurbishment and mezzanine project. As well as the physical building works, the School will be investing in upgrading our IT infrastructure, including the speed and bandwidth of our internet connection to the outside world, moving from a school-hosted server to a cloud-based server, providing access to Office 365 and providing computers for senior students. This will also facilitate enhanced access to digital resources. Work has begun on this project.

Part of this work has been creating a simple structure and single location for all Board documents. During 2016, the Board Charter, the guiding document for all Board work, has been updated, and a short handbook for new Directors has been developed. We have also renovated our process for review of the workings of the Board and the Board Chair. We also now start each Board meeting with an activity to engage the heart and the hands (my request as Chair), which has so far included singing, drawing and designing mosaics.

At the end of 2016, the International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO) carried out their first 5-year review of our progress. These reviews provide an excellent opportunity to





critique our own work and to obtain external feedback. The School received a number of commendations, as well as two recommendations. The IBO did not identify any matters to be addressed. This was a huge endorsement for Sophia Mundi, the first Steiner School in the English speaking world to implement the IB Diploma.

The directors also tasked the management team to apply to register for International CRICOS status. This means that international students can then apply to attend Sophia Mundi. Allowing for the necessary preparation, and review and authorisation by the VRQA, we hope to have this in place before the end of 2017.

At the end of 2016, Board there was a changeover of directors.

Denise Hall resigned after serving on the Board since 2013. We thank Denise for her sterling work, particularly in the marketing domain, and we wish her and daughter, Ireland, well for their future journey. We also appointed Nicholas Conigrave and Darren Scotti as Directors. After several years as Chair, and in light of my increasing work commitments, I stepped down and the Board appointed Robin Power to take my place. Robin is devoted to the School, and in his humble, dedicated and extraordinarily effective way, has been responsible for many of the concrete achievements and improvements in the School in recent times. Some of these include; significant building projects, improvements in financial systems and reporting, IT, Grants, CRICOS and many others. We are

very fortunate to have him as Chair. On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank all of our wonderful teachers for their hard work every day to bring our children the wonders of the world and the soul, and our Principal and Management team for managing the School. I would like to thank the Teachers' Assistants, our Administrative team, all other staff members, volunteers and all those within the community who have contributed in some way to making our School what is it. I would also like to thank my Board colleagues and those who assist on our committees for their most generous contribution. Without this collective community effort, our School would not be able to do the work we do.

*Emrys Nekvapil*

OUTGOING CHAIR – SOPHIA MUNDI  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## Parent College

*"This is a gathering of Learners. In this gathering there is no high, no low, no smart, no ignorant, no special assembly, no grand discourse, no proper schooling required. There is no master, no disciple."*

*Inspired by Jalaluddin Muhammad Rumi*

Our community is an important dimension of Sophia Mundi. How do we nurture parents and support them in their tasks in parenting, and in the process, offer meaningful conversation and activities that are enriching? This was the context for forming the Parent College. It is a welcoming space for all parents and carers where we can listen and learn together, offering support and finding inspiration. It is a mix of information, discussion and practice, with a new topic each week. Different people are encouraged and supported in

hosting and leading the group. We use a process of exploring from different perspectives and allow everyone to contribute. We keep the discussion open.

If the Parents & Friends Association (PFA) is the busy, doing work in the life of the parent body, or the 'giving out' aspect of our engagement in the School, then the Parents' College is the 'taking in', receiving nourishment for the journey. If we as parents are cared for, then we can offer better care to the teachers and to our children.

Parent College commenced in Term 1, 2015 and links to all of our prior sessions are found on the School website.

This year, we meet on Tuesday mornings from 9:00 – 10:30am in the Cottage (Aftercare room).



All parents and carers are welcome. No prior attendance is necessary. And the best way to find out more is to come along!

*"The healthy social life is found, when in each individual the whole community finds its reflection, and when in the community, the virtue of each one is living."*

*Rudolf Steiner*

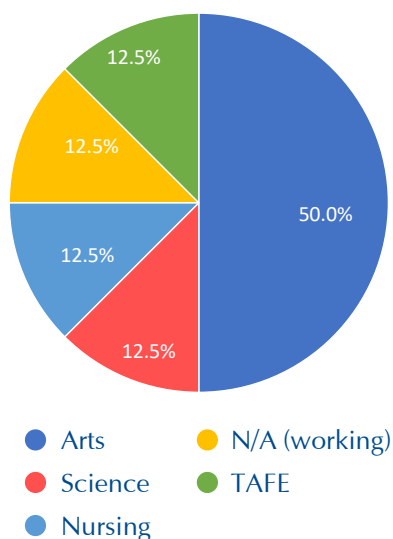
*Jennifer West*

ON BEHALF OF THE PARENT COLLEGE

# Graduating Class 2016



## 2016 IB GRADUATE: TERTIARY COURSE DISCIPLINE



The students of our graduating Class 2016 are to be congratulated on their outstanding success in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP). The Class of 2016 is the fourth cohort to graduate from Sophia Mundi under the Diploma Programme pathway. We were thrilled to be able to continue to offer a wide range of subjects, including online subjects (French *ab initio* and Mandarin *ab initio*) through Pamoja Education.

The Class of 2016 consisted of eight students, 60% of whom had been at Sophia Mundi since Prep and 25% joined the Class in Year 7. Of the Year 9 Class of 2013, 31% continued into Class 12.

The two-year IB Diploma Programme curriculum encompasses the study of six subjects together with the core components of CAS (Creativity, Action and Service), TOK (Theory of Knowledge) and EE (Extended Essay: a 4000 word academic research based essay). The aim of the challenging and rigorous Diploma Programme is to develop internationally minded



people who strive to display the IB Learner Profile outcomes of being inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced and reflective individuals.

Of the Class of 2016, five students achieved their Diploma, with an average score of 31 [out of 45]. Students who did not achieve their Diploma still earned certificates in at least half of their subjects. One student completed exams in May 2017 and is eagerly awaiting results, due in July. Two of the five students earning Diplomas received an ATAR over 90. In addition, one student originally from the Class of 2015, finished their exams in May 2016 and earned a final Diploma score of 42.

The Class of 2016 bested the world average in five subjects: Environmental Systems and

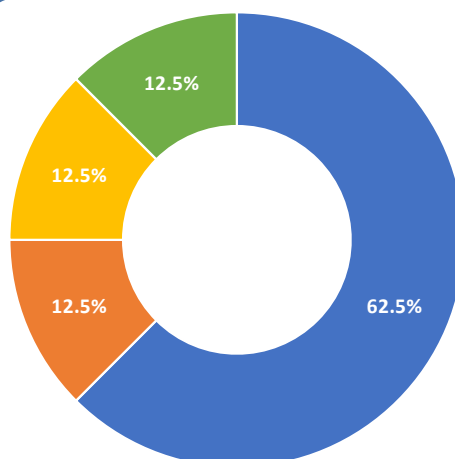
Societies (SL), History (SL), Biology (HL), Biology (SL), Physics (SL), Maths Studies (SL).

The cohort had several students receive early entrance offers to LaTrobe University with other offers coming in from Melbourne University and Holmesglen Institute of TAFE after results were issued. At least one member of the Class of 2016 has taken a gap year to work, while others have gone immediately into further study, working towards degrees in a range of areas, including Midwifery, Sports Development & Event Management, Arts and General Science. We are excited to see how each student decides to use their unique talents and achievements to benefit the local and global communities in the years to come.

*Ashley Duffy*

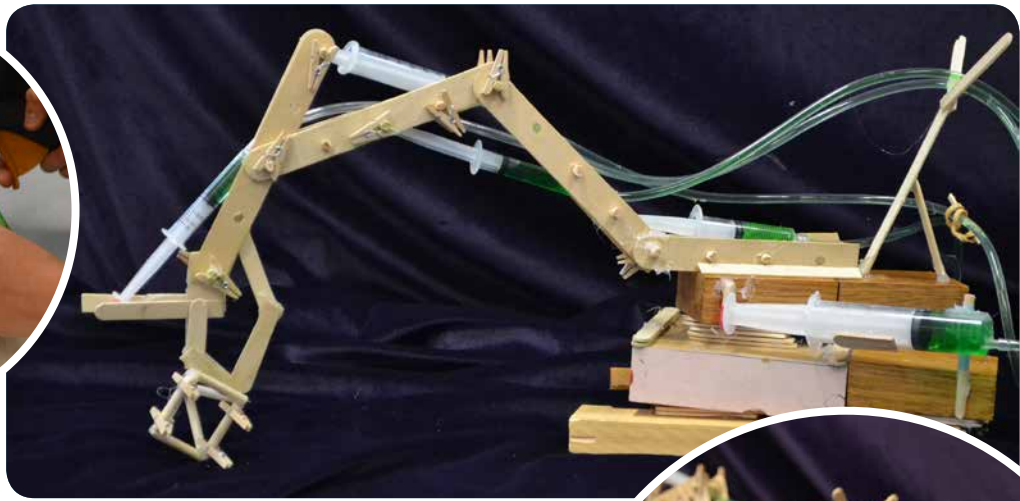
INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE  
DIPLOMA PROGRAM CO-ORDINATOR

## 2016 IB GRADUATE: TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS



- Melbourne University
- LaTrobe University
- N/A (working)
- Holmesglen Institute of TAFE





## Class 8 Science - Physics

### Hydraulics and Pneumatics

There are moments in a Teacher's life that are special. I had one recently in the Class 8 Physics Main Lesson on Hydraulics and Pneumatics (water and air). Two of the keenest students were asked to investigate making a working model of a hydraulic excavator using craft materials and syringes. There are YouTube videos available and I pointed the boys in this direction.

Next day each boy arrived with glue guns and boxes of sticks of all sorts ready for action. By the end of the session they already had a working arm. By the end of the following morning, they had a machine with a working claw and the ability to swivel. This was way more than expected. They tinkered with it for the rest of the week, ironing out the glitches. What an impressive little machine it became! A low budget version of a robotic arm.

I had thought I might guide the Class through a simple version of the arm expecting more or less interest from each group. As it turned out – everyone had a go operating it and appreciating the power of hydraulics in action. A great experience all-round.

Main Lessons are a feature of Steiner Education and part of the Steiner Curriculum. Main Lessons

are two hours long and go in depth into a particular topic for three or four weeks. They cover all the key learning areas, alternating a Humanities with a Math/ Science topic. They allow a Class to go deeply into a subject and engage more fully in its content, from a range of perspectives. In this case the students had time to construct their remarkable machine while keeping up with the book work and practical experiments that underpinned the topic. As a Class, we did 45 experiments in all.

Class 8 is part of the Middle School at Sophia Mundi. In the years between Classes 7 and 10, children naturally become sharper in their critical faculties and better able to take on abstract ideas and causal relationships. Sophia Mundi's Physics Curriculum is based on the curriculum set by Steiner Education Australia (SEA) and approved by the Federal Government. It is designed to introduce students to the world of science through observation. We study light, sound, electricity, magnetism, heat, air and water in a particular way. Students observe phenomena in action, in the natural world or laboratory experiments, and draw conclusions

from what they have observed. They help construct the rules and characteristics of Physics from their analysis of what they have observed, rather than starting from concepts in a text book that get reinforced by experiments. They create the text book themselves!

This phenomenological methodology informs all our Science subjects up to the end of Class 8 and provides a bedrock of experience from which to approach the increasingly abstract ideas and rules of later years. Students actively "do" Science, not just read about it. It makes the subject come alive for all and meets them at a level that suits their stage of development. By Class 9 they are fully ready to launch into the world of ideas in a more sophisticated way, having taken on the subject in this satisfying and deeply experiential way.

*Robert Stemp*  
MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER



## ICT in Sophia Mundi

most jobs in the near future? Are Steiner Schools in Australia inherently capable of meeting these needs?

Educational institutions the world over have faced this challenge, introducing computer lessons, online learning, laptops and tablets into schools in an ad hoc way, with very little teacher support and quality software, and the results have been generally mixed. In March 2016, top Australian school, the prestigious Sydney Grammar, banned laptops in class, warning that “technology “distracts” from old-school quality teaching”<sup>3</sup>. Steiner Schools have traditionally stayed away from the hype and I believe wisely held back from early introduction of digital technology, preferring “an ‘unplugged’ experience.... seen as crucial for children to develop an uncluttered self- image and the ability to develop rich communications skills.”<sup>4</sup>

The time has come to rethink the Steiner Curriculum for the 21st Century. For the last few years Steiner Education Australia (SEA) has been consulting Teachers and the Education Department towards developing a comprehensive Design and Technologies Curriculum which is currently being reviewed by Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA).

Steiner Schools are fortunate in that they have well tested moral and ethical organising principles

from which to introduce digital technologies into the classroom. In this new curriculum, Steiner outcomes converge with the ACARA outcomes in a systematic way, which preserve its philosophical underpinnings and embeds and contextualises digital learning.

In Steiner Schools, digital technologies have traditionally been the province of the Math and Science subject areas but one of the important changes in the new curriculum is that digital technologies are now to be developed across all subject areas. It recognises that digital technologies are a powerful tool but need to be imbedded in meaningful real life situations, relevant to the student’s experience and developmental stage.

Critical to the success of the new curriculum, sufficient digital literacy must also be developed within the teaching staff, who need to model appropriate and ethical use as well as confidence, flexibility and ability to develop new skills. The re-introduction of Edumate in 2015, a comprehensive web-based student learning and management system, has been a huge learning for most teachers but has helped them develop more confidence in digital technologies.

In 2016, the ICT curriculum consisted of:

- **Class 8** – DSLR photography workflow and digital image manipulation
- **Class 9** – Ergonomics, OSH and digital animation
- **Class 10** – Creating a blog, introduction to java script coding, Excel spreadsheet and

My current career trajectory is characterised by five to six jobs with a rapidly increasing need for computer literacy and ongoing retraining. This is nothing compared to the future your children will face. It is predicted that; “40 per cent of Australia’s workforce, more than five million people, could be replaced by automation within the next 10 to 20 years” and “most kids will have 13 different jobs in their lifetime”<sup>1</sup>.

This is a considerable challenge for educational institutions who have relied on traditional subject areas, classroom based learning and clear career paths. Out of 4.2 million jobs advertised between 2012 and 2015, researchers found that; “Demand for digital skills went up 212% over three years, while critical thinking increased 158%, creativity increased by 65% and presentation skills by 25%”<sup>2</sup>

Steiner Schools are exceptionally well placed to meet the challenges of such a fluid work environment, where the ‘soft skills’ of perseverance, creative thinking and teamwork are becoming increasingly as important as specific technical skills and knowledge. But what about digital literacy which will be at the heart of



‘cellular automaton’, password encryption, advanced internet searching, Wufoo (an online form builder) and Zapier for creating automated actions between business applications and services.

2017, will be another year of upskilling educators and further developing our courses to align with the new curriculum.

With these changes, I believe parents can have confidence in Sophia Mundi’s ability to provide their students with a

comprehensive, holistic education, and the ability to apply digital and design technologies effectively, creatively and ethically in an increasingly competitive and ‘casualised’ workforce.

*“To use modern technology with no knowledge of how things work or how they were made is like being a prisoner in a cell without windows through which one could at least look out into nature and to freedom.”<sup>5</sup> Rudolf Steiner*

Phil Jopson  
ICT MEDIA TEACHER  
AND EDUMATE TRAINER

- (1) *The New Work Mindset* (<http://www.ceda.com.au/research-and-policy/policy-priorities/workforce>)
- (2) *The New Basics* ([http://www.fya.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/The-New-Basics\\_Update\\_Web.pdf](http://www.fya.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/The-New-Basics_Update_Web.pdf))
- (3) *The Australian* (<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/education/computers-in-class-a-scandalous-waste-sydney-grammar-head/news-story/b6de07e63157c98db9974cedd6daa503>)
- (4) *Steiner Education Australia* (<https://www.steinereducation.edu.au/steiner-education/an-enriched-curriculum/technology/>)
- (5) *Rudolf Steiner* (<https://www.steinereducation.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/Journeys-through-Technology.pdf>)

## Is authenticity still ‘good value’?

Every day, as teachers, we make our way into the hearts and minds of the students we teach.

Sometimes it can seem that the only thing that we have left in common is our humanity itself. And this is as good a place as any to start: simply by being present.

At some point in the recent past, as new technologies repeatedly made our lives easier and less hassle, we stopped knowing each other in an authentic, present way. Instead, it appears that as technology has become more a part of our lives, we have become more distracted from really spending time with each other. In 2015, the average adult was already spending more time on their mobile device than they were asleep. Some days there just isn’t time to learn from our mistakes, and so we end up making the same mistakes time and time again and calling it part of life. The cure for this dis-ease of knowing ourselves

and each other is to become present again in our relationships and conversations.

When we take the time to truly listen to others, the surprising thing is that we learn something about ourselves! Suddenly the world stops spinning and we engage our senses in meeting and reading a real human being. Nothing is more important than learning what the other has to say – not time, not appointments, not bills, not phone-calls. Everything else can wait because in this moment I am seeing someone else with my own eyes, listening with my own ears, feeling with my own heart, indeed meeting them with my whole being. This is being authentic.

The most important thing we have to teach children today is how to meet others and still be themselves. There is no substitute

for authenticity. Being authentic is the place from which we can work together to make the world a better place. Where you can be you and I can be me. It is the first lesson in being truly present and it has a resounding moral purpose: with dignity and integrity we can cultivate trust. At Sophia Mundi, we do our best to be authentic human beings.

Benedict Darby  
HEAD OF MIDDLE SCHOOL



# Nature Playgroup

## Outdoor playgroup for three and four year olds

Sophia Mundi's Nature Playgroup came into being from a strong desire to connect young families with the Outdoors – giving young children the opportunity of unhurried time to explore and play in Nature. Parents and carers could also be outside too with little interruption. Everyone could enjoy being part of a Community, caring for a garden, planting and harvesting fruits and vegetables as well as some collaborative weeding. Children could come and go freely lending a hand before returning to their play.

The impetus for the Nature Playgroup came from a Bush Kinder program which has been running in Melbourne since 2011. Busk Kinder programs are inspired by the nature walks that young children regularly take in Scandinavia and the 'Forest Schools' movement in the United Kingdom.

Further inspirations came from the sobering statistics on the diminishing "outdoor" time of modern children. In a 2011

Planet Ark survey, 73% of respondents stated that they played outdoors [more often than indoors] when they were young compared to only 13% of their children today. The survey also found that 72% of respondents played outside every day when they were young; compared to only 35% of their children. One in 10 children today play outside once a week or less. Clearly a dramatic decline in time spent playing outdoors [compared to playing indoors].

At Sophia Mundi, we are very fortunate to care for a piece of land adjoining the Yarra River. This "bik" is the land of the local Wurrundjeri people. The soil is deep brown and full of fat earthworms. Birds wheel over us casting a pattern of shadows as they fly past. Willy wagtails flit from fence post to fence post. Ibis occasionally are sighted as we arrive at the garden. Sheep with their black faces watch us as they graze on lush grass.

On our walks we pass beehives and horses in the paddocks. Grandmother Oak tree embraces us with her low branches. The old Cork Oaks with their sun-soaked craggy bark invite our curiosity. The children climb the fallen tree who lives on despite her upturned



roots. The children ask me to tell them the story of the Crinkam Crankam tree.

At the beginning children were shy and some stayed close to their parents but now, two months on the children are freely exploring and playing in the garden. Getting stuck in the mud has been a favourite game. Once timid children are getting their hands into the soil, expressing wonder at finding a wriggly grub.

Our mornings have been blessed with sunshine but we are ready to embrace the rain or cold in our woollen layers and wet weather clothing. Cool weather winter greens have been planted, parsley, mizuna and Asian tat soi as well as garlic and peas. Being in Nature is a wonderful place for children to learn about the world, to explore and develop their sense of touch, movement and balance and of course the sense of life. Here we feel the gentle breeze on our cheeks, the fresh smell of sweet grass or rain soaked soil and the touch of wriggling worms in our hands. Here there is a deep sense of connection to the rhythms of the land knowing that we share this special place with the plants and the animals. It is their home too and Life is good.

Vicky Stock  
PLAYGROUP LEADER





# Parenting Perspectives

## The transition from a Steiner Teacher to a Steiner Parent



I've been a Steiner class teacher for the past 10 years. I've only been a parent for just over 1 year. It has so far been a fascinating recalibration process! People always said to me, "It's different when it's your own child. Teaching and parenting are two very different things. You'll see." Yes, I can now say they were right!

Although I had been working closely with children all day, it surprised me how little that experience prepared me for motherhood. I feel like I know a lot about children aged 7-14 but hardly anything about babies. I've been allowing myself to be guided by my intuition quite a bit over this past year and catching up on my reading to see what Rudolf Steiner said about the Early Years.

Over the years, I've given talks at Parent Nights on the importance of rhythm, on boundary-setting at home, on the importance of warmth, on Temperaments and on child development. I had never really been responsible for applying these ideas outside of the classroom until recently. Now with Raven, I am living them in a different way. I find myself questioning my own parenting advice on a daily basis!

About a month ago we went to Japan for a family holiday. While

we were away, Raven got sick and came down with a fever that lasted three days. We did not give him Panadol or do anything to reduce the fever; I just held him and fed him and we stayed in our

ryokan in the quiet. Sure enough, the day after he had recovered, he took his first steps! There was that developmental leap following sickness I had heard about and spoke about. I had seen it in my students but that was the first time I had witnessed it so intimately with my own child. "It's true! It's true! He was sick and now he's taken a developmental leap into toddlerhood!" I said to my husband.

Another noteworthy change is that issues I'd overheard class parents discuss over the years that weren't really relevant to me as a teacher are now suddenly 100% relevant. I often think to myself, "Ohhhhhh, that's what they meant!" For example; the vaccination debate is suddenly highly relevant and taking place in our own living room. Family sleeping arrangements, where to find tiny-sized wool socks and singlets, the importance

and challenge of incorporating etheric-strengthening rhythm into daily family life—these issues are now entirely relevant to me. This experience of being on the other side of the fence is engendering a lot of empathy. In just a few short years, I myself will be a Class parent!

This past year has been humbling and far more amazing than I could have imagined. I love my students, but I feel my heart has grown so much bigger since becoming a Mum. I wonder how my teaching will be changed once I come back to it as a Mum. Time will tell!

*Jill Casavecchia*

PLAYGROUP LEADER

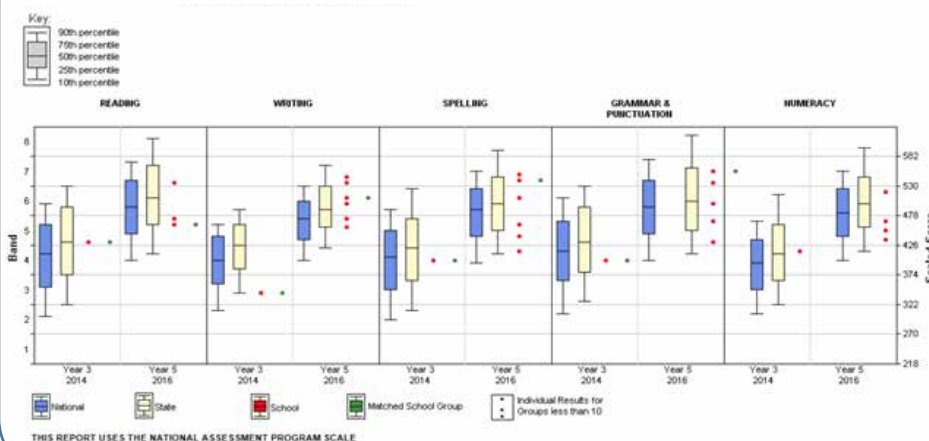
PAST SOPHIA MUNDI CLASS TEACHER



# NAPLAN – Student Learning Outcomes 2016

## SCHOOL COMPARISON REPORT

### NATIONAL ASSESSMENT PROGRAM – LITERACY AND NUMERACY TESTS 2016 YEAR 3 2014 TO YEAR 5 2016



The Sophia Mundi assessment process determines student performance and learning outcomes in a rich and broad curriculum designed to address the social, emotional, academic and artistic development of each individual student. Student progress in specific areas of numeracy, spelling and reading comprehension is assessed using information compiled from results of standardised tests which students complete in Semester Two at each year level from Class 3 to Class 10.

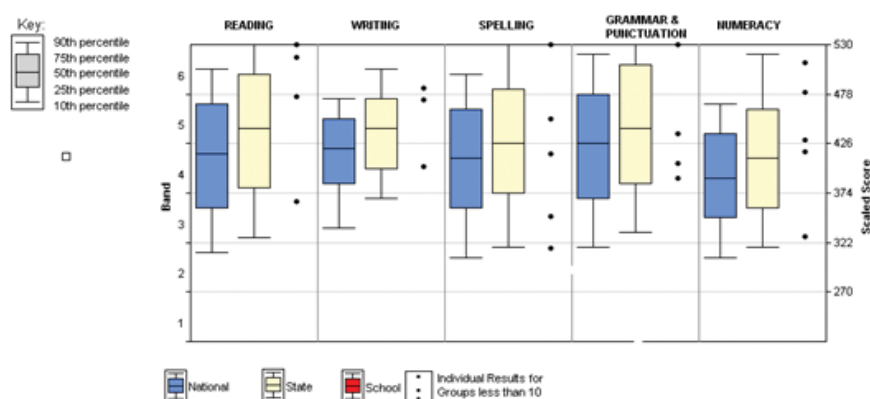
Relevant information from these tests and ongoing assessment of main lesson material, oral presentations, performances, class and individual projects, is regularly shared with our Support Education teachers and parents to maximize student learning outcomes in all domains. This ongoing assessment by Class and Specialist teachers using a variety of modes takes into account the multiple intelligences with which different students are endowed.

In 2016 a small cohort of students in Classes 3, 5, 7 and 9 participated in the National Assessment Program– Literacy and Numeracy tests. Student results were distributed to their parents at the end of Term 3. Class teachers and learning support staff noted their students' results as part of the ongoing assessment process in place at Sophia Mundi.

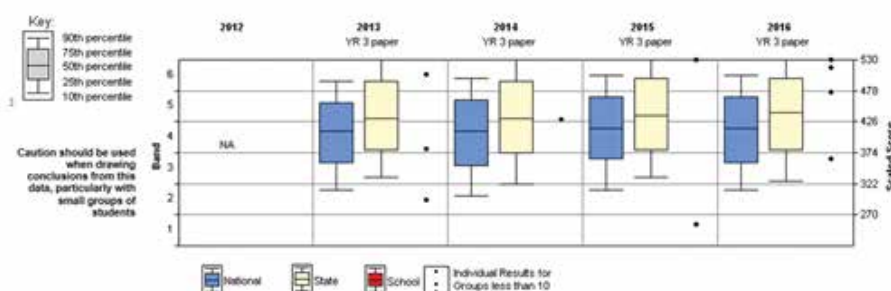
Since many parents at Sophia Mundi choose to withdraw their children from NAPLAN tests, insufficient data is produced from which to draw conclusive comparative results within the School, from class to class and from year to year. However, for those students who do participate, we provide the following reports:

## SOPHIA MUNDI STEINER SCHOOL

### NATIONAL ASSESSMENT PROGRAM LITERACY AND NUMERACY TESTS 2016 YEAR 3



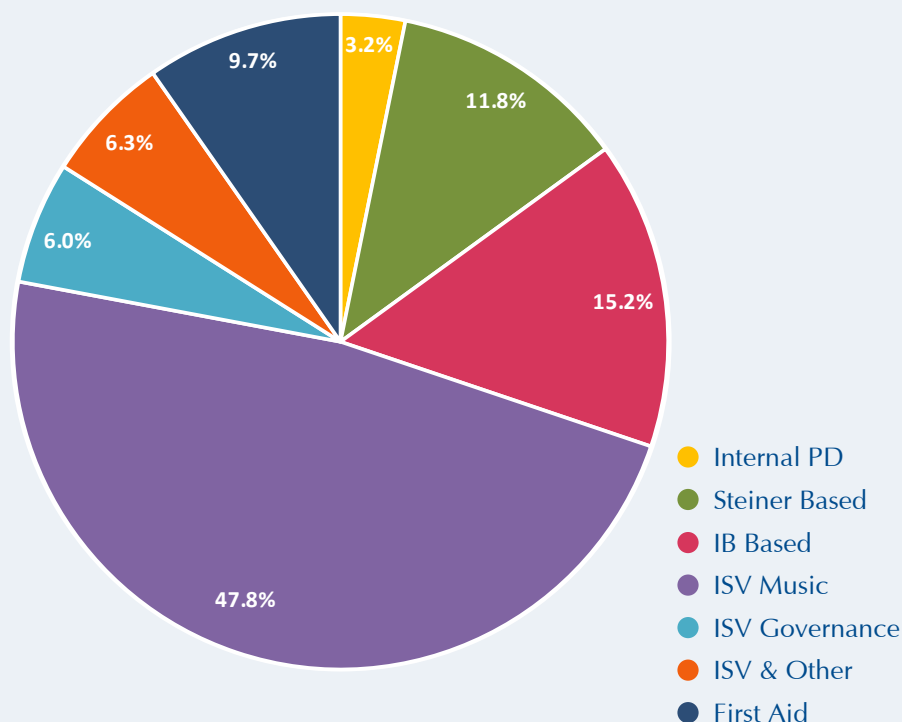
## FIVE YEAR TREND DATA REPORT (2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016)





## Professional Development Distribution

2016 STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EXPENSES AMOUNTED TO \$21,880 AND HAD THE FOLLOWING PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION



During 2016 a total of \$21,880 was spent on staff professional development. The pie chart above shows the percentage distribution.

The pie chart legends give a short description of the various types of Professional Development. The 47.8% relates to Independent Schools Victoria's (ISV's)

Southern Cross "Process and Performance Management (PPM) Workshop" attended by the Music Department for transitioning from Music Contractors onto Staff. The 6.0% relates to the ISV's two-day Governance Workshop attended by three Staff and three Directors of Sophia Mundi.

## Staff Retention

All Teachers	76%
Primary	80%
Secondary	71%
Music Tutors	80%

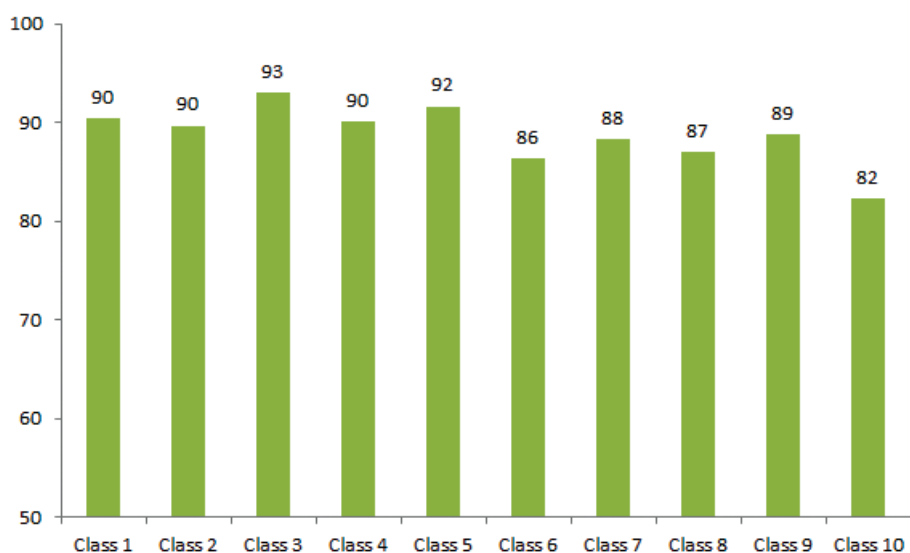
## Staff Attendance

In 2016 we had a staff attendance rate of 97%. In addition, two teaching staff were on leave for significant periods.

## Teaching Staff Qualifications

Qualification	Total
Doctor of Philosophy	1
Masters Qualifications	6
Master of Education	1
Eurythmy Qualifications	2
Bothmer Gymnastics	1
Steiner Education Qualifications	16
IB Certificates	19
Post Graduate Diploma	3
Graduate Diploma of Education	12
Graduate Diploma Outdoor/ Environmental Studies	1
Diploma of Education	11
Bachelor of Letters	1
Bachelor of Health, Science and Physical Education	1
Bachelor of Science	5
Bachelor of Arts	19
Bachelor of Education	7
Bachelor of Teaching	2
Bachelor of History	1
Bachelor of Law	1
Bachelor of Music	5
Bachelor of Visual Art / Fine Arts / Creative Arts Industries	6
Advanced Diplomas	8
Certificates	4

## 2016 STUDENT ATTENDANCE

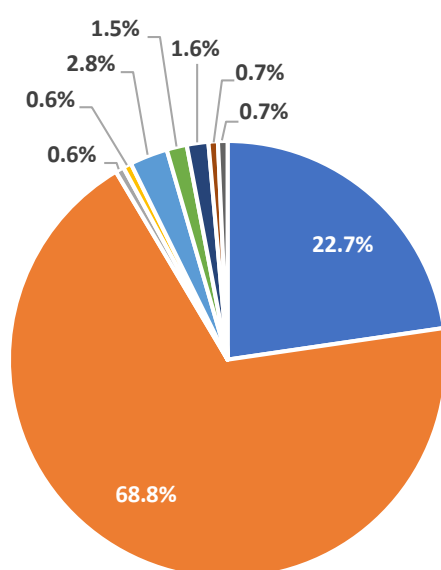


# 2016 Financial Report

During October 2015 the Board made the decision to increase fees for 2016, thus continuing the more transparent simpler fee system introduced in 2014. This fee system includes the easier 'combined composite' School fee figure for invoicing purposes. Although Sophia Mundi annually continues good control over its expenses, the increase in fees was necessary to fund the increase in; employment and related costs of Staff, occupancy costs to Abbotsford Convent Foundation, and Teaching and Class materials.

## 2016 INCOME SOURCES

EXPRESSED AS PERCENTAGES



- Government Grants
- Student Fees
- Fund-raising
- Donations
- Building Fund Donations
- Other Income
- Income from Trading Activities
- Government Capital Grant: Library
- Deficit

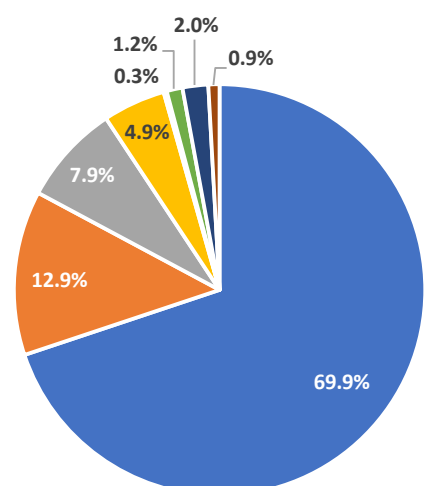
During 2016 enrolment numbers dropped suddenly during the third term to below the Board's target. This had a negative impact on student fees. Consequently, the budget was adjusting and the necessary savings were found without negatively affecting the quality of the School's educational offering. Nonetheless, the Audited Financial Statements indicate a deficit for 2016 of \$28,165 (2015: \$19,979).

The School's Building Fund donations amounted to 2.8% of the income (2015: 1.2%). The increase was due to a \$50,000 bequest to the Building Fund, which assisted with the School's Library refurbishment (completed at the start of 2017). We would like to thank those parents who generously continued to contribute towards Sophia Mundi's Building Fund. These contributions made it possible for Sophia Mundi to submit a Building Grant Application (BGA) to the Commonwealth Government for a Library refurbishment-including the construction of a mezzanine floor. These donations became Sophia Mundi's co-contribution necessary in securing the building grant during September 2016.

As our accounting Chart of Accounts is now fully aligned with The Department of Education and Training (DET)'s recommended Chart of Accounts for Non-Government Independent Schools, our reporting obligations to the DET has been simplified. This has meant that we have a new reporting category; Trading Activities. This category includes everything that is not related to the actual educational teaching process such

## 2016 EXPENSE CATEGORIES

EXPRESSED AS PERCENTAGES



- Employment
- Occupancy (inc. Depreciation)
- Educational Expenditures
- Discounts/ Bursaries
- Bad & Doubtful Debt
- Financial & Interest Expense
- Expenses of Trading Activities
- Capital Expenditure Library

as Aftercare, Playgroup, Canteen and student payables. Although we do not make a surplus on Trading Activities, they are a part of the very necessary fabric that constitutes Sophia Mundi.

The full audited financial statements are available on the Sophia Mundi website: [www.sophiamundi.vic.edu.au/community/school-structure-governance-and-strategic-plan/](http://www.sophiamundi.vic.edu.au/community/school-structure-governance-and-strategic-plan/)

John Bradshaw  
BUSINESS MANAGER

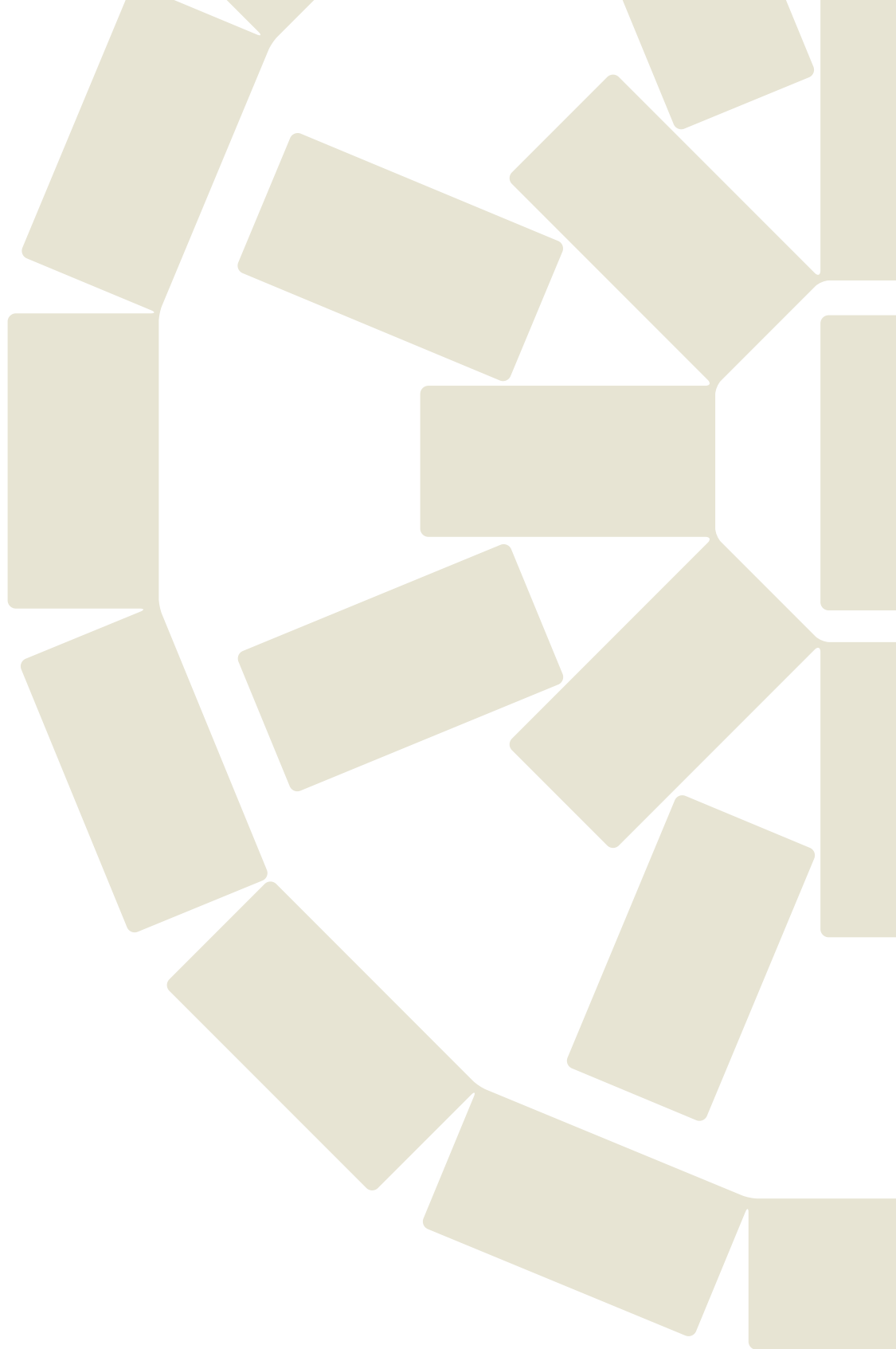


Our vision is to educate individuals who can meet the future out of a sense of inner freedom and purpose.

We draw inspiration from Rudolf Steiner:

*“What should be taught and cultivated...must be drawn solely from a knowledge of the growing human being and of individual capacities...The question should not be: What does a human being need to know and be able to do for the society that now exists? But rather: What capacities are latent in this human being, and what lies within, that can be developed? Then it will be possible to bring ever new forces into the society from the rising generations. The life of the social order will be what is made of it by a succession of fully developed human beings who take their place in the society. The rising generation should not be moulded into what the existing social order chooses to make of it.”*





**SOPHIA MUNDI Limited**

A.B.N. 44 006 411 016

St Marys, Abbotsford Convent

1 St Heliers Street, Abbotsford Victoria 3067 Australia

T 03 9419 9229 F 03 9419 0835 E [reception@sophiamundi.vic.edu.au](mailto:reception@sophiamundi.vic.edu.au)

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



June 2017