



**SOPHIA MUNDI STEINER SCHOOL**

Steiner Education and IB World School

# **Chronicle Supplement Annual Report 2019**

**Our Vision:**

Education towards freedom

**Our Mission:**

To be a living and contemporary embodiment of the spiritual, cultural, and educational impulse of anthroposophy that contributes towards social renewal in the world

**Our Values:**

Truth, courage and moral and ethical responsibility



# Principal's Report



Welcome to our 2019 Annual Report. Sophia Mundi Steiner School continues in the role of educating students- in particular, helping them to unlock their talents and goals.

Steiner Education continues to play an important role in the education landscape of the world with an ever-increasing number of schools across the globe.

Our Pedagogy encompasses the following values:

**Developmental** – we value the foundation that a healthy childhood gives to a successful life. We support the need for children to play, be part of Nature and enjoy a time free from the stresses of premature, commercial age compression. We also value the developmental picture of human consciousness, evolved through the ages of history;

**Balanced** – we provide a balanced education to every child fostering the development of clear thinking, rich emotions and a strong will. This is delivered through a high quality academic program, a flourishing creative and performing arts experience, and a practical training in traditional and contemporary technologies for every student;

**International** – along with the other 1,300 Steiner Schools around the world we promote an international understanding and tolerance of diversity;

**Compassionate** – we value an approach that fosters collaboration over competition as the basis for both individual achievement and community harmony: we strive to make every classroom a learning community;

*The beautiful land on which our School lives has a history stretching back to the beginning of the Dreaming. We are privileged to have the use and care for it now. I would like to acknowledge that our School is on the lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation, and pay my respects to elders both past and present. We are grateful for the legacies imbedded in the land. I acknowledge the contributions of Aboriginal Australians and non-Aboriginal Australians to the education of all people on this land and in this part of country.*

**Individual** – we value the uniqueness of each individual student, recognising that each is on a path of biographical development unfolding his, her or their sacred essence of Self;

**Sustainable** – as Dr Rudolf Steiner was a pioneer in sustainable agricultural practice in the early 20th Century, so too do we aim to continue this tradition through working in harmony with the forces of Nature in a creative and collaborative manner; and

**Mindful** – we value the expressions of the “wisdom of humanity” that have guided humanity through the great world religions and traditions and strive to find the appropriate expressions that will nourish and support students, teachers and parents in creative, contemporary ways in harmony with the works of Dr. Steiner.

It is our aim to be true to the spirit and intentions of the educational impulses and anthroposophical insights offered by Dr Steiner.

We are continually striving to provide and develop a curriculum and learning programme that is inspired by a deep understanding of human development; and embraces and reflects the universal values of freedom, equality, peace and democracy and values diversity and individual worth. All curriculum content and experiences offered to young people during their schooling are purposefully and consciously considered in light of how and when the activity or knowledge will

best support the child's natural development. Teachers at Sophia Mundi work to create a school where goodness, beauty and truth permeate the pedagogical, physical and social fabrics.

Steiner Education is holistic in nature and at Sophia Mundi we strive to develop equally the faculties of thinking, feeling and willing (head, heart and hands) within each child, so that strong foundations are laid for academic and social success and initiative and moral strength in adult life.

We seek to bring an integrated approach to knowledge. Subjects are interwoven into Main Lesson blocks which bring to the students a holistic view of the world and allow them to establish a balanced relationship to themselves, others and the world.

## STUDENT initiatives in 2019

**Primary:** tinkering tables (Design and Tech) during breaks, Garden Club, reading and chess in the Library and sporting/circus pursuits.

**Middle School:** meeting space in the ‘Maths room’, inspirations continued in Life Skills, Performing Arts activities, Debating Club, Justice Collective, purchases of computer hubs and the Library IT meeting space.

School-wide community participation saw us come together nationally with the Steiner Youth Conference celebrating 100 years of Steiner Education internationally and as a School in the Les Miserables musical production in November.

Once again the Class 10 students were inspired and courageous to step into the International Exchange programme. They attended Steiner Schools in Geneva, Paris and Avignon. Our School has also developed a new memorandum of understanding with Argentina.

### **TEACHER and Faculty Goals**

With the appointment of Peter Henderson as Teaching and Learning Coordinator, the focus for 2019 was clearly defined and mapped.

2019 was the year of accreditations with three out of our four governmental authorities. The Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) audit of Sophia Mundi; our Exchange programmes and the Education Departmental Review of Aftercare brought clarity, critical thinking and created an opportunity to reflect and review. The serendipity of these alignments was not lost as now, during the complex times we are facing in 2020, we are agile and responsive.

Although these reviews were a school-wide challenge, the good foundational work of 2018 meant we were well placed.

We successfully walked through the VRQA Curriculum; Child Safe Standards and our Exchange Programme Audit and continue to provide inclusive education. Sophia Mundi staff are well known for their incredible care, support and love for the children and students in their care.

In 2019 we recognised that there is still so much more we can do and at

times we can do no more. This led to a few families leaving the School.

At the end of 2019, Madonna Holmes re-imagined our Tobias Programme into what we now call FLARE (Focused Learning and Rotational Exercises).

This is an inclusive and vertically offered programme from Prep to Class 10.

Social Renewal is very important for the future and Sophia Mundi has an important contribution to make in this realm.

### **Professional Development foci:**

1. Teaching and Learning in Assessment and Reporting.
2. School Learning Management System (Edumate) overhaul in reporting.
3. Departmental analysis in the following key learning areas of:  
(a) Mathematical Pedagogy across the School; (b) Engagement and enrichment in dyscalculia; and (c) Visual Arts.  
  
The departmental work was facilitated by Independent Schools Victoria (ISV) through their Southern Cross programme.
4. Leadership – six staff and the chair of the Board of Directors (Kerry Laughton) participated in the year long ‘Complete Leader’. Sophia Mundi is focused on succession planning in a transparent and active manner as we face 20% of our experienced staff retiring in the next three years.
5. Indigenous relationships were again seeded with the Wurrundjeri Tribe as we learnt about songlines of the Yarra River and worked with the Yarra Keepers in the Clean Up Yarra Project.

6. Mental Health First Aid Training: During the term break we held a two day certification session that was initiated by Raquel McConnell.

7. Engagement and Enrichment: boat building, Individual Educational Plans, Tobias and welfare initiatives; Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships (RRRR) programme and Festival development.

### **PARENT: Community**

Conversations were held on IT, Social Technologies and the Human Being and Disabilities. Workshop offerings were in Early Childhood, Parenting, Leadership (Complete Leader), Governance and Steiner Education.

### **Child Safe Standards Report:**

Each year we focus on Safe Places, Safe Practices and Safe People.

We recognise that child safety is the concern and responsibility of every member of our school community. We also understand that we must all work together to create a culture of child safety in our school.

Sophia Mundi has woven the life skills and RRRR curricula across the School, and staff have been trained in mandatory reporting and disclosures.

We continue to monitor risks and work with local authorities in presentations and consultations.

As part of our reviews we have identified the need for further staff training in Mental Health, Disabilities, Restorative Conversations and Community Education.

Finally, thank you to my colleagues, the Board of Directors, Parents and guardians but most importantly, the Sophia Mundi students who bring laughter, tears and joy to the earth we live on.

I honour and learn so much from you all.

*Fiona Cock, PRINCIPAL*

# Sophia Mundi Board of Directors' Report



What and who are the Board of Directors, and what do we do here at Sophia Mundi? This is a question we often hear, from new as well as long-term community members. As a not-for-profit company, Sophia Mundi Ltd is governed by a Board of Directors who are responsible for our school's governance. The Board is accountable internally to the Sophia Mundi Members, to ensure the school's constitution and values are upheld; and externally, to various government regulatory bodies to ensure our school meets current corporate and educational requirements and remains financially viable and solvent.

Meeting external requirements is an essential component of school health, and we are proud of the school's collective achievements within two significant formal audits over 2019.

## **Victorian Registrations and Qualifications Authority**

**(VRQA) audit:** This year our school was subject to a 5-yearly VRQA audit to assure compliance with requirements to operate as a school in Victoria. This year's audit focused primarily on implementation of the new curriculum and of Child Safe Standards. The VRQA visited in

mid-July and their audit feedback was very positive, particularly around teaching and learning structures. The successful audit is a tribute to our Principal, school management, College and teachers in holding the School's day to day activities with responsibility and striving; and to their tremendous efforts as a team to successfully meet the requirements of external audit. Special mention to Fiona Cock for audit leadership and Peter Henderson for leading the curriculum review.

**School Aftercare audit:** The ACECQ Authority oversees a 3-yearly assessment and rating of Sophia Mundi's School Aftercare program. Sophia Mundi exceeded the national quality standard – the highest possible rating. The review findings were a delight to read, strongly affirming the quality, commitment, innovation and harmony of our School Aftercare program. Our warm thanks to Jude Walker, Aftercare Coordinator, as well as Volunteer Moritz Schon and Lila Mann, Aftercare Assistant for leading such a wonderfully engaging Aftercare Program.

Sophia Mundi's Student Exchange programme offered Class 10 students in 2019 the opportunity to live and attend schools in Geneva, Paris and Avignon. Our thanks to Tania Sarmas, Registrar, for assisting exchange students and their families throughout the programme.

The Board and Management are committed to delivering affordable inner-city Steiner schooling. Together, we endeavour to keep our fees reflective of the quality of education we provide and the actual running costs of the

School. Positive financial outcomes continued at Sophia Mundi over 2019, our third consecutive year of delivering an operating surplus and our second consecutive year of being debt-free. Similarly to 2018, we supported school affordability through a budgetary decision for no tuition fee increase. Sophia Mundi tuition fees have remained the same across 2018, 2019 and 2020 – a rare achievement in independent schooling. These financial outcomes provide good grounding for Sophia Mundi's ongoing sustainability.

Our school's financial health is supported by the composite of sound financial management and timely receipt of school fees. We thank our Principal, Management, and our school Business Manager, John Bradshaw, for sound budget oversight on a daily basis. We thank former Boards and Directors for their instrumental contributions to our current financial health.

One of the biggest contributing factors to our school's sustainability, is the commitment of parents in paying school fees, in full, and on time. Thank you to all our school parents that ensure our fees continue to reflect the true cost of your child's education, sharing costs evenly across all families at our school.

This helps us, as a community, to support and contribute to families that may need fee relief. We are now reminded of the importance of flexibility, understanding and individual responsibility within our shared community.

Each year, to reinforce and guide the Board's work, we conduct a community survey, to keep us in touch with the pulse and views of the Sophia Mundi community.

This year the school invested in an independent survey designed by Independent Schools Victoria (ISV). By using an external survey, we gained valuable insights and comparative benchmarks against similar independent Victorian schools. The ISV survey gave us a chance to hear the community's voice, from many perspectives – our students, our parents, our teachers and our governance. This has helped build a comprehensive picture of who we are, highlighting our strengths and giving direction for future planning to help inform and shape our school's culture.

This past year, the fruit provided through our survey has helped inform adaptations to our policies and supplied sustenance and nourishment to the seeds of a renewed and purposeful partnership with the school's leaders – our Future Pathways project to collaboratively imagine Sophia Mundi's desired long-term future.

In August 2019, we convened in our first Future Pathways workshop, attended by the Board, Management, College and other school leaders, and facilitated by Julia Wolfson. A goal of our August workshop was to review our past to gain clarity on Sophia Mundi's biography, identity and strengths. We were treated to the personal story of Sophia Mundi's legacy and history by some of the original founders and teachers. The day was profound, and I personally left the retreat feeling deep admiration and respect for the maverick, tenacious and moral character of Sophia Mundi's past, present and future leaders and community. I felt honoured to be part of the workshop conversations acknowledging the past and the seeding of the continued writing of Sophia Mundi's story.

The retreat reconfirmed what many of us know in our hearts, that a successful school requires the

commitment, dedication and hope of many individuals. Sophia Mundi holds a story of collaboration, steadfastness and community that holds it together as it grows through the full circle of shared uplifting and challenging experiences. Our collective love of our school and our collective capacity for adaptability and resilience are clear pillars of our strength.

We as a Board, would like to acknowledge all school community members of the past, the present and the future that have shared their joy, their sweat and their tears allowing the spirit of Sophia Mundi to shine and give its wisdom to the world.

So, who are we? Our Board currently consists of both community members and independent directors, together covering a mix of skills and expertise required for all aspects of school governance. As is standard practice on school boards, our board members give their time, knowledge and expertise voluntarily in service to Sophia Mundi.

Our current constellation of Board directors includes myself, Jennifer West (ex-Sophia Mundi Principal), Annette Batchelor, Matthew Hardie and Serina Mukerjee. (Go to [www.sophiamundi.vic.edu.au/community](http://www.sophiamundi.vic.edu.au/community) to view our profiles.)

Matthew and Serina joined us in May and October respectively. Matthew attended a Steiner School that was built on his family's biodynamic dairy farm in Goulburn Valley. He has a business and risk consulting background, and is currently Founder and Director of a premium organic raw food company, Manuko. Serina has two children attending Sophia Mundi, and has a background in accounting and business administration.

Both Serina and Matt have landed on their feet in the Board, with Serina now chairing the Finance and Audit Committee and Matt chairing the Risk Management Committee.

Over 2019, we farewelled Darren Scotti and Nicholas Conigrave, both Directors since 2016.

Darren approached his Director role with clarity, skill, warmth and dedication, and brought business acumen and expertise to his chairing of the Finance Committee. Darren has been missed. Nick brought to the Board table educational, management and human resource expertise, and was appreciated and enjoyed for his candour, wit and ability to deliver difficult messages in a way that could be well received – truly an art. Nick generously continues as an advisor on the Nominations, Remuneration and Succession Committee.

Overall, 2019 continued a stable period in the school's history with strong governance and financial outcomes, and an evolving eye to Sophia Mundi's future. The Board wishes to thank the College and teachers, Management, Principal, Members, and Board advisors (Carlo Lacota and Takis Joannidis) for their ongoing dedication and contributions to quality school governance and quality Steiner education at Sophia Mundi.

We thank the school community for the vibrancy of their engagement and volunteerism in the school; completing surveys, contributing to school meetings, donating to the Building Trust Fund, active engagement in school and classroom activities and providing support and encouragement to your children; all contributing towards a resilient, respectful and rich school community. Finally, my personal thanks to my fellow Board Directors over 2019, who rise to shared leadership with commitment, striving, collegiality and the best interests of Sophia Mundi in their hearts and minds.

*Kerry Laughton*

CHAIR, ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

# Naplan 2019 Report

Once again, in 2019 a small group of students undertook the NAPLAN testing Sophia Mundi. The test results therefore reflect the performance of a small cohort on the day of testing.



## FLARE Program 2020

After a little more than one term into the Focused Learning and Rotational Exercises (FLARE) program, I am delighted to present some reflections and observations from staff members that point toward this being a successful programme. Some of the feedback includes:

- Increased mixing of students across grades during play times;
- High levels of active participation of students across all classes except one;
- General mood of enthusiasm and positive energy around participating in the program;
- Social cohesion over a diverse age group;
- Reduction in fidgety, restless behaviour in the lower primary classes;
- Students have disclosed sensitive information to teachers they are walking with; and
- Students receiving small group or individual support are participating willingly and improving.

These results, and others, are the result of the extraordinary support of the Board and all staffmembers and has contributed a great sense of teamwork and collaboration amongst colleagues, which is both a tribute and a gift to Sophia Mundi.

Our in-school testing of student achievement is in line with these results and indicates that our efforts toward improving student outcomes, guided by the Teaching and Learning project group and supported by the Education Engagement and Enrichment group, are bearing fruit.

As indicated in the graph below, the reading outcomes of students tested are not only above those of similar students, but well above the outcomes of other Australian schools. These results are consistent with our in-school results and show that our pedagogical practices are sound and fruitful.

The other information we received through the NAPLAN testing is that, whilst the numeracy results of our SMSS students are above those of similar students, the gap is considerably smaller. This confirms our decision in 2019 to establish a numeracy working group to strengthen our teaching and learning outcomes in these areas.

We continue to be very proud of our students and the results they are achieving.

# Graduating Class of 2019



*The students of our graduating class 2019 are to be congratulated on their success in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP). The class of 2019 is the seventh 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. The class of 2019 consisted of 14 students, 55% of students from Class 9 2016 continued to complete the IB Diploma in 2019. These students who were enrolled at Sophia Mundi in Class 9, made up 36% of the graduating class in 2019.

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 (a Theory of Knowledge course) and EE (a 4000 word academic research based Extended 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 2019, five students achieved their Diploma. The average total score of those who completed the Diploma was 32 (ATAR 88.05). The average subject grade achieved by these 5 students was 5.1.

*“The class of 2019 bested the world average in several subjects including History SL, Visual Arts SL, Physics HL and Mathematical Studies SL and Environmental Systems and Societies.”*

In addition, the class of 2019 bested the world average in several subjects including History SL, Visual Arts SL, Physics HL and Mathematical Studies SL and Environmental Systems and

Societies. In addition, the core subjects (EE & TOK) generated additional points for 50% of those who attempted the full Diploma in 2019.

The cohort had several students received offers from Melbourne University with other offers coming in from Australian Catholic University and Deakin College. At least one member of the class of 2019 has taken a gap year to work, while others have gone immediately into further study, working towards degrees in a range of areas, including Law, Arts, Science, Nutrition and Health Sciences.

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 Dufty*  
IB CO-ORDINATOR &  
HEAD OF SENIOR SCHOOL

# Teaching and Learning Report 2019



*“If one was to step outside the bubble of 2019 and the beginning of 2020 and reflect on the challenges Sophia Mundi has faced, one could only surmise that Teaching and Learning within the school has grown quite exceptionally in terms of exploration of new and innovative ways of planning and teaching, which can and will be incorporated and integrated across the school in various forms in the years to come.”*

Teaching and Learning across Sophia Mundi was a major focus in 2019, and has continued to be in 2020, resulting in extensive additions and enhancements to the curriculum, teaching preparation and practice.

The predominant reason for the targeting of Teaching and Learning was to improve our processes and procedures, as well as preparing for the VRQA audit that was completed in July 2020.

The outcomes of the focus on Teaching and Learning have become evident and tangible as we have continued to develop greater Teaching and Learning systems and structures to support best practice in Teaching and Learning throughout the School.

Like most years, 2019 began with great positivity from all parts of the staff, even with the understanding of the daunting task the VRQA audit of the School presented.

This energy and engagement permeated throughout the School, resulting in great collegiality and cohesive working as the staff approached the documentation of the curriculum with verve and open mindedness, while still fulfilling the substantial responsibilities of day to

day school life. This togetherness was rewarded with the outstanding audit report Sophia Mundi received from the VRQA.

The second half of the year represented a time to consolidate and embed areas of the curriculum that the review shone a light on for further development.

It was pleasing to see the early stages of implementation of the documentation and sharing of ideas, resources and teaching methodology.

Teachers begun using the curriculum overviews, scope and sequences and unit plans prepared in Semester One, as to develop their own planning, extending on and relating the documentation to their own teaching techniques and individual class context.

The nature of Teaching and Learning, like the evolutionary growth of humanity, is ever changing and is never the same from year to year, term to term, week to week or even day to day.

Thus, we as a teaching body begin our preparation inwardly, centring ourselves in our own understanding of pedagogy, before exploring outwardly, every searching, ever striving for improvement.

Major areas for reflection and review we are presently undertaking are assessment across the school and mapping skill development along individual key learning area continuums. The outcomes of these reviews will then be integrated across the school and will gradually become embedded and visible to all members of the community.

If one was to step outside the bubble of 2019 and the beginning of 2020 and reflect on the challenges Sophia Mundi has faced, one could only surmise that Teaching and Learning within the school has grown quite exceptionally in terms of exploration of new and innovative ways of planning and teaching, which can and will be incorporated and integrated across the school in various forms in the years to come. Who knows what the remainder of 2020 will bring, but with such an exceptionally conscientious, adaptable and capable staff, the progress in Teaching and Learning will most certainly continue its upward trajectory.

*Peter Henderson*

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL &  
TEACHING AND LEARNING CO-ORDINATOR

# Staff Attendance

There was an attendance rate of 97% for both General and Teaching Staff during 2019.

# Staff Retention

All Teachers	89%
Primary	81%
Secondary	90%

# Teaching Staff Qualifications

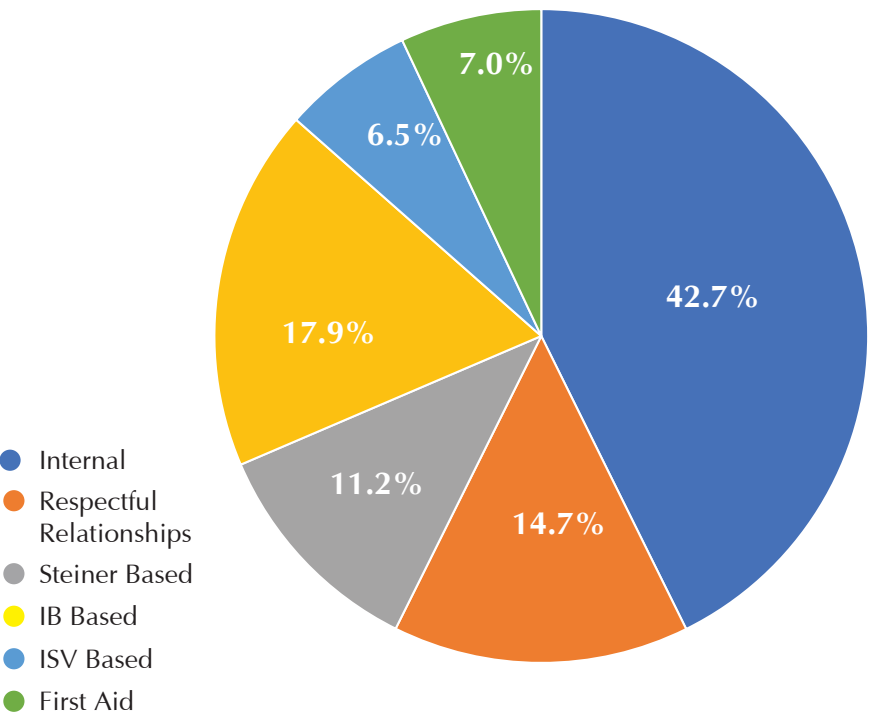
Qualification	Total
Doctor of Medical Research	1
Masters Qualifications	6
Master of Education	5
Steiner Education Qualifications	15
Eurythmy Qualifications	1
Bothmer Gymnastics	2
IB Certificates	18
Graduate Diploma of Teaching & Learning	1
Graduate Diploma of Education	15
Diploma of Education	10
Bachelor of Outdoor Education	2
Bachelor of Letters	1
Bachelor of Applied Science	1
Bachelor of Science	1
Bachelor of Arts	18
Bachelor of Education	4
Bachelor of Teaching	3
Bachelor of History	1
Bachelor of Law	1
Bachelor of Music	2
Bachelor of Visual Art / Fine Arts	2
Advanced Diplomas	6
Certificates (Other)	9

TERM 1-3 2019 STUDENT ATTENDANCE



# Professional Development Distribution

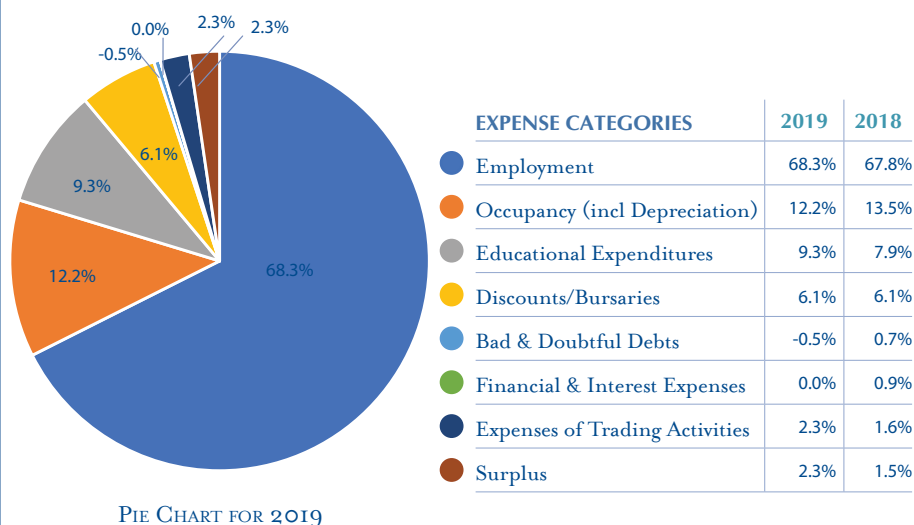
2019 STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EXPENSES AMOUNTED TO \$34,104 AND HAD THE FOLLOWING PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION:



# Financial Report 2019

At the end of Term 3 2018 the Board of Directors took the strategic decision to maintain tuition fees as they were for 2019. This was partially due to Sophia Mundi continuously maintaining good control over its expenses each year. The simplified fee system, introduced in 2014, continues to be used, which includes most school fees within the annual fee schedule. During 2019 numerous suppliers notified the school of increases in the cost of their services. Even with these increases the school's finances performed remarkably well during 2019, upon which trend the Board of Directors took the strategic decision at the end of Term 3 2019 to maintain tuition fees as they were for the third year in succession with only minor increases in other fees for 2020 from what they were in 2019. Finally, the Audited 2019 Financial Statements (available on our website) have enabled the preparation of the 'Expense Categories Pie Chart for 2019 Expressed as Percentages' (above right). It also shows 2018 figures. Overall, this pie chart shows a

## EXPENSE CATEGORIES EXPRESSED AS PERCENTAGES

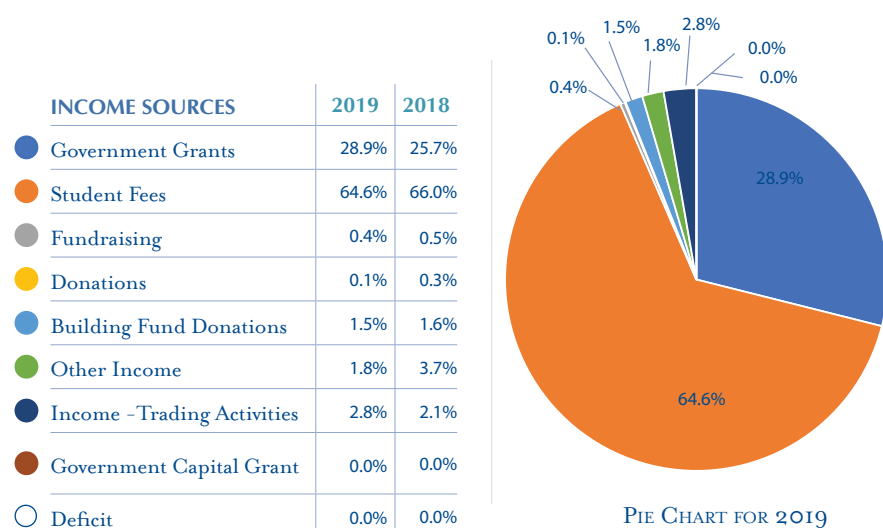


*"We express our appreciation to those parents who continue making their \$350 voluntary donation per term to the School Building Fund. We also remind all parents and guardians that these are tax deductible ...."*

\$114,595 Surplus (i.e. Income less Expenses) or 2.3% of total income for 2019, compared with \$69,590 Surplus or 1.5% of total income for 2018.

The 'Income Sources Pie Chart for 2019 Expressed as Percentages' (below left) shows the percentage distribution of income by category. As indicated, the one source of income that has reduced considerably is our Building Fund Donations, down to 1.5% from 1.6% and 2.6% and 2.8% respectively in 2018, 2017, 2016 of total income. We express our appreciation to those parents who continue making their \$350 voluntary donation per term to the School Building Fund. We also remind all parents and guardians that these are tax deductible donations and encourage parents who have ceased their donations to restart. The tax deductibility of your donation means that on average at tax assessment time it will only have cost you approximately \$233. School Building Fund donations are crucial to all building maintenance and aesthetic improvements such as the painting of St Marys during June/ July 2019 and the intended carpeting in 2021 which is needed.

## INCOME SOURCES EXPRESSED AS PERCENTAGES



John Bradshaw  
BUSINESS MANAGER



## Dom the Juggler!

*Sophia Munidi Alumni Domenyk La Terra has a passion for juggling. Since leaving the school in 2017, he has performed in Taiwan, Convent Garden and at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Currently immersed in his studies towards a Bachelor of Contemporary Circus, majoring in juggling, he took some time out to answer our questions.*

### **How did you get into juggling and where has it taken you?**

I was introduced to juggling five years ago when I was on exchange in Switzerland. I became passionate about it and I quickly realised that somehow, I was going to make juggling my career. After finishing school, I spent two years traveling and street performing. I developed a 30-minute comedy juggling show which gave me the freedom to travel and make money. I based myself in London over the summer, performing at Covent Garden and various street arts

festivals around Europe. Last year I decided I wanted to move towards contemporary circus and stage performance. I was lucky enough to be accepted into Stockholm University of the Arts which has a good reputation for its juggling program.

I'm now doing a Bachelor of Contemporary Circus, majoring in juggling. It's a three-year degree and I have almost finished the first year.

University is very intense - there are long days of physical training. Juggling classes explore conceptual ideas of what juggling is as an art form and how we can express art through juggling alone.

*A movie clip entitled "Dom The Juggler - Street show promo video" can be found on YouTube. A number of Dom's performances can also be seen on his Instagram page: @jugglingdom*





I have an exam next week that involves creating a performance of a five-minute act. As you can tell, circus school is quite unique!

**What are your aspirations for the future?**

After university I would like to continue travelling and possibly go on tour, performing my act with a circus company. I would also like to create a full solo juggling show one day. Aside from performing I have many goals for my training, and I would like to continue training and push the limits of juggling.

**What were the positives of your time at Sophia Mundi and what values did you learn here that you have been able to take with you through life?**

Sophia Mundi and Steiner education have been a positive experience for me. My creativity was supported and ultimately, this provided me with a firm foundation. One regret that I have though, is that my training as a juggler slowed down quite a bit until I finished school.

*“After finishing school, I spent two years travelling and street performing. I developed a 30-minute comedy juggling show which gave me the freedom to travel and make money. I based myself in London over the summer, performing at Covent Garden and various street arts festivals around Europe.”*

**What advice do you have for aspiring jugglers?**

The most productive tool for me has been goal setting. I set myself short and long-term goals that are frequently well above my own expectations.

This keeps me motivated and focused in my training and allows me to clearly see progress. I believe it's important to pursue a career in something you enjoy and are passionate about.

I remember seeing a meme, it was making a joke about how bad Mondays are.

As basic as it sounds, my advice would be to believe in yourself, follow your dreams and work hard for them.

Monday should be just as good as any day!



# Music across our school in 2019



*Over the course of the year, the sound of music was ubiquitously heard around St Mary's while Sophia Mundi students attended classes and practised for performances. Music performances at the school's Open Day, and the Annual Concert in the Abbotsford Convent's iconic Rosina Auditorium ended the year on a vibrant note. Myfanwy Hunter, Music Co-ordinator, takes us through Sophia Mundi's music highlights.*

## Class Concert Series

At the end of Term 2 and Term 4, each student from Class 3 to Class 10 performed a solo or duo piece for their Class Concert in our Eurythmy Hall. These bi-annual events give students an opportunity to refine one piece for presentation, to practice their public speaking, to overcome the physiological challenges of performing in public, to celebrate and support their fellow classmates, and to practice active listening to live music. Pieces performed range from the simple, such as Twinkle Twinkle, through to complex contemporary Japanese piano music, Handel, Beethoven, hip hop, musical theatre and singer songwriter pieces. The breadth of musical interest particularly in the Secondary School never ceases to amaze. In each concert, we see students rising to the challenge of performing, feeling



pride in their accomplishments, and parents experiencing wonder at the skill, progress and talent of their children.

## Open Day Spring Fair

In 2019, music again filled the courtyard and classrooms of Sophia Mundi all throughout the Open Day and Spring Fair, held on Sunday 9 November. For the first half of the day, audiences were delighted with music from our Primary School classes. The Class 3 Orchestra was directed by Rachael Kim. For their first ever public performance, Class 3s played a very sweet version of Star Light Star Bright, Hot Cross Buns (including a burnt version!), Kaeru – a song about a Japanese frog complete with sound effects “Gwa. Gwa. Gwa. Gwa.”

They concluded with an original composition.

Class 4 Orchestra, directed by Alister Barker, gave a sterling rendition of Headstrong Horses (a Class 4 favourite), Clown Dance and May Song.

I directed the Class 5 Orchestra, Class 6 Big Band and the Middle

School String Orchestra Sophia Strings. The Class 5 Orchestra performed a selection of pieces from their study of Indian classical music, which was connected to their Main Lesson study of Ancient India. This included singing “Do Re Mi” in Indian Sargam (“Sa Re ga Ma Pa Da Ni Sa”), a song about Indian elephant deity Ganesha, playing and singing Saraswati – a chant to the Hindu goddess of knowledge, music, art, wisdom and nature; and playing and singing Spirit of Diwali in celebration of the Festival of Lights, held in India each year. The complex melodies of Raag Revathi – a piece for compassion, was played. Class 5s then took to the ocean with a stirring rendition of Edward Grier's Sailor's Song, before concluding their full program with March of the Titans, which is connected to their Main Lesson study of Ancient Greece.

The Class 6 Big Band came on stage for a thoroughly entertaining set featuring their own compositions devised for marimba, guitar, drums, voice, percussion, piano, double



bass, and tic tac box. The Big Band commenced with Twins & Puppy, then Escalator Impossible (both original compositions).

The group then played an old classic Yellow Bird (complete with yellow outfits), an audience pleaser and singalong number Stand by Me, then finished with a hilarious piece titled Kokonut Song.

After lunch, the Middle School String Orchestra Sophia Strings played a string version of The Beatles classic, Eleanor Rigby, a Sarabande by Handel, Mission Impossible theme song, and then concluded with Suddenly, The Peoples Song and Look Down from the Les Mis musical.

Our advanced strain group Accelerando joined Sophia Strings for many of the pieces, then performed the jazz classic Fly Me to the Moon, finishing up with a suitably intense version of the Game of Thrones theme song.

Other groups who performed in the afternoon on the Main Stage in the courtyard were the Guitar Ensemble, directed by Gerard Mapstone, who played Arabian Fantasy by Sabicas, Orian by Metallica and La Llorona Traditional Mexican Folk Song. The Cello Ensemble, directed by Chien-Hsiu Ong, played Ashoka Farewell and Dream Tower from Lord of the Rings. The school choir, directed by Nicola Eveleigh and Chris Roache, sang Voir Sur Ton Chemin by Coulais & Barratier, Ave Verum Corpus by Mozart, Ladies and Gentlemen We Are Floating in Space by Pierce, Weiss, Peretti, Creatore, and Now, O Now I Needs Must Part By Dowland. Percussion Ensemble, directed by Hannes Lackmann played a selection of contemporary, jazz and improvisation. Our second stage on the courts federated an open mic blackboard with performances from current and

past students, teaching staff, parents and friends sharing music, dance and dad jokes.

## Annual Music Concert 2019

This year's concert highlight took place in the Abbotsford Convent's iconic Rosina Auditorium, just a few 100 metres from Sophia Mundi, on the afternoon of Monday 12 August. Our usual evening concert was shifted to an afternoon this year in account of the huge undertaking of the Les Miserable production later in the year.

The afternoon concert enabled many of the Primary School students and families to attend. We heard pieces from all the Secondary School ensembles:- Sophia Strings, Accelerando, Guitar Ensemble, Percussion Ensemble, Cello Ensemble, Secondary Choir, Class 9 Band, Class 7 Band, and a welcome to the Secondary School by the Class 6 Big Band. It was wonderful to see so many of the Primary school students attending. The event gives the Secondary students a focus in rehearsals towards public presentation, the opportunity to witness and support other ensemble groups, inspiration for the Primary students and a strong indication of what they can enjoy in their Secondary years of learning and playing music.



# Les Miserables musical performance

*In this article Rohan Vicars IB & Secondary English/Drama Teacher reflects on the journey taken to bring the musical to the stage and shares with us the positive accolades he received from the students and teachers involved in the production, as well as from the school community as a whole.*

It has been several months since our students took their final bows at the Les Misrables musical performance last year, but even now there is a lingering sense that we did something special – and a question about what we might do in the future.

As recently as the first term of 2020, I was still receiving comments about how positive the musical was for individuals and for the school community as a whole.

Part of what made the project so valuable is the sense of connection between students of different grades, the feeling that we are all in this together, and that we all stepped out of the mundane to touch something closer to the heart of us. These positive feelings continued into the beginning of the year, at the whole-school camp and then again at the school disco.

It is my hope that even though we are physically separated now because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we can sustain that feeling of connection with each other so that it can flower anew when the ice of the corona virus winter finally melts.

As a way of reflecting on what we accomplished with the musical, here are some pieces of the journey that I shared last year, to cement that milestone in our memories.

## How it all began ...

It all began with our early discussions at the end of 2018 in which we began to look at possible shows, time slots and venues, and generally began to bring some

shape to our plans. Over the Easter holidays we ordered the music and scripts (which then took well over a Term to arrive!) and booked the venue. At that time the venue was the Collingwood Town Hall, a space with a more traditional raised stage in a proscenium arch,



*“The love of what we were doing began to unfold for groups as they realised how powerful the content and musical score really is. The amazing barricades and props were conceptualised, crafted and created.*

*It was an amazing experience watching the students step up on those barricades for the first time, and step into their characters with everything they had.”*

450 seats on the ground level and another 150 seats on the balcony. That would have been a big and beautiful place to perform and for several months that was the plan, but when the Magdalene Laundries at the Abbotsford Convent became available, we knew right away that they would be our performance space!

The Magdalene Laundries had the “Basilica Hall” available – the wall textures and 1900s fixtures, the visible scaffolding beside wooden support beams, and the sense of history created a space in which beggars, peasants and convicts, love, tragedy and rebellion all fit perfectly. Not to mention the convenience of working in a space right beside our own School.

## The intensity steps up

In Term 4 the focus, energy and intensity really stepped up. We began regular weekend rehearsals for the mains, in addition to the in-school rehearsals.

During the rehearsals, students polished up their skills and some of the more spectacular talents began to reveal themselves. The love of what we were doing began to unfold for groups as they realised how powerful the content and musical score really is. The amazing barricades and props were conceptualised, crafted and created. It was an amazing experience watching the students step up on those barricades for the first time, and step into their characters with everything they had.



### Help came when needed

Beautiful costumes were found or made, and backdrop scenes were carefully painted on huge canvasses. We called out to all the extraordinary people needed to make impossible things like this happen, and they graciously came to work with us. I can't thank everyone who helped enough for what they brought to this – without you, we couldn't have made this show come to life.

### Performance week arrives

Then there was the performance week. Stress went up, sleep went down, lights were set, stages were in place, costumes were finalised, bows were waxed, microphones were charged and – most importantly – the magic of this wonderful endeavour started shining through.

Part of that magic came from watching a whole School focusing

in the same direction with a single goal; and part of it came from seeing students taking 'artistic risks,' stepping up in incredible ways – freeing their incredible talents and sharing this gift with the whole community!

The culmination of the week was then the most magical of all – the three performances that left us all awash with emotion; stories and melodies that echoed down from centuries ago to touch us all.

The unbelievable, often breathtaking talent of our students still amazes me now, and I hope all the performers can know and feel that we achieved something extraordinary.

For this, one last time, let me thank you all – students, parents, teachers, and friends – for all your support and for playing your parts faithfully. We couldn't do it without you!

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## “Eureka!” – the flagship Secondary School Camp

*Every now and again our amazing community gets an opportunity to shine and show off what it is like to be part of a tribe of like-minded and good-hearted people. Sophia Mundi’s Secondary School camp was just that – a kickstart to 2020, the year of challenge and great change! Nic Andretta, Outdoor Education Teacher, tells us more.*

The initial idea for the camp came off the back of last year’s “100 years of Waldorf Education” celebration. I was lucky to attend the Waldorf 100 student conference at the Samford Valley Steiner School. The entire week was mesmerising. It was incredible to observe so many Steiner-educated students from around Australia come together for a meeting of great significance. Hearing the students speak of their experiences was inspiring. It was important to acknowledge the breadth of what students had gained during that week. In some ways, it was more than most students gain in an entire term! After this unforgettable experience, the seed of the Secondary School Camp had been planted.

Since the musical, *Les Miserables*, was scheduled for the end of 2019, the idea to run a camp programme at the start of 2020 became more and more attractive. The stage was set, yet no one knew the script at that time.

A lot of extensive planning had occurred to ensure the programme would go ahead. Many of the ideals that we sought for the week had to



be sacrificed for something that was more practical and sufficient – a programme that would set the whole Secondary School Camp in motion. The menu was planned and the venue chosen, and somewhat amazingly, the week went off without a hitch. We had almost every young person attend in some capacity from classes 7 – 12, including six exchange students (84 students in total), and 23 Secondary School teachers came and went throughout the week. We were gifted with beautiful weather that truly allowed us to utilise the bush for the lessons, workshops, activities and conversations. As a mixed bag of

young people and teaching staff, we came together in mixed classes and sat in nature, observed the rhythms of our surroundings and engaged in conversations about our future. We discussed the prospects of an artificially intelligent (AI) dominated world where teachers would be replaced by robots and computers. (Ironically our young people overbearingly wanted human teachers, and then COVID-19 presented itself, which has necessitated online learning!)

We looked internally at what we value on an individual level and worked towards making the choices to keep and bring more of the things that we value into our daily lives. We worked as small groups, large groups and within ourselves. We painted by the river, we ate together and we sung by the fire together.

The entire week was designed for our students to co-mingle, to be presented with new ideas about self-care and ways of engaging in a purposeful way of living. We aimed to have discussions and connect them with new ideas and thoughts about what school is. We have continued to bring the vertically



staked groups of students from different classes together in the FLARE programme and aim to have more workshops and activities throughout the year that will revisit their groups from the camp.

On reflection, we see how much we have learned from the experience and overall, we have been more than thrilled with the immediate feedback and results of the camp. The school seems to be more connected, with students proclaiming that they now notice students from other classes more than they had before and acknowledging that they can actually SEE each other. There have been new friend connections among different classes and overall a noticeable lift in school spirit among students as well as staff – it was a great opportunity for us too. As a team we got to spend quality time together out in nature as we strived for our common goal, educating and inspiring our young leaders of the world. Overall a beautiful outcome was achieved!

Initially it was difficult to come up with a name for this significant outdoor education programme – it was new, with a lot of unknowns. Yet our intuition told us that the name would be revealed to us. And then, there it was. “Eureka!”

Eureka reeked of being the most fitting name for the Secondary

School Camp. A small and large feat in our history of a small, yet big-hearted school.

We extend endless thanks to the school community.



*The term “eureka” comes from an Ancient Greek word meaning “I have found (it)!” The historical origins of eureka are believed to be related to Archimedes’ discovery of a way to determine the purity of gold by applying the principle of specific gravity.*

To the management team at Sophia Mundi who saw the potential in this programme and allowed it to happen. To the parents who patiently waited all summer to see how the camp would eventuate, who helped their child/children prepare for a camp

that was a bit of a mystery, and the new families at the school who had the confidence to join and support their child/children on this wild adventure.

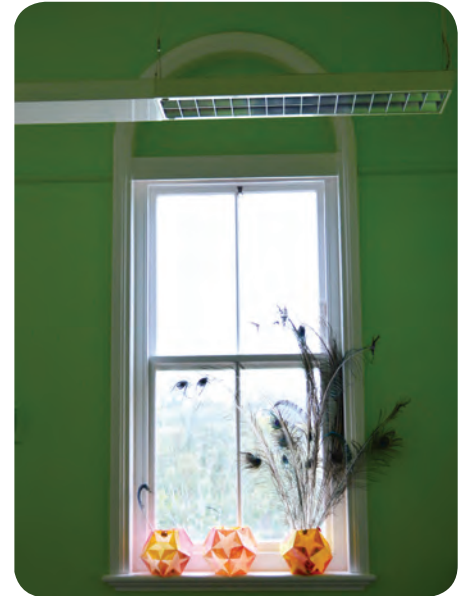
Endless appreciation to the admin and teaching staff who got on board and were flexible, as they took every part of the process in their stride. The support and energy that they brought to the camp was sensational and made it all that it was, nothing short of inspiring.

In particular, the new staff who attended the camp and were unaware of how it would come together. They brought new dimensions and energy to it, which gave the whole programme another level. One of those new staffers is Maddie Mejak, our 2020 Outdoor Educator who slaved away for 12hrs a day in the kitchen preparing and serving all our magical food for the week. This was a very hectic, big start to the event!

A continued thank you to Assistant Principal and Teaching & Learning Co-ordinator, Peter Henderson and Volunteer, Konni Pade, who were also in the kitchen keeping over 100 campers fed!

It was a monstrous job putting it all together, but it has been worthwhile. The broad range of learning and experience we gained from our first Camp Eureka will help us put together another programme to set us off in 2021!

# New colours in the classrooms add a fresh new look to St Mary's



*Over the July holidays, Sophia Mundi's rooms in the St Mary's building were painted, giving the school a fresh new look. Now, beautiful blends of colour evolve through the corridors, community spaces, offices and classrooms.*



When you tour the school, you will notice pastel pink 'embracing' the early childhood area and 'evolving' brightly to other general areas of the building, providing a sense of 'being held'.

Yellow (in the Class 3 classroom) and, gold (in the Class 4 classroom) 'energises' while green in the Class 5 classroom indicates 'perfect balance' before the onset of puberty. From the Class 6 classrooms to the middle and high school areas, smooth gradients evolve from blues to purples, to resonate with the 'intellect of the adolescent'.

Spearheaded by Teresa Martin, Arts Co-ordinator and Tanya Rao, Head of Middle School, the project was first considered at least nine months ago. The duo set up a 'colour choice' team, adding Madonna Holmes and Robert

Stemp to the mix. Over a 12-week period, the various colour schemes were agreed on, and assigned to various rooms in the building.

Influenced by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's 'Theory of Colours' and the later work of Rudolf Steiner, the team chose colours to support each student's general phase of development for each grade level, the age of the students, and the activities within the specific classrooms.

They also considered the uniqueness of Sophia Mundi's 'modern day' students who mainly live in the inner city and are awakened to the metropolitan energy of the world around them. For this reason, they chose bolder hues of colours than originally suggested by Goethe and Steiner a century ago, for the Primary School classes and upwards.

John Bradshaw, Business Manager and Brendan Martin, Maintenance, selected Abbas Saeidavi and his team at Azma Painting Services, who had completed work at the school in 2014, to complete the project.

John is pleased with the paint jobs and has received positive feedback in terms of the high-quality of workmanship, timeliness, respect, good-manners and diligence of the Azma Painting team ([www.azma.com.au](http://www.azma.com.au)).

Well done to all those involved in this massive project!

Finally, a big thank you to all our parents who, irrespective of financial hardship or otherwise, continue to make regular termly tax deductible gift donations to our Sophia Mundi School Building Fund Trust. Without the building fund donations this project would not have been possible.

# Waldorf 100

## Waldorf 100 Youth Conference

*From 4–7 September, a beautiful mix of Sophia Mundi students and fellow teachers journeyed up to Queensland, joining over 250 students from around Australia and New Zealand to celebrate the Waldorf 100 Youth Conference hosted by Samford Valley Steiner School.*

Each day students gathered for singing, participated in group discussions on topics including; mental health, gender and sexuality, indigenous perspectives, social entrepreneurship and business. The days were also filled with eating delicious food (prepared and served by various community

members) and engaging in interactive workshops that encourage thinking and creative action towards a more equitable, sustainable future.

There were live performances from the Samford Valley class 10 cohort, Waldorf trivia night, an 80's disco night and a talent show.

What an amazing movement these wonderful Waldorf/Steiner young people are a part of. It is truly humbling experience to witness our students take ownership and creative control over their futures.

*Nicolas Andreatta*

OUTDOOR EDUCATION TEACHER

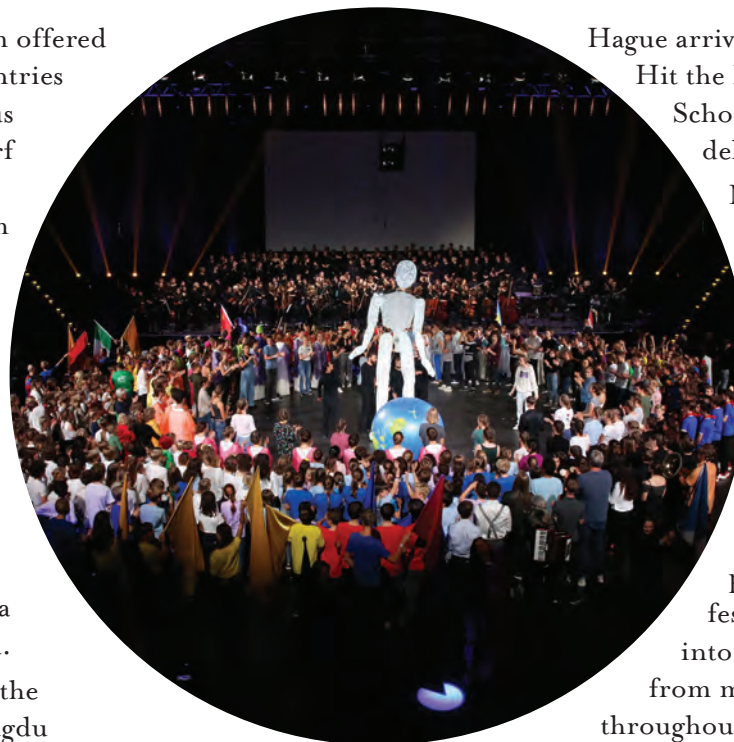
## Waldorf 100 Festival in the Tempodrom

*100 years of Waldorf: 2019 was the year of the anniversary of Waldorf Schools. After many regional celebrations in Germany and other countries and after several international conferences on all continents, Berlin hosted the world on 19 September for the great Waldorf 100 Festival in the Tempodrom.*

The deftly curated program offered insights into different countries and cultures with numerous contributions from Waldorf students from Berlin and the surrounding area, from other regions in Germany, and from many other countries around the world.

The drumming skills of the students of the Kyotanabe Steiner School in Japan delighted the spectators, as did the orchestra of the Little Yarra Steiner School in Australia.

For the evening program, the flute orchestra of the Chengdu Waldorf School in China as well as a musical ensemble of the Vrije Theaterschool in the



Hague arrived, and the ensemble Hit the Beat of the Waldorf School Windhoek in Namibia delighted the audience.

Not only on stage did people from all over the world come together, but also in the audience.

The big celebration was announced as a one-day “festival” and it kept what the organising team had promised: In a pleasant festival atmosphere one got into conversation with people from many different countries throughout the day.

A truly worthy celebration for the past and for the coming 100 years of Waldorf School.

*Reprinted with kind permission from contributor Christina Reinthal, Waldorf Worldwide 2019/Winter 2020*



## 2019 Open Day & Spring Fair

*Despite the day being a little cloudy, the communal energy at Sophia Mundi's 35th Open Day & Spring Fair on Sunday, 10 November was warm and welcoming.*

The Open Day & Spring Fair provided a wonderful opportunity for us to share the unique and diverse qualities of our School with the wider community.

In attendance was representatives from Little Sophia Kindergarten, City of Yarra, Collingwood Children's Farm, fellow Independent and Government

sectors, and Abbotsford Convent. Counsellors, teachers, extended family members, Alumni students and their families also joined us on the day.

The classrooms were beautifully presented, there was an abundance of tasty food, fun activities, inviting market stalls and creative craft on offer.

Eurythmy and music, as always, was well received and provided a space for visitors to enjoy and feel a part of.

The spirit of Sophia Mundi was lovingly expressed by one and all. A very big thanks to all those who helped make the event the success that it was – it was certainly a day to be proud of!

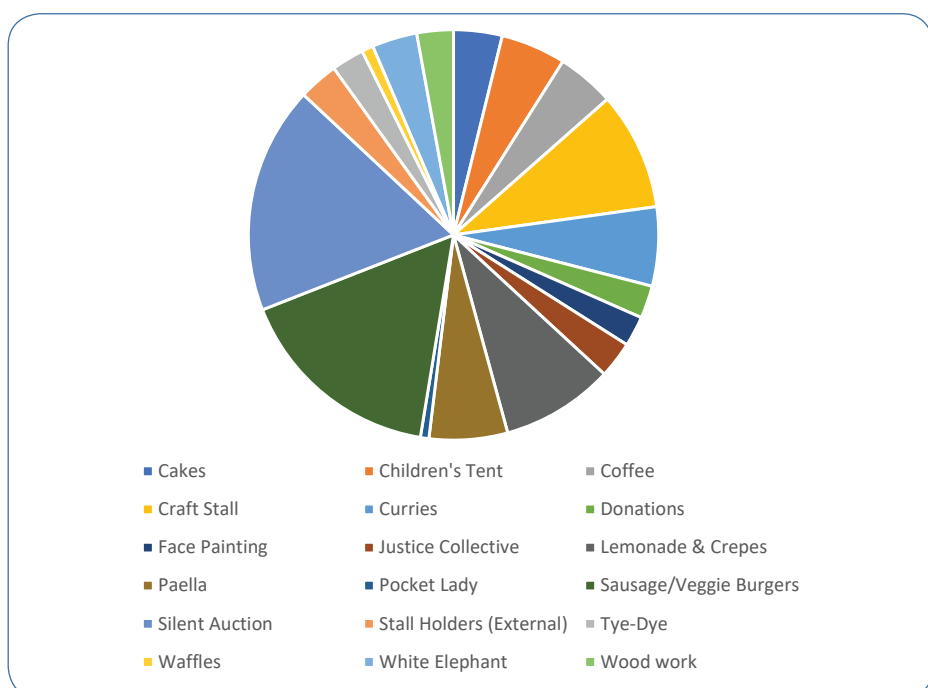




The beautiful artwork used to promote the 2019 Open Day & Spring Fair was created by Bec Harris.

## 2019 Takings

The total takings on the day amounted to **\$20,146** less expenses incurred of \$9,289, resulting in a surplus of **\$10,857**. \$580 of this was earned by the Justice Collective and was utilised for the school disco event earlier this year. The remaining surplus of \$10,277 will not be incorporated into the School's general funds – the Management team is currently discussing the possibility of utilising the funds for much needed new theatrical equipment.



*“Our need for imagination, a sense of truth, and a feeling of responsibility – these three forces are the very nerve of education” ~ Rudolf Steiner*



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