

Sophia Mundi Steiner School

# Annual Report 2021



SOPHIA MUNDI  
Steiner Education and IB World School



# Sophia Mundi Board of Directors' Report

2021 was an extraordinary year of change at Sophia Mundi. Long lockdowns followed by the phased return from online to face-to-face teaching brought with it unprecedented challenges for teachers, parents and students alike. Schools were required to develop COVID-Safe plans around ventilation, social distancing and sanitisation. Parents had to check-in with QR codes and display proof of vaccination. Staff and students were required to socially distance, wear masks and enter the school via the Nun's Gate only. The most painful part by far was the loss of a few school staff who, for personal reasons, chose not to comply with the new vaccination mandates.

There were also significant changes in the school management team. 2021 saw the departure of our Principal, Fiona Cock and our Business Manager, John Bradshaw. Both had been with the school for many years, helping bring the school out of debt and establish a solid financial foundation. The Board would like to thank them for their contributions and wish them well in their future endeavours.

Peter Henderson was appointed Acting Principal and has been ably supported by John Mulhall, the Acting Business Manager. John has overseen a continuation of the school's healthy financial position and brought with him a new rigour to the role.

At Board level there was change as well. We assumed the roles of Co-Chairs, with the other Directors, Cheryl Nekvapil and Carol Liknaitzky, providing strong support. All of us are deeply appreciative of Matthew Hardie, the previous chair, for his energy and dedication to the role. Through these changes the Board has maintained its resolve to clarify the school's strategic intent. We made the decision to appoint Tony Sullivan as School Executive Officer for a fixed period, tasking him with mentoring Peter and working with the Board to develop a clear strategic direction for the school.

It has been pleasing to see the huge steps the school has taken to craft the vision of a progressive Steiner and IB World School. Behind this vision is a clear intent to create what is a ground-breaking,

academically rigorous pathway that combines two beautifully complementary philosophies and pedagogies.

Realising such an exciting vision involves much hard work and an unwavering focus on the things that matter. It requires promoting a teaching culture that lifts academic styles while remaining true to Steiner indications. It requires implementing the infrastructure that supports and inspires learning, from modern IT systems for teaching management to upgraded physical spaces for IB, Design and Technology, and Performance. And it requires the unity of purpose and clear communication that we have between School Management and the Board.

After a year of change, we have a genuine sense that the school is on a bold new path. We very much look forward to the years ahead.

*On behalf of the Board –*

*Damien Hicks and Michael Arcella*

CO-CHAIRS, BOARD OF DIRECTORS,  
SOPHIA MUNDI STEINER SCHOOL

## Graduating Class of 2021



# Acting Principal's Report

2021 was a year of listening to our stakeholders – students, staff and parents. Under the auspices of Independent Schools Victoria, we participated in a range of student, staff and parent satisfaction surveys which benchmarked our performance against other independent schools. We also undertook an audit of the school's culture which looked at our communication and decision-making processes and we workshopped the results widely.

In response to this feedback, and under direction of the Board, the school initiated a strategic review to establish a clear vision for the school and develop strategies to make that vision a reality. The most important outcome of the strategic review was recognising the desire for the school to become a progressive Steiner – IB school, offering a richer, more academically rigorous educational pathway from Prep to year 12.

Under the new vision, three academic departments – Maths, English and Science – were created to drive a lift in academic standards. Heads of Department were appointed and tasked with formally mapping the Steiner Middle School curriculum to the needs of the Senior School IB Diploma Programme to ensure a seamless transition from one to the other. To further support this process, the departments developed a more insightful student assessment framework and the school committed to implementing a new IT system to support improved lesson planning, collaboration and reporting.

The strategic review identified further needs for which plans are now in place:

- Clear roles, responsibilities and structures for transparent and effective decision-making

- Improved facilities including new dedicated spaces for the IB programme, Middle School Design and Technology and Music and Performance
- Improved lesson planning and review processes
- Improved student reporting processes
- Clear role for our college of teachers to address deep pedagogical questions and enable the school to sit at the forefront of age-appropriate, holistic education
- Partnering with other Steiner schools in areas such as IB, Outdoor Education, Music and Art

In summary, 2021 was a pivotal year in the life of Sophia Mundi and the work done will guide the school for years to come.

*Peter Henderson*  
ACTING PRINCIPAL

The students of our graduating class 2021 are to be congratulated on their success in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP). The class of 2021 is the ninth cohort to graduate from Sophia Mundi under the IB Diploma Programme pathway. We were thrilled to be able to continue to offer a wide range of subjects. The class of 2021 consisted of twelve students. Of the twelve enrolled students, 67% of them (8 students) entered the school in Years 9, 10 or 11, and 33% (4 students), had attended Sophia Mundi since primary school. 50% of the class were

retained from Class 9 to Class 12, these students made up 57% of the graduating class.

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.

The highest score earned in the 2021 session was ATAR Score: 96.25 and the lowest ATAR 70.2. The ATAR mean was 84.10 for all students that received the Diploma.

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.

*Melanie Brown*  
IB COORDINATOR



## Staff Retention

All Teachers	86.8%
Primary	77.8%
Secondary	95.0%

## Staff Attendance

There was an attendance rate of 97% for both General and Teaching Staff during 2021.

In addition, some staff took Leave Without Pay or Long Service Leave, during the Metro Melbourne lockdowns. This is not reflected in the above figure.

## Teaching Staff Qualifications

Qualification	Total
PHD	2
Master of Education	6
Masters (Other)	7
Eurythmy Qualifications	1
Steiner Education Qualification	17
IB Certificates	42
Graduate Diploma of Education Teaching & Learning	14
Diploma of Education	9
Bachelor of Applied Science	1
Bachelor of Arts	15
Bachelor of Education	5
Bachelor of History	1
Bachelor of Law	1
Bachelor of Letters	0
Bachelor of Music	4
Bachelor of Outdoor Education	2
Bachelor of Science	3
Bachelor of Teaching	3
Bachelor of Visual Art/Fine Arts	1
Bothmer Gymnastics	1
Advanced Diploma (Applied Physics)	2
Certificates (Other)	8

## Financial Report 2021

2021 presented challenges with staff and students returning to the school following periods of extended lockdown. This changing environment impacted on both financial performance and the ability of families to maintain fees. Despite these challenges, the school continued to provide support to families, ongoing employment for staff, working together to achieve a positive outcome.

A total operating surplus of \$62,789 was achieved in 2021 compared to \$1,290,733 in 2020. This variance can be attributed to the cessation of JobKeeper and decrease in donations. The net surplus including building fund donations and capital expenses, amounted to \$59,810 compared to \$1,320,250 in 2020. The reinstatement of camp and music fees following lockdown in addition to receiving a Government

Chaplaincy Grant assisted in the recovery of the operating income.

The 2021 income split is presented as 39% grants, 53% student fees and 8% trading. This compares to 30%, 46% and 3% respectively for 2020.

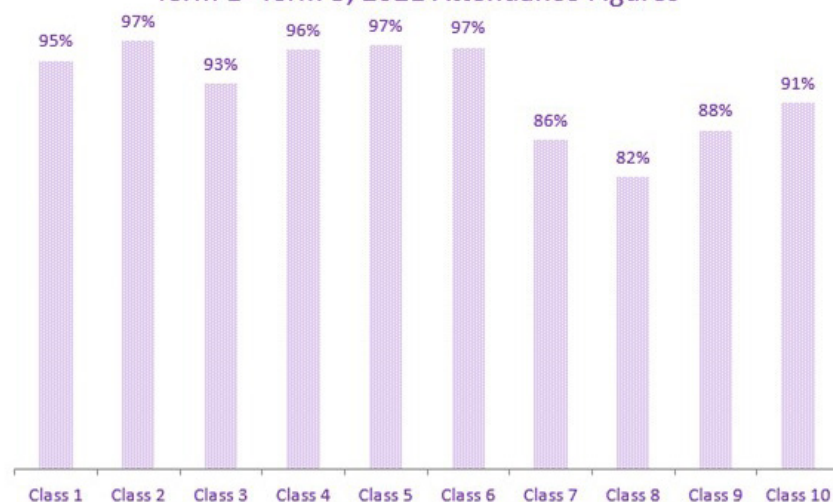
Salaries and oncosts increased by approximately 4% due to the cessation of JobKeeper, payments to retiring staff and those who left as a result of the COVID-19 Vaccination Mandate.

Bursaries and fee subsidies totaling more than \$380K were provided to families to enable their children to remain at Sophia Mundi.

*Dianne Rich*  
BUSINESS MANAGER

## Term 1-3 2021 Student Attendance

Term 1- Term 3, 2021 Attendance Figures

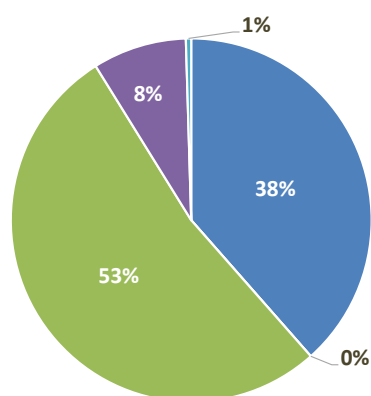


Attendance figures for 2021 Primary classes are similar to those reported in the previous year. This is due to students attending classes from home via online learning and attendance being counted differently during lockdown.

Lower attendance of Middle and Senior year levels reflects additional periods of roll marking throughout the day and the impacts of the extended lockdowns on student wellbeing/mental health.



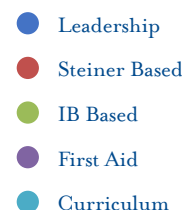
### INCOME SOURCES - EXPRESSED AS PERCENTAGES



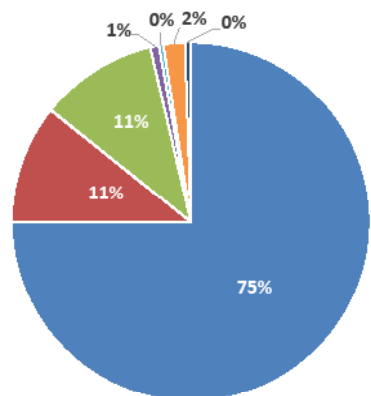
INCOME SOURCES	2021	2020
Government Grants	38.5%	29.7%
JobKeeper	0.0%	20.6%
Student Fees	52.7%	45.5%
Operational Income	8.4%	3.0%
Building Fund Donations	0.48%	1.10%
	100%	100%

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DISTRIBUTION

Staff Professional Development in 2021 amounted to \$22,475 and had the following percentage distribution:



### EXPENSE CATEGORIES - EXPRESSED AS PERCENTAGES



EXPENSE CATEGORIES	2021	2020
Employment	74.1%	57.8%
Occupancy (incl. Depreciation)	10.6%	8.8%
Educational Expenditures	10.5%	7.2%
Financial & Interest	0.8%	1.2%
Bad & Doubtful Debts	0.4%	0.8%
Trading Activity Expenses	1.9%	1.6%
Capital Expenses	0.53%	0.61%
Net Surplus	1.19%	22.2%
	98.8%	78.1%

## School Summary Report

In 2021 only a small group of students from Class 3, 5, 7 and 9 undertook the NAPLAN testing at Sophia Mundi.

Many parents at Sophia Mundi choose to withdraw their children from the NAPLAN tests based on philosophical objection. Our parents appreciate that unlike many schools countrywide, Sophia Mundi provides a rich, wholesome, and inclusive education that does not focus on teaching to NAPLAN.

Our class teachers, guardians, Literacy and Numeracy teachers as well as Leadership team do however note the students' results as part of

the ongoing assessment process in place at Sophia Mundi.

In 2019, an average of 16% of students from the four classes completed all five tests and the results therefore only reflect the performance of a very small cohort of students on the days of testing, meaning our data is insufficient to draw conclusive comparative results either from class to class or from year to year, especially from class 3 and 5, who had the lowest participation levels.

From those who did participate, we are pleased to share that the year 7's performed significantly

above National benchmarks in Grammar and Punctuation, as well as Numeracy and were on par with state means in all other areas. Year 9's also performed significantly above State average in Reading and Grammar and Punctuation; they were slightly above the state in Numeracy and Spelling and were on par in Writing. These results indicate a strong standard amongst our students.

*Emma Gillette*  
NAPLAN COORDINATOR

## Our Vision:

Education towards freedom

## Our Values:

Truth, courage and moral  
and ethical responsibility

## 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.



**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 E [reception@sophiamundi.vic.edu.au](mailto:reception@sophiamundi.vic.edu.au)

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



June 2022