

Aetaomah School

2023 Annual Report





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Acknowledgement Of Country - Aetaomah

Nestled at the foot of Wollumbin and by this mighty river...

In this special place...

We acknowledge and offer our respects to the people of the Bundjalung Nation;

The original caretakers of this land on which we stand...

And the original storytellers too...

To the Ancestors...wise Elders...

And those developing who walk with us...

The continuous custodians of Country and carers of the land, waters and sky...

Where we live, learn and play together...

Context



2023 Reflections from The Principal

It is with pleasure that I share some reflections and memories of 2023 in this Annual Report.

The new year began in a joyful Summer mood of anticipation and at the centre, as always, with the wholesome intention to encourage and nourish our Aetaomah School teaching, learning and community life.

We feel blessed that our school's special geographic location by the banks of the beautiful Tweed River, allows that on the hot days of February and March the teachers and students are able to cool off with a shady sit by the bank and a refreshing paddle in the River.

Along with the enriching teaching and learning work of the College of Teachers with their students, there were many seasonal, festive and social activities and events that brought us together as a community.

As the days gradually grew cooler, teachers and students began their preparations for the Autumn Equinox Festival. The Autumnal week was celebrated with students speaking a Play/Verse, singing songs, performing a little Autumn concert and dance for parents and a Harvest Market celebrating the ripening, fruitfulness, Will and courage that is Autumn. As the year steadily turned, cooler days and weeks drew us towards the long, dark of Mid Winter Night and the beautiful candle-lit festivities shared by the whole community.



And after all the chilly mornings and cosy times, how wonderful it was when at last, we felt Life forces moving upwards from Mother Earth. Spring season had arrived, and

with our whole school community, we celebrated the renewal of life after the rich inwardness of winter; with a spring in our step and a Spring Market – such a joyful, wonderful celebration of life and hope was felt by all.

In the later part of the year, as the Spring days grew warmer, the students and Teachers ventured out near and far, on Class Camps and Excursions.

Class 4 and 5 went to Noosa North Shore Campground and along with camping, cooking, walking and swimming activities, their trip also included a visit to the Ginger Factory, a Woodwork factory in Gympie and also a Gold Mining Museum.

Class 2 and 3 ventured on a camp to Woody Head, where the children enjoyed walks, swimming, camp cooking and helping; a visit to Yamba, a Rockpool Ramble and a stop in Grafton, City of Jacarandas to walk and bathe the beautiful, fragrant colour of lilac.



The Class 1 Camp happened at the school. The children set up their tents with the help of the Class 4 and 5 students, then cooked their camp dinner and dessert, before enjoying some evening activities

connecting with the nature around them and singing nature songs.

The Kindergarten children, accompanied by the Class 6 and 7 students enjoyed a beach adventure day at Hastings Point which included exploring the rock pools, paddling in the beautiful creek and a picnic lunch in the park.





In Semester Two, we welcomed Teera Palmer as Assistant Principal. In Term 4 Teera together with Matt Reynolds capably took on the School Leadership, acting in my place, while I took some much needed leave. I so appreciated their presence and give my thanks for their good work at Aetaomah.

Also, at the end of the year, we farewelled some dear and appreciated Aetaomah Staff and wished them well on the next chapter of their life journeys.

In closing, I would like to express thanks to the College of Teachers for their interest, care and responsibility given this year in holding the educational impulse and continuing development of the school, while guiding from the heart.

Appreciation and thanks also to our dedicated Support Staff, including Leadership, Administration, Site, Assistants and Volunteers for their wonderful care and contributions.

Finally, our grateful thanks to our wonderful Aetaomah Parents, to everyone who contributed to and supported the school, in so many ways in the 2023 year.

Ron Caisley
Principal

*Our highest endeavour must be to develop free individuals who
are able, out of their own initiative, to impart purpose and
direction in their lives.*

... Rudolf Steiner

Aetaomah School

Our School

Aetaomah is a small school nestled in the heart of the Tweed Valley in the foothills of Mt Warning, a short bus ride from Murwillumbah and Uki.

At Aetaomah we educate through the arts and imagination, by making things, enjoying outdoor activities and agriculture. In this way we can creatively inspire the inquiring mind, delicately foster the child's emerging thinking, care for the physical and emotional health and nurture social and leadership skills. We strive to develop in the children individual inner strength imbued with moral, ethical and social skills, a sense of wonder and a desire to learn and understand the world and humanity. We unite imagination with the sciences, expressed through the visual and performing arts and the skeleton of our syllabus and values are brought to life through wonder and creativity.

This is the heart of our educational approach, enriched by the science, art and practicality of biodynamic agriculture (we have two gardens worked by the children) and outdoor activities such as sports and excursions. The development of life-skills is fostered through handwork and hard and soft crafts. An open, artistic outlook, penetrated by thought, reason, knowledge and hope with a sense of spirituality weaving through all things and a capacity and determination to work through life's challenges are all priorities we endeavour to share with the children.



Student population

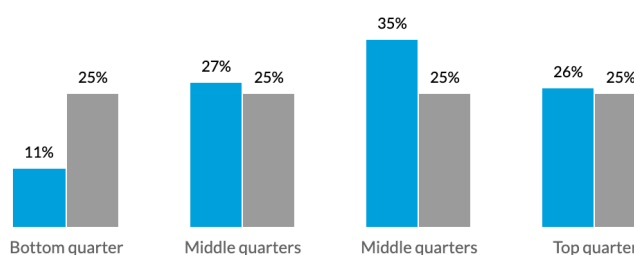
Our students come from Murwillumbah area, Uki, Burringbar, Nimbin and Blue Knob, rural properties, semi-suburban situations, villages and alternative communities. It is a mixed socio-economic area of low to average, and a philosophically stimulating one.

Student background

Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA)

School ICSEA value	1057
Average ICSEA value	1000
School ICSEA percentile	71

Distribution of Socio-Educational Advantage (SEA)



■ School distribution ■ Australian distribution

Percentages are rounded and may not add to 100

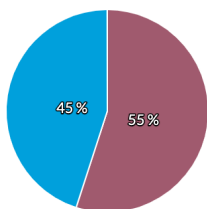
We welcome students from all backgrounds. This area provides a stimulating diversity of outlooks. All of our students speak English as their first language at present, and 4 students speak a language other than English at home.

The school student enrollment in 2023 was 74, including 41 girls and 33 boys.

Students

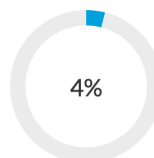
Total enrolments: 74

Boys 33
Girls 41



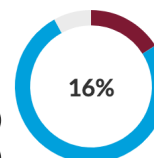
Full-time equivalent enrolments: 74.0

Indigenous students



Language background other than English

Yes (16%)
No (76%)
Not stated (8%)



Educational Approach

Aetaomah is a Kindergarten to Year 8 school based on the educational work of Dr. Rudolf Steiner. We strive to develop in the children individual inner strength imbued with moral, ethical and social skills, a sense of wonder and a desire to learn and understand the world and humanity. We unite imagination with the sciences, expressed through the visual and performing arts and the foundation of our syllabus and values are brought to life through wonder and creativity.



At the heart of Aetaomah's educational approach and philosophy, is the understanding of the child as a human being, developing in the gradual process of incarnating into a relationship with the physical world. To really understand this world requires an imaginative, artistic approach. To educate in accordance with the natural development of the child requires creative artistry and imagination. The growing human being develops through recognisable physical and cognitive stages from birth to the change of teeth, where the physical body is consolidated.

All subjects are taught through the arts and crafts: drawing, painting, music, singing, story, poetry, drama, modelling and a range of handcrafts and enriched by the science, art and the practicality of biodynamic agriculture (we have two gardens worked by the children) and outdoor activities such as sports and excursions.

The development of life skills is fostered through handwork and hard and soft crafts. An open, artistic outlook, penetrated by thought, reason, knowledge and hope with a sense of spirituality weaving through all things and a capacity and determination to work through life's challenges are all priorities we endeavour to share with the children.



Imagination is the key to the child's world, especially through play and imitation in the kindergarten, the artistic guidance of the teacher in primary school and informed leadership in high school.

A nurturing learning environment based on imitation of adults and creative play in the natural world is what the young Kindergarten child needs. In the school this is supported by activities such as content-based songs, modelling, drawing, painting, handwork and gardening, encouraged by the child's natural instinct to imitate their teacher.

The next stage, from the change of teeth to puberty, sees the social aspect and the unfolding of the child's imaginative relationship to the outer world. The child has an inner need for an authority to set the examples of how to act in the world. The intellect in association with imagination and creativity is preparing to unfold. The rhythmical processes, particularly the heartbeat/breathing relationship are consolidating.



A day based on rhythm and a respected authority (their teacher) is important to lay the foundations for physical, emotional well-being and a healthy, free, thought life.

From around puberty the principles of love and critical, reasoned thought are released and need to be nurtured to allow the young person to develop into freedom and responsibility. The key to our education approach is from Play to Beauty to Work.

Respect and responsibility always has been and always will be an integral part of our school's social, ethical and moral education programme.

This is approached first and foremost in the presentation of lessons. Stories are told picturing social situations and a variety of ways of dealing with them. In general, one story a day over 9-10 years of schooling gives a thorough coverage.

We present all the subjects in such a way that they picture a moral/social aspect. This requires close observation of the social workings of the children and use of stories to help correct problems.

Teachers set the tone of respect and responsibility through the way that they relate to each other, the children and the parents.

Social events such as Class Trips away where the children need to work together, and in a situation where they need to respect others (eg. A Camping Ground) are vital and are an integral part of the school year for all students.



Our highest endeavour must be to develop free individuals who are able, out of their own initiative, to impart purpose and direction in their lives.

... Rudolf Steiner

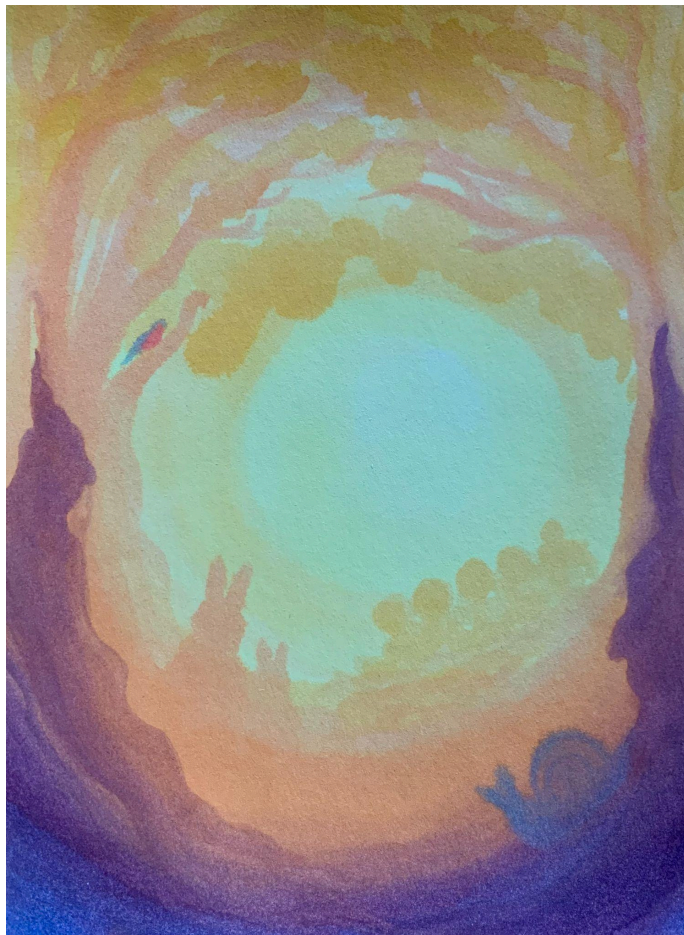
[Aetaomah School](#)

Outcomes & Results

As an Independent School, our education is underpinned by the philosophy and values of Steiner Education. Our Steiner Curriculum follows a program of Main Lessons, meets NSW Syllabus requirements and links closely to the stages of child development. Hence, we deliver a rich and broad curriculum and the timing of delivery of when and why we teach as we do, is often a point of difference. Our programs are designed to support the developing child with minimal exposure to stress and as such, our teachers spend minimal time preparing the children for the tests.

Whilst our school always participates in NAPLAN testing, parents do have the right to request withdrawal of their child/ren from sitting the tests, should they wish.

In 2023, two students participated in the National Assessment Programme - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). The Parents of other students requested their child/ren be exempt from sitting the test.



Staffing



SCHOOL STAFF	NUMBER
Teaching staff	7
Full-time equivalent teaching staff	5.8
Non teaching staff	5
Full-time equivalent non-teaching staff	3.2

LEVEL OF TEACHER ACCREDITATION	NUMBER
Conditional	0
Provisional	2
Proficient	7

[My School](#)

All teachers at Aetaomah participate in regular meetings weekly, where ideas in education are discussed, drawing from all relevant sources and areas. Ideas on how to help individual children are discussed drawing on the experience within the teaching group and qualified resources from without.

We all participate in artistic speech and movement activities at these meetings. This is important as the most used tools of teaching are the voice, facial expression, gesture and posture. Instantly a teacher will gain or lose a child's interest through his or her uninspiring speech or sloppy movement.

Staff Professional Learning Days are held at the end of each term break; teacher education sessions are held with experienced teachers. All Staff participate. At present, none of our staff members identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.





Attendance

87% of students attended school on average each school day in 2023.

Year Level	Attendance Rate
Kindergarten	87%
Class 1	89%
Class 2	84%
Class 3	86%
Class 4	85%
Class 5	88%
Class 6	91%
Class 7	85%

Note that attendance rates were down in 2023 due to the ongoing impact of Covid-19 which required students to remain at home if they exhibited any flu-like symptoms.

Management of non-attendance

If your child is away any day, you must ring and let us know in the morning. The phone call lets us know that your child is safe. Please don't send an email. They are not always able to be checked early in the day. If we know to expect a call when a child is away we can check further. This is for the protection of your child.

An explanatory communication/note is expected on the child's return. This is a requirement; the school is obliged to mark the Attendance Roll *Absent Without Reason* if one is not received.

Mandatory reporting procedures apply where absences are extended, or the student may be at risk.

School Policy

The School Policies below link to those made publicly available on our website

[Enrolment Policy](#)

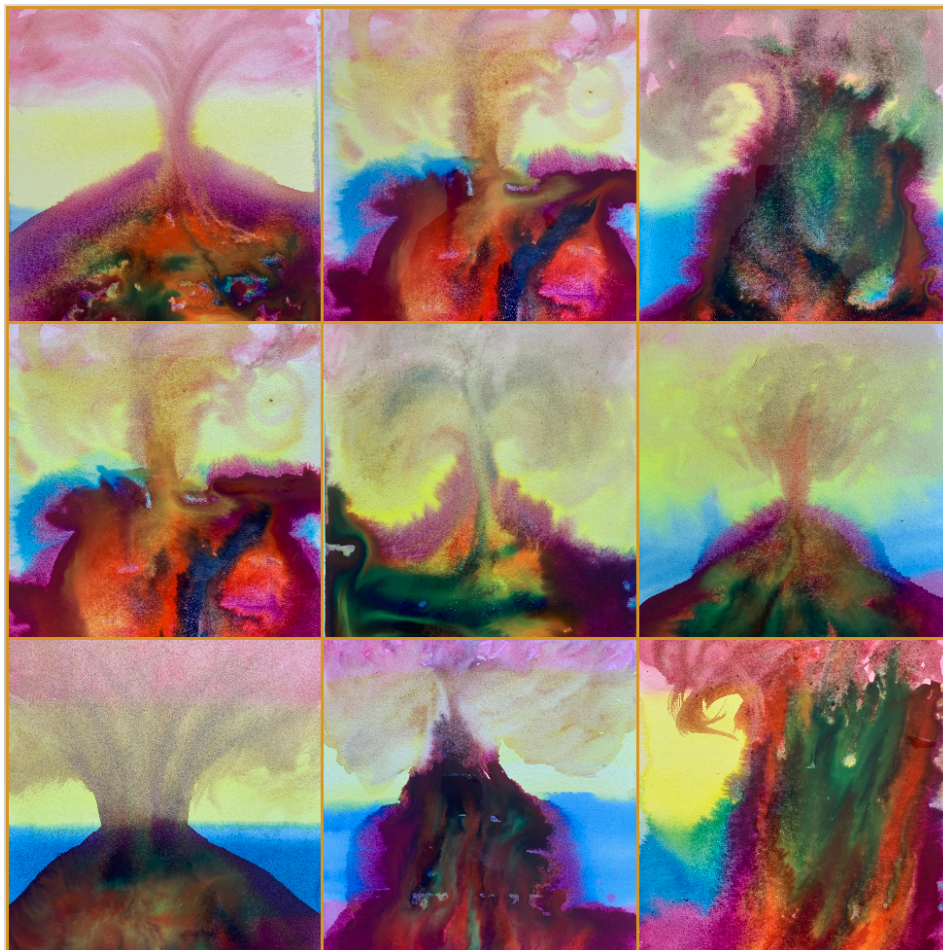
[Child Protection Policy](#)

[Anti-bullying Policy](#)

[Discipline Policy](#)

[Complaints Handling Policy](#)

[Aetaomah School](#)



Stakeholder Satisfaction

Creativity is a key aspect of the school and the children are enthusiastically involved. The students perform major play presentations several times a year and these provide an artistic-creative focus through drama, movement and music. Often, some of the parents are involved in costume creation.

Students

Students are always excited and proud to show their parents their class work, which often includes their bookwork, handwork, craft, and art work. A wonderful gauge of satisfaction is to observe our students proudly singing or performing in a play for a parent audience. The students have very happy days at school and love to work and care for the gardens.

From time to time, we have adult visitors who pop in to visit the school and they share happy stories of their own time as a student at Aetaomah.

Teachers

Teachers are most often fulfilled by their interactions with families on School Community events.



Events such as Seasonal Festivals, Markets and Family Fun Day are a wonderful time to observe Parents, Teachers and Students collaborating together to create special times and memories together.

Teachers feel well supported by Parents who give a good response when asked to be 'Parent Helpers.'

Gardening days where the children, parents and teachers all work together in the school garden have had enthusiastic results.

Our Teachers and Staff often express their love of Aetaomah and of working with their colleagues.

Parents

Teachers have regular meetings with our parents individually, and as a Class group. These meetings may take place after school and also may take the form of formally arranged meetings; the anecdotal reports heard from parents are of satisfaction. Such meetings with parents are important opportunities to deal with any problems that may be simmering. The door is always open for parents to come to the school and view the children's work and talk to the teachers.



Parent feedback is positive and appreciative of what is happening at the school, this is particularly observed when we have long-term families reluctantly leaving the school with appreciative thanks, sadness and very warm memories. Seasonal festivals bring the whole school community including parents together, where the children give a short presentation (music, speech, drama, movement or a talk) and the children's bookwork, craft etc is displayed. These are all opportunities for observing Teacher, Student & Parent satisfaction in action. The teachers work harmoniously together

and are able to express attitudes and raise problems as they wish. School morale continues to be high.

*'A healthy social life is found only when,
in the mirror of each soul,
the whole community finds its reflection, and when,
in the whole community, the virtue of each one is living'*

...Rudolf Steiner

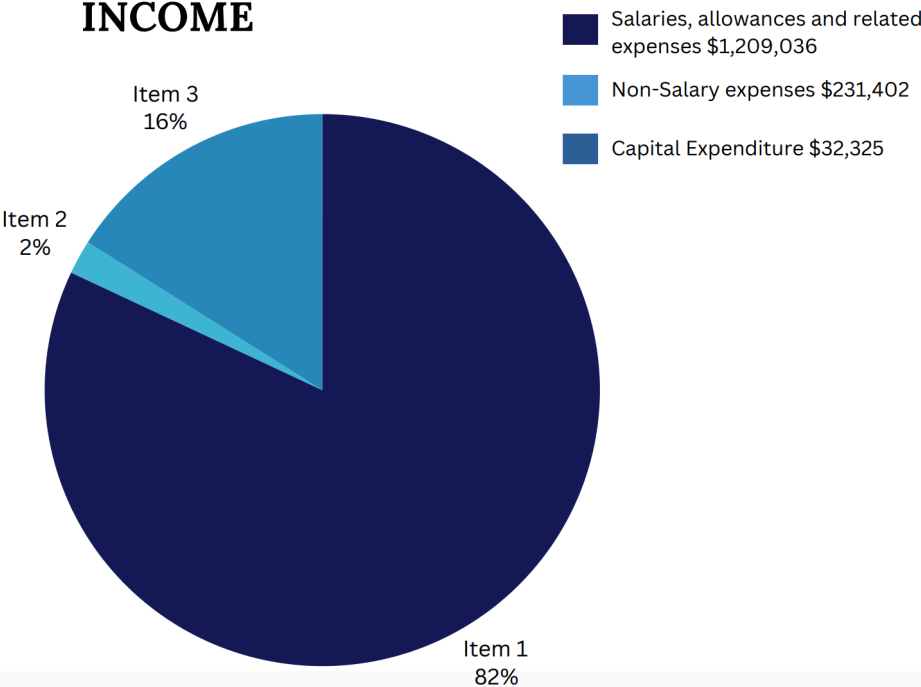


Financial Information

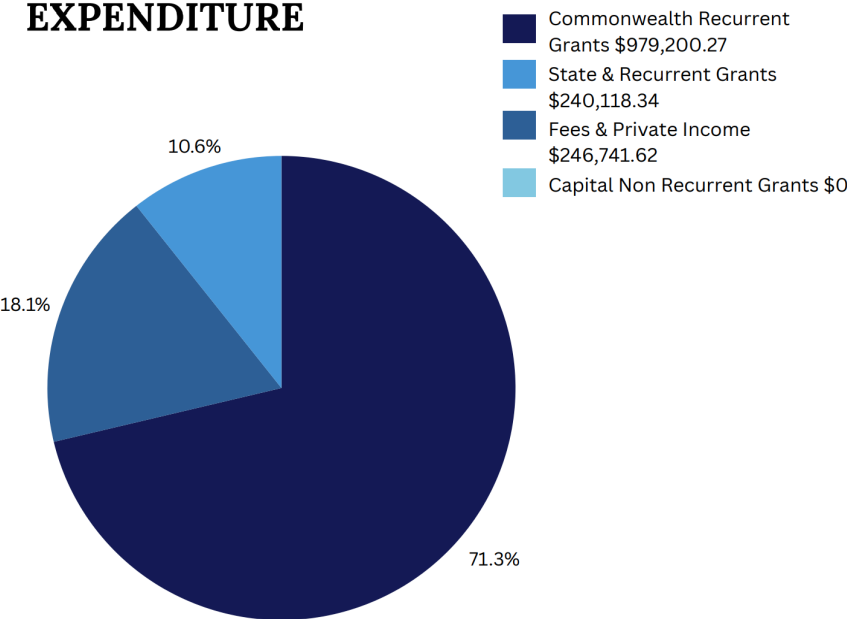
Sun Artistry Limited. Financial Review 2023

[My School](#)

INCOME



EXPENDITURE



A Verse For Our Times

We must eradicate from the soul
All fear and terror of what comes towards us out of the future
We must acquire serenity
In all feelings and sensations about the future

We must look forwards
With absolute equanimity to all that may come
And we must think only, that whatever comes
Is given to us by a world direction, full of wisdom

It is part of what we must learn in this age
Namely, to live out of pure trust - Without any security in existence.
Trust in the ever-present help of the spiritual world.
Truly, nothing else will do
If our courage is not to fail us.

Let us discipline our will
And let us seek the awakening from within ourselves
Every morning and every evening

...Rudolf Steiner

