

# 2019 Annual Report

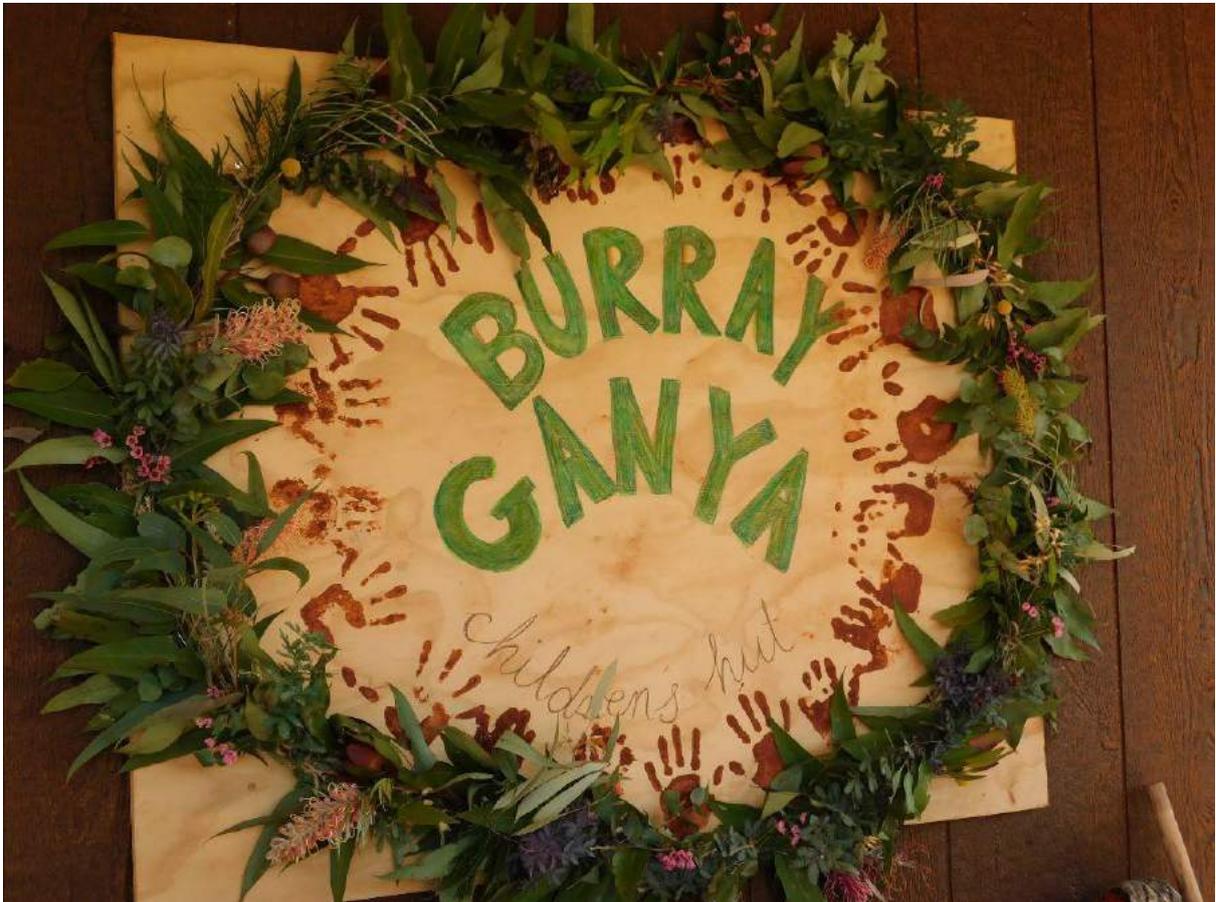


Photo: 2019 Sign on the new Kindergarten Building named Burray Ganya, Birpai language meaning 'the children's hut', hand painted and prepared by the Kindergarten class of 2019, using the rich, red earth from the garden as paint, and decorated from native plants that were grown in the garden over the previous two years.



**PORT MACQUARIE**

**Steiner School**



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## Mission Statement

*To create a community-centred, Steiner education-based school for the Port Macquarie region, which fosters a holistic education for our children and a valuable, ethical, nurturing resource for our community.*

## Our Core Values

- Education which nurtures the head, the heart, and the hands
- Social relationships as a means for connection, inclusion, trust, and meaningful learning
- Art, creativity, and imagination as an integral part of the learning process to cultivate self-motivated free thinkers who are equipped to meet the challenges of the future
- Valuing whole-life-learning and actively supporting learning for parents, families, and our community as well as for the children
- Inclusiveness as opposed to exclusiveness
- Valuing community and the importance of skills and human contribution before economic value
- Education should be accessible to all, regardless of social, cultural, or economic background
- Supporting the long-term study and experience of the natural environment in order to deeply connect to ourselves, one another, and the world as a whole
- Recognising that the actions and thoughts of each individual impact the health of our community, and then our planet
- Festivals to celebrate the change of seasons, the natural rhythms of the earth and the community, and to experience reverence and gratitude for the natural cycles of life

## A Message from the President of the Board

2019 was a year of much change and growth in all areas of the school. The year was marked as the anniversary of 100 years of Steiner education in the world. It was quite an experience to be involved in a Steiner school that is just newly forming, at such a salient time in the history of the educational movement. There was a definite sense of worldwide tribute and reflection followed by groundswell for social renewal.

As usual, the year started off with a flurry of activity with the expansion into two classrooms and learning spaces. We welcomed Sally McDowell into her new role as Class 1,2 teacher and Kristy into her new role of Teaching Principal. Kylie Ross joined the teaching team in the role of Kindergarten teacher to allow Kristy the opportunity to take on more in the realm of school leadership.

As a result of the creation of the Teaching Principal position, the School Management Committee was dissolved and the delegation to that committee was redirected to the Teaching Principal position. The board roles and responsibilities were redefined to achieve better clarity and a more suited approach to the skills held by our board members.



The Company was registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission and our building fund was successfully granted Donatable Gift Recipient status in February. This is such a positive feature for the school and many thanks go to Cheryl for all her efforts in bringing that together. We began to receive our first donations into the fund almost immediately and we were able to plan a building fund fundraiser in September to mark the Centenary of Steiner education in the world. This was a wonderful way to bring our school community together for such a marked occasion and to raise money for our building fund.

Early on in the year we appointed John Oxley as our Financial Consultant and John has helped us immensely to maintain good control of our finances and provide specialist knowledge and recommendations to the board as we navigated some large financial decisions throughout the year.

One of the major focus areas of the board in 2019 was the future site of the school. The board recognised a need for more assistance in this area and resolved to form The Future Site Committee and co-opt members with specialist skills in the area of local property knowledge, Council liaison, strategy and developer contacts. This Committee worked tirelessly throughout the year (and still does to this day) to bring potential opportunities to the board for consideration.

2019 was also a year of bringing stabilisation to our school and working deeply to improve our systems and processes from the foundation level. The board has played a crucial role in all phases – enabling this, allowing this change and being part of the doing aspect also which is a reflection of where we are at as a young board.

In 2019 the Governance, Leadership, Administration and Management (GLaM) conference was held by SEA at Lorien Novalis Steiner School in Sydney. The theme was social renewal and was in a way a celebration of the 100-year anniversary of Steiner education. Torin Finser gave a wonderful keynote on the past, present and future of Steiner education. In this, he put forward some powerful ideas of looking at the current needs of humanity and reclaiming our social mandate. This has been so relevant to our current times.

In October, the board formed our Finance and Risk Committee and has been working to bring risk management into our consciousness at board level. This is in an effort to further develop our board in order to be ready for what the future may bring.

The board undertook a number of professional development sessions on governance with Paul Davies from Integroe Partners and Steven Codrington and I thank our friends at Mid North Coast Community College for inviting us to these sessions and making this further development and professional learning a possibility for our board in these early stages of our formation.

One of the highlights of the year for me was the presentation on the Threefold Social Order in Schools by Lisa Devine. Perhaps it was the timing of this and the ripeness of the information tying in with the Centenary of Steiner education and the movement towards social renewal but the inspiration this brought to me and I'm sure, others as well, was profound.

Over the course of the year, the Board held 13 meetings, the AGM and 3 special planning meetings. There were no new Company members in 2019 which leaves a total of thirteen members. All existing board members retained tenure throughout 2019 and there were no new appointments to the board throughout the year.



We had no outgoing board members in 2019 so to our current board members, Bianca Bateman, Cheryl Meyer Millican, Ruth Gallagher and Fred Buys, I wish to pass on my sincere thanks for your commitment and service to the school board. I feel that it is a privilege to be on the board and to work with you. I also want to acknowledge the countless hours volunteered by the Board of Directors and members of the Future Site Committee, Bursary Committee, Building Fund Committee and Finance and Risk Committee in keeping a steady momentum and forward direction of the school towards our vision.

A special thanks to our Principal, Kristy Barry, who has been with us since the birth of this school and has helped us to realise our vision of bringing Steiner education to families in Port Macquarie.

We are forever grateful to the anonymous benefactor who continued to support our school through the continuation of the bursary offerings in 2019 and for the more recent and incredibly generous donations into our building fund.

I am always impressed by those who work and volunteer for our school. To keep a new school afloat for 3 years in the most regulated State in Australia, is no mean feat. This dedication does not appear in just any old setting. I believe it appears here, in our staff, board, committees and in our school because this is the spiritual world at work, within us as a group and within us as a school community.

Something I find very inspiring and motivating in this work is that not only are we giving children the opportunity to receive a Steiner education in Port Macquarie, we are also giving them the opportunity to see the adults around them come together in a positive way to create something for them and for our community.

Mel Ayriss, President of the Board

## **A Report from the Teaching Principal**

2019 began with our newly appointed class teacher, Sally McDowell attending the Glenaeon Teacher Training Intensives, Sydney, in mid-January. The next two weeks at the school was a hive of busyness, with preparations taking place to create a second classroom and a staggered timetable, to make way for the new Class 1/2. The school year began with a graduation ceremony, our Rainbow Bridge ceremony, where the outgoing, first graduating kindergarten class of 2018 met their Class Teacher for the first time, together with 3 new students, who joined the school as part of the Class 2 cohort. There were smiles, songs and flowers, and a few tears could be seen among the gentle rain drops that fell that morning.

Kindergarten commenced the following day with a strong class of 10 students, held by teachers Kristy Barry and Kylie Ross, in a job-share position. In total, we started the year with 19 students in classes K-2, a large increase from our first year of 6 students.

2019 marked the one hundredth year of Steiner Education in the world, and there were many initiatives in place for Steiner schools across the globe. We were part of the Waldorf 100 Postcard Initiative, with special thanks to the Armidale Waldorf School, who shared some of the postcards that they were sent from Waldorf students from all around the world, as well as giving us pre-addressed blank postcards for our own students to decorate with their artwork and send back across the world to other Steiner schools. They coloured the wall of the school office so cheerfully, with postcards from

faraway places such as Brazil and Switzerland. Teachers, Sally and Kristy travelled to Byron Bay in July to attend the 100-Year Waldorf School Conference, held at Cape Byron Steiner School. The theme was 'Renewal for the 21st Century', and the conference program was a packed few days of inspiring keynote talks, workshops, and communal meals with lots of conversations, sharing and networking among the many participants.



Postcards from all around the world, as part of the Waldorf 100 project.

The teachers participated in several studies over the year in their faculty meetings, including 'The Spirit of the Waldorf School, Lectures Surrounding the Founding of the First Waldorf School, Stuttgart 1919', by Rudolf Steiner. Later in the year, we completed a study on the 'Four Temperaments'.

During the year, the school hosted many visitors to the school to present a variety of talks and workshops for parents and staff. These included; Susan Perrow (*The Healing Power of Stories*), Lynn Clifton (*Bridging Home and School with Home Health Care*), Melanie Deefholts, (*Child Development and the Waldorf-Steiner Curriculum*), Lou Harvey-Zahra (*Thriving Children, Stages of Child Development, and Positive Classroom Discipline*), and Lisa Devine (*The Threefold Social Order*). Mark and Ruth Gallagher commenced a book study on the Threefold Social Order lectures by Rudolf Steiner, following Lisa's talk, with a group of interested parents and Kristy.

With Steiner education being new in Port Macquarie, the school has an important role in bringing Steiner's pioneering work on child development and the three-fold and four-fold pictures of the human being to the parent and broader community. These educational events are always well-attended, and it truly was an honour to have so many special guests visit us throughout the year.

Seasonal festivals were celebrated throughout the year, including a vibrant Harvest Festival at the end of term one, a mid-winter Lantern Walk Festival at the Lost Plot Community Garden in term two, and a Spring Festival and Maypole Celebration in term three. The year finished with a beautiful Christmas Festival, with carols from the older children and a Nativity Play performed by the Kindergarten students. We celebrated the end of another wonderful year with a whole school picnic at Flynn's Beach, where everyone delighted in eating the gingerbread house that the Kindergarten children had made, as part of their shapes and measurement lessons.

In term one we advertised for a Teacher's Assistant, and employed Jeffrey Styles, who joined us each Friday, and was also able to take on relief teaching for Class 1/2. Both Kindergarten and Class 1/2 participated in local bush walks each week, exploring the nearby beautiful Kooloongbung Creek Nature

Reserve. This is a local koala habitat, and the children became familiar with how to spot koalas and locate koala-habitat trees. They used the maps along the way to help navigate the loop track, and enjoyed playing games, climbing trees in the reserve and 'fishing' off the bridge in the creek using native lomandra grass.

School photos were taken this year by a parent photographer, with thanks to Noni Colyer- Marr, and photo artwork completed by another parent, with thanks to Scott Simpson. The Kindergarten children had an eyesight health check organised by Community Health.

In April, the school organised a weekend outing to a small biodynamic farm in Bellingen, which families and staff attended. This was to celebrate the harvest and was a time for the children to enjoy the experience of collecting chicken eggs and picking fruit from the trees, such as dragon fruit and kumquats.

In early May, the school had its annual registration visit from a NESA inspector, who approved our application for Year 3 for 2020 with thanks to Annelie Johannsen-Riley, who helped prepare the documentation required for this submission. Sally visited the Casuarina Steiner School in Coffs Harbour, and spent time with their class one as part of her teacher-development program. Kristy attended the Northern Regional Leaders' meetings in Grafton throughout the year, as well as the GLaM conference held at Lorien Novalis school in Dural, Sydney.

Throughout the year the parent body was also busy, between organising fundraisers such as sausage sizzles at Bunnings, they also held a couple of working bees in the school garden and playground. They organised a Craft group that operated in term one, organised by parent, Robyn Falzon, and a playgroup, facilitated by Kylie Ross, Jenhi Sheyan and then by Gillian Colgan, and was held in various parent's homes, one morning per week.

In the middle of the year, the school built a specially designed Kindergarten building at the rear of our 8 Table Street property, which was ready for the commencement of Term Three. We held an official opening with a respected local Indigenous Elder, who conducted a Welcome to Country and smoking ceremony, and helped name the building '*Burray Ganya*', meaning *The Children's Hut*, in local Birpai language.





Throughout the year Kristy visited Newcastle University, Port Macquarie campus, and both the TAFE at Wauchope and Taree campuses to give students an introduction to Steiner education and some of the remedial work that is inherent in Steiner education. These sessions were met by very interested learning support and primary education students, who were very keen to know more about Steiner education and the school.

In September, the school held a major fundraising event at the Little Fish Café and Vineyard, with local musician, Rose Wilson entertaining on the harp, and our own parent choir performing, under the direction of Rose. There was a raffle and auction, and the local newspaper, Port News covered the event. Money raised launched the school's Building Fund.

In September, we advertised for a new Kindergarten teacher for 2020 and for a part-time class one teacher, and interviews were conducted shortly after.

In term four, the commencement of new parent interviews took place, with 15 families being interviewed for enrolment into kindergarten 2020.

The search to find a larger property for the school continued throughout 2019, with many sites being considered. The board-appointed Future Site Committee was very active in their investigations, and there was regular communication with the parent community as the search continued.

In November, the school was placed in a difficult position when Port Macquarie experienced widespread bushfires throughout the surrounding area, and the school was forced to send students home when there were days with unsafe levels of smoke. Smoke levels were constantly monitored and assessed for safety. This caused some disruption at the time, and the fires caused fear and uncertainty amongst all in the community.

I would like to express my thanks to the parent volunteers, who helped support the teachers and assistants throughout the school year, in fundraising efforts, assisting on bushwalks, washing rosters, helping in hand work sessions and with reading groups, and in supporting all of the festivals. A special thank you to Galina Tucker for all her work in helping to establish and organise the school parent library.

**Kristy Barry, Teaching Principal**

## **Faculty Report – Kindergarten**

Kindergarten started the year with 10 students, using the church hall in a creative way to share the large space that was divided into two appropriate learning spaces, using a staggered timetable. The kindergarten children did their morning circle inside when Class 1/2 skipped outside. We then moved into the kitchen to complete our cooking program each morning to prepare our morning tea, cook, chop fruit, and enjoy eating a seasonal plate of fruit before heading outside for our outdoor garden program and play. We would return indoors to eat a warm grain each morning; Rice on Mondays with seaweed and roasted seeds, Bread baking on Tuesdays with local organic honey, Millet and vegetables on Wednesdays, Lentil and Vegetable soup on Thursdays and Oats with fruit or apple crumble on Fridays. The children would then move inside for their indoor play and story time, whilst the older

children were outside eating their morning tea and having a play. The two groups became very familiar with alternating between the various learning spaces, and this worked well, although with more children arriving, and with children growing bigger, we began to outgrow the kitchenette, where some lessons were taking place. The decision was made in term two to build our own classroom, which took place in the middle of the school year.



In May, Kristy and Kylie attended the Early Childhood Regional meeting at Chrysalis Steiner School in the Thora Valley. There was a talk on Creativity and the Young Child, by Ebba Bodame, as well as storytelling, with the theme of bees. Galit Fischer also presented a Movement Circle, that focused on early developmental movements and reflexes. It was a wonderful opportunity to meet other Early Years' teachers from the area, and to spend a day in the beautiful kindergarten classroom at Chrysalis.

Term one was a time to establish class rhythms, learn to be a part of a class group for the first time, and a time to get familiar with our school grounds. The term finished with a fun harvest festival that the parents were invited to. There were games, such as sack races, and everyone enjoyed a lovely feast, and stories and morning circles developed throughout the term helped the children to live deeply into the summer and the harvest time. We visited a farm just after Easter, to collect hens' eggs and meet various farm animals, such as goats, cows, and horses.

In term two, the class started to venture further out into the local surrounds, going on regular bush walks to 'Kooloongbung'. The children walked so tentatively at first, as they walked down the stairs into the darkened forest, some even appeared a little afraid of the bush. By and by, the children's confidence, strength, and comfort in walking the various tracks grew, and they began to enjoy looking for koala scats, and locating koalas high in the trees.



The children would walk past the paperbark forest and cross several bridges over the tidal, mangrove creek, spotting various bird and fish life. They enjoyed climbing trees and free play time in the reserve and singing their way back to school for a rest. In term two, Kristy gave a parent talk on the '*Six Year Change- the developmental stage of the 6-year-old child*'. The highlight of term two was attending the Lantern Walk Festival, with a special puppet play at twilight, baking bread in the outdoor bread ovens and eating delicious, home-cooked soup. Mid-year parent-teacher interviews were conducted in term two.



In term three, the children started to show a lot of growth, and settled into their new classroom so well. Many mathematics outcomes were embedded in daily morning circle activities, as the children mined for gems. Counting forwards, backwards, counting in twos, addition and subtraction skills were all developed and practiced in these morning sessions in a creative and fun way. The children used small chalkboards to practice writing numbers and sequencing numbers, as well as writing letters and their names and their friend's names in chalk. They created a play from the fairy tale, 'The Elves and the Shoemaker', which they practiced extensively and created costumes for. They invited Class 1/2 to watch their performance. Towards the end of the term, the children started to live into the warmer and longer days, with the coming of spring, and learnt many new songs, verses and dances to perform at the Spring Festival and Maypole for their parents. A lot of work in the garden took place at this time, harvesting spring peas and snow peas, and planting and caring for many seeds and seedlings. Arona brought in some of her newborn ducklings for all the children to have a cuddle with.



Kristy gave a parent talk on the *'Four Lower Senses'*, as well as did a morning circle together to provide the parents with an opportunity to experience firsthand the richness of language, the rhyming, sequencing, gestures and memory involved in learning these twenty minute morning circles, that the children do each morning at school.

In term four, our summer, Christmas term, the children lived into some very beautiful, traditional Nativity stories, and created their own Christmas story book, writing simple nouns to accompany their picture books. The children also made an Advent calendar, writing numbers 1 to 24, as a countdown to Christmas. Twenty-five envelopes were filled with treasures from each of the four kingdoms, such as minerals, sand, or crystals; silk, wool, or feathers; flowers, ferns and grasses; and drawings of an Angel, a baby and a class photo. During the morning circle, the children practiced a Nativity Play, filled with songs, movement, and various roles, which was performed on the last day of school for the parents. It was a wonderful experience to see how far the children had come as a whole class, and they really shone like a bright Christmas star, as they performed the play to a rather large audience in the school hall. We finished the day at the beach, eating the delicious gingerbread house that the students made as part of their cooking program.

Kristy Barry, Teaching Principal and Kylie Ross, Kindergarten Teacher

## Faculty Report – Classes 1 and 2



Our journey started with a rainbow bridge ceremony. The kindergarten class and the newly enrolled class two students crossed a beautifully decorated bridge to meet me, their new class teacher. Crossing the bridge was a gesture of their ending of early childhood years to the beginning as a class group. This marked the more formal Steiner education model primary years model, with all the Stage One outcomes of the NESA curriculum being explored throughout the year, through the context of the Steiner Curriculum.

Each morning began with a blessing and gratitude circle, in which parents were welcome to join, and then said goodbye for the day. The class then participated in skipping and sequenced movements as a form of exercise and means of grounding themselves with their surroundings.

When entering the classroom all students individually greeted their teacher with a handshake and then a 30-40-minute morning circle commenced. The morning circle consisted of songs, verse, movement, and speech work relating to the main lesson in place and also seasonal and physical milestones the students were reaching. The recorder became part of our morning circle during term three, after the class had finished their woven recorder bags in craft sessions. Songs of the pentatonic scale were learnt as part of this program and this program will continue till the end of year five.

The main lesson continued after the morning circle. These main lesson blocks ran over the course of three to four weeks and allowed opportunities for topics to be explored on a deep level. A three-day rhythm in which the children were introduced through story on the first day, retold the story in their own detail on the second day and did some book work of either writing or drawing and then worked with the theme on a deeper level happened on the third day. Each term consisted of a mathematics, English and science/HSIE based main lesson. These topics were then worked further with in practise lessons over the remainder of the year.



Our practise lessons took place in the middle of the day and were based around mathematics, English, form drawing, cooking and science. These times allowed the students to continue working with ideas drawn from the main lessons and outcomes of the syllabus that required further investigation.

Within mathematics work with the four processes and number sense were key themes throughout the year, this was done through puzzle and games-based activities as well as teacher made revision booklets and group tasks. English practise lessons focused on handwriting practise, creating word lists for different letter and sound blends, and creating our own readers. Our cooking and gardening sessions allowed science and mathematics outcomes to be practised as we predicted, measured, created, and shared our findings. A class based and a home reading program was established and continued for the remainder of the year.



Afternoons involved rhythmic and hands on activities of wet on wet painting, bushwalking and exploration time in the Kooloongbung Creek Nature Reserve, craft, gardening, and outdoor games. Within our weekly handcraft sessions, the class embarked on the long-term project of weaving their own recorder case, which took over a term to create. We then learnt the skill of knitting, making our own set of needles and then knitting and creating a class blanket and small animals. Parent helpers were of great assistance during these times and created a stronger sense of community within the classroom. Our gardening sessions involved lots of composting, planting, and harvesting seasonal vegetables and upkeep of larger plants and areas of the schoolyard. This encouraged the students to take a greater responsibility and share a greater respect for their school environment and recognise changes to the natural environment over the seasons. On our bushwalking afternoons parents often joined us for the walk as we took our lunch and often a camera or sketching pad to document the local plants and animals we encountered at different times of the year.

The year finished with a very special performance at the Christmas festival in which all families attended before celebrating with our annual picnic at Flynn's Beach.

Sally McDowell, Class 1/2 Teacher

### Student activities in 2019:

- Regular bushwalks
- Seasonal festivals; Autumn Harvest Festival, community Winter Lantern Walk, Spring Festival and Maypole, and Christmas Festival and Nativity Play
- Recorder playing
- Cooking, gardening, making a bee hotel
- Woodwork projects
- Trip to a Biodynamic farm

- Handcrafts and arts program
- Seasonal activities such as making Winter Wonder rub, hand-dipped beeswax candles, lantern making, citrus cleaning sprays from preserved lemons and oranges
- Biodynamic Stir and garden application, with Mark and Ruth Gallagher
- Aboriginal storytelling with Uncle Bill for 'Home Surrounds' Main Lesson
- Kindergarten Class Plays, 'The Elves and the Shoemaker' and 'Nativity' play





## Parent Education Offered in 2019:

Susan Perrow - *The Healing Power of Stories*

Lynn Clifton - *Bridging Home and School with Home Health Care*

Melanie Deefholts - *Child Development and the Waldorf-Steiner Curriculum*

Lisa Devine - *The Threefold Social Order*

Lou Harvey-Zahra - *Thriving Children; Stages of Child Development and Positive Classroom Discipline.*

Mark and Ruth Gallagher - book study on the Threefold Social Order.

Our Kindergarten and Class Teacher also provided whole-class parent evenings each term with their parent body to discuss elements of the curriculum, child development and working with the senses. In addition, at these meetings, parents have the opportunity to participate in a morning circle and complete some artisan work, to experience some of the work that the children complete in class, as well as to learn the importance of the type of class work involved.



## School Satisfaction

There was overall a very high level of positivity and satisfaction within the school in 2019 amongst staff, parents and students in 2019. The school held regular seasonal festivals throughout the year, which were always well attended by most parents, grandparents, or family members. Additionally, we had an official opening for the new kindergarten classroom, which connected our school to a local Birpai elder, and was also well attended by families and people from the community who had helped with the project. The school parents helped with organising a major fundraiser event for the school, contacting many local businesses for prizes, with the event being covered in the local newspaper, and raising awareness and funds for the school's new building fund. The parents also helped with a hamper raffle at Christmas time, with the school year ending with a well-received Nativity play and a lovely sharing of Christmas carols.

The school, in its many attempts to secure a permanent future property for the school, held community meetings to discuss prospects that were being considered, for the community to contribute their ideas or to express their concerns. The school has been consistently transparent to the parent body in

communicating future plans and engaging community feedback and will continue to work in this manner moving forward.

The school published regular newsletters to keep parents and the community updated on achievements and events happening at the school. The feedback we have received has been of gratitude and of satisfaction, for their children to receive a Steiner education in Port Macquarie, which is fostered with such attention to detail and care. Mainly through word of mouth, the school more than tripled in its first year, which is a great accomplishment, and the school continues to grow. The school is committed to having extensive parent-teacher interviews each semester, and additionally teachers are available to meet with parents to discuss any concerns they may have.

The teachers hold regular staff meetings to discuss issues, resolve and plan, as well as conduct regular studies to deepen their work and understanding of Rudolf Steiner education. There is such a small number of staff, and teaching staff, and the classes were so small, that strong and caring relationships have been built within the school. The teachers, assistants and administration staff all contribute to the life of the school, including regular maintenance, the making of classroom resources and materials, gardening, organising and attending both festivals and working bees, which parents also get a lot out of.

With Steiner education being so new to Port Macquarie, there was a strong focus on bringing specialists to the school in 2019, who brought a robust amount of workshops to engage, educate and inspire not only the parents, but also to offer extended professional development sessions to the teachers and staff. The feedback from these inspiring sessions was always highly positive and they provided a lot of inspiration and a deeper understanding of components of Steiner education for the teachers, who were able to also use as teacher-identified and some NESA approved courses for their own professional development. The school will aim to continue to create a wonderfully inspiring program of workshops, talks and festivals for the school community in the future.

## Wellbeing Report

The bushfires around Port Macquarie in November were significant and proved to affect the wellbeing of staff and students, with extreme levels of smoke pollution that meant school closures were necessary at this time. The school purchased PP2 face masks for all, as well as two quality air filters to help with the removal of particles from the classrooms.



## Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility

Largely, the festivals were wonderful examples of the community of students and families coming together to work together to achieve a harmonious event. The collaboration and joy experienced on the festival days is felt by all and strengthens the community and the work involved in bringing a festival together, with elements of food, music, games, and artistic activities.

Other policy guidelines that focus on both student and parent code of conduct also promote our school values of showing respect and taking responsibility for our words and actions. Self-development is encouraged and supported for all teachers at the school as well as a reflective and collaborative style of teaching and learning.

## Teacher Accreditation and Professional Learning

Glenaeon Teacher Training Intensive attended by teacher Sally McDowell.

Mentor sessions with Annelie Johannssen Riley and a visit to Casuarina Steiner School, for teacher Sally McDowell.

AARSECE Early Years' workshop theme 'Working with Bees', with Ebba Bodame and Galit Fischer, held at Chrysalis Steiner School, Thora, attended by teachers Kylie Ross and Kristy Barry.

G.L.A.M conference, Lorien Novalis Steiner School, Sydney attended by teacher Kristy Barry and Board member Melodie Ayriss.

NCCD Term One Network Meeting: Planning for Students with Additional Needs, organised by the AIS, St Columba School, Port Macquarie, attended by Kristy Barry (NESA approved course).

- Susan Perrow - *The Healing Power of Stories* workshop
- Lynn Clifton - *Bridging Home and School with Home Health Care* workshop
- Melanie Deefholts - *Child Development and the Waldorf-Steiner Curriculum* – talk
- Lisa Devine - *The Threefold Social Order* - talk attended by all teachers.
- Lou Harvey Zahra - *Thriving Children; Stages of Child Development and Positive Classroom Discipline* attended by teachers Kristy Barry and Sally McDowell (NESA approved course).
- Waldorf 100- Renewal of Steiner Education, conference in Byron Bay, attended by Sally McDowell and Kristy Barry.
- Child Protection training in school session, attended by all staff.

Teachers continued to complete and log their teacher identified and NESA approved training throughout the year.



*The 100-Year Anniversary of Steiner/Waldorf education. Cape Byron Steiner School, July 2019*

## Workforce Composition

Staff	Position	Load
Nyree Pryce	Administration Assistant	0.875FTE
Kristy Barry	Teaching Principal- Proficient Teacher	0.4FTE
Kristy Barry	Kindergarten Teacher	0.6FTE
Kylie Ross	Kindergarten Teacher - Proficient Teacher	0.4FTE
Kylie Ross	Kindergarten Assistant	0.6FTE
Arona Gibbons	Kindergarten Assistant	0.4FTE
Sally McDowell	Class One-Two Teacher - Proficient Teacher	1.0FTE
Jeffrey Styles	Class One-Two Assistant	0.2FTE
Gillian Colgan	Playgroup Facilitator	0.1FTE

## Student Attendance

In total, at the end of 2019 we had 21 students in the School. The majority were full-time students with a small number of part-time students who joined the Kindergarten class for two days each week. The average student attendance rate in 2019 was 89.87%.

## Student Numbers

Student Population for 2019	
Kindergarten	11
Class 1	6
Class 2	4

*Data as per the August 2019 census*

## Student Attendance Rates

Student Attendance for 2019	
Kindergarten	89.66%
Class 1	87.25%
Class 2	92.75%

## Working to Improve Attendance

At the commencement of a child's enrolment to the school in information sessions, all parents and carers are given access to the school's attendance guidelines and are communicated with the school's values around school attendance and non-approved absences from school. Parents are communicated about the importance of attending school regularly, especially important for children in the class years, who participate in new main lessons each day, deepening the work from the previous day, and preparing for work for the following day. The importance of regular school attendance is reiterated at termly parent-teacher evenings by the class teachers, and is addressed with parents in individual meetings, especially if attendance has been flagged as an issue.

## School Policies and Procedures

The need for clear guidelines and a full policy framework which is compliant with the law is not only a requirement of NESA registration but is required to effectively operate, manage, and govern an independent school.

With the creation of the Teaching Principal position in 2019, the aim of this year's policy review was to create a distinction between educational policies and governance policies. The educational policies were delegated to the faculty which over time will allow a more natural adaptation of these policies in our school. The policies continued to be improved to achieve more clarity and purpose in our documents so that they could be relied upon as a valuable resource at any level in the school.

## Enrolment Policy

The school's enrolment policy is as follows:

### INTRODUCTION

All applications received by the School will be processed in the order they are received. To maintain their enrolment, once enrolled, students are expected to act consistently with the School's ethos and comply with the conditions and terms of enrolment. Parents are also expected to be supportive of the ethos of the School.

### POLICY

#### 1. Enrolment

The School acts in accordance with anti-discrimination legislation and will consider enrolment of students from families irrespective of gender, age, religion, ethnicity, sexual preference or marital status.

Clear enrolment procedures are in place for the enrolment of students into the appropriate classes. These are outlined below in the Procedures section of this document. All applications for enrolment will be processed as per these procedures and in order of receipt.

Students enrolling for the first time into Kindergarten will be five years of age on or before July 31 of the year preceding full-time Kindergarten entry.

When an enrolment application is received, consideration is given to:

- the applicant's support for the ethos of the School;
- siblings already attending the School;
- the educational needs of the students already attending each class;
- the School's ability to meet the special needs or abilities of the student; and
- other criteria determined by the School.

All of these points are considered and none of the above, by itself, is a determining factor.

## **2. Classes**

The School operates with one to two classes per year from Kindergarten, Class 1 and 2. Classes are formed as required and composite classes may be formed if enrolments and School operations require this.

Students will be placed in a class according to their age and in accordance with Steiner principles of education, together with perceived levels of maturity and ability.

## **3. Fees and Charges**

Parents and guardians will be made fully aware of the financial requirements of the School, prior to enrolling their child. Continuing enrolment is subject to the satisfactory payment of all school fees and charges as per our Fee Schedule and Enrolment Contract.

An application fee of \$200 is payable on submission of the Enrolment Application Form. This fee is non-refundable except under extenuating circumstances by consideration of the Teaching Principal.

When a new family joins the School, the first term's fees and charges are to be paid in advance of the student commencing their first day at the School.

When bursaries are available, parents and guardians are welcome to complete the Bursary Application Form in order to be considered for a bursary. Information collected on this form is subject to the PMQSS Privacy Policy.

## **4. Enrolment Contract and Acceptance of Placement**

The Enrolment Contract is to be completed by all prospective families wishing to enrol their child/ren at the School. This document outlines the agreement between the School and the family. Where applicable, the Enrolment Contract is to be signed by both parents or by both guardians. An additional, separate Enrolment Contract is to be completed and signed by any third party responsible for paying School fees.

The Acceptance of Placement form is to be completed to acknowledge receipt of an Offer of Placement.

Communication between the School and parents or guardians is very important and as such it is the parent's or guardian's responsibility to inform the School of any change of address, telephone numbers or email as soon as it is known.

## **5. Continued Enrolment**

Continued enrolment at the School is dependent upon the student making satisfactory academic progress, attending consistently and the student and the parents or guardians observing all aspects of the student code of conduct and other requirements of the School which are applicable from time to time.

## **6. Other Aspects**



Students are expected to respect the property of the School, their own personal belongings and the belongings of others. Each student is responsible for their personal belongings and the School will not be liable for any loss or damage to these belongings.

The School shall not be obliged to continue any student who does not observe all of the foregoing conditions.

## **7. International Students**

The School is not registered to accept International students.

## **Policy Development**

The development and refinement of school policies, procedures and guidelines is an ongoing task at Port Macquarie Steiner School.

We recognise the importance of having workable policies and procedures that are clear, and which accurately reflect relevant legislation and best practice. We seek to ensure all policies relevant to stakeholders are readily available; either through the school's website for families, and that staff are aware of, and are part of the updating of particular policies that are relevant pertaining to their work.

Port Macquarie Steiner School seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment which:

- Minimises the risk of harm and ensures students and staff feel secure and valued.
- Supports the physical, social, academic, spiritual, and emotional development of students.
- Provides student welfare policies and programs that develop a sense of self-worth and fosters personal development.
- Provides a fair and equitable workplace that supports our staff to develop their careers and realise their potential.

All school policies are available as a hard copy version and are kept in the school office. The electronic copies are stored in Google Docs, and in the future, these will be added to our information management system. As required, some documents are available on the School website on the 'Our Community' page via the 'Resources' link. Please see the individual hyperlinks below link directly to the relevant PDF document of the policy on that page. Where no link is provided, the document is available by request.

[Child Protection Policy](#)

[Student Enrolment Policy v2.3](#)

[Student Attendance Policy v1.6](#)

[Student Code of Conduct v1.6.pdf](#)

[Bursary Policy v1.2](#)

For all policies and procedures related to students and parents, parents may request a hard copy by contacting the Teaching Principal or Administration Assistant.

## Policy Changes Throughout 2019

The full suite of school policies underwent review throughout 2019 and required changes to reflect the appointment of a key educational leadership position, the Teaching Principal. All policies were updated to ensure the proper delegation to this position.

More general changes were made as part of this review process also. The registration renewal team included the following changes:

- Improved criteria and documentation required in the Bursary Policy
- Included child safe practices and reportable conduct complaint handling procedures section in the Child Protection Policy
- Linked Volunteer Policy to our Child Protection Policy
- Clarified roles and responsibilities of directors in Board of Directors Roles and Responsibilities
- Improved clarity of our Delegations of Authority Policy
- Clarified returns to NESA in our Responsible Persons Policy
- Included register of conflicts of interest in our Conflicts of Interest Policy
- Included steps for procedural fairness into our Complaints and Grievances Policy
- Included Australian Education Regulation summary from NSW Auditor General into our Financial Policies
- Included fire drills section into our Fire Evacuation Policy
- Included lockdown drills into our Lockdown Policy

These policies are available to staff in the Policies Folder on Dropbox and in the hard copy Policies Folder in the Administration Office which staff, parents and volunteers can access. Some of the policies covering these areas are available on the school's website

<https://portmacquariesteinerschool.nsw.edu.au/resources.html>

## Student Welfare, Behaviour Management and Anti-Bullying

### Student Welfare

The School is dedicated to providing a safe, secure, caring and supportive environment and to promoting personal growth and self-confidence for students. The welfare of our students and staff is a high priority and was tested this year when we were met by extreme environmental circumstances with the November bushfires, which resulted in some school closures due to unsafe air quality levels. The school community responded well, and school resumed when levels were safe again.

Port Macquarie Steiner School promotes and practices a commitment to developing strong relationships between students and teachers. Steiner education, with its focus on creating and maintaining strong weekly and yearly rhythms; the development of the arts and placing a strong emphasis on social responsibility in the school and a play-based learning model in the Kindergarten, all help to establish in the students a positive experience at school. As our class sizes are small, teachers know their students well and can work with each student to know their strengths and areas where they may individually need for support.

## Behaviour Management

Behaviour management at the school is met consistently through the classes, and may vary, depending on the age of the child. Individual parent meetings take place for teachers to communicate transparently with the parents if behavioural concerns continue and strategies, including communication strategies with the parents are put in place. The school has developed a Behaviour Management Policy, which will be reviewed and adapted each year as the school grows. It is linked to the Student Code of Conduct, which identifies the expected behaviour of students at the school. Both policies are available to parents at the school. In regard to behaviour, the teachers are very supportive in providing continual positive reinforcement to students on a daily basis, to guide students to be able to self-regulate their behaviour. Students are expected to show respect to others and their learning, and to equally always respect the school environment and property.

## Anti-Bullying

The School is dedicated to providing a safe, secure, caring and supportive environment and to promoting personal growth and self-confidence for students, staff and visitors to the School. It recognises the potential negative effects of bullying and other anti-social behaviours that disrupt the optimal learning and teaching environment. The School does not condone any behaviour which could be of a bullying, harassing, or violent nature. The School will seek appropriate interventions if such situations occur.

The school's Anti-Bullying Policy applies to all employees, students, parents, guardians, and volunteers both on and off the School site such as excursions. Everyone has the right to be free of bullying. The School is committed to the creation and maintenance of an optimal learning and teaching environment. It is a priority and an expectation of the School for all students, staff, and visitors to the School to be granted a safe, secure, caring, and supportive environment free of bullying, harassment, or violent behaviour. However, should situations of bullying, harassment or violence occur, the School has in place procedures to follow in response to aggressive situations. These must be undertaken in a timely manner, ensuring procedural fairness for all parties involved.

The School staff will seek to identify bullying, violent or harassing behaviours and will work with students, staff, parents, or other individuals involved to offer all parties a safe and restorative response.

The School has a Behaviour Management and Discipline Policy giving appropriate levels of response to behaviours including suspension and expulsion, and methods to record and identify repeated behaviours using the Incident Report Form. Students and their parents and caregivers are to be encouraged to report bullying, harassment, and violence, so that appropriate support can be provided.

We seek to inform the School community on methods of resilience, positivity, and conflict management, whether within the School curriculum, newsletter, class emails or within general information sessions given to students, staff, or parents throughout the year.

## Complaints and Grievances

The Complaints and Grievances Policy is available to parents at the school and includes processes for raising and responding to matters of concern raised by parents or carers, staff, or students. They aim to incorporate principles of procedural fairness. The full policy is available in the school office Policy folder and may be requested at any time.

Communication is of great importance to the School and we value the input of our parents and guardians. We are committed to effective communication in all areas and particularly with parents and guardians. Teachers value parents as partners in the education of their children. An essential part of developing this open environment is ensuring that students and parents are encouraged to come forward with their matters of concern and grievances in the knowledge that the responsible staff will take prompt and effective action to address these concerns. Grievances that are not addressed have the potential to grow into major problems that can cause tension, low morale and reduced learning and academic achievement.

A grievance may involve unlawful discrimination if it contains allegations of unfair and inequitable treatment on the basis of a person's race, ethnic and ethno-religious origin or nationality, sex or sexual preference, age, disability, religious, or political affiliation. Unlawful harassment is unwelcome and offensive or intimidating behaviour, comments or images based on any of these grounds is unacceptable by the School. The grievance may be against another student/s or staff member/s of the School. In certain circumstances, this policy may be used to deal with a complaint against a person who is not an employee or student at the School but who is involved in a School related activity.

This policy is to be provided to the staff, parents, and guardians of the School in order to offer a mechanism for resolving disputes and or grievances about matters relating to the School. It specifies a process to be applied to such grievances when raised with the School and makes clear that the School will decide the most appropriate method of dealing with the matter on a case by case basis.

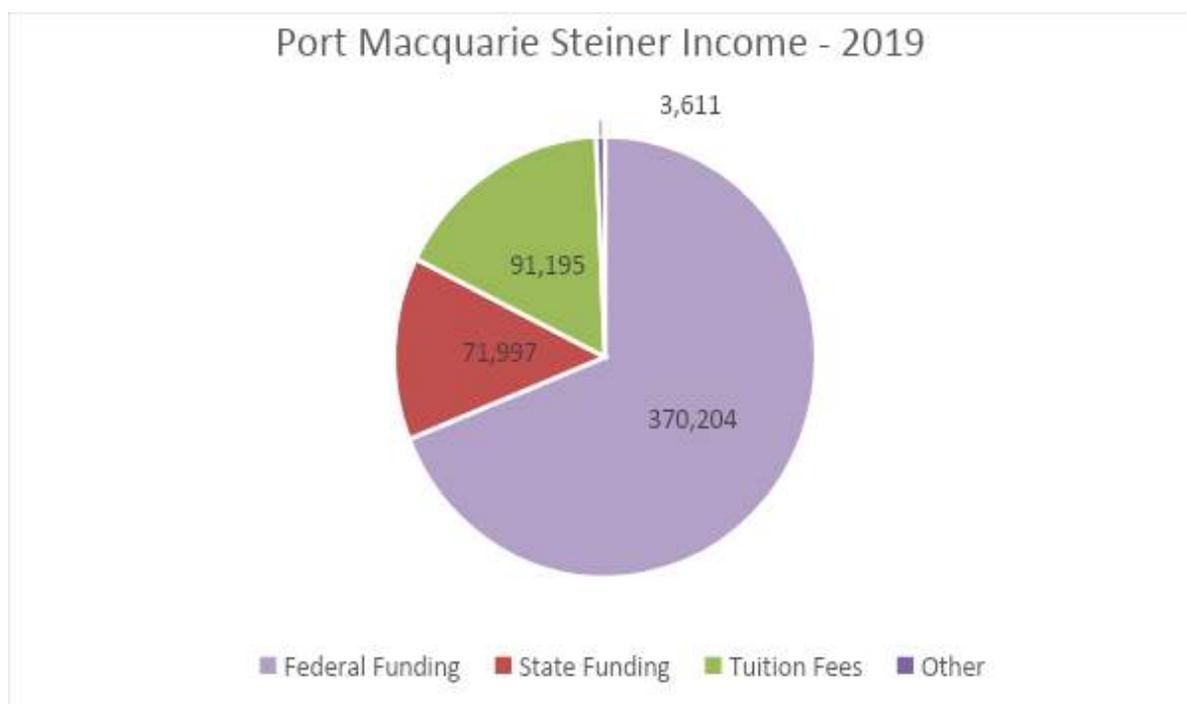
As the school is in a residential area, the school has sometimes had issues regarding noise complaints and traffic problems. The school is respectful of the residential neighbourhood that we are a part of and are continually looking at ways to improve arrivals and departures at the school, to alleviate these types of issues.

## Financial Report

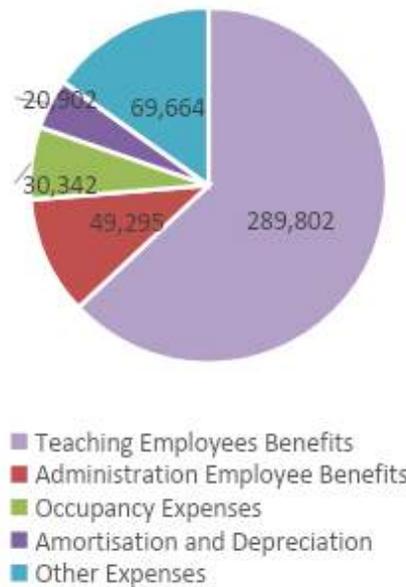
Revenue from government funding was \$442,201 and from tuition and other fees was \$91,195. The main expense was teacher's remuneration and benefits of \$289,802. All employee benefits, including administration staff, amounted to \$339,097. These and other expenses were well managed which enabled the school to show a profit of \$77,002 (2018: \$36,393.) This level of profit is unlikely to continue in the future as the school grows, employs more Steiner qualified teachers, and moves into bigger, more modern premises.

The school had a positive inflow of cash during the year of \$95,169 which strengthened the balance sheet. Consequently, cash balances at year end were \$200,139. During the year, a prefabricated building and school equipment to the value of \$77,772 was purchased.

The school has built up a retained profit balance of \$162,584, which will be helpful in providing funding for the planned expansion program. During the year, the school received \$73,475 in low growth adjustment from the government which will be acquitted by the end of 2022.



## Port Macquarie Steiner Expenses - 2019



### Looking Back on Last Year

2018 was such a quiet year, with only one small Kindergarten class of 6 students. In comparison, the school experienced enormous growth, with a larger class of 11 students in the kindergarten, almost double in size, as well as an offering for a composite one-two class in 2019. The school went from being a 'set-up, pack-down' classroom each week to accommodate the needs of the other tenants at the church hall, who used the hall on weekends, to having sole occupancy in 2019. There was a large focus and effort put into the school playground, vegetable gardens, mud kitchen and sandpit in 2019, and now the school enjoys established gardens that were just being created in 2018. The building of a second classroom midway throughout 2019 was needed to accommodate the kindergarten and the emerging needs of the younger children to have a separate and more customised learning environment, was a huge achievement. Towards the end of 2019, more than 14 families were interviewed for the incoming kindergarten class of 2020.

### Looking Forward to Priority Areas for Improvement

The school has actively been searching for a suitable property to expand onto. Many sites were looked at, including both rented properties and properties available for purchase. Just recently, in September 2020, the school has had an offer accepted on a four-acre piece of beautiful, treed land in the Thrumster area, slightly west of Port Macquarie. We plan to get all the necessary approvals and finance to build a full K-6 primary school there over the next few years. As we have outgrown the current site that we are on, we currently have applications in place with the local council to increase our student numbers from 31 to 45 in 2020, (we currently have 29 students). In addition the school has a lease agreement in place to rent a large portion of land behind the school in 2021 and 2022, to use as a playground for the older children. A new rented building will need to be placed on the site to allow for an extra classroom.

As the school grows, there will be a continued focus on the review and customisation of all school policies, to ensure that they are representative of the school, as well as documentation for parents, such as information on curriculum and programs, the improvement of the school website, and parent handbooks. The school aims to bring in a strings / violin program for the older children, and to develop some more playground equipment for the older students. The school will gain permission to create a dividing wall within the school church hall to accommodate the two classes.

The school faculty will strengthen with a commitment for a regular study and college meeting and meditation. Updates and improvements to the school website will be a focus, as well as updating the school handbooks for both the primary and kindergarten classes.

2019 was a positive year and makes way for a large Kindergarten class in 2020, a class 1, with some afternoon classes combined to make a vertical class of 1-3.



Website: [www.portmacquariesteinerschool.nsw.edu.au](http://www.portmacquariesteinerschool.nsw.edu.au)

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