



Tuntable Falls Community School

Annual Report 2023

Message from the Management Committee

Grants and school improvements

Four major grants and a few minor grants were successfully applied for during 2023 thanks to the tireless energies of committee members, staff, parents and Tuntable Falls Community members.



The school AIS Capital Block Grant of \$25'000, which encompassed fixing old windows and doors on existing classrooms, including lock changes, installing a dishwasher in the kitchen and renovating the outdoor garden classroom. Nicole Devery took the lead on applying for the grant and overseeing all the works needed to see this through and fully completed by Term 4, 2023. In addition to the AIS Capital Block Grant, \$25'000 of school funds were allocated to the upgrade and renovation of the school composting toilets, painting of the kitchen classroom both inside and out, fixing termite damage on the rear of the Maker Space/STEM classroom, and the restoration of the historic cubby house at the front of the school. These additional works started in Term 4, 2023, and will be continued on until completion sometime in 2024.

The school was successful in applying for the AIS Capital Works Grant of \$750'000 to build an all-weather pedestrian footbridge and associated footpaths from the school bus stop directly to the school. Thanks to the dedication of Joe Landers, Terisa Bisco, and Sean Spain who have been heading this massive undertaking and putting in many hours of planning to make it successful. The bridge and associated works are due to commence construction in 2024 once all quotes from construction companies are approved and regulations met. This project has been a long-term goal for the school, not only to mitigate the high concerns of flood evacuations and closures due to flooding events, but also the

everyday concerns of safe pedestrian access for children and staff to and from the school bus stop.

We were successful in three of the four Sporting Schools grants we applied for, valued at \$1'800 each. These grants helped us run soccer, softball, and swimming sporting programs for the whole school over three of the four terms in 2023.

The Woolworths Junior Landcare grant of \$1'000 paid for a 100m section of the Tuntable creek adjacent to the school to be regenerated. Led by Emmy Jett, our STEM teacher, and the efforts of staff, students, and parents this fantastic river care project saw over 200 trees planted.



The school applied to the National Student Wellbeing Program and will receive \$6'900 every year for the next 3 years, starting in 2024, which will provide the funds for a dedicated Wellbeing Officer one day per week. The Wellbeing Officer will work through specific student-focused programs as well as coordinate lunch clubs and group activities.

We also received the Wellbeing Boost Grant of \$7'500 to use on wellbeing programs in 2024. The funds have been allocated to pay for all our full-time teachers to attend the Berry Street Trauma Informed Behaviour Program; a four-day professional development running in 2024 to be integrated into our current whole school behaviour model.

In addition to the above wellbeing grants applied for during the year, over the course of 2023 the classroom teachers were individually working through the Smiling Mind program with their students to help with social and emotional regulation skills. Before her departure at the end of Term 3, 2023, Ochitha Karunaratne completed the last few groups of students participating in the Stormbirds, Seasons of Growth program which began back in 2022 to support students who were affected by the flood disaster.

There was a big push to boost education enrichment in the early years (Kindergarten, Years 1 and 2) at TFCS, with the new numeracy and literacy syllabus incorporated into the stage one and early stage one programs, as well as the expansion of the Investigations program. Ishta Wilsons started the Investigations program in 2022 and expanded it in 2023 to include the Kindergarten students. We will be supporting Ginger O'Brien, our Kindergarten teacher, to take her 2024 kindergarten class through the investigation program independently.

Post COVID-19 and our renewed focus on promoting student well-being

Our other main focuses in 2023 have been lifting student attendance and attracting new enrolments across most classes, after the double whammy of the COVID lockdowns and the 2022 flood disaster. This was followed by the slow recovery of infrastructure and rebuilding of affected homes, thus leading to the increased pressure on the current housing crisis in our

local area making it difficult for new families trying to move into the area, or families from the area requiring new accommodation in order to remain in the area. Some of our students were dealing with complex feelings of stress, anxiety or separation from these experiences which affected their participation or attendance at school.

By bringing the strong wellbeing focus into the school program across 2022 and 2023 we aimed to build childrens' sense of connection and safety while at school. Making school a place they want to come to, where they feel supported and heard, where they have friendships and mentors. Small group programs like Stormbirds, whole class sessions like Smiling Minds, and drumming circles, were a great way to explore emotions and feelings safely with classmates whilst being guided by staff. Social connections and peer mentorships were also fostered through Buddy Reading groups, Sharing Circles and time to check in after play time, as well as whole school Garden Day group rotations and shared meals (once a term). Other school events such as the quarterly school community dinners, camps, and the end of year circus show brought the whole school community together to create and boost a wider sense of community and deeper connections to both people and place. These events give families something exciting to look forward to, remember afterwards, and talk about with friends.



One of the greatest parts of the end to COVID-19 restrictions has been restoring the family-friendly, parent-run culture of our school. This can be so reassuring for some of our more sensitive or anxious students.

We saw a slow and steady increase in enrolments over the course of 2023. With student enrolments at forty-four students in Term 1 and forty-seven students in Term 4, with some coming and going of families over the school year. The waiting list for the 2024 kindergarten class was back up to eight students from the previous year, which was our lowest kindergarten waiting list of many years, at only two students. The number of students in the school cohort that live on Tuntable Falls Community is up by one from 2022, now at twenty students, with four potential students who reside on the Community on the waiting list to start kindergarten in 2024.

Management committee changes

2023 also saw a shift in the management committee over the course of the year.

In Term 1, 2023, Zachary Rook joined the Management Committee as a general member. Followed shortly by the resignation of Jacintha Duivenvoorden as Secretary. Jacintha resigned after many years of invaluable contributions to the management of our school in the many different roles she took on in her time, including Treasurer, President, Vice President

and Secretary. Her professional skill and heartfelt passion will be missed. We also lost long standing member Nicole Devery from the Committee after 9 long years of tireless motivation and guidance. She lives and breathes education and brought so much knowledge and passion to all the roles and challenges she took on in her many years with the Committee. Her devotion to improving the school's infrastructure and the educational experiences of students can be seen in the numerous grants, projects and programs she has spearheaded over the last decade.

The 2023 AGM saw Blossom Gillard step down from the Presidency role and become a general member, whilst giving support and guidance to new members. Kristoff Burnet De Coursou stayed on in his role as Treasurer, ensuring smooth and consistent direction over the year. Bart Bunting stepped up to take over the role of Vice Presidency. Zachary Rook took on the role of Presidency, while new member Melody Atkinson stepped into the Secretary role.

Unfortunately, by Term 3, 2023, we had lost Melody Atkinson as a general member of the Committee due to changes in her working life. During Term 3 Cameron Blair joined the Committee, stepping into the Secretary role.

Bart Bunting resigned from the Committee in Term 4 as one of his children relocated to another school.



Parent-run School and extracurricular activities

Parent involvement at TFCS continued to grow steadily over the 2023 school year, with more parents ticking off their roster days than last year, as well as the Tumble Falls Community work levy hours, which was up from 144 hours last year to 166 hours this year. There were many fantastic whole school dinners over the year put on by parents for the enjoyment of the school community. The welcome dinner at the start of the year, followed by the Winter Solstice feast and lantern parade, and the end of year circus extravaganza and dinner.

The Kindy home visits, class camps and a whole school camp were on again after the Covid-19 pandemic. We also brought back the much-loved Family Camp during the October 2023 school holidays, after a 4-year hiatus due to lockdown restrictions and the natural disaster recovery. Along with all these fantastic camps, students experienced many day excursions put on by staff, both for whole school and individual classes, such as the Byron

Writer's Festival, bush walking in the Nightcap National Park, whale watching, Nimbin basketball courts, swimming carnivals and much more.

Our parent run Fete was successful in raising funds for the school, which generated \$4680 for things such as additional programs and excursions which allowed our school to provide extra opportunities for students. It is events like this that strengthen bonds within our school community and reflect our values of togetherness and unity.

All these events show a return to the healthy, thriving, parent-run community school structure reminiscent of a preCovid-19 TFCS.



Our exceptional teachers

Joe Landers

During 2023, Joe Landers exemplified excellence in his capacities as both Coordinating Teacher and Guruman class instructor for the composite year 4/5/6 class. His dedication and innovative approach enriched the educational journey of his students, leaving a lasting impact on their personal development.

One notable achievement was Joe's adept organisation of a highly successful Byron Writers' Festival excursion. Through meticulous planning and coordination, he ensured that students had the opportunity to engage with renowned authors, participate in stimulating literary discussions, and explore the world of storytelling in a captivating setting. This immersive experience not only broadened students' understanding of literature but also inspired them to express their own creativity through writing.

In addition to his focus on literacy, Joe implemented a dynamic music programme that resonated with students of all abilities and interests. By introducing them to a diverse range of musical genres, instruments, and techniques, he sparked their passion for music and nurtured their talent. Students thrived under Joe's guidance, discovering new avenues for self-expression and artistic growth.

Moreover, Joe's commitment to holistic education extended beyond the classroom as he created a supportive and inclusive learning environment where every student felt valued and empowered to succeed. Through his mentorship and encouragement, he instilled confidence in his students, enabling them to embrace challenges, pursue their aspirations, and achieve their full potential.

Joe's outstanding contributions as a teacher and mentor in 2023 not only enriched the educational experience of his students but also inspired them to embrace learning with enthusiasm and confidence. His dedication to embracing a love for education, music (and of course dinosaurs), coupled with his unwavering commitment to student success, truly set him apart as a beacon of excellence in education.



Ruben Davis

Ruben began teaching the Yuruugin, Year 3/4 class, in 2023 with a dedication to nurturing young minds and fostering a love for learning. His dynamic approach to education infused the classroom with energy and creativity, creating an environment where students thrived. Through innovative teaching methods and hands-on experiences, Ruben engaged his students in a myriad of exciting learning opportunities. He introduced creative design projects that encompassed sculpture, woodwork, and alchemy. Students had the opportunity to explore the fascinating process of creating Bismuth and unleash their imagination through artistic expression. These projects not only encouraged experimentation and problem-solving but also instilled in students a sense of pride and accomplishment in their creations. Ruben's passion for phonics and spelling shone through in his meticulous attention to language development. He employed interactive and engaging activities to reinforce phonetic principles and enhance spelling proficiency. He empowered students with the foundational skills necessary for effective communication and literacy. Furthermore, Ruben created a nurturing and inclusive classroom culture where every student felt valued and supported in their learning journey. His compassionate approach to teaching nurtured a sense of belonging and camaraderie among students, which allowed students to develop positive relationships and create a conducive atmosphere for learning. Ruben Davis's first year as the teacher of the Yuruugin, Year 3/4 class, in 2023 was marked by his unwavering commitment to educational excellence and student well-being. Through his innovative teaching methods, creative projects, and passion for language development, he inspired a love for learning that will continue to resonate with his students for years to come. We are blessed to have such a dedicated and committed teacher.

Ishta Wilson

Ishta, as the primary teacher for Gooarng, the composite Year 1/2 class, exhibited a remarkable dedication to her students' holistic development throughout the year. Recognising the importance of inquiry-based learning, Ishta took proactive steps to expand and enrich the Investigations program within her classroom. She curated a diverse range of hands-on activities, experiments, and projects that not only captured the imaginations of her young learners, but also encouraged them to ask questions, explore concepts, and make discoveries independently. One of Ishta's notable achievements was her adept incorporation of the new literacy and numeracy syllabus into the Year 1 and 2 curriculum. Understanding the significance of these foundational skills, she meticulously designed lessons and activities that seamlessly integrated literacy and numeracy concepts into the broader units of study. By contextualising

learning within real-world scenarios and engaging students in meaningful tasks, Ishta ensured that her students not only acquired essential literacy and numeracy skills but also developed a deep understanding of how these skills are applied in everyday life.

Moreover, Ishta's commitment to differentiated instruction was evident in her personalised approach to teaching. She recognised and celebrated the unique strengths, interests, and learning styles of each student, tailoring her instructional strategies and providing targeted support to meet individual learning needs. Through flexible grouping, scaffolding, and ongoing assessment, Ishta created a learning environment where every child felt valued, challenged, and empowered to succeed.

Beyond achievement, Ishta prioritised the social and emotional well-being of her students. She cultivated a classroom culture of respect, empathy, and collaboration, where students felt safe to express themselves, and engage in meaningful dialogue with their peers. By modelling positive communication and conflict resolution skills, Ishta nurtured a sense of belonging and community within her classroom, laying the foundation for lifelong social and emotional growth.



In summary, Ishta Wilson's dedication, innovation, and commitment to student success made a profound impact on the Gooarng Year 1/2 class. Her emphasis on inquiry-based learning, integration of literacy and numeracy, differentiation, and socio-emotional development created a rich and nurturing learning environment where every student had the opportunity to thrive socially and emotionally. Ishta's passion for teaching and her profound belief in the potential of her students were reflected in the growth, achievements, and lasting memories created within her classroom throughout the year.

Heather Jessup

Heather started teaching the Buribi K/1 class in 2023. The Buribi class is usually a stand-alone kindergarten class but due to the historically low kindergarten enrolments, the class was made up of the 2 kindergarten students and 5 of the Year 1 students. The new literacy and numeracy syllabus was incorporated into the kindergarten program over the course of 2023. Heather remained with us for only 2 terms, choosing to leave at the end of Term 2 due to changes in her family's situation. We will miss her dearly and wish her all the best in her next role.



Ginger O'Brien

We were exceptionally lucky to welcome back Ginger O'Brien from maternity leave to take up the position of kindergarten teacher, bringing some of that infectious fun-loving Ginger zest with her. Ginger's impact on the school community extended beyond her role as a classroom teacher. In addition to her exceptional teaching in the Kindy/Year 1 class, Ginger took on the responsibility of spearheading a whole school transition program in Term 4. This initiative aimed to ease the transition for students across all year levels, including the incoming kindergarten cohort for the following year. The transition program ensures a smooth and positive adjustment to new routines, environments, and expectations. Ginger's whole school transition program was meticulously designed to cater to the diverse needs and developmental stages of students at such an important part in their lives. Each session was thoughtfully planned with engaging activities, games, and discussions that not only familiarised students with the school's facilities and resources but also encouraged collaboration, teamwork, and friendship building. By providing opportunities for students to interact with their peers from different year levels, Ginger fostered a sense of community and belonging.

Furthermore, Ginger's transition program incorporated elements of social and emotional learning, empowering students with the skills and strategies needed to navigate the challenges of starting their first year of primary education. Through mindfulness exercises, role-playing scenarios, and open discussions, Ginger facilitated meaningful conversations around topics such as resilience, empathy, and self-regulation, equipping students with the tools to manage stress and build positive relationships.

The success of Ginger's transition program was evident in the enthusiastic participation and positive feedback from students, parents, and staff alike. Students approached the new school year with confidence and excitement, armed with a sense of familiarity and belonging that eased their transition and set them up for success. Parents expressed gratitude for the thoughtful support provided during this pivotal time in their children's lives, while teachers praised Ginger for her dedication, creativity, and commitment to the well-being of the school community as a whole.

Ginger's school transition program was not only a logistical success but also a testament to her passion for education and her profound understanding of the social, emotional, and developmental needs of students. Through her leadership, creativity, and unwavering dedication, Ginger created a supportive and inclusive environment where every student felt valued, empowered, and ready to embark on their educational journey with confidence and enthusiasm.



Emily Jett (Emmy)

Emmy, STEM teacher extraordinaire, epitomises innovation and excellence in education. With her dynamic approach to teaching, Emmy has transformed the learning experience for students, inspiring them to explore the exciting realms of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

Through hands-on experiments, immersive projects, and interactive lessons, Emmy ignites a passion for STEM subjects in her students. Her classroom is a hub of creativity and discovery, where students eagerly engage with challenging concepts and embrace the thrill of experimentation. Whether it's designing practical gardening days or conducting scientific investigations, Emmy empowers her students to problem-solve collaboratively, and discover their potential as future innovators.

Beyond the confines of her classroom, Emmy is a driving force for STEM education within the school community and beyond. She organises and provides students with opportunities to further explore their interests and showcase their talents.

In addition to her passion for STEM, Emmy is a dedicated advocate for inclusivity and diversity in education. She works tirelessly to create a supportive and welcoming environment where students of all backgrounds and abilities feel valued and empowered to pursue their interests in science related fields. Through her mentorship and guidance, Emmy inspires a new generation who are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to make a positive impact on the world.

Emmy's impact extends far beyond the classroom walls, as she continues to inspire and empower students to embrace the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. Her dedication, creativity, and unwavering commitment to STEM education make her a true trailblazer and a source of inspiration for educators everywhere.



Simon Adams

Simon, our phenomenal circus teacher, brings a unique blend of passion, skill, and creativity to the classroom by igniting a sense of wonder and excitement in his students. With his background in circus arts and performance, Simon creates a dynamic learning environment where students are encouraged to explore their physical abilities, develop confidence, and unleash their inner performers.

Under Simon's guidance, students embark on a thrilling journey into the world of circus arts, learning a diverse range of skills including juggling, acrobatics and aerial silks. Through carefully crafted lessons and hands-on activities, Simon cultivates a supportive and inclusive atmosphere where students of all abilities can thrive and grow. Whether they're mastering the art of balancing on a tightrope or perfecting their tumbling technique, students are empowered to push their limits, overcome challenges, and celebrate their achievements. Beyond teaching technical skills, Simon instils important values such as teamwork, perseverance, and creativity in his students. Through collaborative projects and group performances, students learn to trust and support one another to build strong bonds of friendship and camaraderie. Simon also encourages students to express themselves creatively by crafting their own circus routines or designing elaborate costumes and props. Simon's impact extends beyond the classroom as he shares his passion for circus arts with the wider community. He organises and leads performances at school events, community festivals, and charity fundraisers to showcase the talents of his students. Simon's dedication to his craft and his belief in the transformative power of circus arts make him a beloved and invaluable member of our school community.

In summary, Simon is more than just a circus teacher – he is a mentor, a performer, and a source of inspiration for his students. Through his passion, creativity, and dedication, Simon empowers students to discover their strengths, embrace their uniqueness, and shine brightly, both inside and outside the circus ring.

Ochitha Kurunaratne and Kate Dempsey

Ochitha returned to her position as LaST for the greater part of 2023 as well as delivering the Stormbirds program to small groups. Ochitha gave notice that she would be leaving us at the end of Term 3 to relocate to Queensland to be with family. Committee decided to advertise for the LaST role during Term 3 in the hope that we would find the right person to take on the position in time to provide them with a full hand over from Ochitha. Committee also extended the last position from a 2 day per week role to a 3 day per week role based on recommendations regarding student enrolments and current needs requirements. The vacancy ads were fruitful and we had many great candidates apply. Of those, the incredibly

talented and passionate Kate Dempsey was successful in securing the position and started with TFCS in Term 4.

It is wonderful to have someone highly skilled in student support joining the TFCS team. Kate brings a wealth of expertise and passion for student wellbeing. Having a LaST onboard and already familiar with students and their learning needs prior to Term 1 2024 was one of the school's top priorities after the setbacks of the last few years and the implications this had on our children's learning. Kate spent the last part of Term 4, 2023, getting to know the students and developing individual learning plans for all the students needing the extra support, as well as working out new student support timetables for 2024.



Administration and learning and support teachers' aides

Our beloved teachers' aides - Amanda King, Cathrine Smith, Lisa Czapnick, Jericho Waters, and Freya Barber (who took maternity leave) - are the heart and soul of our school community. With their unwavering dedication, kindness, and support, they play a pivotal role in ensuring the success and well-being of our students.

Each day, Amanda, Cathrine, Lisa, Jericho, and Freya bring warmth and compassion to their interactions with students, creating a nurturing and inclusive environment where every child feels valued and supported. Whether they're assisting in the classroom, providing one-on-one support, or supervising during recess and lunchtime, these dedicated professionals go above and beyond to meet the diverse needs of our students and help them thrive.

Their contributions extend far beyond the classroom walls as they collaborate with teachers, therapists, and other support staff to develop and implement individualised learning plans as well as learning accommodations and interventions that address the unique needs of each student. Amanda, Cathrine, Lisa, Jericho, and Freya are not just aides - they are invaluable partners in education, working to ensure that every student has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Even during challenging times, such as Freya's absence due to maternity leave, the team continues to uphold the high standards of care and support that define our school community. Their dedication to our students and their families is unwavering, and their presence brings comfort and reassurance to all who have the privilege of knowing them. In summary, Amanda King, Cathrine Smith, Lisa Czapnick, Jericho Waters, and Freya Barber are more than just teachers' aides - they are beacons of kindness, compassion, and dedication. Their commitment to our students and our school community makes them truly beloved members of our team.

Our wonderful administration officers continued to support the TFCS team to do their best and keep on target throughout 2023. René Nowrie, from Monday through to Thursday, and the Nina Evens on Fridays, are the ever-present glue that manages to keep the whole school connected and motivated from the front office. The biggest news for the admin team in 2023 was the implementation of a digital school management system from uEducateUs that will hopefully help with streamlining all systems within the school.



Final thoughts summary

The outlook for TFCS (Tuntale Falls Community School) in 2024 is incredibly promising, with positive trends in enrolment indicating a flourishing future. With just one Year 6 student transitioning to high school at the end of 2023 and a confirmed eight new kindergarten students set to join in 2024, the school is poised for growth. These figures bring enrolment numbers back to the ideal level, reminiscent of the pre-2022 natural disaster era when TFCS had a steady cohort of fifty-one students.

The anticipated enrolment for 2024 is approximately fifty-three students, marking the highest enrolment figure in TFCS's forty-plus years of operation. While this exceeds the ideal number by two students, it allows flexibility for adjustments throughout the year. Moreover, this strategic planning considers the forthcoming departure of the largest class, comprising 14 Year 4 students, set to transition to high school in 2025.

TFCS's success is particularly remarkable given its location in a small rural community nestled deep within our precious rainforest. Despite the challenges posed by its remote setting, the school has demonstrated resilience and adaptability, thriving socially, and within the community at large.

The school's exceptional performance is a testament to the dedication of its staff and the support of our parents who all contribute to the nurturing environment provided to students. TFCS's commitment to holistic education, coupled with its ability to overcome challenges and seize opportunities, underscores its status as a beacon of educational excellence in the independent school sector. As TFCS looks towards the future, it does so with confidence, knowing that it is well-positioned to continue serving its students and build upon its strong parent-run school community.

With love and warm regards

Cameron Blair,

Acting TFCS Management Committee President

About our School

We are a small parent-run independent school situated amidst the lush rainforest of the Tuntabale Valley, 10 kilometres East of Nimbin, in Northern NSW.

The school was opened in 1981 by a group of families living on the Tuntabale Cooperative Community. These parents were committed to providing their children with an education consistent with their values, which at the time were considered alternative to the mainstream. Some of those values include: the importance of an environmentally sustainable lifestyle, the need for a closely integrated relationship between family, community and school in a child's education, the value of each child's gifts and their own unique learning styles, the value of independence and the flexibility this offers the school in being able to support a child's journey into adulthood. These values continue to be at the core of the school's value base.

The school's physical environment and the children's freedom to interact with their natural surroundings are fundamental elements of the school.



We offer classes from Kindergarten to Year 6 in four classes. These classes are made up of one Kindergarten class, a Year 1/2 class, a Year 3/4 class and a Year 5/6 class. We continue to have confidence in the need for a stand-alone Kindergarten class, as we believe children thrive with a nurturing start to school and specialised support. It was initially trailed in 2013 and proved to be very successful. Outcomes for the children continue to improve as a result of having a separate class for the ten children in this age group. The kindergarten children attend 4 days per week for this introductory year.

Our paid staff include: one Teacher Coordinator/classroom teacher, four classroom teachers, one teacher who presents both STEAM (Science Technology Engineering Art & Mathematics) and SEE (Sustainable & Environmental Education), one LaST (Learning and Support Teacher), four teacher's aides, two office administrators, a part-time bookkeeper, and a part-time maintenance person. We also have a specialist external teacher providing circus classes.

The parent body forms most of the volunteer workforce, who perform the other duties involved in the running of the school. Parents want to be present on their child's learning journey and encourage the idea of a tribe or community, with grandparents, younger siblings, and extended family all welcome and encouraged to have daily involvement.

The Teacher Coordinator and teaching staff work with the management committee, which consists of parents of students, who run the school as a cooperative. This is one of the ways in which the link between the school and its community of families is unified. The committee meets every week during term time, and additionally for strategic planning, operations and team building sessions throughout the year.



The size of the school and its independence allows the teachers to respond to events quickly, integrating them into the children's learning program. There is an incredible diversity amongst the school members and within the surrounding community, often with a creative bent and a refreshing degree of free thinking. Parents and committee members are encouraged to share their skills.

Sustainability is our specialty. It is demonstrated through every aspect of our daily school life in the use of classroom supplies and on excursions. With regards to all classroom and school purchases, we always choose paper, cardboard, or wood alternatives over plastic regardless of price. We avoid one-use products and avoid laminating unless necessary. For any school purchases, we ask and find the answers to these questions before purchasing....

Is it organic?

Is it local?

Is it fair trade?

How much power does it use?

What is its environmental impact?

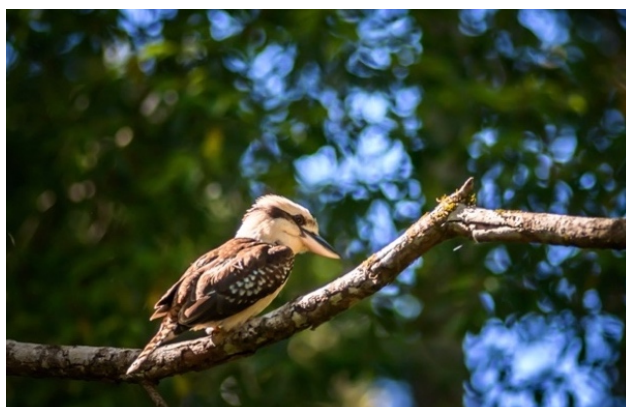
Respect & Responsibility

We have a positive approach to guiding behaviour. This builds children's confidence and self-esteem and is based on the development of caring, equitable and responsive relationships between parents, educators, and children.

In our holistic educational program, we value emotional intelligence just as much as literacy and numeracy. As adult role models and caregivers, we foster this through a sensitive, aware, well informed, and nurturing environment. We ensure that there are a range of books available for families and staff to borrow in relation to education on this topic, providing information on the latest research.

Tunable Falls Community school promotes child-centred, sustainable values, unique experiences, and integrated learning in a peaceful rainforest environment. Our children learn and play in a safe, creative, and natural environment.

The relatively recent move back to environmental education, particularly regarding sustainability, has been driven by research about how important children's connections with nature are. Beyond the physical play afforded by natural spaces, children benefit so much from manipulating natural materials in natural play spaces. Nature is a critical element in children's health, well-being, and development.



Students with a link to place and community have a strong sense of agency. They are capable, confident learners. They believe in their ability to shape and commandeer their learning and experiences. At Tuntable Falls Community School children construct their knowledge in social ways, benefiting from the strong community values tangible in every aspect of the school. Students have the amazing gift of having many adults and friends who each contribute skills, knowledge, and care to our school environment. In this caring, supportive environment, students enjoy a sense of belonging and this dependability and security allows them the space to explore, learn, and make mistakes.

It is the way students are regarded as respectful, responsible, and competent learners that is so important at Tuntable. When students know they are supported by others who believe in them, they are capable of anything.

Core Values

- **Maintain our Parent Run School**
- **Communication Skills:** Fostering clear and open communication with a focus on self-expression, knowledge sharing and interpersonal skills.
- **Environment & sustainability:** Embodying deep respect for the natural environment and acting for future generations.
- **Relationships:** Nurturing empathy, positive relationships, and socio-cultural awareness.
- **Empowerment:** Giving voice to individuality to encourage freedom with responsibility
- **Respect:** Valuing respect for self, others, community, and the built and natural environments.
- **Physical & Emotional Wellbeing:** Developing emotional intelligence, mindfulness, resilience, and healthy living practices.

We regularly address and review the children's wellbeing using the *KidsMatter* Framework. Our goals within this are to:

- create and foster an environment in which children experience mutually enjoyable, caring, and respectful relationships.
- help children to understand how their behaviours and actions affect themselves and others.
- support children to communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.
- role model positive ways to relate to others.

Our three guiding principles are:

1. The right to be safe.
2. The right to learn
3. Treat others in a way that you would like to be treated.

All boundaries and agreements stem from these principles and are related to students on these issues.

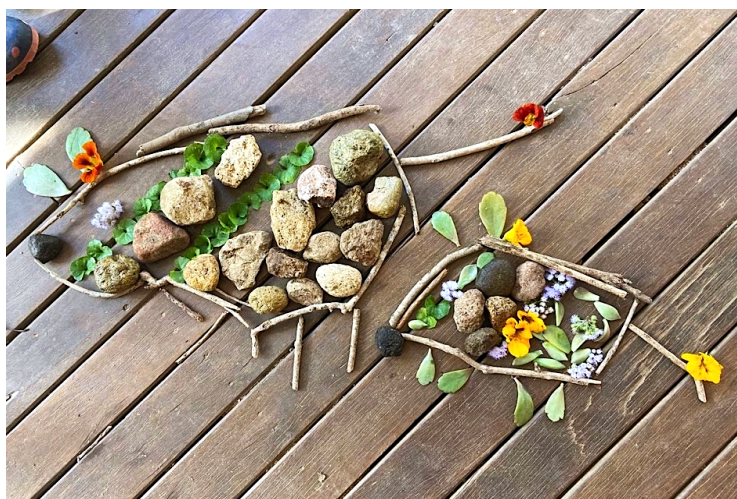


Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction

The school uses a variety of methods to gauge parental, student, and teacher satisfaction with school operations. The school understands the importance of regularly reviewing approval and satisfaction levels. Last year, the following formal and informal opportunities allowed the school to test reaction to decisions, policy, and school procedures.

- We have a formal evaluation process to measure parent, student, and staff satisfaction, conducted in Term 2 of each year, with surveys being distributed to families online and in print. While the results were overwhelmingly positive, the suggestions for improvement still provide useful ideas for discussion and action. They are taken to strategic planning to be evaluated and incorporated into the long-term vision for the school.
- Parent meetings at the beginning of each term, provide parents with a formal opportunity to communicate with the management committee.
- Weekly committee meetings provide all parents and staff with an opportunity to attend or provide agenda items to be discussed.
- Parent/teacher meetings are held throughout the year. There is also an open-door policy where parents can speak with teachers on a more informal basis.
- Staff appraisals are performed in Term 2 and 3. This process involved teachers, office administration staff and teachers' aides completing a self-assessment that requires questions to be answered regarding satisfaction levels, main achievements for the year, aims for the following year, training, and suggestions to improve the school and school operations. Committee members request feedback and observations from other members of staff, committee members, parents, and students. A meeting is held, and the appraisal discussed. Information is then taken on board at committee meetings so that important items can be addressed and followed up.

Student enrolments remained steady during the year. Notably, Kindergarten enrolments for 2024 were back up to a level where the school could once again offer a stand-alone Kindy class. School functions were well attended and had a positive atmosphere of commitment and support, and parents continued to support the school using Roster Days.



Attendance

For students to reach their full potential it is important that they attend school regularly. Whilst it is the parents' legal duty to ensure their children attend school regularly, our staff, as part of their duty of care, monitor attendance each day. The Class Roll is marked every day with absences being followed up immediately by office staff via a phone call, where parents can provide an explanation for the absence. The committee is made aware of sustained student absences. When children develop poor patterns of attendance, we work with the family to identify the issues behind this. We initiate a series of letters and meetings to address these and to educate families on the many benefits to regularly attending school.

Prolonged periods of absence occur from time-to-time for various reasons. In these cases, students and their parents apply for exemption from attendance, stating the reasons and period.

For student attendance rates, please refer to the Australian Government's *My School* website at: <http://www.myschool.edu.au>

We continued to target student attendance levels with a thorough review of our attendance policy and procedures. This information is regularly distributed to families via our newsletter and discussed at teacher-parent meetings.

Year Group	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
Attendance %	89%	83%	87%	84%	84%	74%	32%

Whole School Average Attendance Rate: 82%

Post COVID restrictions has seen an increase in attendance rates.



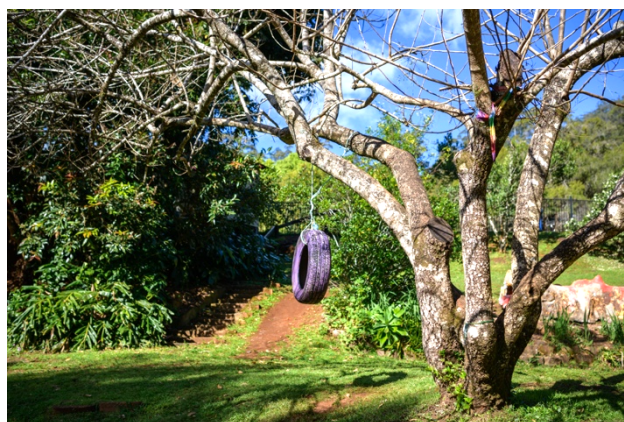
Student body

In 2023, we had 49 students enrolled (including 3 students who un-enrolled prior to 15 Dec 2023). The gender balance was 23 girls and 26 boys, with three students self-identified as Indigenous. The majority were Anglo-Australians with English as a first language. The following table indicates the student enrolment characteristics:

	K	Yr. 1	Yr. 2	Yr. 3	Yr. 4	Yr. 5	Yr. 6	Totals
Male	2	6	1	3	8	5	1	26
Female	0	7	4	5	6	1	0	23
Indigenous	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	3
EALD	0	2	0	0	2	1	0	5

In the past, most students lived on the Tuntable Cooperative Community, however, as our reputation has spread, our students have been drawn from a wider area. In 2023 students attended from Nimbin, Mt Nardi, Terania Creek, The Channon, and the Tuntable valley.

Typically, students come from families with an average to low income, and approximately one quarter are from single parent families.



Standardized Testing

Our School offers the National Literacy and Numeracy testing (NAPLAN) to Years 3 and 5 each year, as required by the Commonwealth Government. A number of parents chose to withdraw their children from the NAPLAN testing by filling in the consent for exemption and withdrawal for philosophical reasons or because the test will cause undue stress on their child.

Due to the small number of children participating in the NAPLAN, results have not been published on the Australian Government's *My School* website since 2015.

NAPLAN results 2023

For 2023, of our 18 year 3 and 5 students, we had 9 of the year 5 students and 3 of our year 3 students participate in the national assessment program.

Year 3

For year 3 students, for the **Grammar and Punctuation** assessment area, we had 66% of students achieving in the Developing performance area for the national achievement comparison data. There were 33% of students who achieved Exceeding on the scale. No students were in the "Needs additional support" range for this year for this assessment area.

For year 3 students, for the **Numeracy** assessment area, we had 100% of students achieving in the Strong performance area for the national achievement comparison data. No students were in the "Needs additional support" range for this year for this assessment area.

For year 3 students, for the **Reading** assessment area, we had 66% of students achieving in the Developing performance area for the national achievement comparison data. There were 33% of students who achieved Strong on the scale. No students were in the "Needs additional support" range for this year for this assessment area.

For year 3 students, for the **Spelling** assessment area, we had 100% of students achieving in the Developing performance area for the national achievement comparison data. No students were in the "Needs additional support" range for this year for this assessment area.

For year 3 students, for the **Writing** assessment area, we had 66% of students achieving in the Developing performance area for the national achievement comparison data. There were 33% of students who achieved Strong on the scale. No students were in the "Needs additional support" range for this year for this assessment area.

Year 5

For year 5 students, for the **Grammar and Punctuation** assessment area, we had 66% of students achieving in the Strong performance area for the national achievement comparison data. There were 33% of students who achieved Developing on the scale. No students were in the "Needs additional support" range for this year for this assessment area.

For year 5 students, for the **Numeracy** assessment area, we had 66% of students achieving in the Strong performance area for the national achievement comparison data. There were 33% of students who achieved Developing on the scale. No students were in the "Needs additional support" range for this year for this assessment area.

For year 5 students, for the **Reading** assessment area, we had 22% of students achieving in the Exceeding performance area for the national achievement comparison data. There were 56% of students who achieved Strong on the scale. There were 22% of students who achieved Developing on the scale. No students were in the "Needs additional support" range for this year for this assessment area.

For year 5 students, for the **Spelling** assessment area, we had 11% of students achieving in the Exceeding performance area for the national achievement comparison data. There were 33% of students who achieved Strong on the scale. There were 56% of students who achieved Developing on the scale. No students were in the “Needs additional support” range for this year for this assessment area.

For year 5 students, for the **Writing** assessment area, we had 44% of students achieving in the Strong performance area for the national achievement comparison data. There were 33% of students who achieved Developing on the scale. There was one student who was in the “Needs additional support” range for this year for this assessment area.

Overall results have been tabled, analysed and discussed at staff meetings. Individual Learning Plans and Stage Programs have been adjusted.

Transition

We take the transition from Preschool or home to Kindergarten very seriously at Tuntable Falls Community School. A program is set up with the kindergarten teacher and Tuntable Falls Preschool director to ensure that any student participating, whether they are from Tuntable, from another feeder school or from home, feel safe and included. Information is sent to feeder schools and advertising is placed in local newspapers in Term 2. The children transitioning to kindergarten participate in scheduled orientation activities in November/early December to help prepare them for their first year at school.

Due to its proximity, Tuntable Falls Preschool and kindergarten staff regularly work together to ensure shared activities are organised throughout the year to allow children to stay connected with the homely and familiar Preschool space while building a feeling of familiarity with the primary school. Larger events like our Fete and Winter Solstice celebrations are two of the activities that the schools share to foster such relationships. Starting school can be a gentle process if children and families feel connected to both pre-school and primary school staff.

Transition to primary school doesn't stop on enrolment. A buddy system is set up where each kindergarten student is paired up with a Year 3 to 6 student to continue the settling-in process, where activities such as reading, and sport are shared.



Professional Learning and Teacher Standards

In 2023, we had four permanently employed teachers, one temporary Learning and Support Teacher and four teacher's aides. All permanent and relief teachers were fully qualified with BA Degrees in Education (Primary), or equivalent, from approved higher education institutions. We had a balance of 5 female: 1 male permanent teacher in 2023 and all identified as non-Indigenous.

Teachers' Name	Accreditation Status
Joe Landers	Proficient
Ishta Wilson	Proficient
Fionn Quinlan	Proficient
Heather Jessup	Proficient
Ginger O'Brien	Proficient
Ruben Davis	Proficient
Emily Jett	Proficient
Ochitha Karunaratne	Proficient
Katherin Dempsey	Proficient

All teaching staff maintained the current WWCC, and all our volunteers acquired a WWCC and verification. All teachers have been involved in professional learning activities throughout the year. These activities are designed to develop the professional skills and understandings of staff to improve student outcomes. Professional development can take many forms including whole-staff development days, subject specific in-services, meetings, and conferences.

Professional Learning happens in many areas:

At School

- Staff meetings: that include planning, assessment, lesson evaluation, work samples and student and class profiling.
- Dialogue about assessment, differentiated teaching and learning including consultation with our Learning and Support Teacher.
- Reflection of Student learning and classroom practice.
- Professional development days before the start of a new term that may include varying topics, guest speakers or practical applications depending on the needs of the school at the time.

- Individual parent meetings during term 1 and 3.
- Peer-appraisal process for all staff with documentation and feed-back
- Mentor sessions

Externally

Staff attended either individually or in groups, a range of professional development opportunities including:

Activity	Date	Attending Staff	Presented by
Mandatory Child Protection Training Annual	Jan 2023	Joe Landers Emily Jett Ishta Wilson Fionn Quinlan Heather Jessup Ruben Davis Catherine Smith Amanda King Lisa Czapnik Ochitha Karunaratne René Norwie	AIS/TFCS
Code of Conduct Policy Review	Jan 2023	Joe Landers Emily Jett Ishta Wilson Fionn Quinlan Catherine Smith Amanda King Ruben Davis Heather Jessup Lisa Czapnik Ochitha Karunaratne René Norwie	TFCS
CPR & Anaphylaxis Annual Update	Jan 2023	Joe Landers Ishta Wilson Ruben Davis	International Paramedics College

		Emily Jett Catherine Smith Amanda King Lisa Czapnik Jericho Waters Simon Adams Ochitha Karunaratne René Norwie Heather Jessup	
Understanding Autism Spectrum Disorder	April 2023	Joe Landers Ishta Wilson Catherine Smith	Sue Larkey
AISNSW Professional Learning: Planning and Programming with the new English 3-6 Syllabus	May 2023	Joe Landers	AIS
English 3-6 Professional Learning	July 2023	Joe Landers	NSW Edu, Standards Authority
Fraud and Corruption Control	Feb 2023	Emily Jett	NSW Gov Edu
Cyber Security NSW Essentials Refresher Training	Feb 2023	Emily Jett	NSW Gov Edu
Sounds-Write Practitioners' Online Training	March & Nov 2023	Heather Jessup Katherine Dempsey	Sounds-Write

Policies

Our policies are compiled into two manuals: (1) Safe and Supportive Environment and (2) Management and Employment, which are available from our office upon request.

Upon student enrolment, families are provided with relevant School Policies. These are made available to families on our School website and at the school office upon request. Enrolment Packs are provided to families which include relevant information from our School Policies such as:

1. Attendance Policy
2. Child Protection Policy
3. Disputes Policy
4. Anti-Bullying Policy
5. Behaviour and Discipline Policy

Enrolment Policy

We have an upper limit on enrolments of 60 students. Within that, there are constraints within particular age groups due to classroom space and size.

To enrol, families are asked to complete an enrolment application and then meet with members of the committee. As a parent-run school, it is vital that new families understand, and are committed to, the level of involvement that will be expected of them.

A full copy of the enrolment policy is located in the school office or can be accessed on the school's website. The School Enrolment Policy explains enrolment procedures.

The Welfare of Students, Staff and Volunteers

Tunable Falls Community School has several policies that fall under Student Welfare. Some of these include;

- a) Child Protection Policy: This policy sets out the responsibilities of all employees to follow child protection and processes documented within the Policy and Child Protection and Legislation in NSW.
- b) Safe and Supportive Environment Policy: This describes the necessary steps in providing a safe learning environment including sufficient supervision, the use of grounds and facilities, as well as travel during school-related activities.
- c) Pastoral Care Policy – Students, Staff and Volunteers are made aware of and have access to appropriate pastoral care arrangements (*in conjunction with parental consent when involving a student*). Fostering positive interactions is a primary focus at Tuntable Falls Community School. We strive to meet the needs of everyone through our existing programs, classroom teachers and where necessary exterior services can also be suggested.
- d) Work Health and Safety Policies – These policies apply to all staff, volunteers and students with varying processes and procedures to be followed. Tuntable Falls Community School meets legislated Work Health and Safety requirements.

Anti-Bullying

The School's Anti-Discrimination, Harassment & Bullying Policy outlines the behaviours that are expected of students, and any kind of bullying behaviour that would not be supported under this policy. All children and staff are aware of the expectations of behaviour and that failure to meet the expectations will be followed up. The Policy is based on principles of procedural fairness and involves parents. Full details of the procedures to address inappropriate behaviour and the steps taken to seek a resolution are outlined in the Policy, which can be accessed in the school office or on the school's website.

Disputes Policy

A fair and swift resolution process for complaints or concerns is enforced to sustain harmony within our school community. The aim of this Policy is to maintain the quality of care and services by adopting a positive attitude towards constructive feedback. The Committee provides ample opportunities for open and formal discussions about issues that may be brought up on the Committee Agenda, which is accessible to staff, volunteers, and families. Guidelines and assistance are provided by staff at the school office.



Priority Areas

Key Targets Achieved in 2022	Key Targets for 2023
<p>Organisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed and updated legislation and its relevance to existing policies and procedures. Commenced review of all policies and procedures to suit updated legislation and changed operations. Engaged parents to apply for grants to support school maintenance. Created clear goals around which areas to use surplus budget. 	<p>Organisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing Nicole has been amazing, can continue to encourage parents to volunteer with this. Ask Nicole to delegate as a way of getting other parents involved – form of mentoring/handing over knowledge. Wish list for spending the surplus budget on maintenance and resources. Have a list ready in committee meeting minutes so that decisions can be made quickly.
<p>Teaching and Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sounds Write has implemented across the whole school. Teachers shared new teaching/learning resources during teacher meetings. Ongoing PD for literacy. 	<p>Teaching and Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers can continue to share Sounds Write experience. Mentoring & ghost teaching to share <i>Sounds Write</i> experience. Need to create release time to accomplish this. Teachers collegially working together for whole school educational outcomes. Create a peer mentoring process. Class observation needs to be led by a goal set by the teacher being observed. Teachers sharing back PD that is relevant to other year levels.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hired a LaST (Learning and Support Teacher) and ensured funding for sustainability of this position. • Continued our SEE program with the employment of a specialist teacher. • Sourced funding for a school counsellor • Source funding for a wellbeing program i.e., Stormbirds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LaST position was established by Ochitha Karunaratne and Kate Dempsey took over from her in Term 4, 2023. • Emily Jett ran an integrated SEE/STEAM program • Successfully applied for the NSW Gov (Dept of Regional NSW) Children and Young People Wellbeing Recovery Initiative Grant to employ a Wellbeing Officer for one day per week for four consecutive years. Billi Bourne has accepted the position. • All staff have completed the Smiling Mind program focused on mindfulness.
School's Mission and Ethos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintained our community parent run school by encouraging parent participation in all aspects of running the school and opening the school up more regularly for community events. • Need to build on parental involvement • Set expectations at induction. At inductions parents are to spend half a day at the school. • Parents to spend a minimum of one day per term at the school for a roster day. 	School's Mission and Ethos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing • Suggest to parents to tag team on tasks – buddy up. • Re-inducting the current families to re-establish understanding of the school's ethos and expectations. Suggest parents tag team on tasks – buddy up. • Aim to have 30 parents consistently involved.
Enrolment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waiting lists for kindy and lower classes. Need to work on upper primary for new enrolments. • Kindergarten stand-alone class remains a priority. 	Enrolment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waiting lists for kindy and upper primary for new enrolments. • Lower classes blended into K/Yr1 and Yr1/2 model for 2023

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted marketing around specific enrolments. • Ensure TFCS is represented positively by engaging within local environs i.e., newspaper articles, art gallery exhibitions, open days etc Restructure of classes-K, year 1, 2, Year 3,4, Year 5,6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing • Ongoing
Community and Relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to utilise local First People to integrate indigenous culture into curriculum. • Introduce specialist educators to teach sex education. 	Community and Relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local elder engagement – good on excursions. Emmy has just completed '8 ways' which covered how to integrate aboriginal views in the curriculum. • Sex education with 'Adoles-sense'. Annual one day workshop set in place with a facilitator.

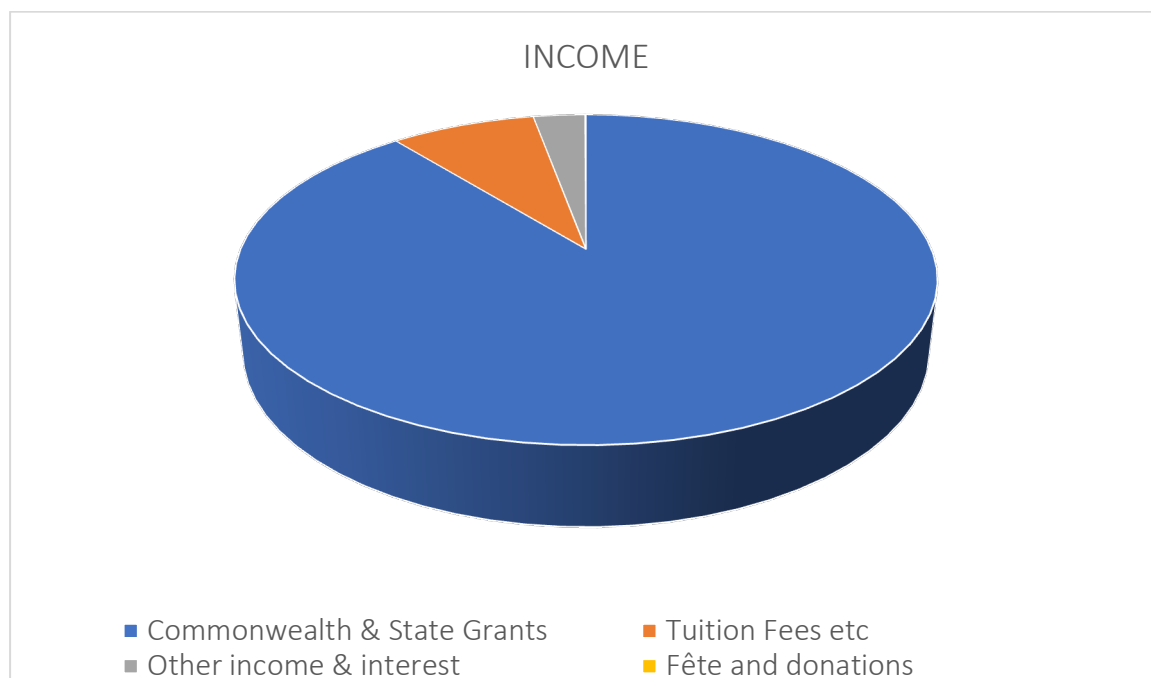


Financial Report

The Tutable Falls Community School's financial report reflects data and information taken from our school's audited financial statements for the year ending 31st December 2023, and the annual Auditor's Report dated 3rd May 2024. The school's Audit was conducted by Rochdale Accounting and Business Advisory. The financial statements consist of a Profit and Loss Statement (showing our income and expenses), a Balance Sheet (showing the schools assets and liabilities) and a Depreciation Schedule.

Tutable Falls Community School's core funding comes from Commonwealth and State grants and in 2023 this amounted to \$1,052,722, reflecting 90.4% of our total income for the year. This figure/percentage of income is directly related to the number of students enrolled at the school at the time of the 2023 census, which was 46 this year. Total income from tuition fees and other revenues came in at \$93,918 (8.1%) and other income including interest on our fixed term deposits and additional small grants came to \$33,466 (0.1%). This year our fête raised \$5,430 for our school, and we also received \$673 in donations.

Our total income this year was \$1,164,308, which is an increase of \$150,921 (14.9%) over last year.



Our Profit and Loss Statement showed our school's main expenses were, as expected, staff wages and salaries. Taking into account salary increases and other staff related expenses such as superannuation, contract teachers and staff training, total outgoings in this area came to \$859,882, 77.2% of our total expenditure. This is up 11.9% from last year where our staffing expenses sat at \$768,300. There was a marked increase in Relief Support Staff expenses, up to \$29,956 this year from \$15,870 last year, an 88.8% increase. Conversely, our Relief Teachers expenses were reduced by 25.6%, from \$39,068 to \$29,063. Admin Wages were also up 16.7%, from \$64,591 to \$75,380. Our Maintenance Staff Wages were down 16.4%, from \$6,600 to \$5,520. Teacher and Support Staff expenses overall increased by approximately 7.7%, from \$555,433 to \$598,296.

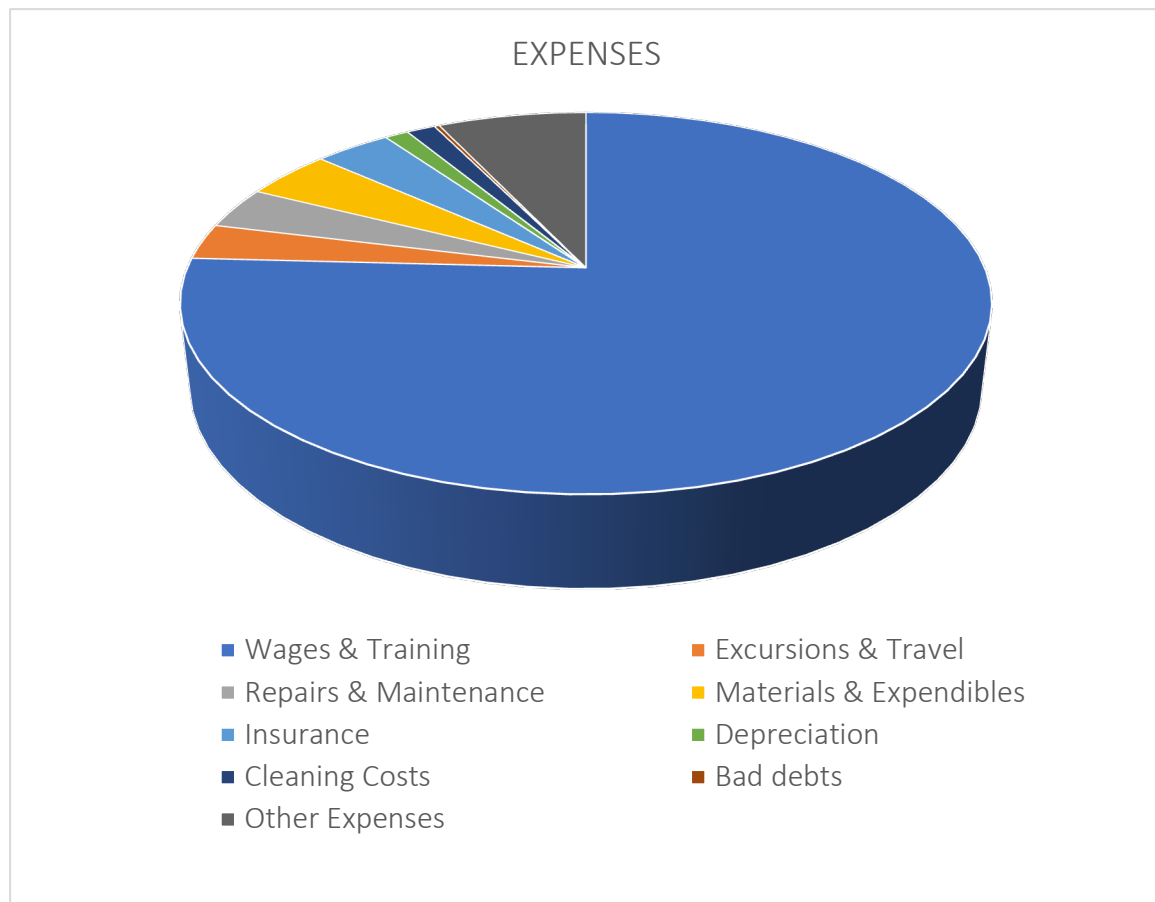
Repair and maintenance costs at Tutable Falls Community School were down this year compared to last year at \$40,235 (3.6%), down 33.7% from last year (\$60,665). In addition, our expenses for contracting maintenance staff were down a significant 68% from \$28,935 to \$9,270.

Our school's outgoings for camps and excursions came to \$34,282 (3.1%), which is a substantial increase of 33.2% over last year (\$25,735). This is mainly attributed to our year Family Camp being back on after being unable to hold it for a few years due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Our total cleaning costs remained the same year on year, reducing slightly by 1.9% from \$15,872 to \$15,568, contributing 1.4% to our total expenses.

Materials and expendables came in at \$47,085 (4.2%), a 16.5% increase of over last year (\$40,427) and insurance as always, ever increasing at \$41,094 (3.7%), 10% more than last year (\$37,361). Depreciation on all our assets came to \$12,872 (0.4%). All other expenses make up the remaining (7.2%). This year we wrote off \$2,658 of bad debt. We are expected to write off further debts this year as certain debts are likely to be unrecoverable.

Our total expenditure for the year 2023 was \$1,114,188, a 11.9% increase over last year (\$995,482).



Overall Tuntable Falls Community School ran at an operating profit of \$50,120, a significant increase over last year's \$17,905.

At the close of 2023 our Balance Sheet showed the school had cash and cash equivalent assets of \$320,851 and outstanding tuition fees of \$74,889 (less provision for doubtful debts \$16,706). This, along with other outstanding payments receivable bringing our current assets to \$418,437, along with the school's non-current assets of \$597,093 takes our Total Assets to \$1,015,529 for 2023.

Our Balance Statements showed our outstanding liabilities for the year came to a total of \$76,367, this figure including outstanding GST owed, PAYG and superannuation withheld and provision of sick and long service leave for permanent staff.

As of the year ended 31st December 2023, Tuntable Falls Community School had Total Equity of \$939,162 and remains in a financially viable position looking forward, able to meet all outstanding debts.

Kristoff Brunet de Courssou
Treasurer