



Minutes for AGM 2022

Castlemaine Steiner School & Kindergarten

Held at CSSK

25/05/2022 @ 19:00

No. Minutes

1. Acknowledgement of Country

2. Opening Verse

3. Welcome, Attendance and Apologies

Present : Miles Bennett, Hayley Bridgwood, William Camp, Anna Campbell, Keppel Cassidy, Brendan Cossens, Dominic Crinson, Ian Cuming, Lyn Farrow, Katherine Freeman, Marian Goodman, Aleesha Hercus, Shelley Krape, Suzanne March, Julieta Mateo Vitale, Amanda McDonald, Hannes Macnamara, Sue Murphy, Anuveer Nathan, Jeff Onans, Anne Perry, Tracey Robertson, Warwick Smith, Beatrice Varga, Kirsty Pearse, Lisa Hall, Pearse Casey, Natalie Stevens, Nicole Furze

Proxies : Hellie Lynch (to Aleesha Hercus); Chris Curtis, Moya Maguire, Leonie Schellhorn (to Anna Campbell); Nola Birch, David Dorizzi, Michael Gersch, Raziel Gutierrez Soto, Nicole Gutierrez, Rodney Le Cuddenec, Caithlin Meave, Rebecca Meyers, Raphael Read, Luke Shavak, Esther Skarboe, Leanne Tatersall, Sam Thomas, Thyana Read (to Anuveer Nathan); Sera Watson (to Brendan Cossens); Rose Demaria, Joel Hines, Sarah Hines, Tyson Holopainen, Brenna Jensen, Ruth O'Leary, Brett O'Sullivan, Josie Taylor (to Dominic Crinson); Hilary Blackshaw, Michele Forbes, Kate McGann, Joel Reynolds (to Keppel Cassidy); Adrian Pearse (to Kirsty Pearse); Lucas Bester, Penny Gilbert (to Lisa Hall); Fiona Mariposa (to Lyn Farrow); Chris Archbold, Steph Archbold (to Pearse Casey); Sujeeva Henadhira (to Tracey Robertson); Kyle Murphy (to Suzanne March); Jane Staley, Brendan Sydes (to Warwick Smith)

In Attendance : Neil Bowker; Nerrida Johnson (via Zoom)

4. Previous Minutes

[4.A AGM_2021_Minutes_19_05_2021.pdf](#)

Motion : That the minutes of the AGM held 19 May 2021 be accepted

Moved : Anna Campbell

Motion passed

5. Reports

5.1 Board Report

Keppel Cassidy presented the board report.

- Keppel acknowledged the challenges that the school had been through over the past 12



CASTLEMAINE STEINER SCHOOL & KINDERGARTEN

months due to the Covid19 pandemic and the resulting, unprecedented government restrictions. He expressed regret for the loss of several of the school's teachers due to the government vaccine mandates, and the impact of government restrictions on our school's families

- He noted all that the school has to look forward to in the coming year: a dynamic, highly respected new principal Nerrida Johnson; the science and technology building, which is progressing towards completion; and the completion of the strategic plan in the coming months. The board is also supporting the school leadership in reviewing and updating school policies and procedures for the upcoming VRQA audit
- He acknowledged the service of former principal Danilo Paglialonga who resigned last year, former Chair Warwick Smith who resigned at the end of 2021, and Board director Joel Reynolds, who is not seeking re-election at this AGM
- He expressed gratitude for the school leadership and teachers for their hard work and dedication to supporting their students through the past year, and especially in how they responded to the crises and challenges of Covid. Hayley Bridgwood and Neil Bowker were mentioned for going above and beyond in their service to the school and to our students

5.2 Financial Report

[5.2.A Castlemaine Steiner School 2021 REVISED Signed Audited Accounts.pdf](#)

Neil Bowker presented the 2021 financial report.

Motion : That the 2021 financial report be accepted

Moved : Keppel Cassidy

Motion passed

5.3 Questions relating to the reports

A number of questions were asked by members present in regard to the finances and processes, which were addressed by the business manager.

6. General Business

6.1 Elected Director position

Nominations for the two vacant board positions were received for the following people:

- Shelley Krape
- Anuveer Nathan
- Brett O'Sullivan
- Aleesha Hercus
- Beatrice Varga
- Hannes MacNamara
- Marian Goodman
- Bill Camp

Beatrice Varga and Marian Goodman were elected by secret ballot using preferential voting.

As there were no objections to either nomination, Beatrice Varga and Marian Goodman were declared elected directors under s35.2 of the constitution.



6.2 Appointment of auditor

Motion : That Nexia Australia be reappointed Auditors for 2022.

Moved : Keppel Cassidy.

Motion passed.

7. Close of Meeting



CASTLEMAINE STEINER SCHOOL & KINDERGARTEN

Board Chair's Report to AGM 25/05/2022

Keppel Cassidy

Members of our school community, teachers, parents and friends of the school: thank you for joining us for our CSSK AGM, and for your interest in the welfare and success of our school. The past 12 months has been a time of great trial and challenge for our school, and indeed for all schools in this state, as we have moved through the Covid19 pandemic and the resulting, unprecedented restrictions on the operation of schools as part of the government's efforts to protect our community from the virus. Many of these restrictions were perceived by most as reasonable, commonsense and, if uncomfortable at times, were relatively straightforward to manage. Some, such as the periods of remote learning due to school closures, presented a challenge for our teaching staff (not to mention for parents), yet one I believe all concerned rose to admirably. Other restrictions seemingly challenged the very principles and philosophy that underpin Steiner education. Substantial divisions emerged in 2021 among members of the broader community in their understanding of the best response to Covid, and these were heightened by aggressive government messaging and a general atmosphere of fear for the safety of ourselves and our loved ones. In this environment, the school had a difficult path to walk, and I would like to acknowledge our leadership team and teachers for doing their best to meet these challenges in a respectful, responsible way. Where mistakes were made, as is inevitable in crisis situations, we will endeavour to learn from these for the future.

I acknowledge with great sadness the departure of several of our teachers as a result of the vaccine mandates imposed by our state government, a policy which, though motivated by the right intentions, was one that I personally believe was unjustified and not in accord with Steiner principles. The decision to place these teachers on involuntary leave, and then to discontinue their employment, was one of the worst I

have had to make in my professional life, and we acknowledge the hardship and suffering that doing so has caused them and their students. If I had seen a way of avoiding this outcome, I would have gladly pursued it, and I think I speak for the whole board in saying that we wished this outcome could have been averted.

I would also like to acknowledge how difficult this past 12 months has been for our school families. To our parents, we recognise that limits have been placed on your involvement in the school that have been hard on you, and we are glad that it has become possible for these limits to be significantly eased. There is no Steiner school without its families – you are the heart of the school and we look forward to renewing our school community with the return of school fairs, morning teas, open classrooms and other events over the coming months. We are excited that a new parent body has been formed to support parent involvement within the school, and we express our gratitude to those parents who have created this initiative.

As the AGM is a time to acknowledge the past, it is also a time to look to the future for our school, and there is much to bring us hope that that future can be a bright one. After considerable searching, the school has been fortunate enough to obtain the services of a highly experienced and dynamic Steiner principal in Nerrida Johnson. Nerrida was principal at Cape Byron Steiner School for 7 years, and oversaw the completion of their strategic plan, and a period of renewal and expansion for the school. She comes with glowing references from several leading Steiner educators and the common refrain seems to be that we are very fortunate to have her joining us. Nerrida will commence as Principal at the school at the beginning of term 3 in July.

The school is also working towards the completion of our long-awaited strategic plan - a vital document for crystallising who we are and the ethos of our school. This process began in early 2021 with the board commissioning NIODA to conduct a cultural analysis, a process that was eventually completed in late 2021 after delays due to Covid lockdowns. In March this year, the board commissioned leading Steiner education consultant David Liknaitzky to facilitate a visioning workshop with school staff which was held in late April, and we understand from participants this was a rich and productive day. The next stage will involve drawing on the results of this workshop and

the cultural analysis to develop a vision, mission statement and statement of principles for the strategic plan, in consultation with the school community. Our goal is to complete this work and the remainder of the strategic plan over the coming months.

The school is also preparing at present for an audit by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) as part of a review of our accreditation. In order to support this process, the Board hired former Sophia Mundi Steiner School principal Fiona Cock to assist us with review and improvement of our policies and procedures. Such structures might seem dry to some, but they are essential for ensuring the school has clear, effective guidelines for its work and can create a safe, respectful environment for students, staff and parents. As such, they are also a legal necessity for a modern school to be able to continue functioning. The Board is currently assisting in a review of our school policies to ensure that they are clear, up to date and can operate successfully to support the healthy life of the school.

Finally, the school's new science and technology building is rapidly taking shape after a long process of gestation. The board contracted the design and construction of this building in 2021 with the assistance of a government grant, and it is exciting to see the results of this preparation taking shape. We hope that this building will represent a real asset to the school and help make us a more attractive choice for current and future students approaching the early secondary years.

I would like to close this report by acknowledging several people who have made an important contribution to the school in the past year. First, I acknowledge the contribution of our former principal Danilo Paglialonga, who sadly had to resign late last year due to his health. Danilo has a deep love for, and dedication to Steiner education, and we are grateful for his carrying the leadership role with this same dedication through much of the difficult Covid period. Second, I acknowledge my predecessor as chair of the board, Warwick Smith. Warwick served the school as board director for 5 years and chair for 4 of those, and I am grateful for his caring, intelligent and collegial approach, and his skill at finding the balance between allowing space for deliberation and guiding matters to a decision in a timely manner. I would also like to acknowledge Joel Reynolds, who is stepping down from the board after 4 years' service.

Joel brought to the board extensive experience from the corporate and not-for-profit sector in organisational governance and recruitment, and played an important role in helping us to recognise and respond to potential risks over the past year. His presence on the board will be greatly missed. I also acknowledge Barbara Fisher and Fiona Cock, two highly experienced Steiner educators who have brought their knowledge to the school and assisted us to strengthen our governance and policy structures in preparation for VRQA registration.

On behalf of the Board I would like to express my gratitude to all of the school staff, teaching and non-teaching, for their hard work and dedication to the school over the past year, and for providing a safe, caring learning environment in conditions of significant adversity during that time. I'd especially like to thank Amanda McDonald and Anna Campbell for combining their teaching work with participation on the school board, and for their contributions throughout the year.

Finally, I'd like to acknowledge two people who have gone well above and beyond the call of duty in service to our school and children over the past year. Neil Bowker, as business manager, has informed the board's decision making through thoroughly presented financial reports, his financial projections and grasp of governance principles being vital to our ability to navigate the difficult waters of 2021-22. And lastly, Hayley Bridgwood. Hayley stepped into the breach when Danilo was struck down by illness last year, and despite being a single mother of two school age children, has carried the myriad demands of this role for most of the time since then, simply because there was no-one else who could do it. Hayley has exceptional organisational skills and enormous reserves of dedication and persistence and, perhaps because of this, has often ended up carrying more than anyone should have to carry. We acknowledge your service to the school Hayley, and your willingness to do what was needed for the children, and we recognise that it is time for the burden you have been carrying to be shared with others. We trust that implementation of additional resourcing for the school leadership, along with the imminent arrival of Nerrida, will help you to achieve the balance and fulfilment in your work that you surely deserve.

There is much to look forward to in 2022, but let us not doubt that there are also dangers ahead of us: the dangers of further division afflicting our community, of further health crises and government responses that we must work with, and of any further losses of students threatening the viability of the school. Yet I think we can take heart from the thought that each of us here, no matter our differences, wants the best for the school and for our students. As members of our school community, we each want to see a thriving, vibrant school going into the future. Let us work constructively together to achieve that goal, knowing that we are part of a bigger education movement that is carrying an impulse that has vital role to play in the future of humanity and the future of this Earth our home. And let us take hope and courage from the immortal words of the Michael Prayer, inspired by the lectures of Rudolf Steiner:

We must eradicate from the soul all fear and terror of what comes towards us from out of the future.

We must acquire serenity in all feelings and sensibilities concerning the future.

We must look forward with absolute equanimity to all that may come.

And we must think only that whatever comes is given to us by a world-direction full of wisdom.

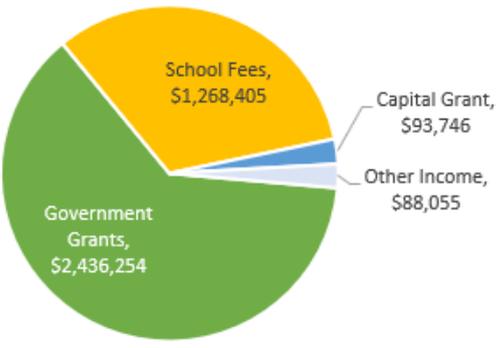
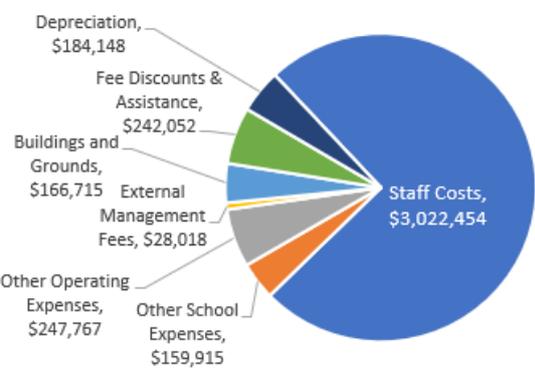
It is part of what we must learn in this age, namely, to live out of pure trust, without any security in existence, trust in the ever-present help of the spiritual world.

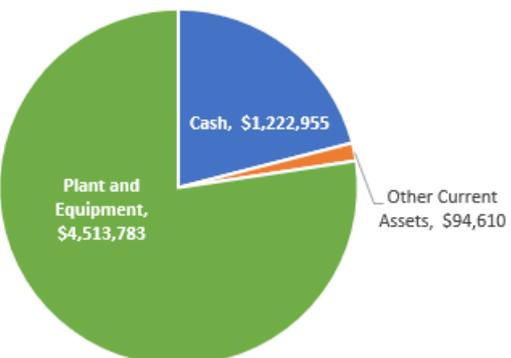
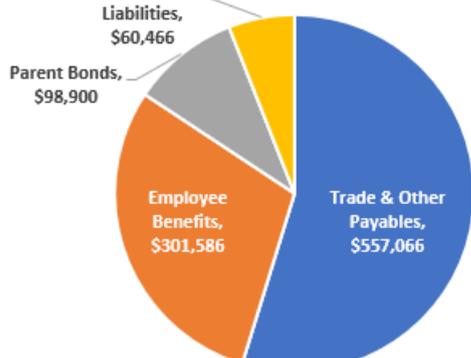
Truly, nothing else will do if our courage is not to fail us.

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

CSSK Financial Statements 2021

Summary of Key Points

Statement of Profit or Loss (Page 4)																											
<p>The Statement of Profit or Loss sets out a summary of the school's income and expenses for 2021, with 2020 figures included as a comparison.</p>																											
<p style="text-align: center;">Income</p>  <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <caption>Income Breakdown</caption> <tr><th>Category</th><th>Amount</th></tr> <tr><td>School Fees</td><td>\$1,268,405</td></tr> <tr><td>Government Grants</td><td>\$2,436,254</td></tr> <tr><td>Capital Grant</td><td>\$93,746</td></tr> <tr><td>Other Income</td><td>\$88,055</td></tr> </table>	Category	Amount	School Fees	\$1,268,405	Government Grants	\$2,436,254	Capital Grant	\$93,746	Other Income	\$88,055	<p style="text-align: center;">Expenditure</p>  <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <caption>Expenditure Breakdown</caption> <tr><th>Category</th><th>Amount</th></tr> <tr><td>Staff Costs</td><td>\$3,022,454</td></tr> <tr><td>Fee Discounts & Assistance</td><td>\$242,052</td></tr> <tr><td>Buildings and Grounds</td><td>\$166,715</td></tr> <tr><td>External Management Fees</td><td>\$28,018</td></tr> <tr><td>Other School Expenses</td><td>\$159,915</td></tr> <tr><td>Other Operating Expenses</td><td>\$247,767</td></tr> <tr><td>Depreciation</td><td>\$184,148</td></tr> </table>	Category	Amount	Staff Costs	\$3,022,454	Fee Discounts & Assistance	\$242,052	Buildings and Grounds	\$166,715	External Management Fees	\$28,018	Other School Expenses	\$159,915	Other Operating Expenses	\$247,767	Depreciation	\$184,148
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<p>Alongside the revenue figures is a reference to Note 4 on page 12, which provides further details of revenue. From this, it can be seen that school fees (33%) and government grants (63%) make up most of the school's revenue. The other item of interest is the Capital Grant, which is the amount of the grant for the new building project that had been received up until the end of 2021.</p>	<p>The school's expenses are made up mostly of staffing costs (75%). Fee discounts and assistance provided to parents amounted to \$242k in 2021. This is significantly down from 2020, as in 2020 across the board fee discounts during lockdowns were provided using the government Jobkeeper subsidy.</p>																										
<p>Overall the school had a shortfall of \$164,608 for the year. Note that this includes the capital grant, so the operating deficit excluding this grant was \$258,354.</p>																											

Statement of Financial Position (Page 5)																			
<p>The Statement of Financial Position, or balance sheet, shows the school's assets and liabilities, divided into current (ie those that are more short term, and most easily converted to cash) and non-current (more long term assets and liabilities).</p>																			
<p style="text-align: center;">Assets</p>  <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <caption>Assets Breakdown</caption> <tr><th>Category</th><th>Amount</th></tr> <tr><td>Plant and Equipment</td><td>\$4,513,783</td></tr> <tr><td>Cash</td><td>\$1,222,955</td></tr> <tr><td>Other Current Assets</td><td>\$94,610</td></tr> </table>	Category	Amount	Plant and Equipment	\$4,513,783	Cash	\$1,222,955	Other Current Assets	\$94,610	<p style="text-align: center;">Liabilities</p>  <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <caption>Liabilities Breakdown</caption> <tr><th>Category</th><th>Amount</th></tr> <tr><td>Trade & Other Payables</td><td>\$557,066</td></tr> <tr><td>Employee Benefits</td><td>\$301,586</td></tr> <tr><td>Parent Bonds</td><td>\$98,900</td></tr> <tr><td>Non-current Liabilities</td><td>\$60,466</td></tr> </table>	Category	Amount	Trade & Other Payables	\$557,066	Employee Benefits	\$301,586	Parent Bonds	\$98,900	Non-current Liabilities	\$60,466
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<p>The item "cash" is made up of cash and cash equivalents (\$1.015m) and other financial assets (term deposits, \$0.207m). Along with prudent measures to control spending, this provides sufficient cash reserves to ensure uninterrupted payment of salaries and expenses while we increase enrolments to pre-pandemic levels.</p> <p>Property, plant and equipment (mostly land and buildings, also furniture and equipment) amounts to \$4.5m. The school owns all the land and buildings.</p>	<p>Liabilities are relatively small compared to assets, leaving net assets (ie assets minus liabilities) of \$4.813m. Note that, importantly, the school does not have any loans payable.</p>																		
<p>Overall, the balance sheet shows that although there was a shortfall of \$164k in the profit and loss statement, the school benefits by having a strong bank balance, owning its land and buildings, and having no bank loans to pay off. This positions the school well as we rebuild enrolment levels following the two years of pandemic lockdowns and restrictions.</p>																			