

ANNUAL REPORT 2008

This is the Sixth Annual School Report presented to parents, teachers, staff and other members of the school community at the Annual School Meeting, held at the Castlemaine Steiner School and Kindergarten, Rilens Road, Muckleford Vic, 3451 on Monday 27th October, 2008.

1. Introduction

2008 has been, overall, a year of continued consolidation, planning for the future and creation of new depths in the life of the school. We have continued to focus on directions articulated in the school's Strategic Plan, and to revise and strengthen this plan in many ways.

This report will cover:

- i. A report from the Board of Directors including a progress report on the Governance Review undertaken this year
- ii. the key educational programmes undertaken by the College of Teachers and specialist teachers,
- iii. A report from the Administrative Council, developments in the administrative areas, , and
- iv. A report on development of the grounds, facilities and buildings.
- v. The Business Management and Finance report.

2. Board of Directors

Jeff Onans

This year the School has planned and commenced a review of its governance structures. This has been a response to changing external accountability requirements as well as a desire to improve and clarify internal accountability and decision making functions across the school. The Governance Review was initiated from a positive position, seeking improvements, rather than response to a school crisis.

The Administrative Council and College, through the "Governance Review Sub-committee", worked hard to outline the brief for the review, to select a suitable consultant to assist in the process. Ian Stehlik, the ex-business manager of the Orana Steiner school in Canberra and endorsed member of the Rudolf Steiner Schools Association (RSSA) "Support Panel", was appointed to the position. As

a member of the RSSA "Support Panel" Ian was able to offer the school a discounted rate for his consultancy.

The process for the review was:

1. Ian interviewed the Board of Directors, members of the College of Teachers, the Administrative Council and administration staff and reviewed a full range of company and school documents. On the basis of this he prepared a set of draft recommendations in his 1st report.
2. The report was presented at a public meeting at the school.
3. During the next 6 weeks the report was available for analysis, comment and suggestion from all stakeholders in the school.
4. Feedback from this consideration was collated and summarised by the sub-committee and relayed back to Ian.
5. On the basis of this feedback Ian will produce a final report. We anticipate this before the end of this term.
6. The College of Teachers and Administrative Council will consider this report and from it submit final recommendations to the company.
7. The completion of the Governance Review will be when the final recommendations are endorsed by the Board of Director's at the 2009 company AGM, (expected to be in May 2009). This will position the school strongly for the future and will enable clarity of management and governance processes to lead the school in a healthy and fruitful manner.

Feedback on this report is currently being collated. Major aspects of the review to date can be summarised as follows.

- Key stakeholders in the school (College of Teachers, Admin Council and parents) are supporting the overall direction that the report is recommending;
- The school will revise the role and function of the Board of Directors, making a clear distinction between the governance and management functions of the school.
- A clear VISION and MISSION statement is being drafted to guide the future activities of the school.
- The educational management functions of the College of Teachers are being reviewed in a SLAM (School Leadership and Management) workshop in November.

3. College of Teachers

Lyn Farrow

The opening statement of our school's Curriculum is:

The Steiner curriculum is based on a universal pattern of child development which provides the basis for both the curriculum content and the way in which this is presented to the children. By integrating the humanities, arts and sciences, it strives to give students a picture of the whole world and to educate not just the intellect, but the whole child.

Every aspect of Steiner education seeks to develop the proper relationship between intellectual, physical and emotional development - the head, hand and heart. Thus each activity, each day, each week and each term, will reflect this 'head, heart and hand' balance.

The approach is always from the whole to the parts, the concrete to abstract, so that learning takes place in an integrated way. Subjects are studied in relation to each other so that children perceive their unity, rather than splitting them into separate compartments.

Attention is paid to the learning process rather than the product, and engaging the child's imagination during the journey rather than focusing only on the destination. This child-centred approach is built around the natural rhythms of the day, the week and the year, and the celebration of festivals and special occasions forms an important part of the life of the school.

The Steiner curriculum is comprehensively co-educational in that all students, irrespective of gender or ability, are expected to participate in the full range of activities. The Castlemaine Steiner School is committed to supporting students from a diverse range of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.

In today's fast-paced society with its multitude of choices and opportunities for instant gratification; a society that is facing an unprecedented global challenge to survival as a result of our misunderstanding of the natural world, educational goals which express a striving to "*develop the proper relationship between intellectual, physical and emotional development*" become ever and ever more crucial.

A search for improvement in how we achieve this *balance and integration*, the *development of imagination* and support *rhythm and balance* in children's lives underwrites the continual striving in the work of the College of Teachers.

In addition this year the College of Teachers has invested considerable focus on the areas of Governance and Professional Development.

Governance Review:

While reviewing the Governance of the school may not immediately stand out as a means to further these ends a further analysis of the matter reveals it to be a powerful tool furthering this constant striving.

Firstly there is the issue of the competent running of the school without which there would be no ability to enact these educational goals at all. The school is very proud of its current management and the achievements to date. However, times change and a commitment to continual improvement is essential for any modern organisation. The proposed updated school structure, responding to the growth in maturity of the school, will add immeasurable support to our efforts to develop the education to meet the modern needs of society.

Furthermore a Governance review process is by nature an opportunity for us to reflect upon our whole reason for being. It allows us to get in touch with our deepest motivating forces and to review these in the light of the moment. Such reflection renews and restates our passion in a vital and contemporary way. Such work has led to a revitalisation of the statement of the *Vision* of the school; the Vision being a powerful expression of the spirit of the school, a statement that we use to remind us of why we do what we do and to use as the "rock" onto which we anchor all of our decisions. The Vision statement then leads onto a Mission statement; a statement of measurable intents about how it is that we intend to achieve that Vision. Both statements then become the ongoing tool for referencing our on-going assessments of decisions and planning for the future. Both of these statements are in development and will be released with the release of the final recommendations.

Our Governance review has also allowed the College a further opportunity to restructure its operation to allow for an increased focus on educational research and professional conversation and support.

In a Steiner school the College of Teachers fulfils the role of a "Principal" who, in a usual school structure, is the head of the school's management as

well as being a leader of its the educational development and operation. The requirements of, however, are many and varied and as such often consume most of the available time and energy which is in competition with the needs of the educational leadership role. Our Governance review process has led to the College of Teachers investigating a whole new model for educational management, distinct from the business management of the school. This is being explored with an experienced New Zealand Steiner educator and manager later this year. We fully expect to be able to use aspects of this model to revitalise and focus the activities of the College of Teachers in 2009.

Professional Development:

The school's commitment to Professional Development remains as strong as ever. This year:

- 6 teachers attended a full week class teacher professional development course run by Alan Wagstaff at Silkwood Steiner School.
- The whole staff completed:
 - Level 1 Rock and Water training under the guidance of Lyn Farrow
 - "Sensory Processing" and "Handwriting" workshop with an occupational therapist from SCOPE in Bendigo.
 - 1st Aid updates, CPR updates and annual training in asthma management, anaphylaxis response and snake bite 1st aid.
- Lyn Farrow completed the Rock and Water Advanced Training and attended Boys in Education seminar with Steve Biddulph.
- Rob Jorritsma undertook a
 - drama development workshop at the VCA and a
 - "Teaching Drama" workshop at NIDA.
- Jeff Onans attended:
 - an Association of Independent Schools full day workshop "An Introduction to Mediation in the Workplace" and a
 - Centre for Strategic Education half day workshop on "School Leadership".
 - Level 1 1st Aid training.

- Our Early Childhood teachers have attended State Steiner Early Childhood network meetings
- Heather Osborn and Mary Nesbit went to a seminar at Lady Gowrie "Communicating Concerns to Parents"
- John Goble participated in an Association of Independent Schools seminar on Gender Issues in Education.
- Lorna Atkinson, our Pastoral Carer, has attended College twice each term to lead discussions in behaviour management. Having Lorna on staff in this way has been a wonderful benefit to the school because it has allowed her to lead these *on going* professional development sessions, thus allowing us to build and develop a topic over time.
- Chris Curtis, Dagmar McNamara, Johanna Winchcomb and Julie Luckman completed an inspiring bookbinding course the fruits of which will certainly flow on into the school as it is one of the craft topics that Rudolf Steiner recommends for the senior classes and we have already seen some results in Class 8.
- Mara Macs is participating in an ongoing national Bothmer Gym training program. Bothmer Gym is a specific form of gymnastics developed for Steiner education.
- Helen Jones completed her Integration Aid certificate.
- Lyn Farrow, Anne Perry and Deb Wardle attended a Rudolf Steiner Schools Association school management workshop called "Meeting the World".

Other Important News:

- **Class 1 2009:** The College is delighted to announce that **Dagmar McNamara** has been appointed to the position of Class 1 Class Teacher for 2009. The appointment of Dagmar, who is a founding parent of the school as well as an established member of the College, creates further consolidation of the staff in the school. We now have a staffing profile of experienced teachers with a minimum of 4 years' association with the school with 6 of the 10 Class Teachers having more than 10 years' experience here!
- The College also wishes to acknowledge the work of **Sue Bruce** who is finishing in a Class Teacher role this year with the graduation of Class 8. Sue has worked as a Class Teacher with 2 classes now over the past 8 years and has shown herself to be an imaginative and highly skilled

teacher as well as a valued colleague. We certainly hope to find ways for Sue, with her wonderful talents and happy personality, to continue to be involved here in the future.

- The school has endorsed Jeff Onans' election to the Executive Committee of the Rudolf Steiner Schools Association (RSSA). The RSSA represents Steiner Schools from all over the country. This year it has been particularly involved in representing their interests in the federal government process of development of a National Curriculum and changed requirements for funding. On top of this the Association (RSSA) has:
 - Organised a specific school management conference.
 - Provided specific support to a number of schools through its "Support Panel"
 - Maintained a national data base on its web site.
 - Generated a marvellous generic Steiner Education booklet for Australian schools to use - copies are available for viewing tonight.
 - Supported the development of the first ever tertiary accredited Steiner Secondary teacher training certificate through Canberra University.

Also this year Rosemary Gentle, the Executive Officer of the Association was awarded an OBE for service to Steiner education!

- **Practical Skills Program:** The program is designed to support specific needs of children in class 5 - 8 who are best continuing their education in an "apprenticeship" model, or those who are in crisis.

The program prepares children to cultivate life, work and social skills through academic, social and practical means by -

- i Maintaining self confidence and self esteem
- ii Providing opportunities to experience success in areas of intelligence they naturally possess
- iii Using the above to build skills in their less developed areas
- iv Experiencing success and instilling a sense of pride and ownership of a task by contributing to the needs and life of the whole school

v Fostering meaningful relationships with children and adults across the school.

The ultimate aim is to foster the development of children who value themselves, their skills and who feel they can contribute positively to the world. This program has run for a number of years and this year we took it to another level and ran it as a 'pilot program' with **Lyn Wallace** taking on the coordinator role. Resources and formal planning and assessment procedures were set in place. A review of this pilot conducted at the start of term 4 has indicated that this is a very valuable program that is well structured to achieve these goals. With ongoing development and refinement, it will become an increasingly important tool in the provision of diverse opportunities to our students.

- **Pastoral Care:** A significant development in the school this year has been the appointment of **Lorna Atkinson** as our **Pastoral Carer** under the Commonwealth funded program the National School Chaplaincy Program. The appointment of Lorna, an educational psychologist of many years' experience and former parent at the school, has provided support to the core role in Steiner Education of the Class Teacher/student relationship. This unique relationship has not only powerful academic educational advantages but is also a particularly potent way to support children's emotional needs. To have someone as experienced and dedicated as Lorna on staff to provide expert support to the Class Teacher has allowed an invaluable strengthening of this relationship. In addition Lorna's appointment has provided:
 - Assistance with values education sessions with parent groups and 1 on 1 support to children and parents. Participation in the program is entirely voluntary. Evidence of the success of and need for the program has been demonstrated through teacher feedback and in an overall review of Lorna's position. Surveys are currently being collated on this programme in the school.
 - The opportunity for ongoing Professional Development sessions in the College. To achieve this Lorna attends 2 College meetings per term to facilitate professional learning on relevant topics.

- **Specialist Teachers:** The College of Teachers would like to acknowledge the high quality work done by our wonderful team of **specialist teachers**.

- Our **music program** continues at its wonderfully high standard. The program was further developed this year with a new violin teacher **Andrew Schellhorn** joining the team and with our inaugural Senior Music Concert at the Phee Broadway and what a fabulous event it was. The added formality of the event, the inclusion of performances by the music teaching staff and the presence of an ensemble from the Melbourne Rudolf Steiner School (Warrenwood) significantly raised the expectation of the students playing and this was clearly evident on the night. We look forward to this as a regular feature on the school calendar. The class work continued to be extended through the regular quality of the Class soirees.
- The **senior choir** has been a continuing feature this year and we extend our thanks to *Andrée Cosens* for her consummate skill, patience and love.
- *Gitesha* continues to guide our **German** language program from Prep to Class 8. *Gitesha* has been able to offer a significant addition to her program with the involvement of our German Social Service volunteers. This started with *Jonas* who, since his return to Germany, has been replaced by *Martin Hinderberger*. Although we have not been able to continue **French** across the whole school *Rebecca Morton* is achieving marvellous results with our Classes 7 & 8.
- **Gym** is a special feature of the school that we offer from Class 3 to 8 and this year the program has been significantly extended through the addition of a specialist branch of gymnastics unique to Steiner schools called **Bothmer Gym**. This has been possible because for the first time in Australia a training course has been established and *Mara* has been an eager and dedicated participant.
- This year we are pleased to introduce **Stuart Dunn** as our new senior **Sport** teacher. *Stuart* has been doing a marvellous job with Classes 5 to 8 and this year has connected the school into the local school's Physical Education network and organised a highly successful badminton clinic with the local badminton club.
- Although we have not been able to offer **Eurythmy** so far this year we have continued to actively seek a new teacher and we are very hopeful that these efforts will bear fruit this term.

- The **Craft** program continues as a stream of strength under the careful and creative talents of **Chris Curtis** and **Dagmar McNamara** this year. Chris and Dagmar attended a bookbinding course during the year although with Dagmar's appointment to the Class 1 position we will soon be making a selection for the senior Craft position.
- The school has been well placed with excellent programs and staff to provide a range of **educational support programs** to children across the school with
 - **Lyn Wallace** continuing our **Support Education** program for 1 on 1 support;
 - **Sue Murphy** running a **Developmental Movement Program** for Class 1 and 2 students, along with **Debbie Hanrahan** and **Sue Murphy**, our private 1 on 1 **Extra Lesson** instructors;
 - **Classroom Assistance** has continued in Class 5 with Helen Jones, who this year completed her TAFE Integration Aid certificate, and has been expanded with the appointment this year of **Julie Luckman** who has provided valuable support as required across classes 1 to 8.
- **The National Safe Schools Framework:** In July 2003 all Australian state and territory governments endorsed a program called the *National Safe Schools Framework* which has the very simple vision statement that:

"All Australian schools are safe and supportive environments."

 The framework was adopted to attempt to provide a consistent national approach to ensuring safe school environments, and to countering all forms of bullying, harassment, violence, abuse and neglect. The school works with in this framework in many ways and has been furthered this year through:
 - Continued development of the Rock and Water program.
 - The appointment of a Pastoral Carer under the Commonwealth Government's National School Chaplaincy Program.
 - Parent forums and information evenings for parents of adolescents.
 - Values forums.

Specialist Programmes: A few words from the Specialist teachers

Senior Craft

Dagmar MacNamara

Senior Craft has a well established programme, which incorporates many craft media, such as wool, mosaic, paper making, papier maché, linocut, basketry and book binding, as well as all the different textile techniques. Each student keeps records about the different design processes and evaluation questions are answered to encourage a conscientious decision making process.

This year Class 8 visited the *Victoria Carpet* factory, a textile mill in Castlemaine as part of their Industrialisation main lesson which went hand in hand with a wool assignment in craft. During the whole year most craft items were displayed either in the library or at school assemblies. Each class is contributing with some craft items to the Spring Fair. A gnome's house, made by students will be part of the Silent Auction and felt balls and simple books will be for sale at the school's craft stall.

Junior craft

Chris Curtis

Junior Craft had another colourful and productive year in 2008. Stimulating the children's creative powers, aesthetic confidence and problem solving abilities.

The children have developed great skills in a variety of craft techniques (weaving, felting, woodwork, embroidery, book making and knitting), along with an awareness of how objects are made - giving the children an appreciation of hand made goods and connecting them with the world through perseverance and creative thinking.

We displayed our craft projects in the Castlemaine CWA exhibition early in the year, thus involving ourselves within the community. The response to our display was so very positive.

Music Programme:

Libby Anderson

The music team aims to actively engage and enthuse students in lessons, rehearsals and performance, as we strive to develop the children's levels of skills and competency. We hope that through this striving the staff, parents and students will see firstly the relevance of the program and that ultimately a deep love of music making and practice will grow within the school community.

Throughout 2008 there have been high levels of engagement from many of the students. The Phee Broadway Concert was a highlight as was music camp at Little Yarra. However, perhaps it has been through the soirées that the children's level of confidence and sense of achievement have acted as the biggest motivator.

Physical Education:

Stuart Dunn

The 2008 Sport program was implemented in classes 5, 6, 7 and 8. The program was based around the key concepts of sportsmanship and fair play, as well as participation and an ongoing development of the fundamental motor skills.

The Sport program also aims to introduce the children to a variety of sporting activities. In 2008 these activities included golf, badminton, orienteering and cricket as well as many minor games and skill building activities. Pleasingly, a number of students have joined local sporting clubs after being introduced to activities in Sport classes.

2008 also saw the Castlemaine Steiner School become an active member of the Mt Alexander Cluster Physical Education network for the first time following our attendance at a local schools cricket carnival. This is a relationship we will endeavour to grow during 2009, leading to more opportunities for the children to participate in sporting activities with their peers from local schools.

I congratulate all of the children on their exemplary attitude, commitment and behaviour during our classes and on our visits to local sporting facilities.

LOTE - French and German

German:

Gitesha Brendell

Much has been learnt and enjoyed in the German programme this year. A highlight has been the individual and small group lessons on Fridays. This programme allows for extra time for students to practise and consolidate the classroom work. It gave the opportunity to assess individual progress, to deepen relationships with students and to strengthen particular areas of language learning, giving the opportunity to give that precious one to one attention that everyone benefits from. Jonas, this year's German volunteer, was an enthusiastic assistant, diligently helping to improve pronunciation, reading reciting numbers, colours, completing book work and much more. There has been a marked improvement in confidence, concentration, willingness, eagerness and pride in achievement.

French:

Rebecca Morton

Students in Class 7 & 8 have learnt to read and write and speak and listen to French through songs, aural and text work. Students have learnt that much of English language is derived from French. The connections between the languages enrich the understanding of our own literature and history. Learning French grammar also helps us learn and understand English grammar. Students have learnt to tell the time, seasons, colours, food, clothes and numbers as well as simple conversational phrases. The small group lessons in French have consolidated classroom learning. The enjoyment of the sounds and cultures of these 2 languages lays vital seeds for future language development.

Horticulture:

Lisa Hall

The children of Class 3 & 4 have been learning hard in the vegetable garden, growing edible produce from seed to table. They have also worked in the wider environment around the school property, undertaking revegetation, pruning, mulching and biodynamic activities, enhancing their learning in these areas. Students are developing a variety of compost heaps and love going back to class filthy or sodden !

Gym:

Mara Macs

Students have become stronger, more agile and coordinated in all their Gym work, learning new balance and movement techniques. Bothmer Gymnastics a specialist branch of gymnastics unique to Steiner schools has been introduced and Mara has been heavily involved in organising the first combined Steiner School's Greek Olympics for Class 5's.

Library:

Johanna Winchcomb

The library programme has continued from strength to strength this year, with more student library sessions offered, more teacher research and more additions to the collection than ever. The development of the parent collection has been a feature of the work this year. Student use of the library has improved as the collection widens to meet the wonderful breadth and depth of the curriculum.

4. Administrative Council

David Storm

The Administrative Council meets monthly to oversee the financial, administrative and legal aspects of the school. Five parents, two teachers and the Business Manager form this group. Heather Osborn, Jeff Onans, Deb Wardle, Jeff Huzzey, Aileen Caddy, Hugh Finlay, Andre Farley and David Storm are current Admin Council members. Subcommittees have reported to the Admin Council, particularly the Building Group and Governance subcommittee.

The Governance review has occupied a lot of time this year for the Admin. Council and other groups associated with the school. We are getting close to completion of the review and will soon be able to plan implementation of the recommendations. It has been great to see the enthusiastic involvement from all areas of the school community. The anticipated result of the review is a Governance structure that meets the current and future needs of the school. It is expected that this will be done in a way that not only covers all the complex legal and financial requirements we have but also ensures that all school community groups have access and input to decision making processes within the school.

The Building program is continuing. Earlier this year we saw the completion of the Eurhythmy room and building works will soon commence on the new Administration building. Upon completion of this project, which also includes the new school entranceway, there will only be two projects outstanding in the current School Master Building plan.

One of the major items of interest for the School Community each year is the issue of the school fee rates for the new year. Normally CPI is used as a guideline to mark the increase. Given that the second planned decrease in sibling discount will be instigated next year and our relatively healthy financial position this year the decision was made by Admin. Council to keep the increase as low as possible. This decision seems to have become even more prudent given the recent economic instabilities that are occurring. Consequently the increase in fees will be set at 2.3%. The proposed fee structure is attached to the end of the report.

The second step in reducing sibling discount also comes into effect in 2009 at the following rates: First child - full fee; Second Child 18% discount, third child 55% discount; fourth child 73% discount

The third and final reduction for sibling discounts will occur in 2010. From that time forward, until further review is required, the rates will be: First child - full fee; Second Child 15% discount, third child 45% discount; fourth child 60% discount

Some of the other major tasks and issues covered by the Admin Council throughout 2008 have included:

- Overseeing the restructure of the Administration team. The following movements occurred during the course of the last year:
 - Resignation of Accountant - Graeme Fleming (Feb)
 - Resignation of Bookkeeper - Joy Richards (Jul)
 - Business Manager shift to full time
 - Admin Assistant shift to full time
 - New bookkeeper increased to three days a week

- Overseeing the monthly finance reports to monitor expenditure and ensure budgets are adhered to.
- Confirmation of Fee Assistance allocations within budget.
- Management of fee Retrieval - this year we appointed an outside firm, ARL, to oversee the retrieval of old outstanding debts.
- Review of fee retrieval patterns each month.
- Oversee completion of 2007 Audit by accounting firm Prowse, Perrin and Twoomey.
- Planning and approval of use of school funds for new Administration building.
- Completion of audit on Prep and Eurhythmy buildings - both projects completed on budget.
- Confirmation of expenditure of fundraising funds on school projects.
- Exploration of second bus from Castlemaine.
- Determining the annual School Budget for 2009.
- Review of School insurances.
- Formulation and update of school policies.
- Oversee the annual review of the School Administration team.
- Approved donations to St Lukes and Chengdu Steiner School.

Further, the following additions and improvements have been approved for completion throughout the school this year:

- A new storage shed for the maintenance team.

- Additions to and completion of the barn and plans for new stockyards to provide for livestock for an agriculture programme for students.
- Landscaping of the pizza oven area.
- Installation of solar panels, primarily funded by Government grants.
- Installation of a second water storage tank.
- Upgrade of the junior oval.
- Tree planting around the school grounds.
- Completion of the Highway intersection improvements.

The role of the Administrative Council will change somewhat in 2009 as the outcomes of the Governance Review are implemented. It has been a strong and cohesive group for the past years and has made many significant contributions to the school. This will only be improved by clarifying these roles and functions.

4. Business Manager's Report

Deborah Wardle

The school continues to grow in strength and diversity as it reaches its 19th year of operation. Enrolments numbers are starting to plateau at the expected level. We are steadily approaching the targeted 220 students, with 193 enrolments in 2008 and an expected 205 in 2009.

- **Administrative Team:** Thanks to the hard work of the Administrative Team. This year has again seen considerable ongoing staff changes as outlined in the AC report. Bea has continued magnificently as the Administration Coordinator, front line in the office. Alison Parish has gone full time and has taken on a wide range of important duties including fee retrieval and payroll. We welcome a new Book Keeper Allison Boddinar to the Admin Team. Ines Jewell has joined the team as the Admin Assistant for one day per week. Lisa Minster has assisted with relieving work at times when staff were away.
- **Grants and Submission:** The school has applied for several funding grants in 2008 and has completed the expenditure of the grants secured in 2007, such as the Community Water Grants and the Investing in our school grants. The following is a summary of major grants received for specific projects:

Grant Source	Overall Purpose	Amount
National Chaplaincy in School Programme	Development of the Pastoral Care programme over three years. Refer to the College Report for details.	\$22,000 p.a. over three years. (Total \$66,000)
Commonwealth Targeted Programmes funds	LOTE Literacy and Numeracy Country Areas programme Special Education Programme	TOTAL \$67,550

- **Marketing:** The school has maintained a positive profile in the community through regular media coverage, updates of the school website, redevelopment of the Parent Handbook. Use of the school logo has ensured that the icon of the school is widely seen and recognised. Many thanks to all the parents who have volunteered many hours of graphic design work, notably Michael Wolfe, Alison Woodgrove, Chris Curtis and Anne Luchessi.
- **Building and Facilities:** Having completed Stage 5 of the Master Building plan, the Prep and Eurhythmy rooms, the design stage for Stage 6, the Administrative building and the new Entrance Canopy was completed and will be under construction later in Term 4 2008, for completion in Term 1 2009. The Administration building will provide final definition of the major buildings in the heartlands and will enable final planning of car parking arrangements to be completed.

The school has two last projects on the Master Building Plan to consolidate facilities for the primary school over the next 6 years. Stage 7 and 8 include an extension to the Multi-purpose Room (stage, backstage, storage and toilets) and a senior craft, design and technology centre, to replace the ageing portable.

The school greatly appreciates the ongoing involvement of Des Cullen, the school architect, whose design work on the school makes it a landmark architectural site in this region.

Sheds, Fencing and Car Park works (Investing In Our Schools Round 2) a total project of \$77,000 - This funding has provided the second Maintenance Shed, and completion works on the Barn, skilfully

completed by Jake Webb. This project is developing the student area for the expanding practical skills programme.

Other Minor Works Projects - The school has undertaken:

- a. Installation of a 2Kva Photovoltaic cell system on the Multipurpose room. This project received assistance from Sustainability Victoria and the federal Department of Environment and Water Resources. The project application was supported by the Mount Alexander Sustainability Group. The balance of funds was contributed by the school. The analysis of the school's electricity bill during their Electricity Main Lesson revealed an initial decrease in the use of mains power in the winter months. We will continue to monitor the benefits of this system.
- b. Completion of the set up of the kiln donated by Dominique O'Neil.
- c. Providing snake proof mesh around the Prep and Kindergarten yards keeping prep and kinder free of errant asps!;
- d. Junior oval fencing and oval surface improvements.

Maintenance of the school grounds has received a boost with new equipment; a mower and brush cutter, a pedestal drill, as well as the expansion of shed storage and work space all contribute to a smoother operation.

"Challenge to Change":

For the second year, with the invaluable help of Johanna Winchcomb and several parent volunteers, we participated in a program called "Challenge to Change" which is a schools program being piloted in this region by Sustainability Victoria in which schools audited their energy use and set targets and strategies for change.

A Review of the Master Building and Facilities Plan is expected to be completed in the early months of next year.

As the school site grows, the Maintenance programme continues to be wonderfully carried out by Peter Foran. Pete's artistry and practical skills are ever appreciated. The impact of the work of Lisa Hall, our new school gardener, is also outstanding as she continues to transform the area to a

soft and inviting garden for children and adults alike to enjoy. The class based working bees have also been well attended this year and remain a vital way for parents to contribute to the beautiful development of the site, as well as making friends and building community through working together. Huge thanks to all those who help the school in this way.

Working as the Business Manager at this school for now the eighth year, I remain committed to the task of supporting the school's healthy development and fully engaged in the diversity of the work. The school continues to consolidate in many ways and to have a bright and solid future ahead.

5. Finance Report

Deborah Wardle

The 2008 year has shown a continuation of recent healthy trends for the school. Total income is expected to be in the order of \$2.21 million and recurrent costs at \$2.1 million. Of the total income, 38% comes from all parents' fees and 62% comes from Commonwealth and State recurrent funding plus a range of grants and other income. Teachers' wages account for 57.5% of total expenditure and other wages costs (administration and building and grounds staff) are 15% of total expenditure. Non-Salary operating costs are running at approximately 18% of total expenditure, indicating generally sensible spending patterns and the commitment to socially responsible salary levels. Reporting of recurrent costs across the school is divided into four main areas:

	Expected <u>2008</u>	Actual <u>2007</u>	<u>Mvmt</u>
▪ School	\$1,643,107	\$1,250,212.00	+31.4%
▪ Administration	\$ 334,592	\$263,420.69	+27%
▪ Building & Grounds	\$185,862	\$181,571.24	+2.3%
▪ Other external costs	\$72,370	\$83,323.75	-11.9%

Over the past four years **teachers' wages** have been increased in stages to bring wages in line with Victorian State Teaching Awards. For the past 15 years the teaching staff have worked under an award which meant teachers were paid significantly less than State school colleagues. Matching the recent State Teacher's Award increase has been a major achievement this year, with a commitment to continue this into 2009.

The school, through strong financial management has met its loan commitments without default. In fact, over that past year interest savings have been achieved through efficient cash flow management creating positive mortgage offsets.

The 2007 financial audit was completed "without qualification". The school continues to improve its forward planning capacity to minimise financial risk in an uncertain financial environment.

- Mr Tim Bunning of Prowse Perrin & Twoomey has continued as the Auditor;
- Ongoing implementation of the fee recovery policy;
- Continued improvement of administrative processes designed to improve administrative practices.

The school's budget process for the 2009 year is almost complete and the Administrative Council has approved most areas of income and expenses. The 2009 year is expected to provide opportunities and challenges in the following areas:

- reduction in expected net profit due to funding of the continuing commitment to maintain alignment of teaching wages to Victoria State Awards;
- continued management of cash flow in the face of financial uncertainty and interest costs.

The financial management of the school will give attention to expected changes in education funding in the light of recent Federal Government review of education and the current debate of newly proposed *Schools Assistance Bill 2008*. The *Schools Assistance Bill 2008* puts in place the legislative arrangements necessary to continue existing recurrent, targeted and capital funding arrangements for non-government schools for the 2009-2012 funding quadrennium, as well as introducing additional compliance and reporting requirements for non-government schools.

There will be ongoing attention to management of the **fee retrieval policy** and communication with families to provide assistance with payment of school fees and reduction in current arrears. Outstanding parent fees from more than 3 months ago are still a significant liability to the school and currently stand at approximately \$78,000. Through steady and systematic work on

fee retrieval the level of outstanding fees is gradually decreasing. The Administrative Council has endorsed an ongoing commitment to the Fee Assistance program in the 2009 budget, allocating \$20,00 to families facing serious financial hardship.

In summary, the school continues to operate from a healthy financial situation. The management of financial risk is handled with sound financial management principles, ensuring ongoing viability and a bright future.

7. School Community Groups

Fundraising

Lisa Hall/Lisa Thomas/ Bea Carr

There may be a perception in the school community that the Fundraising Committee is kept in a box under the window in the office and brought out once a year, soaked in water overnight to plump us up, then put into the fridge next to the sick bed where we have Meetings and Harass Class Carers until the Big Day (the Spring Fair).

This is not the case, and we are actually Ordinary People (in fact, ordinary people, often called Lisa), who weave in and out of the school community, unnoticed but always with an eager eye out for anyone who looks even vaguely like a Volunteer or other ordinary people who might join our group.

This year, as in other years, while we keep pedalling madly to keep the wheels in motion for the Spring Fair (and don't forget, every class gets \$500 of the Spring Fair takings to put towards the cost of camps, excursions, etc.), we have had time, prompted by Alison Hackett, to raise money for the Cheng Du Steiner School, which was destroyed in an earthquake earlier this year.

With Lisa Thomas's help, we had a mini Silent Auction, which featured lots of desirable items, and the bidding was frenzied and fast! Someone in the office won the raffle prize, a beautiful print by Melinda Hawkes.

To prove that we are ordinary people, with ordinary little lives, this report on the 2008 Spring Fair will be a preview of one person's day at the Spring Fair, based on that person's past experience of Spring Fairs stretching back many years, to the very beginning. My daughter loves the Spring Fair, so she will be with me on the day, and it will go something like this:

We're getting the shuttle bus this year from the Market Building.

Why ?? Because it will reduce our carbon footprint. Yes, we have got a carbon footprint. I know you can't see it, but we have a great big black one. No, we haven't only got one leg. Look, why don't you go to the fishing dip, you might get some lovely hair ties, or wool, or you could go and have your hair braided. That would be nice. I'm going to help on the craft stall. I have to go and open the safe first to get the floats out for the stalls. Watch where you're walking - the ponies - oh, never mind, just wipe it off, it's good for the grass. I think I'd better go to the café first and get some cake.

No, that does feel better, really, and now I have the energy to keep me going on the craft stall. Yes, you can stay in the dunking tank, but try to remember that you're not a fish. No, you're not a fish. You're not. Can you get me more cake? Why don't you go and get yourself some pizza, or some of Cheryl's juice, or an ice cream. But do you really want all of them? Watch where you're standing. Never mind, wipe it off, it's good for the grass. Go and see if there's anything you want to bid on at the Silent Auction, while I go and have a piece of cake. I have to go and collect money. No, you can't go.

And so, as we ride slowly into the sunset on those lovely Spring Fair ponies (we are grateful to the families who sent them along to work on the day), the Fundraising Committee takes this opportunity to thank everyone who has volunteered to come along and man (or woman) a stall, donate something to our Silent Auction, cook something in the café, wash some dishes, get crafty before the event, entertain us, eat cake and look after children.

Fundraising contributes to school life in several important ways:

- It raises \$500 for each class every year to help offset the cost of camps and excursions;
- It pays for many improvements to our grounds and surroundings that would not be covered by the school's operational budget, for example:
 1. Basket Ball Court
 2. Blackout curtains for Multipurpose Room
 3. New Gas BBQ
 4. Turf sand for the new oval
 5. 2nd High quality digital camera
 6. Storage Cupboards for Parent Craft Group materials and equipment in Playgroup
- It helps to connect the families at school in purposeful social activities;
- Events like Spring Fair showcase the school to the wider community in an extremely positive way.

Study Group

Dagmar McNamara

Study Group has met every second Friday morning in the Playgroup. Our members have a range of commitments so some participation is a little irregular, however curiosity and perseverance keep us all going to help us understand "The Manifestations of Karma" by R Steiner a little more each time we read on. The group always welcomes new members, however irregular!

Playgroup

Tania Chaffey

This year playgroup has run on Wednesday and Thursday mornings from 9.15am to 11.15am. Tania Chaffey took over from Bronwyn Beasley who had run the groups wonderfully for the past year. The commencement of the third group in Term 4 2008 illustrates the growing strength of this vital programme where many families start their journey with Steiner Education.

Term One was very warm and most of the time was spent watering the garden and playing in the sandpit. Term Two incorporated the Easter Festival and the parents made felted Easter eggs to take home for the children. Compost was turned, mulching and planting was carried out by the children. Term Three involved the Winter Festival all families were encouraged to attend the school festival and many did. The gardening went on rain or shine. Term Four has been lovely with beautiful spring weather and our numbers picking up with new families starting. The rug was finished for playgroup and looks lovely. Now the parents are making Pom Poms for playgroup. The vegetables from our garden have been very popular to pick and eat by the children and the flowers are blossoming everywhere. Overall a very successful year judging by the feedback from many of the parents.

Schedule A

Staff of Castlemaine Steiner School & Kindergarten

A. *Teaching Staff - This year and 2009*

- Jeff Onans College Facilitator, Director, Chairman of College of Teachers, Member of Administrative Council
- Heather Osborn Teacher Prep, Member of College of Teachers, Member of Administrative Council
- Lyn Farrow Teacher Class 1, Member of College of Teachers
- Mary Nesbit Teacher Class 2, Member of College of Teachers
- Rob Joritsma Teacher Class 3, Member of College of Teachers
- Diana Brooks Teacher Class 4, Member of College of Teachers
- Ann Campbell Teacher Class 5, Member of College of Teachers
- John Goble Teacher Class 6, Member of College of Teachers
- Anne Perry Teacher Class 7, Director, Member of College of Teachers, Member Administrative Council
- Dagmar McNamara Teacher Class 8, Member of College of Teachers; Class 1 teacher 2009
- Sue Bruce Teacher Class 8, Member of College of Teachers
- Debbie Hanrahan Prep Assistant
- Tania Chaffey Prep Assistant and Playgroup Coordinator
- Lisa Hall Horticulture and Gardener
- Helen Jones Classroom Assistant (Class 5)
- Julie Luckman Classroom Assistant (Class 1-8)
- Sue Murphy Extra Lesson Teacher and Prep Reliever
- Helen Butcher Teacher Kindergarten & Ring-a-Rosie, Director.
- Dorothy Wright Kindergarten Assistant and Ring-a-Rose Assistant
- Lyn Wallace Support Education
- Johanna Winchcomb Librarian
- Libby Anderson Music - Cello
- Leonie Shellhorn Music - Violin/Viola
- Wendy Rowlands Music - Violin/Viola
- Andrew Schellhorn Music - Violin/Viola
- Gitesha Brendel Language German
- Rebecca Morton Language French
- Dagmar McNamara Senior Craft
- Chris Curtis Junior Craft
- Mara Macs Gymnastics
- Stuart Dunn Outdoor/Physical Education

- Lorna Atkinson Pastoral Carer - Chaplaincy Programme
- Paul Hampton Drama Class 7 & 8
- Wayne Burtt Class 7 & 8 Science Main Lessons

B. Administrative Staff - This year and 2009

- Deb Wardle Business Manager, Company Secretary, Administrative Council and member of Sub-Committees
- Bea Carr Administration Co-ordinator
- Alison Parish Administration & Finance Assistant
- Ines Jewel Administration Assistant (Commenced 4/6/08)
- Allison Boddinar Book Keeper (Commenced 6/10/08)
- Joy Richards Resigned as Bookkeeper (May 2008)

C. Grounds & Maintenance Staff - This year and 2009

- Peter Foran Safety & Maintenance Officer,
- Lisa Hall Garden & Grounds Maintenance
- Jonas Brockmeyer German Volunteer (2007/2008)
- Martin Hinderberger German Volunteer (2008/2009)
- Jamie Byrne Cleaner
- Ron and Nola McKnight Cleaners

Schedule B

Accountability Requirements

Information provided in this schedule forms part of the Federal Government's accountability regulations. It has been deemed by the Government that this information may be useful to parents.

Some indicators of Professional Engagement

1. **Staff and Student Attendance:**

Teaching staff consist of 12 College members and 17 part time specialist teachers. This is the second year in the history of the school that we have single classes of Prep to Class 8, with no composite classes.

- There were 170 teaching days over the thirty eight teaching weeks, over four terms of 2008. Over nine classes in the school, with a total of 193 students, this represents a total of 1530 teaching days delivered to students. The school had 15 non-teaching days this year (in addition to public holidays) to cater for planning days, parent teacher interviews, report writing and curriculum days.)
- As at the commencement of November 2008 the school has employed Casual Relief Teachers for 77 full days, to replace class teaching staff for either sick leave or professional development.
- Pro rata to November, teacher attendance is 95.5 %. (47 Casual Relief Teacher days and 50 half days over a total of 1530 teaching days represent teacher absence at 4.5%). This indicates the excellent dedication of our teaching staff.

2. **Staff Retention:**

The school employs 42 people in approximately 22 Equivalent Full Time positions (EFT). The school has had four staff members leave the school this year for a range of personal reasons. (Steve Christensen-Sport, Huw Walters - Garden, Graeme Fleming - Accountant, Joy Richards - Book Keeper). Over the total EFT this is a retention rate of approx 91%. Again this is an indicator of the strong staff morale and commitment.

Staff changes for 2009 are still being planned as the programme details are being confirmed.

3. **Teacher Qualifications**
All teachers employed at the school have VIT registration, or VIT Permission to Teach, ensuring that they meet qualification requirements for teacher registration and current police and Working with Children checks.
Qualifications of the 12 College members are either 3 or 4 year education degrees. Seven of the twelve Class teachers have also completed the additional specific Steiner Education training course.

4. **Professional Development:**
Our strong professional development program has continued this year with an expenditure of just over \$ 16,000 on professional learning for all staff. This represents approximately 0.8% of the total school budget.
Funded professional development activities are listed above in the report.

5. **Key Student Outcomes - government indicators**
No students undertook the 2008 AIMS testing based on a 100% withdrawal by parents from this activity.

Students at this school tend not to participate in the AIMS testing programme due to the pedagogical differences of Steiner curriculum and approach at these levels. The school continues to participate in the national RSSA (Rudolf Steiner School Association) efforts to have the Steiner school approach to education recognized in relation to benchmarking requirements. There has been no change in the approach or the proportional numbers of students undertaking the AIMS test in our school over the past four years. The school remains committed to providing quality assessment and reporting activities which are relevant to the learning outcomes of our students.

6. **Value Added Features**
Over and above ordinary benefits of Steiner curriculum which our school offers, this year we mention particular features of the school programme.
 - The final year at the school is marked by three special activities. The undertaking of the major Yr 8 project provides a special challenge for students and an opportunity for them to focus

their energies on a topic of specific interest. The student projects were again this year of outstanding quality and the project presentation evening is a wonderful testament to the quality of the young people in Class 8. The Class 8 students also participate in a particularly challenging excursion. The end of year graduation evening culminates their eight years at the school in a respectful and memory filled occasion. This programme equips students for a confident and successful transition to larger secondary schools in the district.

7. Post school destinations

Our students have for the past two years predominantly attended the Steiner Stream at Castlemaine Secondary College. The school has not yet been able to collate statistical evidence of post year 12 activities of school leavers from our school. Anecdotal evidence indicates that 95% of ex students complete VCE with a large proportion continuing to tertiary education.

Transition to local secondary schools has been very successful. Again, this year's cohort are performing excellently at the Castlemaine Secondary School Steiner Stream.

8. Parent, student and teacher satisfaction

The school will undertake the annual parent satisfaction survey in early December as a means of receiving feedback and planning school improvements for 2009. The 2008 parent satisfaction report indicated overall excellent levels of satisfaction with the school and some outstanding ideas for the school to examine for improvement. In particular this has meant the undertaking of the Parent Values Forums and the Governance review as described earlier. Annual Teacher reviews indicate that staff are satisfied with the match of duties and responsibilities and working conditions. Parents are regularly reminded of the School Communication Policy and are invited to provide input and ideas on any aspect of the school operations on a regular basis.