



Castlemaine Steiner School Ltd

Annual School Report 2007

The aim of Steiner Education is to enable and support the healthy development of the whole child, so that they "are able out of their own initiative, to impart purpose and direction to their lives".

Rudolf Steiner

ANNUAL REPORT 2007

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 at 7:00 p.m. 29th October, 2007.

1. **Welcome and Introduction**

Anne Perry/Lyn Farrow

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Castlemaine Steiner School Ltd I would like to welcome all of you to this 5th Annual School Meeting. Our school has achieved much since the humble beginnings in 1990 and when we look out over the grounds and magnificent buildings and see how our children enjoy themselves we have reason to feel proud. Whilst much has been achieved, the future is even more exciting.

I would like to introduce you to Lynne Farrow who will be Master of Ceremonies for this meeting and present to you a number of people who will speak to you on the events of the past year and outline where we are headed in the future.

2. **College of Teachers**

Jeff Onans

Our Strategic Plan states:

“A Steiner education is child-centred but teacher-created and directed. All of the aspects of the education relate specifically to the seven-year developmental stages of the child, as elucidated by Rudolf Steiner, and are directed by the teacher in response to the child’s educational needs.”

We have complete confidence in the Steiner curriculum, as a means of development of children’s thinking - a thinking which is rich in mobile imagination.....

Developing the imaginative intellect gives students tools to balance competing cultural contexts. The imaginative framework, as developed from the commencement in the early childhood classes, (Kinder and Prep) through to the senior classes, is imperative as a basis for intellectual conceptualization. The school focuses on integrating intellectual development with the feelings of the child, cultivating the powers of “the heart” and “the mind” of children. Within this educational approach is a strong focus on “doing” in the curriculum. This leads to the development of children who think creatively and are able to translate create thoughts in to practical action.

This includes a definite focus on language and mathematics, science and the environment. Through working with the feelings and imagination along side the intellect Castlemaine Steiner School and Kindergarten seek to develop within the children feelings for the natural environment which lead towards responsible behaviour towards it.

In the light of the impulse driving this Strategic Plan the school has a policy of continual and cyclical review of the curriculum in order to assess its relevance and power and, where necessary, introduce renewal.”

As a modern educational institution the College of Teachers takes seriously its responsibility to continually examine the curriculum to assess “*its relevance and power and, where necessary, introduce(ing) renewal*”.

Throughout 2007 these activities have resulted in:

The Time Table Design Discussions:

The College has had a robust discussion about “The crowded timetable and the perception of the loss of the rhythm to the day”. The essential point here is that all healthy natural systems have strong well defined rhythms. Incorporating a rhythmic flow in the organisation of the day, the week and even the year is then something that is extremely important to the approach to education in a Steiner school. However as more and more becomes expected of a modern school these days there is the very real possibility of a child’s school life to become fractured and decidedly arrhythmic. The demands of trying to timetable all the programs often mean that they face a succession of changes and/or interruptions on any given day often with insufficient time available to really properly finish a task before the next is thrust upon them. This dilemma was then examined in a full curriculum day discussion and several subsequent College meetings and the hope is that we will be able to effect some positive changes to the timetable for next year.

Professional Development in:

Curriculum: All of the staff has participated in a wide range of Professional Development activities this year. These have ranged from year level and topic specific programs through to the Rudolf Steiner Schools Association of Australia sponsored national conference “The Transition from Childhood to Adolescence”. This conference focussed on deepening an understanding of the nature of thinking and of how to develop and exercise it in the upper school curriculum while also offering a full week of associated workshops in a wide variety of disciplines including History, Geography, Algebra, Biology, Chemistry, Metal work, Drawing etc etc.

Pastoral Care/Resiliency: Two more staff members have trained in “Rock and Water” allowing us now to extend the program to from Class 8 down to Class 4, (A further discussion of this program is made below) and Lyn Farrow attended a full day seminar on Boys Education with the world recognised authority and author Steve Biddulph as well as undertaking Level 2 training in Rock and Water.

Craft: Chris Curtis attended a week long conference of Steiner Craft teachers at the Kameroi school in NSW.

Program Development:

Pastoral Care/Resiliency:

A. Rock and Water:

This program developed out of an original self defence program for boys in the Netherlands which was aimed at reducing sexual violence. However Freerk Ykema, a physical education and remedial teacher, who developed Rock and Water, felt that the scope of the original program was too narrow and focused too much attention on boys and young men as potential perpetrators of violence, rather than on their positive potential. The program, designed to be taught within schools, was originally aimed at boys aged 10-18 but is now also widely used with girls in this age group. Rock and Water is based on a psycho-physical approach to behaviour self-modification in young people by first focusing on learning skills through a physical exercise which can later be connected to social and mental capacities. The program’s goals are:

- To be conscious of one’s own power and the responsibility of using this appropriately.
- To develop self-confidence, self-knowledge and self-respect, boundary awareness, self-awareness and intuition.
- To learn to deal with power, strength and powerlessness.

Our goal for this program is to introduce it at every level as our whole school approach to human relationship development. At least 2 more staff members will train in this area next year.

B. The Practical Skills Program:

The program is designed to address the needs of specific children in Classes 6 to 8 although under some circumstances children from Class 5 may be considered especially, but not exclusively, in the second half of the year. This program is specifically targeted at:

- Learners who are best continuing their education with a focus on the ‘apprenticeship’ style of skill development.
- Children who are experiencing some personal or family crisis and who would benefit from withdrawal period from the class.

The program will, through practical based activities, prepare children in this group to cultivate life, work and social skills in a manner that addresses their *academic, social* and *practical* needs by:

- Maintaining their self confidence and self esteem.
- Providing an opportunity for them to experience success in the areas of intelligence that they naturally possess.
- Utilising the above as a platform for building skills in other less strongly developed intelligences.
- Allowing them to experience success by contributing, in a meaningful and practical way, to the needs and life of the whole school.
- Instilling a sense of pride and ‘ownership’ of a task.
- Fostering meaningful relationships with a range of children and adults across the whole school.

The ultimate aim of the program is, having identified a target group of students who may otherwise have been at risk of significant underachievement, to have them leave the school as confident young people who value themselves, their skills and who feel that they can contribute positively to the world.

C. The “Pastoral Carer” Program:

This program operates within the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training “National School Chaplaincy Program” guidelines. The *National School Chaplaincy Programme* (the Programme) is a voluntary Programme that will assist schools and their communities to support the spiritual wellbeing of their students. This includes support and guidance about:

- ethics,
- values,
- relationships,
- spirituality and religious issues;
- the provision of pastoral care; and
- enhancing engagement with the broader community.

In a Steiner education the spiritual wellbeing of the students is definitely carried by the teachers by virtue of the pedagogy and the Class Teacher relationship we have identified in the needs and priorities listed above. However a range of particular demands exist over and above those which can be provided by the teaching profession. These include a need for:

- Professional advice. Guidance, comfort and support on a one to one basis to children and parents; support for parenting is crucial in meeting student needs, and yet increasingly has demands beyond a healthy parent teacher relationship.
- Professional advice. Guidance, comfort and support on a one to one basis to all teachers; support for teaching is crucial yet increasingly the teaching role has demands beyond the scope of teacher's professional training.
- Professional development to teachers. The stresses noted above also impact on the personal lives of staff and the school identifies that providing some level of support to staff is a legitimate need.
- Professional advice. Guidance, comfort and support on a one to one basis to all administrative and service staff.

Within these needs the school has identified that support for teaching staff is the first priority to be addressed, as support for them in this role directly supports the children given the above mentioned relationship between teaching and the spiritual wellbeing of the students in a Steiner education.

The direction of the program for students will then be provided by the teachers.

In servicing these needs the Pastoral Carer will:

- Be freely available both in and out of class and in the school yard in scheduled recess and lunch breaks to observe and speak with students and staff.
- Be available and accessible to all staff members during and after school hours, for appointments for professional and/or personal support
- Be available and accessible to the students, by appointment through the Class Teacher, for personal support;
- Be available and accessible to the school community, by appointment through the Class Teacher, for professional and/personal support regarding their children;
- Be available and accessible to attend joint class teacher/parent interviews when deemed necessary by a class teacher.
- Be available to staff, both individually and in staff meetings for professional development;
- Be available to run classroom activities which guide the class community on issues of cooperative social behaviour, dealing with bullying and harassment and developing healthy social values.
- Document and record the overall nature of the works involved with individuals and groups so that a clear evaluation of the programme can be made each year.
- Work within the Policies and procedures of the school.

D. Environmental Education/Plant Regeneration:

The school has developed a science Main Lesson in Class 8 on Electricity and Magnetism to include understandings of “carbon load”, environmental effects of traditional electricity production and photovoltaic / solar power generation.

In addition’ College is developing curriculum plans designed to fit into the science curriculum for classes 1 to 3 as a part of their “Home Surroundings” Main Lessons.

“The Science curriculum begins with Nature Studies in Classes 1-3. Children of this age use their instinctive, imaginative connection to the world, engaging their natural curiosity to consciously explore and understand their environment.” CSS Curriculum 2006

The school is built on 4.5 hectares of former farm land and is bounded on one side by a roadside verge of significantly damaged but nether-the-less original plant community. While most of the school land has been required for buildings and playgrounds there is a significant crescent of land to the north of the junior oval which connects both the roadside verge and Basset Creek. This crescent of land has been assessed as being of sufficient enough size and to be well enough placed to be a potentially significant regeneration zone.

Any regeneration project would however be required to run over many years as the growth of seedlings is encouraged, weed species are suppressed and losses are monitored and replanted. Also, as regeneration usually occurs through a sequence of species, some progressive plantings may well be necessary.

The central Key Concept in this project would be that of *“Diversity vs. Monoculture.”* That is that all healthy ecosystems are diverse ones and that monoculture or uniformity ultimately leads to disease. This is a concept which, when imaginatively grasped, can be extended to almost all areas of life, for example food and colour, but most importantly to people! That is, that without difference, in look, belief, ideas, tastes etc. etc. the world would become an unhealthy environment.

Apart from the encounter with the insight into the need for diversity there would be many other benefits of the school initiating such a project. These include:

- The modelling for the children who would see their school making a considered positive step in caring for the land for which we are responsible.
- That this type of project fits perfectly with the aims of our early years Science curriculum as stated above. It would give us an opportunity, through our “Home Surroundings” Main Lesson component of our Science curriculum, to implement it in a way that it will be fully integrated into the child’s school experience.

According to the school's curriculum document:

“Nature experiences. Children of this age still retain strong identification with the world around them as their sense of an isolated self is still developing, which gives them a natural connection to the world of nature. Nature stories and nature activities, particularly those showing the seasons and cycles of the natural world, connect to their native state of inter-relatedness with humankind, nature and the heavens. Hence, nature and the elements are personified in story content. Seasonal festivals and seasonal cooking are celebrated, and nature walks are normally included on a weekly basis. CSS Curriculum 2006”.

So, by starting the children's involvement in their first years of primary schooling and by working in the way here indicated we have the chance to allow them to form a profoundly imaginative connection to the environment; a genuinely personal connection that stands to form the foundation for the unfolding of a deeply seated environmental ethic in later life. Also, as an ongoing project, they will be able to see their efforts grow and develop throughout the entire period of their education here. It may well then offer opportunities for the Class Teacher to develop this experience in a whole range of as yet unforeseeable ways in later classes.

- The cultivation of:
 - An awareness of the integrated nature of an ecosystem.
 - Knowledge of a variety of plant species.
 - An understanding of plant growth and seasonal changes.
- The educational opportunity for the children to be involved over a considerable period of time in a legitimate environmental science experience. The protracted nature of their involvement allows them to see the outcomes of their efforts and thus to feel the sense of pride that such an experience engenders.
- The opportunity to make a legitimate contribution to environmental repair.

Other Important News:

A. Class 1 2008:

The College is thrilled to announce that Lyn Farrow has been appointed to the position of Class 1 Class Teacher for 2008. Not only will she bring her wealth of experience and love of children to this lucky new class but her appointment also creates another level of consolidation of the school through her continued invaluable involvement in the College.

B. 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 performances are inspiring and the music program has been extended through regular Class soirees.
- The **senior choir** has been a fantastic feature this year and we extend our thanks to Andre Cosens for her extremely generous donation of time, consummate skill, patience and love.
- Gitesha continues to guide our **German** language program from Prep to Class 8 and it is not insignificant that our graduate students have figured well in LOTE programs at secondary level. Although we have not been able to continue **French** across the whole school, Rebecca Morton is achieving marvellous results with our Classes 7 & 8.
- It is a special feature of the school that we can offer **Gym** from Class 3 and although we are very sad to have to say farewell to Steve Christensen our senior **Sport** teacher we are currently advertising for a replacement.
- Similarly we have not been able to continue **Eurhythmy** in the latter half of the year but we continue to actively seek a new teacher and the presence of the beautiful new Eurhythmy building highlights our commitment to this subject.
- As mentioned before, Chris Curtis attended a full week's conference on **Craft** this year and her energetic and continually creative approach to this essential topic has been evident in the high quality of the displays we have seen throughout the year. Dagmar has been similarly active in the senior craft area and the inspiration she has brought back from this year's Mt Barker conference is leading us to plan for a possible expansion of the program into wood, and maybe even metal, work in coming years.
- Lyn Wallace continues our **Support Education** program for 1 on 1 educational support and with Sue Murphy running a **Developmental Movement** Program and, along with Debbie Hanrahan, our **Extra Lesson** offering, the school has been well placed with excellent programs and staff to provide a range of educational support to children across the school.

B. “Challenge to Change”:

This year, with the invaluable help of 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. This process revealed that while we only set a moderate target for reduction, our school’s energy use is already one of the lowest in the region. Next year we hope to continue the good start made in this area and continue periodic monitoring and setting further energy reduction goals as well as looking to installing solar electricity panels.

C. 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 adapted 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. It is a condition of legislation that it be implemented in all Australian schools from the 1st of January 2006. The school works with in this framework in many ways and a Parent Guide to the framework is available on request tonight.

3. **Business Managers Report**

Deb Wardle

Introduction

The school continues to grow in strength and diversity as it reaches its 18th year of operation. The school was first registered in 1990. Enrolments numbers are starting to plateau at the expected level. We are steadily approaching the targeted 220 students, with 186 enrolments in 2007 and an expected 195 in 2008. Specialist programmes remain strong, complimenting the Class Teacher’s programme. The Master Building Programme has taken another step with details given below.

Accountability Requirements of Government funding are now included as Appendix D of this report. Parent satisfaction surveys are being planned for later in the year.

Staff/Employment

- **Administrative Team:** Thanks to the wonderful generosity of the Administrative Team, Bea, Jane, Julie Trueman for the first 6 months and Kirsty Sutherland for relieving Bookkeeping work, and now Graeme and Joy who are managing the financial aspects of the school. Thanks too to Ines and Lisa for relieving work at times when staff are away. Jane will sadly be leaving the position of Administrative Assistant at the end of this year after nine years of outstanding generosity in her work. We particularly thank Jane for all she has contributed to the school.

- Staffing of the teaching programme has remained predominantly stable over the year with only two teachers leaving the school. We farewelled Marion Read as the Eurhythmy teacher and Steve Christenson will be leaving at the end of the year to take up full time work.
- The school has reviewed the Superannuation Contributions Programme for staff and continues to improve many aspects of staff support through employment conditions and clearer administrative processes.
- The school's contribution to Professional Development ensures that all staff remains up to date in their field and well supported in their work. Schedule D and the College Report gives more details on PD activities.

Submissions and Grants

The school has been successful in gaining several new grants this year which have the effect of allowing ongoing development of school facilities and programmes with minimal impact on school fees. The following is a summary of major grants received for specific projects:

| Grant Source | Overall Purpose | Amount |
|---|---|---|
| Community Water Grants | Increases in water storage capacity in the dam and water tanks, development of the junior oval and provision of water to both ovals, bank stabilisation works and fencing of Bassett Creek. | Round 1 \$45,000 Round 2 \$45,000 |
| 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) |
| Investing in our Schools – Federal capital works grants | Round 1: Construction of the Entrance Canopy Round 2: Construction of Storage Sheds, fencing of waterways and car park improvements | Round 1 \$70,000 Round 2 \$70,000 |
| BGA Interest Subsidy Scheme | Assistance in payment of interest on loans | \$3,500 |
| Commonwealth Targeted Programmes funds | LOTE Literacy and Numeracy Country Areas programme Special Education Programme | TOTAL \$67,550 |
| Solar in Schools | Photo voltaic cells – currently under consideration | \$25,000 (approx') |
| Active After Schools Programme | Submission and programme currently under development | \$3,000 (approx') |

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, development of a new gifts and donations brochure and regular new posters and signage. 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 Michel Wolfe and Alison Woodgrove and Chris Curtis.

Master Building and Facilities Plan

The school has worked steadily towards completion of Stage 5 of the Master Building plan. The design stage for Stage 6, the Administrative building is well underway and will be under consideration for construction in 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.

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. In 2007 we celebrate:

- Completion of Prep classroom and Eurhythmy Room (Total project cost of \$604,000 for these two rooms). Both of these rooms have had a provision for site development included, so that a garden can be started. Many thanks to Grant Saltmarsh and Huw Walters who have overseen the development of these two lovely spaces.
- Planning is well underway for the Entrance Canopy. Round 1 IIOS Grant towards the \$75,000 project. This is due for construction at the end of the year.
- Sheds, Fencing and Car park works (IIOS Round 2) in a total project of \$77,000 – due for construction at commencement of 2008.
- Minor Works Projects – The school has undertaken construction of the:
 - a. shade pergola, (designed by Danilo Paglialonga);
 - b. an awning/extension to the Portable for the senior craft programme and to house the donated kiln;
 - c. rebound wall; and
 - d. junior oval fencing and oval surface improvements.

Income from fundraising activities has contributed in a major way to enable these some of these minor works to be completed. I wish to express great appreciation to the wonderful work of the many people who contribute to the school facilities through our successful fundraising efforts.

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 executed by Peter Foran. Pete's artistry and practical skills are ever appreciated. The impact of the work of Huw Walters, our school gardener, is also outstanding as he gradually transforms our harsh site to a soft and inviting garden for children and adults alike to enjoy. The 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.

Working as the Business Manager at this school for now the seventh 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. 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 Bursar and Business Manager form this group. Anne Perry, Jeff Onans, Deb Wardle, Graeme Fleming, Jeff Huzzey, Aileen Caddy, Hugh Finlay, Andre Farley and David Storm are current AC members. Glen Taylor resigned this year after a number of years on the committee. Several subcommittees have reported to the Admin Council on a regular basis, particularly the Building Group and Governance subcommittee. The Human Resources subcommittee and Finance subcommittee need new members to recommence in 2008.

The newly updated **Fee Retrieval Policy** has been formulated to ensure that cash flow interruptions for the school are minimised by addressing overdue accounts in a timely manner. The Fee Retrieval Policy was developed after communication with other Steiner and independent schools. The support and commitment of all parents to paying their invoices by the due date is a necessity to prevent the school incurring further costs.

The reality is that all overdue accounts represent debt that must be carried by the school. These extra costs represent an added burden on a budget that is already just covering the school costs. Aside from the costs there is also the time and effort by admin staff to chase up overdue fees instead of other important administrative work. At the moment there is a very large amount of fees overdue for payment.

You will see in the policy that there is a fair amount of flexibility to allow families with difficulties in paying to make regular payments over a period of time to address fee arrears. Your cooperation in paying all fee accounts on time would be appreciated. Admin Staff are required to implement the policy as has now been adopted by the Admin Council. If at any time you have any queries or concerns regarding school fees and fee retrieval please feel free to approach either the school Accountant or Business Manager or any member of the Admin Council.

Some **tasks and issues** covered by the Admin Council throughout 2007 have included:

- Overseeing the monthly finance reports from the Accountant to monitor expenditure and ensure budgets are adhered to.
- Approving staff appointments and changes of conditions to various positions.
- Determining the annual School Budget for 2008.
- Overseeing the construction of the new Prep and Eurhythmy rooms. Searle Bros of Ballarat / Bendigo have been the builder for both projects.
- Appointment of new firm for the annual finance audit – Prowse, Perrin and Tawney.
- Formulation and update of policies – Sibling discount, Teacher Employment, Conflict of Interest, School Expenditure, Time Off In Lieu, Fee assistance, Fee retrieval.
- Pyrenees Highway / Rilens Road intersection upgrade – Tender process and appointment for the widening of the highway intersection outside the school. This work was a planning permit requirement for the Prep and Eurhythmy classroom building construction project. This project is totally funded by the school, despite strenuous efforts to negotiate a contribution from either Vic Roads or local council.
- Oversee the annual review of the School Administration team.
- Planned and approved the School computer network system upgrade.
- Discussion of Fee Structure changes for 2008.
- Approved the establishment of the Spring Fair Coordinator role.
- Allocation of Fund Raising money to specific projects.

6. Finance Report

Graeme Fleming

Having commenced as Accountant for the Castlemaine Steiner School and Kindergarten on 9th November, 2006, this is my first report to the school community on the financial performance and affairs of the school.

This report is structured to provide information on the past, the present and the future. This covers financial trends and growth over the past eight years, compared with the financial performance for the 2006 year and what is expected in 2007, 2008 and beyond.

If we look at the events from 1999 until 2006 we can see a school community that has achieved much that it can be proud of. The master building plan commenced with the first building in 1996 and stage 2 of this plan commenced in 2000. This building plan will be completed in 2008 when the Administration Building and other smaller projects will be completed.

In 1999 we had xx enrolments and average school fees of \$515.00. In 2006 there were 186 enrolments paying average fees of \$880 per term. In 1999 the school generated income of \$295,325 which included 55% of government funding. In 2006 total income was \$1,911,020 of which government funding was 61.4%. In 2004 the Federal Government introduced a new funding arrangement that took into consideration the regional socio-economic circumstances. Similarly, the Victorian Government implemented changes taking into consideration socio-economic factors to assess funding for schools. These two events were significant for the school in that income and financial performance improved as a result of new funding arrangements.

In 1999 the school operated with a recurrent cost base of \$265,078. In 2006 total recurrent costs were \$1,625,046. During the 1999 to 2003 years the school had to work hard to meet its costs and in fact suffered trading losses during the 2000 and 2003 years. A combination of improved management practices and new government funding arrangements have produced improved financial efficiency during that past 3 years.

The quality of management in the school has improved over the years and in 2003 the administration unit adopted a Budget Program to project costs and set school fees to meet those costs. This process has continued and each year the budget program has become more refined and improved.

Apart from academic achievement, the teaching staff really do deserve considerable praise. During the period 1999 to 2006 they have, by and large, remained committed to the school being paid wages below the level paid by other schools. So much so, in 2004 agreement was reached to bring teachers wages in line with the Victorian State Award. Over the past three years teachers' wages have been increased in stages to bring wages in line with Victorian State Awards. This process is now completed with the 2008 budget. Similarly, other staff have accepted lower wages in the past and adjustments have now been made.

Between 2000 and 2006 the school has spent a total of \$1,170,341 in capital projects. Of this cost, Government funding has contributed \$786,612. The balance of project costs were covered by mortgage finance, with repayment arrangements over 15 years. The school, through strong management has met this financial commitment without default. In fact, over that past three years interest savings have been achieved through efficient cash flow management creating positive mortgage offsets.

Details of the financial performance of the school are included in the reports tabled in Schedule A of this report.

The 2006 year has been a continuation of the trend of the past three years. Total income was the \$1.9 million mark and recurrent costs at \$1.6 million. As expected, teachers' wages and accounted for 59.6% and other wages costs (administration and building and grounds staff) 18.2%. This factor is expected as the school's business is very much labour-based, with lesser reliance material costs. Reporting of recurrent costs is broken down into four main areas (\$000's):

| | <u>2006</u> | <u>2005</u> | <u>Mvmt</u> |
|----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| ▪ School | \$1,111.6 | \$1,072.2 | +39.4 |
| ▪ Administration | \$270.1 | \$171.5 | +101.4 |
| ▪ Building & Grounds | \$157.3 | \$135.1 | +22.2 |
| ▪ External | \$86.0 | \$115.4 | -29.4 |

The above movements include:

- School wage cost increased by \$21.0
- School materials cost increased by \$18.4
- College Administration (wage costs) were re-allocated to a full time position following removal of a "teaching load" \$36.3
- Adjustment to administration back-pay and wages adjustment \$37.5
- Cost of upgrading and improvement to computer network \$10.0
- Other increased administrative costs \$17.6
- Increased Building & Grounds wage costs \$10.8
- Increased maintenance costs \$11.4
- Reduction in audit costs \$6.8
- Reduction in insurance cost due to timing factor \$16.1
- Reduction in finance expenses \$0.5
- Reduction in fundraising expenses \$6

Apart from the financial aspects, during 2006 there were a number of administrative achievements:

- the appointment of Mr Tim Bunning of Prowse Perrin & Twomey as Auditor; an appoint that resulted in significant cost savings and efficiency;
- preparation and implementation of a new fee recovery policy that should deliver financial benefits and efficiency for the school;
- preparation of a new policy covering the conflict of interest of staff and others with a dual interest at the school, ensuring that parents and staff are treated equally in accordance with school policies;
- administration staff review that re-defined roles and responsibilities for staff; and
- preparation and implementation of other administrative processes designed to improve administrative practices and deliver cost savings.

As a "Public Company Limited by Guarantee" the school's accounts are subject to independent audit in accordance with the Companies Code and accepted accounting standards. The 2006 audit was completed much earlier this year and "without qualification". The appointment of Mr Tim Bunning has resulted in a 50% cut in audit costs.

The future is difficult to predict but objectives can be set and actions taken to direct us towards those objects. Apart from consistently working towards administrative efficiency, maintenance of accounting records in accordance with statutory requirements and production of timely and accurate management reports, there are three key areas that require attention during the immediate future:

- effective communication with the school community regarding administrative issues
- effective management of expenses and fee retrieval create cash flow benefits and to maximise financial benefits to the school and the school community
- forward planning to minimise financial risk in an uncertain financial environment

For the 2008 financial the school's budget process is almost complete and the Administrative Council has approved most areas of income and expenses. The 2008 year is expected to provide opportunities and challenges in the following areas:

- reduction in expected net profit due to funding of the final step in the alignment of wages to Victoria State Awards
- greater attention to management of cash flow in the face of higher borrowing and interest costs.
- attention to expected changes in education funding in the light of recent election promises
- attention to management the fee retrieval policy and communication with families to provide assistance with payment of school fees and reduction in current arrears.

School fees for the 2008 year have been approved and a copy of the new Fee Schedule is included in this report. The setting term fees is undertaken by as part of the budget process and are set allowing for review and establishment of class programs, projection of all re-current expenses for the new school year and assess of expected of re-current funding from federal and state governments.

The level of school fees and the payment of those fees are by far the most sensitive financial issue for the school and families. For the administration Office this issue is particularly difficult. On one hand there is a need to manage retrieval of fees in accordance with the Fee Retrieval Policy. On the other hand there is a need to do this in way that does not adversely impact of the relationship with families. "Human nature says that if something is difficult don't go there". The answer to this issue is communication.

Over the past three years the level of outstanding school fees has increased

| | <u>Outstanding Fees</u> | <u>%age of Total Fees</u> |
|---------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| ▪ 2004 | \$49,900 | 8.4% |
| ▪ 2005 | \$104,900 | 13.9% |
| ▪ 2006 | \$129,700 | 16.7% |
| ▪ 2007 (Sept) | \$144,150 | 22.1% |

The current growth in outstanding fees indicates the need for the school to work with families to cover this issue.

Financial Reports are included in Schedule A.

7. School Community Groups

Fundraising

Lisa Thomas/Katie Finlay/Nadine Saltmarsh

Fundraising contributes to school life in several important ways:

- It raises \$500 for each class every year to help offset the cost of camps;
- It pays for many improvements to our grounds and surroundings that would not be covered by the school's operational budget – blackout curtains for the multipurpose room, the hard court, resurfacing the oval, new BBQ, school camera etc;
- 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.

As the school grows, fundraising continues to evolve. A dedicated group of parents including Nadine Saltmarsh, Melinda Hawkes, Tania Flavell, Jane Edwards, Karina Taylor, Lisa Hall and others were very active for a number of years organising the Spring Fair, Swap Meet, cookbooks, calendars, International nights etc. This committee resigned at the end of 2005 feeling they needed a break after several years.

In 2006 a committee did not form until July. Despite the late start the committee managed to put on the Swap Meet (in August) and Spring Fair. An evening with Kenneth Little Hawk was organized but had to be cancelled at the last minute when he became unavailable.

That committee sent a letter to College after Spring Fair in 2006 suggesting that each class could have a fundraising representative as well as a class carer, and these people could make up the Fundraising Committee. This would help to ensure that there *was* a committee, and that the job of fundraising was spread around different parents each year. At the end of 2006 the existing committee resigned.

Despite repeated requests in the Penny no one volunteered for the Fundraising Committee this year. In June a group of parents (past members of the Fundraising Committee) sent a letter to College to explain there was no current committee, and that while the Class Carer system works well, and a Spring Fair Manual exists, without a committee there could be no Spring Fair.

That group of parents speculated to College about possible reasons for the lack of parent volunteers to do fundraising, and low levels of volunteerism in general, including:

1. Lack of awareness of how fundraising money has been used in the past and its importance to the school, leading to a reduced sense of the ‘value’ of the effort that goes into Spring Fair and other fundraising efforts;
2. The increasing size of the school and resulting difficulty of getting to know other people;
3. Children traveling on buses meaning fewer parents actually come to the school regularly;
4. The school’s apparent affluence (“does it really need the money?”), combined with the struggle many families have in meeting fee payments;
5. Awareness of how privileged our community is compared to many disadvantaged communities in Australia and overseas.

In that letter parents suggested to College that the school may benefit from conscious energy and effort being put into building a stronger sense of community at this time in the school’s development – possibly a resurrection of a “Parents and Friends Association” with both a fundraising and social aspect? College responded by deciding to pay a Fundraising Coordinator for 2007 to ensure that Spring Fair went ahead. The three applicants for the job - Nadine, Lisa and Katie - agreed to job share, and so formed the current Fundraising Group. The class carer system works very efficiently, and planning for this year’s Spring Fair is going well. We anticipate a vibrant, exciting and profitable Fair. Due to the appointment of the Fundraising Group quite late in the year it was not possible to undertake any other fundraising activities (such as Swap Meet) this year.

It would seem that the level of volunteerism in the school is dropping each year, as evidenced by the gradually declining number of fundraising events being held, and the lack of a fundraising committee this year for the first time. The current Fundraising Group believes that College is best placed to consider this issue as part of its overview of the whole school, and that it is timely for College to provide leadership and direction to the school community on this issue.

We would like to see discussions in College, Admin Council and the wider school community about potential approaches such as imposing a ‘volunteer levy’ on each family that can either be paid or worked off, or employing a paid ‘volunteer coordinator’.

We have all found fundraising to be an extremely rewarding, fun and social activity. The time commitment involved can best be mitigated by (a) having a large enough committee to spread the jobs evenly and thinly (b) starting early in the year to allow plenty of time for planning (c) insisting on a minimum number of parents (say 6) before a committee can be formed.

The standout feature of being involved in fundraising is that almost without exception, people that are asked to do a particular job are very happy to help, and in fact often pleased to be asked. It has been a wonderful way to connect with people that you wouldn’t otherwise meet, and a good excuse to get together socially with a group once a week. We highly recommend a year on the Fundraising Committee to any other parent, particularly those who have not taken

on a volunteer role before (or not for a while) and parents that are new to the school.

Playgroup

Bronwyn Beesley

This year playgroup has run on Monday & Tuesday mornings from 9.15am to 11.15am. Bronwyn Beesley spent most of Term One getting to know the parents and children after taking over from Alison Hackett, who had run the groups wonderfully for the past three years.

Bronwyn implemented a new programme and introduced a roster system for bread making which the parents received with great enthusiasm and proved a great success. The children help with making the rolls and the parents make the dough the night before playgroup then the rolls are cooked for morning tea. 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. The groups continued knitting a rug for playgroup and a baby blanket for one of the mother's that had had a baby during the year. 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. Numbers were low as many children and parents were sick or circumstances changed for the parents. 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. This term our playgroup is hosting the Victorian Steiner Playgroup Leaders meeting.

Overall a very successful year judging by the feedback from many of the parents.

Schedule A

Financial Reports

It makes the world go 'round

Schedule B

Staff of Castlemaine Steiner School & Kindergarten

The people who make things happen

A. *Teaching Staff – This year and 2008*

- Jeff Onans College Facilitator, Director, Chairman of College of Teachers, Member of Administrative Council
- Heather Osborn Teacher Prep, Member of College of Teachers
- 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
- Sue Bruce Teacher Class 8, Member of College of Teachers
- Debbie Hanrahan Prep Assistant
- Tania Chaffney Prep Assistant
- Huw Walters Horticulture
- Helen Jones Classroom Assistant
- Sue Murphy Teacher Prep Reliever
- Helen Butcher Teacher Kindergarten & Ring-a-Rosie, Director
- Dorothy Wright Kindergarten Assistant
- Miriam Kerrin Ring-a-Rose Assistant
- Lyn Wallace Specialist Teacher – Support Education
- Johanna Winchcomb Specialist Teacher - Librarian
- Libby Anderson Specialist Teacher - Music
- Leonnie Shellhorne Specialist Teacher - Music
- Wendy Rowlands Specialist Teacher - Music
- Gitesha Brendel Specialist Teacher – Language German
- Rebecca Morton Language French
- Dagmar McNamara Specialist Teacher – Senior Craft
- Chris Curtis Specialist Teacher – Junior Craft
- Sue Murphy Specialist Teacher – Extra Lessons
- Charles Affleck Eurhythmy Accompanist
- Bronwyn Beesley Playgroup Co-ordinator
- Mara Macs-Martin Gymnastics
- Steve Christensen Specialist Teacher - Outdoor/Physical Education
- Lorna Atkinson Pastoral Carer – Chaplaincy Programme
- Roger Weber Specialist Teacher – Drama Class 8
- Wayne Burtt Specialist Teacher – Class 8 Science Main Lessons

B. *Administrative Staff – This year and 2008*

- Deb Wardle Business Manager, Representative Administrative Council and member of Sub-Committees
- Graeme Fleming Accountant, Representative Administrative Council and member of Sub Committees
- Joy Richards Book Keeper
- Bea Carr Administration Co-ordinator
- Jane Edwards Administration Assistant (to be announced for 2008)
- Katie Finlay Fund Raising Co-ordinator
- Lisa Thomas Fund Raising Co-ordinator
- Nadine Saltmarsh Fund Raising Co-ordinator

C. *Grounds & Maintenance Staff – This year and 2008*

- Peter Foran Safety & Maintenance Officer,
- Huw Walters Garden & Grounds Maintenance
- Ferdi Saltzman German Volunteer (2006/2007)
- Jonas Brockmeyer German Volunteer (2007/2008)
- Jamie Byrne Cleaner
- Leonnie Hamell Cleaner

Schedule C

Strategic Plan – An Excerpt

Vision for the future

Mission Statement

The aim of Steiner Education is to enable and support the healthy development of the whole child, so that they “are able out of their own initiative, to impart purpose and direction to their lives”
Rudolf Steiner

The Strategic Plan for Castlemaine Steiner School and Kindergarten and the proposals for action address the question: “What skills, faculties and qualities do children need today to meet the demands of the twenty-first century?”

The Principles of Steiner Education guiding the Castlemaine Steiner School and Kindergarten

“The need for imagination, a sense of truth and a feeling of responsibility – these are the three forces which are the very nerve of education”

Rudolf Steiner

Steiner education is child-centred but teacher-created and directed. All of the aspects of the education relate specifically to the seven-year developmental stages of the child, as elucidated by Rudolf Steiner, and are directed by the teacher in response to the child’s educational needs.

Section Two

Abstract, Intellectual Content

The teacher is charged with the responsibility to use, variously, the pre-school child’s natural capacity for imitation or the primary school-aged child’s natural capacity for imagination as the tool for shaping all educational experiences.

These are natural capacities implicit in each stage of development and so, if recognised and used, are powerful forces driving the act of learning.

The application of such an insight leads to the use, in Steiner education, of an artistic approach to all aspects of learning. It also means that, rather than using pre-developed or packaged class material, a teacher in a Steiner school prepares each lesson out of their own creative effort. If teaching is to use the child’s natural faculties of imagination, then it must result from the teacher’s imaginative powers.

This intimate connection between the teacher and the children’s learning is further enhanced by another guiding principle which is the class/class-teacher relationship. That

is that, in the primary school, the teacher and the class stay together for the entire 8 years of their primary school education. School is then a journey shared by teacher and student alike. This is a unique feature of Steiner Education.

Behind and through and through all of these insights is the perspective that the human being essentially has a three-folded structure. That is, although working fluidly as a whole, the human being has three different “folds” or capacities, those of willing, feeling and thinking.

Through interacting seamlessly together, each aspect has its own distinctive qualities, distinctive enough to be able to be spoken of separately. A truly healthy individual will have physical, emotional and mental health. Whilst recognising that very few individuals will ever fit this ideal, educating children with perspectives and practices which aim to, as much as possible, develop that ideal is a truly holistic education. It is one which, though supporting such a healthy development, truly allows for the blossoming of individuality.

Thus this understanding of the three-fold nature of the human being and the vital necessity of developing it harmoniously leads to the conscious, deliberate inclusion of three-fold processes, activities and even structures throughout the whole school.

Finally, as an activity dealing with the developing human capacities, education must be itself continually developing.

Section Three

Education and Society in the 21st Century

At the Castlemaine Steiner School we see the following important elements of society and culture impacting on children’s lives:

- restructuring of notions of the family;
- changes in the relationship to religions and spirituality;
- technological development, particularly in communications.
- environmental change. Global warming, use of water resources, sustainable use of energy, habitat destruction and species extinction ;
- increasingly uncertain employment prospects;
- increasing presence and influence of the media;
- the removal of direct experience of nature from people’s lives. This, coupled with increased awareness of issues relating to environmental degradation, highlights the yearning of people to connect positively with nature;
- rapidly changing boundaries relating to acceptable behaviour in society including the ways sexuality is projected;

Some social and cultural trends clearly have positive consequences for children. These include:

- the value of some contemporary music, visual, literary and dramatic arts culture;
- the richly diverse multi cultural nature of Australian society;
- the positive effect of a strong sporting culture in rural Australian communities
- and the strength and diversity of our local arts community; and
- the potential that technology provide the for greater global connectedness and for access to a vast store of information.

We are concerned that some social and cultural trends have clearly negative consequences for children. These include:

- increasing youth suicide and depression rates;
- the impact of the abuse of both prescribed and non-prescribed drugs in society;
- increased awareness of the consequences of child abuse and neglect;
- pervasive violence in society;
- Whilst many developments in information technology are applauded; paradoxically they can also result in a separation of humans from each other and the environment in meaningful daily interactions; and
- The comparative, graded-assessment ideology of the Australian Government is driving a content focus in the current educational agenda which seriously compromises children's capacity for true creative thinking and imparts an unacceptable burden of stress.

Our times are characterised by the expression of individualisation in an unprecedented way. The might of technology is predominantly produced and consumed in the individual pursuit of happiness, to such an extent, that Nature is at the brink of destruction. Our children are in a world where they must find a way to fulfil the individualisation drive in a way that integrates into the community, where with others they can work for a more healing and sustainable culture.

Considering these issues, even a *brief* historical reflection reveals that children now, more than ever need a wide range of skills and attitudes in order to deal with a great variety of rapidly changing and developing cultural, political and economic issues.

“After all, there has never been a time when we have had such a capacity for cleverness and such a fund of information at our fingertips and yet we are faced with the fact that this has not helped us either to understand each other better or find meaning in our lives. Academic achievement is of very great importance, but it is not enough. Out of balance, it is actually destructive. It must be complemented by other human faculties (such as moral responsibility, social sensitivity, courage, discernment and ultimately love) which are far more difficult to educate.” (Ben Cherry, founder of the Bowral Steiner School.)

Similarly, there have been many developments in the modern educational workplace which have impacted on the whole school, in particular the legal environment. This includes mandatory reporting, equal opportunity, Occupational Health and Safety, work place relations legislation and in 2005 the National Safe Schools Framework. In addition, the current expectations of the Australian education system, including requirements of assessment, reporting, early intervention, ongoing staff development and staff assessment, has often been accompanied by decreasing quality of working conditions for teachers.

The well established maxim that diversity in the delivery of educational experiences is critical to sound educational practice underlies this Strategic Plan. ¹

Considering these demands of the twenty first century, Castlemaine Steiner School and Kindergarten has developed the following Educational Vision.

Section Four

Educational Vision

The integral purpose of Castlemaine Steiner School and Kindergarten is raising the consciousness of children to be aware of:

- his/her own self,
- their communications with others,
- their interactions with nature, and
- their participation in society

To enable children to constructively participate in and to be discerning within the many aspects of contemporary Australian culture, children need a thinking and intellectual capacity which is based on a *mobile and flexible imagination*. We seek to develop in children, *constructively focused motivation* and a *strong sense of their own being*. “*Being*” in this context refers to both knowledge of oneself and to a recognition of the importance of a rich diversity in others.

In order to prepare children to have meaning and purpose in their adolescent and adult lives and so to participate in and contribute positively to the community we:

1. provide a school which is a safe and supportive environment free from violence and where bullying, harassment are minimised;
2. want children to feel that Castlemaine Steiner School and Kindergarten *acknowledges and recognises the cultural context of their lives* and that they are supported and admired for *their unique selves, cultures and spiritual life*;
3. seek to develop an educational environment which facilitates a range of child focused experiences which *enhance their ability to gain life skills*, in particular respectful human interactions and *meaningful participation in their communities*;
4. want children to develop *critical thinking* and an ability to find balance within the competing, contradictory cultures they experience;
5. support the *human element* in all children’s interactions, thereby enriching their capacity to participate purposefully and constructively in their immediate communities and in society generally and

6. seek to develop a *supportive employment environment* for all staff at Castlemaine Steiner School and Kindergarten which enables staff to achieve the highest quality of outcomes for teaching staff to work towards developing children as balanced individuals with positively oriented social sense, they too need to work in conditions which reflect this ideal.

Section 5

Streams of Strength

At Castlemaine Steiner School and Kindergarten there are eleven “*streams of strength*”, which are resourced and developed in annual budgets, in order to operate with work towards the Educational Vision of the school.

The school aims to develop its programmes to cater for Kindergarten to Year 8 as single stream non-composite classes. Following a period of rapid expansion, student enrolments are now increasing slowly and will reach this maximum in the next three years.

The Streams of Strength are:

- The Intellectual Development of children
- Assessment and Reporting – Student Learning Outcomes
- Handwork (Design and Technology)
- Drama and Music
- Outdoor Education / Physical Education
- Gardening and Horticulture/Agriculture
- Remediation
- Organizational Structures and Management
- Administration and Employment Culture
- Community
- Building, Facilities and Environment - Master Building Plan

Each “Stream “ has a recorded ‘history’ and current years plan to be developed.

Schedule D

Accountability Requirements

Big Brother Stuff

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 14 part time specialist teachers. This is the first year in the history of the school that we have Prep plus 8 single stream classes, with no composite classes.

 - There were 164 teaching days over the thirty eight teaching weeks, over four terms of 2007. Over nine classes in the school, with a total of 185 students, this represents a total of 1476 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 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 94.7 %. (77 Casual Relief Teacher days over a total of 1450 teaching days represent teacher absence at 5.3%). This indicates the excellent dedication of our teaching staff.

2. **Staff Retention:**

The school employs over 42 people in 22 Equivalent Full Time positions (EFT). The school has had five staff members leave the school this year for a range of personal reasons. (Marion Read, Janie Bailey, Julie Luckman, Julie Trueman and Jacinta Onans). Over the total EFT this is a retention rate of approx 88%. Again this is an indicator of the strong staff morale and commitment. Steve Christenson and Jane Edwards will leave the school at the end of this year to pursue new adventures.

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 \$ 15,000 on professional learning for staff. This represents approximately 1% of the school budget.

Funded professional development activities have included:

1. Four College members attended the Australasian Steiner Conference in Adelaide;
2. Chris Curtis attended the National Steiner Craft conference,
3. First Aid training for eleven teachers plus three other staff members,
4. training in the Rock and Water programme of two staff (John Gobles and Ann Campbell) and the Train the Trainer component of this course was undertaken by Lyn Farrow.
5. Specific Class 5 Steiner programme training was attended by Ann Campbell.
6. Peter Foran acquired his snake handlers licence
7. Johanna Winchombe attended the national Reading Matters conference focusing on adolescent reading material
8. Lyn Wallace attended the PIPA conference

5. Key Student Outcomes – government indicators
Proportion of Class 3, 5 and 7 meeting national reading, writing, spelling and numeracy benchmarks:

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 school craft programme from Class 1 to Class 8 is taken by Chris Curtis and Dagma Macnamara. A programme of activities, which compliments the ‘in class’ curriculum, has been designed to ensure that practical and beautiful items are produced which the children use daily. The quality of the work produced is outstanding and has been displayed in several public forums this year.
 - 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 are 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 of the district.

7. Post school destinations

Our students have for the past two years predominantly attended the Castlemaine Steiner Stream at Castlemaine Secondary College. Tow of last years Class 8 elected to attend the junior campus Class 9 of 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 years cohort are performing above average in the Year 9 AIMS test 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. 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.

Schedule E

School Fees 2008

Next Year

School Fees Information Sheet - 2008

Enrolment Application Fee – Applicable to Ring a Rosie, Kindergarten and School Applications

A non-refundable Enrolment Application Fee of **\$80 per child** is payable with enrolment application. Sixty dollars (\$60) of this is deducted from the first term's fee.

Entry Bond - Applicable to school only: Prep to Class 8

Entry into the school requires the payment of an Entry Bond of **\$250** prior to commencement. See the document *Conditions of Admission* for further information

| CLASS | FEES PER TERM | Fees per Year | INFORMATION |
|-----------------|----------------------------------|----------------|--|
| Kindergarten | \$510 for 3 sessions per week | \$2,040 | Children are enrolled in either 3 or 4 sessions per week. (Fees are based on \$170 per session per term) |
| | \$680 for 4 sessions per week | \$2,720 | |
| Prep to Class 8 | First child \$940 | \$3,760 | 1. The Prep programme (4 days) is charged at the full school fee. This assists with the employment of two staff members in the Prep room. 2. Class 3 to Class 8 Fee does not include swimming lessons, instrumental lessons, ensembles and camp fees. Day excursions will also be charged separately each term. Music @\$245/term |
| | Second Child 21% \$745 | \$2,980 | |
| | Third Child 65% \$330 | \$1,320 | |
| | Fourth child 85% \$140 | \$560 | |

Please refer to Conditions of Admission sheet for additional information. The Conditions of Admission must be signed and lodged at Reception during enrolment.

Tuition fees are subject to change on an annual basis with a minimum of one term's notice.

Music Tuition Fees. (Stringed instrument) **\$245 per term** for all students in Class 3 upwards, includes lessons and ensembles. Participation in Percussion Ensemble in Class 7&8 only is charged at \$125 per term.

Discounts: Sibling discounts apply to school enrolments only (21% for second child, 65% for third child and 65% for the fourth child). No discounts apply to Kindergarten, Ring a Rosie or Playgroup enrolments.

Other Costs –_invoiced each term

- Stringed Instrument Music Tuition will be invoiced each term for Classes 3-8.
- Excursions/camps/swimming and special performances and events(Such as the multi-cultural week performances)– as required in each year level
- Individual class levy for text books – as required in each senior level
- Personal equipment/Musical Instruments – are purchased by the family as required in each year level.

Payment of Tuition Fees

Fees are payable in advance at the beginning of each term within 3 weeks (approximately 21 days) of receiving the invoice.

Any fees outstanding after 12 days, without a signed Fee Agreement, will incur a \$25 Administration charge.

The school has implemented a Fee Retrieval Policy which all incoming parents must receive. A condition of entry to the school is that each parent / guardian sign the Conditions of Admission form.

Fee Assistance scheme

The school has adopted a Fee Assistance Scheme, which forms part of the Fee Retrieval procedure. Fee Assistance packages are available on an application basis, for families with severe financial difficulty in meeting fee agreements.

Tax Deductible Donations

The school is undertaking major capital building projects within the School Master Building Plan, which require regular financial commitments. Donations to the school's Building Fund are tax deductible.

The school also operates a tax deductible Library Fund and a Bursary Fund. Donations enable these programmes to develop.

These payments are voluntary and are welcomed at any time throughout the school year.

Other Financial Support

The school has kept tuition fees to a minimum in order to remain accessible to all families. This requires that the school community as a whole supports the school's working bees and fundraising activities. Commitment of time is expected of all families.

Conveyance Allowance and Education Maintenance Allowance – Payments by the State Government to families.

1. *Conveyance Allowance* - This payment is for parents who convey their child/ren more than 4.8km to **school** (one way) and is to assist with travel costs.

2. *Education Maintenance Allowance* - This payment is for parents who are holders of health care cards, pension cards or similar and is to assist with educational costs.

Application to the Department of Education for these two allowances is made through the administration of the school and is advertised through the school newsletter. The EMA payment is made twice yearly through the school – at the end of the second and fourth terms. The Conveyance Allowance is received four times a year, at the end of each term, and is applied to your fee account when we receive it.

Copies of Health Care Cards must be lodged at the office with Application forms to be eligible for this payment.

Families with Kindergarten children who have Health Care Cards also receive a rebate of \$720 on fees in Term 3&4. Copies of Health Care cards must be lodged in February to be eligible for this rebate.

Castlemaine Steiner School and Kindergarten

MUSIC TUITION FEES - 2008

\$980 PER YEAR

| CLASS | FEE | INFORMATION |
|--|------------------------|--|
| Stringed Instrument Programme Class 3 to Class 8 | \$245 per term | Weekly stringed instrument lessons and participation in ensembles |
| Percussion Ensembles Class 7-8 only | \$ 125 per term | For participation in one percussion ensemble |

Castlemaine Steiner School and Kindergarten

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