



Ltyentye Apurte Catholic School
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ANNUAL REPORT 2021

LTYENTYE APURTE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

VISION:

Our school celebrates the life giving Gospel of Jesus in dialogue with the Arrernte people. We do this '*In the Way of Mary*'.

MISSION:

We are called to provide excellence in Catholic education and well-being through:

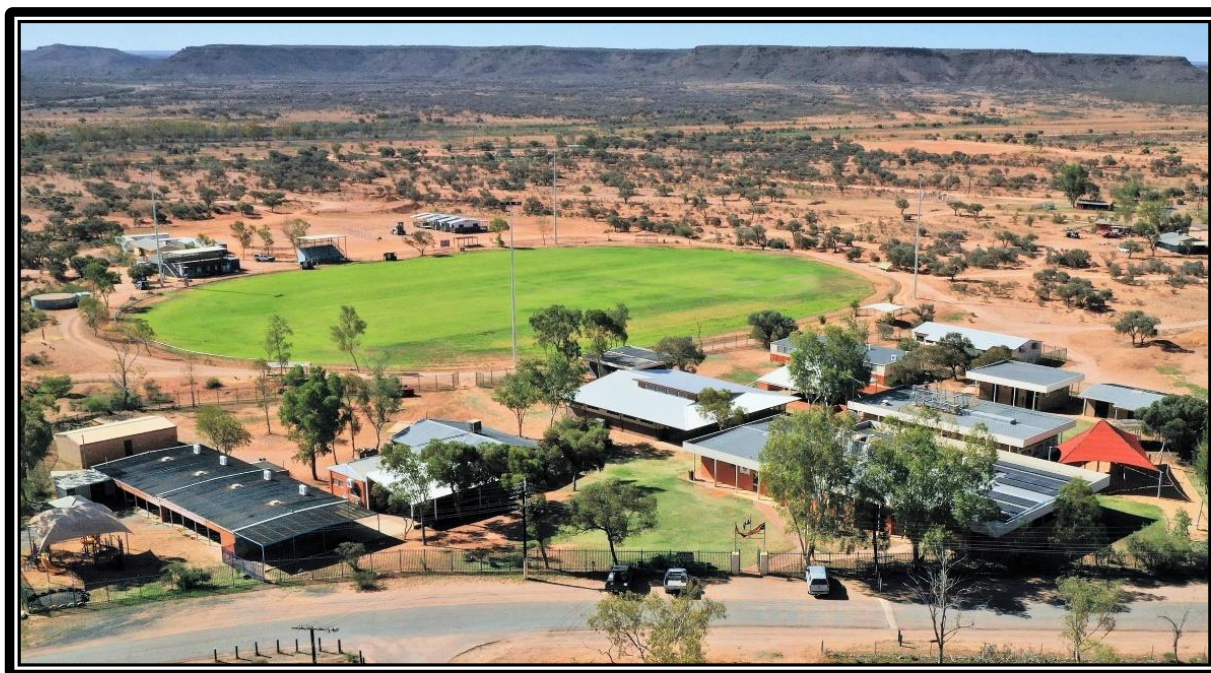
- Shaping hearts with the qualities of caring, strength and respect.
- Arrernte language and culture.
- Providing a place of learning for all.
- Authentic, two-way teaching and learning.

CHARACTERISTICS OF OUR SCHOOL:

Marist Characteristics (aka Pillars) – Presence, Simplicity, Love of work, Family Spirit and In the Way of Mary; authentic Catholic Identity; formation of young people; prayer, contemplation and liturgy; Sacramental life; social justice; stewardship of creation; student centred learning; celebration of achievement; hospitality and inclusivity; recognising the strengths of each person; effective communication.

LACS Vision, Mission and Characteristics revised in 2019 through joint Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff dialogue in presence of Br Neville from the Marist Association, Australia.

SCHOOL PROFILE



Ltyentye Apurte Catholic School (LACS) is a P - 12 school (and the only school) to serve the remote Aboriginal community of Ltyentye Apurte / Santa Teresa. Just over 600 persons live here. Most belong to the Arrernte people. Others are non-Aboriginal staff working for community organisations (such as the school). The community is located roughly 83 km southeast of Alice Springs, in arid country on the north-western tip of the Simpson Desert. Temperatures are extreme, ranging from -1 to 45 degrees and there is access via a largely unsealed road. The people speak Arrernte and use English as their second language.

Santa Teresa was founded as a Mission in 1953 by the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and the OLSH Sisters. The school is governed by the Catholic Education Office, Diocese of Darwin and supported by the Marist Brothers. It is a Catholic school in the Marist tradition.

In 2021, there were 42 staff at the school, 26 of whom were Aboriginal and 16 non-Aboriginal (thus, approx. 62% / 38%). There were nine student classes including Pre-School to Seniors (Year 12). Class sizes were / are small. LACS has specialist facilities such as a library, STEM room, manual arts workshop and food technology room. All classes have Internet access and there are PCs, laptops, iPads and Interactive Whiteboards throughout.

Teachers work as members of a team in partnership with local staff and Arrernte Assistant Teachers. The school's current strategic direction is towards the reinvigoration of a linguistically and culturally appropriate curriculum (i.e. bilingual education).

A School Nutrition Program (SNP) is also provided which includes a cooked breakfast, morning tea and lunch.

School hours are 8:30 am – 3:00 pm Monday to Thursday and 8:30 am – 1:00 pm on Fridays.

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE



This Annual Report provides a summary of our school's main achievements in 2021. They are linked to actions detailed in the Annual School Improvement Plan 2021, which you may also access through the school's website.

Given the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, it was another difficult year. Although we had no Biosecurity Act lockdown in 2021, the arrival of the Delta and later Omicron virus strains caused as much if not more disruption to the school than was seen in 2020. Nonetheless, we strived to be flexible, adaptable and *provide an education for all*. Despite the challenges, we achieved some outstanding successes in 2021, which put us in a good position to start 2022. The school is blessed with a great staff and a dedicated team of stakeholders that help us through. Together, we serve a beautiful community. Please read on to see what was achieved in 2021...

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Justin Colley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Justin Colley
Principal | LACS

Catholic Identity

At LACS, so much of what we do – and the way that we do it – stems from our Vision and Mission statements (at front of report). The Vision reminds us that we live according to the Gospel. Love is shared ‘In the Way of Mary’ – a cornerstone of the Marist charism. This was evident through RE teaching and learning, especially with units of work on Mary and the Rosary. Through our Mission we strive to provide an excellent education and well-being for all. Staff have worked hard to maintain high standards of teaching and learning. We regularly remind everyone that LACS is a Catholic school in the Marist tradition. We adhere to the Marist Characteristics of: presence, simplicity, love of work, family spirit and doing things in the way of Mary. Our students are the main priority. We try to model authentic Catholic Identity to them through prayer (in class and at morning prayer for staff), contemplation on liturgy, the Sacramental program (Baptism, First Eucharist and Confirmation), social justice and stewardship of creation. We regularly acknowledge students learning and achievements. At LACS we are inclusive and we recognise the strengths of each person.

Liz Falconer from Marist Schools Australia visited LACS in 2021 to present to staff on the annual theme, ‘BREATHE – The Spirit of Life’. Religious Education Coordinator, Roseline (Rosie) Landsberg, also revisited the Marist Way and the five (Marist) characteristics via a PowerPoint. Further, there is now a clear visual display of the characteristics in the school library. These charisms tie in well with the school values.

The connection between the parish and the school is strong. We continue to encourage students and families to attend Mass as often as possible. At the beginning of the year we have a whole school Start of Year Mass. At the end of every semester we have a thanksgiving Mass. During the year we celebrate special feast days with Mass or a prayer service. At school we have termly class liturgies, whereby Parish Priest, Fr Elmer, is able to come in and share the Gospel with the students.

After the pandemic disruption of 2020, the Sacramental Program was able to resume in 2021. However, due to 2020, there was a back-log of candidates for First Holy Communion and Confirmation. Each sacrament featured two cohorts (and two corresponding liturgies). Despite the large numbers, ceremonies were a great success.



June and August 2021: **Sacraments of First Holy Communion (top) and Confirmation (bottom).**

LACS is looking for ways to raise the profile of Arrernte spirituality which exists both alongside and within the Catholic faith. In 2021 we continued to build resources that connect the two belief systems within our RE curriculum. Catholic Education Northern Territory (CENT) RE Consultant, Robyn Craig, visited and worked with our Catholic Aboriginal Leadership Team (CALT) comprising Rosemary (RP) Palmer and Renee Gorey, the REC, Rosie, and Cecily Palmer. Their focus was the establishment of an 8 Ways Aboriginal Pedagogical Framework for application to RE. This was achieved and we are pleased to see non-Aboriginal teachers and local Assistant Teachers working alongside each other in unpacking and presenting the new program.

We continue to look for ways to engage students (and their families) with the Catholic faith by making meaningful links to Arrernte spirituality in the Sacramental Program. To that end, local Elder and Healer, Mia Mulladad, presented to parents / families at the First Holy Communion Information Session. Her presentation was very well received by the audience. It led to a symbol of connection between the two spiritual systems being allowed at the sacrament. We will continue to explore opportunities in 2022.



June 2021: Damper in a Coolamon – a symbolic link between Arrernte Spirituality and Catholic Sacrament.

The 8 Ways Aboriginal Pedagogical Framework has already been implemented in the RE curriculum. We started with Community and Belonging units. Through this inter-link, we are able to do story telling bringing Aboriginal Spirituality to life through the Gospel. The use of language gives identity to students and connects to the land and their ancestors. Celebrations teach us the importance of culture and spirituality in both worlds, with a connection to homeland (Aboriginal Spirituality). By doing so, students are more engaged with and understand the links between Catholic faith and Arrernte spirituality.

At APRE / REC Network Meetings at CENT in Darwin, there is strong agreement that Aboriginal Spirituality teaching and learning, through the 8 ways Pedagogical Framework, needs to be taught by Aboriginal Assistant Teachers with the assistance of the non-Aboriginal classroom teacher. Good progress to that end was achieved at LACS in 2021 through the development of Godly Play (RE pedagogy) facilitated by Sr. Nuria and co. from CENT. We are grateful to our Yr. 1 / 2 teacher, Haidee MacKenzie, for facilitating this. Most Arrernte ATs undertook PD and began teaching RE units in Semester 2 via Godly Play – non-local teachers supporting.

In 2021, staff were constantly reminded that Accreditation A, B, C and D are all very important in order to teach in a Catholic School. While most staff can easily get Accreditation A and B (to be aware of the purpose and ethos of Catholic schools), in order to teach RE or lead in a Catholic school, they must have Accreditation C and D, which provide a much more in-depth and sophisticated understanding of theology and leadership.

Teaching and Learning

Despite the challenges, we achieved progress in many areas of Teaching and Learning. With the easing of pandemic travel restrictions for remote communities, staff were able to participate in a number of professional development workshops to upskill them in the areas of English as an Additional Language / Dialect (EAL/D) teaching and learning, bilingual education and play-based pedagogy to improve our student outcomes. LACS was provided with access to the Department of Education (DoE) EAL/D hub where they could participate in e-learning on two-way bilingual education. This was completed by one of our staff members who implemented their learnings in the Transition classroom. In Term 3, two teachers attended a two-day EAL/D workshop in Darwin facilitated by CENT consultants on EAL/D pedagogy, how EAL/D learners learn and planning aligned with EAL/D progressions and phases. In Term 4, two staff members attended two days of Kathy Walker Play Based Learning training and visited a school in Darwin to observe this pedagogy in action, and hope to implement in lower Primary in 2022.

Our school community grew in 2021 with many students coming from other Homelands or towns. While this growth was positive, it did come with challenges for staff as class numbers increased and we had more students with diverse learning needs. This was supported by our Inclusion Support Team who provided one to one academic and behavioural support where required and developed individual education plans for these students.

In our drive to become a more *bilingual* school, we strive to make Arrernte language and culture feature in school programs, events and celebrations – *beyond* routine Arrernte lessons. In 2021 we continued to work with Dr Margaret Carew from the Department of Education. Two staff training sessions took place in both semesters. The first developed staff understanding on the various models of bilingual education. The second made links between bilingual education and authentic learning (i.e. culturally and contextually relevant – with strong community outcomes). It also provided an opportunity for teachers and assistant teachers to start planning whole school bilingual science units on water or 'kwatye'. This was subsequently achieved – to varying levels of success – in most classes. Arrernte language and culture continued to be more explicit in classrooms around the school. Many rooms feature bilingual displays, i.e. Arrernte / English vocabulary combined with graphics in relation to, for example, emotional literacy, seasons, weather, body parts, etc. In some classes the relationship between the teacher and Arrernte assistant teachers developed to such an extent that it was possible to achieve even higher outcomes. In Junior 2, Haidee MacKenzie, Jane Oliver and Ashley Smith devised a number of innovative curriculum projects on everything from water, animal adaption, bush shelters and bicycle repair. Success was also seen in Junior 5 and Middle 1 but they are by no means alone. Reorganisation and classification of Literacy Production Centre (LPC) resources continued but overall less progress was made in the LPC in 2021 than hoped. LACS is yet to commence *digital* Arrernte literacy production (in the LPC). We will focus on this in 2022.



May 2021: Junior 2 male students made Humpies (bush shelters) with their male Assistant Teacher.

In Literacy, teachers have continued to use the Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Program to support decoding and encoding skills, a program that all students are familiar with and enjoy. We have been working towards developing a consistent synthetic phonics and reading program that is relevant to our community context and EAL/D learners. In Semester 2, LACS reinvigorated the Fountas and Pinnell Levelled Literacy Intervention program within classes to support guided reading and response tasks involving phonics, spelling, comprehension, syntactic awareness and semantics while we continue working towards the development of our own scope and sequence.

In Maths, we have continued to maintain a strong focus on number, place value, understanding, fluency, problem solving and reasoning. Our first round of Progressive Achievement Testing in Maths (PAT Maths) revealed data that LACS students in Year 1 – 7 have a sound knowledge and understanding of number and place value, which are fundamental to all other mathematical concepts. Teachers continue to use the Maths Online program as a means of interactive instruction and ongoing assessment, along with experiential real-world mathematical problem-solving engagements.

Formal means of assessment have been a challenge this year for a variety of reasons. Nonetheless, LACS was able to implement PAT assessments in the area of Maths in Term 4, an assessment we will continue every year at the same time to show data and patterns on student and whole school mathematical understandings. Diagnostic maths assessments JAM and Gloss (NZ Maths) were meant to be implemented in Term 1. However, they proved inaccessible to our students. The assessments have been adjusted according to our context by the school's CEO Maths Consultant and will be implemented in 2022. A LACS data plan was written in Term 4 in response to the need for better use of data to inform teaching, and we look forward to embedding this in our PLCs next year.

Our secondary curriculum faced a number of challenges in 2021. Nonetheless, Senior Fellas were still able to attend the Michael Long Learning Leaders Centre in Term 2. The Senior Ladies participated in the AFLW competition for the second year in a row with much success, making it into the Grand Final where they were the runner-up. LACS is working towards a reform in senior curriculum and pedagogy next year as we move from Employment Pathways, to the Australian Curriculum.

NTRAI National Partnership

Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment – Non government Schools Agreement

The NTRAI fund provides for two staff with a variety of roles designed to improve outcomes for Aboriginal people – students and staff. These staff work in the fields of well-being, Aboriginal workforce development and Arrernte literacy production. In 2021, LACS was fortunate to be funded for an additional teacher who did not have class but nonetheless contributed to improving outcomes for Aboriginal students and staff.

Ray Ireland ('Students With Disabilities teacher') worked collaboratively with teachers and the Inclusion Support Coordinator (ISC) to provide ongoing, one-to-one and small group interventions and support for students with additional learning needs from Transition to Year 12. Students' Educational Adjustment plans were used to guide the scope of Ray's work, along with information gathered from meetings with class teachers and the ISC and support was predominantly given in the curriculum areas of English and Maths. Ray also worked with our Arrernte Teacher and staff from The Literacy Centre to produce some simple Arrernte literacy resources for display in classrooms.

NAPLAN

NAPLAN was cancelled *nationally* in 2020 due to disruption to schools from the coronavirus pandemic. NAPLAN resumed in 2021. Indeed, 2021 saw the introduction of NAPLAN Online across Australia. Due to its chronic Internet connectivity and bandwidth problems, LACS was identified as a 'low-bandwidth' school and administered the tests via the 'low-bandwidth solution'. In elaborating on LACS' experience of NAPLAN Online in 2021, it would be useful to look at some of our key responses to the NT DoE post-NAPLAN survey.

- **What were the positives from online testing?**

- Student engagement was higher due to novelty of using computers.
- Students were less demoralised seeing only one screen at a time where they couldn't answer questions. In the past, they saw page after page of unanswered questions which surely harms their self-esteem.
- In 'theory', the tests were / are adaptive, meaning that questions are pitched better at students' capabilities and they're more able to access the test as a whole.

- **What were the biggest challenges?**

- Low-bandwidth solution is extraordinarily complex and onerous to work.
- Getting low-bandwidth solution ready for national test week required significant support from IT technicians / professionals. This continued 'during' test weeks.
- NAPLAN Online placed stress on the school during test weeks due to complex expectations on the Principal (also NAPLAN IT Coordinator) and NAPLAN Coordinator (also Deputy Principal) to administer low-bandwidth solution.
- The application of NAPLAN in the remote Aboriginal context is highly controversial as it is linguistically and culturally inappropriate.
- Students guess their way through questions in an attempt to save face.

Despite all these challenges, we feel that students did their best and we saw numerous examples of certain individuals really doing well. Nonetheless, data from the tests continues to show that our students perform well below age-appropriate expectations. Far from being unique to LACS, this is part of the wider (above identified) problem of the application of NAPLAN in remote Aboriginal communities.

Later in 2021, NT DoE officials visited LACS to test the 'high-bandwidth solution'. It was found that our network could sustain the solution. This reveals more about the operation of the solution than our network capability, which is low.

2021 NAPLAN Results (for tests by number of students):

YEAR 3	Below minimum standard	At minimum standard	Above minimum standard
Reading	2	4	1
Writing	3	6	0
Conventions of Language	10	1	0
Numeracy	10	0	0

YEAR 5	Below minimum standard	At minimum standard	Above minimum standard
Reading	10	1	0
Writing	9	1	0
Conventions of Language	11	0	1
Numeracy	13	0	0

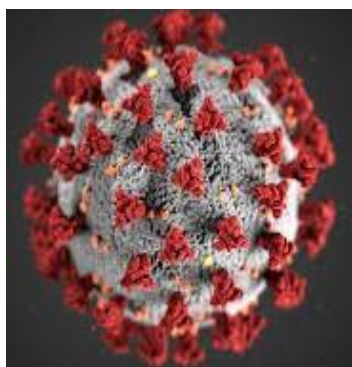
YEAR 7	Below minimum standard	At minimum standard	Above minimum standard
Reading	8	0	0
Writing	5	0	0
Conventions of Language	7	0	0
Numeracy	7	0	0

YEAR 9	Below minimum standard	At minimum standard	Above minimum standard
Reading	Absent	Absent	Absent
Writing	Absent	Absent	Absent
Conventions of Language	1	0 (all others absent)	0
Numeracy	Absent	Absent	Absent

Leadership

2021 got off to a very solid start from a leadership perspective. In Semester 2, 2020, a number of acting positions became substantive. This included the Principal, Justin Colley, and the Religious Education Coordinator, Roseline Landsberg. A new substantive Deputy Principal, Pamela Brown, was also appointed for 2021. Pamela (whom we call Georgia for cultural reasons) transferred to us from Xavier Catholic College, Wurrumiyanga on Bathurst Island. Together with the Principal, Deputy and REC, the school's Executive Committee (Leadership Team) also includes Curriculum / Inclusion Coordinator, Zoe Smithies, and the Catholic Aboriginal Leadership Team (CALT) comprising Rosemary Palmer (RP) and Marcus Williams. To keep the committee-size proportionate for the size of the school, other members of staff / middle leadership are invited to attend meetings as and when necessary. The Executive Committee continued to meet every Monday after school.

The Executive Committee (or 'Exec') is the main decision-making body in the school but it consults with other bodies, i.e. non-local staff in staff meetings and local staff in Yarning Circles (and through CALT within Exec). Leadership at LACS is first and foremost, 'servant', but also consultative in its approach.



The coronavirus pandemic posed a number of challenges to LACS leadership in 2021 and we had to rise to them as best we could. Coronavirus (COVID-19) deters potential staff from venturing interstate. It impacts retention of existing staff – cut off for longer periods from their families. In 2020, student enrolment and attendance declined due to anxiety about sickness and the unintended consequences of Federal Government financial stimuli. Falling enrolments and attendance impact on school budgets. These challenges were experienced everywhere, not just at LACS.



In 2021 we appointed a very good new preschool teacher. However, for matters beyond their control, the teacher ultimately never made it to Santa Teresa.

Two capable and experienced Arrernte Assistant Teachers, Tina Williams and Delphina Cavanagh (pictured left), were asked to take responsibility for Preschool. They were supported throughout the year by Deputy Principal, Georgia Brown, and Lisa LeGros at CENT. We appreciate the contribution these ladies made to ensuring that LACS could offer preschool in 2021. In Term 4 we were finally able to recruit a new preschool teacher for 2022.

Two classroom teachers for the Senior Ladies cohort moved on in 2021 – both for personal reasons complicated by the pandemic. Leadership found a suitable replacement in the form of Katie-Jayne O'Brien (and a number of existing staff) who managed to provide continuity for the Senior Ladies towards the end of the year.

Zoe Smithies went on Study Leave for the entirety of Semester 2. All of her roles (Curriculum / Inclusion Support Coordinator, Data Informed Practitioner and Instructional Coach) were covered very capably by Michelle Abraham. Michelle also joined the Executive Committee and made a strong and intelligent contribution to school leadership. We are grateful to Helen Currie and Catherine Pidoto for coming back to LACS to teach Junior 1 in place of Michelle.

At the end of 2021, Zoe Smithies decided to move on from Ltyentye Apurte, continue her studies and work part-time in Alice Springs. We acknowledge Zoe's excellent contribution to school and community over many years. She was / is an outstanding educator and leader.

Marcus Williams stepped back from CALT at the end of Semester 1. We acknowledge his insightful contribution to Exec and CALT – and at such an early stage in his career. RP and Marcus identified Renee Gorey as the new, third CALT member. Renee's background has been in assistant teaching and community / family liaison. In Term 4, CENT Aboriginal Workforce and Engagement Manager, Sherri Bryers, returned from maternity leave. There was a renewed emphasis on developing LACS' CALT body in terms of membership and an emphasis on youth – for future prosperity. Sheree Doolan and Juanita Davis were identified for 2022, with a further young male candidate being considered for 2023.

Given the increasing challenge that the pandemic posed to work and life in remote, outback Australia, Principal Justin Colley brought in Paul Salmon and the Resilient Educators Program early 2021. Justin applied for a grant of over \$10 K from the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal to fund this important emphasis on staff well-being.

Leadership capacity was developed in 2021 through coaching. The Principal, Justin Colley, was coached by former staff member, Dr Phil Standen. Coaching focussed mainly on principal well-being, sleep, mindfulness and 'Mindful Leadership'. Capacity building will continue for others in 2022 through coaching and PD (a Master's degree and a short course).

In focussing on other aspects of school leadership, local management of Yarning Circle went from strength to strength in 2021. It was not easy and establishing roles took time but was finally achieved in Semester 2. It must be emphasised that leadership is an *ethical* activity and creating opportunities for self-determination for our local staff is very much an ethical thing to do. Although, due to higher priorities created by the pandemic, the Student Representative Council (SRC) is still not working at its optimum best, it did meet on one occasion in 2021. Further to this, student leaders organised a successful whole school campaign to improve attendance and engagement; they contributed to our policy (or rather *practice*) in rewarding best attendance; advised on the variety of equipment for outdoor play and alternative activities for indoor quiet play and so on.

Community and Culture

There has been an increased focus on Community and Culture at LACS since 2020. It is at the heart of our leadership vision and strategic direction; to reinvigorate a linguistically and culturally appropriate curriculum (i.e. bilingual education). As mentioned earlier, leadership is an ethical activity and what could be more ethical than ensuring that education in a remote Aboriginal community is at least contextually relevant.

In 2020, a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) was developed to provide a framework for organisations such as LACS to advance reconciliation within their spheres of influence and increase pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. In 2021, staff reviewed the RAP mid-year to gain familiarity with the document and evaluate what was happening, not happening and how we might improve. While the RAP has not become the 'live document' that we hoped it would be, good progress has been made against certain actions thanks to our focus on bilingual education. There will be a renewed focus by CALT in 2022 to bring the RAP to greater life.

Just as in 2020, NAIDOC Week was rescheduled to much later in the year – but it was worth waiting for. We are grateful to Deputy Principal, Georgia Brown, CALT (RP and Renee) and Yarning Circle for their planning, organisation and delivery of this in November 2021. As in previous years, it took place over two days and culminated in a whole school bush-trip to The Bore where various cultural education activities took place. There are plans to develop this into a whole-school bush-CAMP in 2022 (pandemic allowing). We will commence planning nonetheless.



September 2021: NAIDOC activities at Philipson's Bore.

The African proverb, *"it takes a village to raise a child,"* means that an entire community of people must interact with children for them to grow in a safe and healthy environment. We took this sentiment when devising the *'Alternative Engagement Program'* for Santa Teresa's most disengaged, school-aged youth. School attendance stakeholders tried everything they could over considerable time to get certain children to school but without success. School, for some, is too inaccessible. Consequently, they fall through the cracks and into an uncertain future. This is ethically unacceptable. Thus, in 2021, the school collaborated with a wide range of community stakeholders – principally the local Aboriginal Corporation, AAAC, to devise an alternative approach that would engage these youth in positive activities that would make them feel better about themselves and hopefully lead to re-engagement with school... or, at the least, better engagement with the community. (Several children participate in anti-social behaviour which negatively impacts on community).

LACS got approval from CENT for emergency funding of a local staff member to support at least five identified subjects over a 10-week period. In return, activities provided by stakeholders had to be aligned with the NT Indigenous Languages and Culture Curriculum Framework – so the program is essentially educational and involves learning. Crucially,

learning was culturally appropriate making it more engaging. Students did not attend school but engaged in activities off-site and even out of hours. We were also fortunate to gain the services of a savvy psychologist from Central Australian Aboriginal Congress (CAAC), Dr Reece Cossar, who provided regular counselling to youth regarding their various challenges. This entailed an element of restorative justice in response to incidents of anti-social behaviour in community.

Ultimately, the program was a success in engaging the youth. Incidents of anti-social behaviour declined – during the program’s run – and those attending school attended better and developed more harmonious relationships with those around them. LACS is committed to supporting the program into 2022.



Above: *It takes a village to raise a child*; AEP Offerings 2021.

Our Aboriginal Workforce Development Coordinator, Kellie Mayne, continued to oversee the formal education of local staff. For the most part in 2021, this was through Alana Kaye Certificate III in Early Childhood Development. Three Arrernte Assistant Teachers continued to study alongside Kellie. Kellie also facilitated local staff professional development in many other areas, including WHS and ICT.

We were fortunate in 2021 to resume many school-community events that were not possible in 2020. This included whole-school assemblies every week, Mothers’ and Fathers’ Days celebrations, School Open Afternoons and BBQs, religious liturgies (inc. Easter) and Student Report Afternoon Teas.

Parent / carer satisfaction with the school is gauged in number of ways. We receive feedback following meetings with parents / carers (and other community stakeholders) about Student Reports; through school community events such as assemblies, liturgies and BBQs, and through service provider meetings in relation to school attendance and well-being (RSAS and IFSS). Feedback is largely positive. Community generally recognises that school does its best to serve everyone’s interests. We are seen as school that is making good progress despite the difficulties of 2020 / 21. Sometimes feedback is less positive, e.g. complaints about students teasing one another. We deal with this in a constructive manner.

Well-being

Students and staff pastoral care and well-being continued to be a high priority in 2021, especially given the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

From Term 1, Pastoral Care and Wellbeing Coordinator, Kellie Mayne, focussed students and staff attention on the National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence (aka 'Bullying, No Way'). There was a poster competition which, this year, had an Arrernte theme and encouraged students to design a poster. The top poster from each class won a prize.

Kellie and a range of community stakeholders organised a series of Open Afternoons. These were / are intended to build relationship between school and community. They were well attended by parents and carers. Visitors had the opportunity to see their children at work and learning in classrooms. Each afternoon finished with a BBQ.



March 2021: **Open Afternoons to build relationship between parents / carers and school.**

Kellie and the newly devised Social Committee organised numerous staff social and well-being activities. These included a hot BBQ breakfast every Friday during Term 3, a staff dinner at school, a ladies' movie night and morning teas to celebrate staff birthdays for those who wish to be celebrated.

Earlier in the year, Kellie also worked with a group of interested parties in enhancing toilet facilities for senior students. This started with senior ladies' facilities but extended to senior fellas and to staff toilets as well.

Unfortunately, we lost our CatholicCareNT student counsellor shortly before the end of 2020 and it took CCNT some time to replace her. Nonetheless, a replacement was found in Term 3, 2021. She continued to provide support to our children and families in a range of one-on-one and group counselling sessions (with parents / carers). The school counsellor has supported 10 students and their families. LACS' resident psychologist and counsellor, Br Francis Hough, provided support to students through counselling sessions and spending time in classrooms as an Assistant Teacher.

LACS was visited by a number of sporting organisations in 2021. They worked with students on a weekly or termly basis. Organisations included AFL-NT and Jump Rope for Hearts. Besides sport, they all conveyed the same messages to students; good health, exercise and nutrition and school attendance. Students attended a football carnival in Alice Springs. The Senior Ladies also experienced great success playing in the AFLW competition in Alice Springs. Students attended weekly training sessions to develop their skills. Their coaches created learning opportunities as a follow up in the classroom. The team made it to the Grand Final, where they were the runners up.

Royal Life Saving NT provided swimming and water safety lessons during Term 4. Students enjoyed and benefited from this program through the development of their skills, health and fitness. In addition, three Senior Fella students completed their Bronze Medallion training and now can work at the pool over summer holidays earning an income.

Programs that address the pastoral care, health and well-being of our students remain a central element in the work of the school. Kellie worked with our local clinic to get two Asthma puffers for students who require them (one for the classroom and one labelled clearly in the staffroom) as well as Anaphylaxis pens for students with allergies. This outcome is long overdue and we are pleased that it is finally in place.

In Term 2, Holly-Ann Martin and the Safe4Kids program returned to LACS (they were prevented from doing so in 2020 due to the pandemic). Holly-Ann worked with students and teachers on addressing issues such as sexual harassment and abuse and online bullying. In 2021, we also hired the services of Muso-Magic, who occasionally work alongside Holly-Ann, to create a song and video about Cyber-Safety. The production is called THINK. It has been published to YouTube and seen by hundreds if not thousands of people around Australia. Staff attended professional development with Holly-Ann and parents also attended a session. Later in Term 2, Kellie, and Assistant Teacher, Jane Oliver, attended CENT training on the new Safe Guarding NT Child Protection Curriculum. This program will be rolled out to all schools in the NT in 2022. However, we will continue to use Safe4Kids resources as necessary.



April 2021: **Safe4Kids and Muso-Magic Outback Tracks focus on Cyber-Safety.**

At the beginning of Term 4, staff were trained in the 'Mind Up for Life' program. This teaches a set of social, emotional and self-regulatory strategies and skills developed for pre-kindergarten through to Year 8 children to cultivate wellbeing and emotional balance. The program is informed by understanding on how the brain works, cultivating our ability to slow down and savour the present moment, and ensuring the world is a better place because we are in it. To ensure greater understanding and connection with students, Kellie contextualised the three different parts of the brain along Arrernte lines, i.e. local birdlife. This is done in all communities where Mind Up is applied. Each classroom has a mindfulness chime and bowl to use three times a day for our students to have a mindful moment and a brain break. We looking forward to seeing practices develop in 2022.

In Term 4, Kellie organised a successful health day. Students rotated through five different health stations, which included: headlice treatment, oral health / tooth brushing, sugar in drinks, mindfulness drumming and mindfulness calming bottles. We were pleased to see our older (Senior) students stepping up to leadership on the day – supporting activities and our younger students. We hope to run such days on a termly basis in 2022.

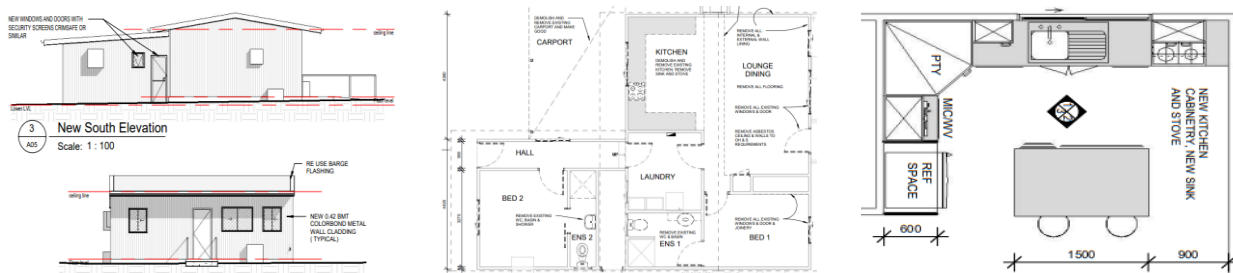
Finance, Facilities and Resources

Prior to 2021 LACS was in a tight financial position due to exhaustion of funds on the new classroom complex and declining enrolments and attendance due to the pandemic. Our spending on a range of things had to be prudent and conservative. As will be detailed in the next section (Attendance Strategy), we turned this situation around in 2021 – increasing school finances to the tune of approximately \$762,000. Of this, approximately \$572K results from improved enrolments in 2021; \$180K from a successful Block Grant Authority (BGA) application to refurbish teacher accommodation and \$10K from the successful application to the FRRR. Thanks to our prudence earlier in the year, we also generated a decent surplus at the end of 2021. Some of this was immediately spent on priorities and some went into reserves. We start 2022 in a much better financial position than previous years.

A long overdue priority for LACS has been the creation of a strategic Master Plan for building projects. This was finally achieved in Term 3, 2021. The Principal, Justin Colley (who is also LACS Property Manager, 0.8) met with new CENT Infrastructure Manager, Bruce McEvoy, CENT architect, Stephen Adler, and a number of builders' representatives. They toured the school site its buildings within community and discussed priorities and costs. This led to the creation of the Master Plan detailing what must be done, when and approximate costs. The strategic plan is now being followed and will continue to inform us for the next five years.

We hired a structural engineer to inspect the old demountable block (replaced by the new classroom complex) and determine whether it could be saved and adapted for future use. Prior to this it had been condemned for demolition. The engineer's report showed that it could be saved. School Executive voted to redesign and refurbish the building for future use. Exec is aware, however, that there are many other *higher* priorities on the Master Plan and thus redevelopment will not take place until 2024 or thereafter.

A very high priority on the Master Plan is the refurbishment of teacher accommodation in Santa Teresa. It has been neglected in favour of school-site projects for too long and consequently, much of it is now tired and, in some cases, dilapidated. This impacts on teacher well-being. Houses 144 and 145 Church Street are in urgent need of repair. During the year, Justin explored funding options. A successful BGA application was put in for House 145 (the larger house) and House 144 will be funded through reserves. Justin and Bruce further agreed to go with 'complete refurbishment', which entails asbestos removal. The initial outlay is more expensive but it will be cheaper to maintain in the long term. Our intention is to refurbish (or completely replace) two teacher houses every year for the duration of the plan.



Above: Architects plans for refurbishment of House 145, Church Street.

In keeping with our drive to become a more bilingual school, the other immediate priority on the Master Plan was / is the refurbishment of the Arrernte language and culture building. This too has been dilapidated for years. Following a competitive tender process, the contract

was awarded to RL Builders, based in Darwin and Alice Springs. Arrernte language and culture teacher, Carmel Ryan, CALT (RP and Renee) and Cecily Palmer were heavily consulted in the process. Work started on a complete \$265K refurbishment in Term 4, 2021. All internal walls were demolished – turning the three-room building in a single, open plan space. All furniture was replaced with new, modern, portable furniture in keeping with the style and standard of furniture in the new classroom complex. The building is scheduled to be reopened midway through Term 1, 2022.



December 2021: RL Builders refurbishment of Arernte Language / Culture building.

Prickles (aka *Caltrop* aka *Tribulus Eichlerianus*) have been a perennial pain underfoot in central Australia for millennia. They present a Work Health Safety issue to students and staff. In 2021 we explored options for managing the problem. Given the sheer extent of their spread on school grounds, a bobcat ‘scrape’ proved to be an expensive, short-term solution. Instead, we chose to install 155 metres of concrete pathways around school. These connected buildings and provided people a prickle-free surface to walk upon. They will last for many years to come.



December 2021: RL Build installation of 155 metres of concrete pathways.

In 2021, we were finally able to afford a new school vehicle. The Toyota LandCruiser (aka troopy) came to end of its working life. Justin and Exec explored the possibility of buying a new troopy. We also consulted Toyota in Alice Springs. Due to a new internal layout and reduced seating capacity, new troopies are not as versatile or cost-effective as their predecessors. Instead, we invested in a Toyota Hiace Commuter van with 4WD upgrade kit. This provides us the versatility and seating that we need and it can also be taken off-road. The vehicle will be ready midway through Term 1, 2022.

There was a significant investment in ICT in 2021. First, we spent \$317K (CENT and school costs) on a network infrastructure upgrade. This entailed re-cabling the entire school with fibre-optics and upgrading wireless facilities and so on. Our server operations are now more reliable – but our Internet connectivity and bandwidth continue to be an issue. Later in the year, Justin, who is also the ICT Coordinator, used financial surpluses to replace IT equipment for staff and students as necessary. This includes a new laptop for every teacher,

new laptops for older students, iPads and storage trolleys for younger students and desktop computers for school administration.

In 2021, the new Deputy Principal, Georgia Brown, took on the role of WHS Co-ordinator. An extensive WHS audit was carried out in Term 1 with the Principal. From there, Georgia was able to write a comprehensive report which guided major maintenance works for the rest of the year. Risk Assessments were developed with detailed actions in place for the challenges of the pandemic. A review section was added to enable teachers to reflect and improve the effectiveness of the plans in mitigating risk. The coronavirus pandemic took many hours of the WHS Co-ordinator's and maintenance team's time. They ensured that staff and students had a regular supply of hygiene products in their classrooms, hand washing facilities were improved (and accompanied with bilingual posters), high touch surfaces were regularly cleaned and PPE kits were placed in every classroom and work space in preparation for a COVID-19 outbreak. In addition to this, Georgia organised for emergency lighting and signage to be upgraded in all school buildings. She also trialled the use of two-way radios as a means of improving communication systems on school grounds. Justin brought in two defibrillators – one for school and one for excursions. These are expensive but wise to have available. St John's Ambulance also facilitated a comprehensive First Aid course for all staff as necessary.



July 2021: St John's Ambulance First Aid course for whole staff.

Attendance Strategy

Ultimate responsibility for student attendance rests with parents and households with support from the school and its stakeholders. There is a team approach to maintaining and improving attendance at LACS. The Principal, Justin, regularly meets with stakeholders including Catholic Care Northern Territory (CCNT), who are the main service providers for the Remote Schools Attendance Strategy (RSAS) and Intensive Family Support Services (IFSS). The team also includes representatives from MacYouth (an arm of MacDonnell Regional Council) and the local Aboriginal Corporation (AAAC). The team works together to determine strategic needs around school attendance and the well-being of children in community. This creates a cycle of action which is constantly under review.








In 2021, a new RSAS Coordinator was appointed by CCNT. Grace Graham-Edney joined the community from Victoria. She brought considerable energy and dynamism to the role. This coincided with recruitment of new and equally capable local RSAS Officers such as Emma (Hazer) Hayes and Robbie Kopp, who joined Belinda Hayes. The new team got off to a strong start and kept this up throughout the year. Santa Teresa's RSAS program was perhaps the best it has ever been in 2021. As part of the school's attendance strategy, we combined our Family / Community Liaison Officer, Renee Gorey, with the RSAS team. She mentored them in communications and joined the team on the RSAS bus at scheduled times. It proved a successful working relationship.

As mentioned earlier in this report, the coronavirus pandemic presented school leadership with some very significant challenges. In 2020 it negatively impacted on school attendance in Santa Teresa and around the world. Declining student enrolments and attendance leads loss of funding. This impacts what a school can offer and how many staff it can employ. LACS is by far the biggest employer in Santa Teresa. Roughly two-thirds of staff are Aboriginal. To highlight the gravity of the situation, the Principal, Justin, repeatedly sent out a strong and simple economic message to community from the start of Term 1, "*Send your kids to school, our jobs depend on it.*"

Besides the economic climate, other conditions also prevailed at the start of 2021. First, LACS is blessed with a great staff that goes the extra-mile to create a good learning environment, engaging education programs and a friendly school where students feel safe and valued. Second, there was a feeling in Santa Teresa that the pandemic was over. It worried us in 2020 but never came near. The NT remained remarkably COVID-free. Given the economic message and prevailing conditions, the community bounced back from the situation of 2020. LACS' enrolments and attendance dramatically increased – with several classes experiencing 90 – 100% attendance each week over many weeks in Semester 1.

The demand for education in community was so high that it heavily increased teachers' workloads – especially in middle and upper-primary. Leadership was faced with a rare and extraordinary challenge. We needed to create a new class but due to 2020 census data, we did not have the necessary staff allocation and funds. Under pressure from teachers to respond, Justin appealed to CENT for additional funding. It was approved and LACS was able to employ a new teacher and create a new class. This was done early in Term 2 by placing all Year 5 students together in a class that we called Junior 5. Pressure was immediately relieved in the Junior 4 and Middle 1 cohorts. We were grateful to Katie-Jayne O'Brien and later Ray (Mondo) Ireland for setting up this class while we waited for the ongoing teacher to arrive, Nicholas (Pat) Hancock.

Maintaining high attendance was crucial. If it dropped before August Census we would lose funding and be indebted to CENT for the additional teacher. Justin and stakeholders focussed attention on the upcoming census. Their ideas were combined with those of school staff and the following measures to maximise enrolments and attendance were introduced:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FREE TRICKETS - Alice Springs Show: For students who come to school EVERY DAY in Wk. 10 (Monday 21st – Friday 25th June).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BBQ Breakfast: Every day while it's cold, JP will provide a hot BBQ breakfast to keep the students warm.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning Fitness Program: Every morning from 8:30 – 9:00 am, students warm up with sports including AusKick, skipping, chasing games (e.g. tails), relays, etc.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athletics Carnival: For the whole school - early Term 3. Might be on the oval. Will include different races, relays, a long-distance run, Tug-of-War, etc.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meat Packs: Students that come to school EVERY DAY will be entered into a raffle. Each week, several students / families will WIN a MEAT PACK to take home!
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AFL Footy Colours Day: Early Term 3 we'll have an AFL Day with Tommy or Clint running competitions. Students to wear their AFL colours.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fun Fridays: We expect to see students EVERY DAY – including Fridays. On these days we'll have Lego, Art, Drumming, Movies, Pop-Corn, etc.

Measure 1 alone (FREE TICKETS to Alice Springs Show) led to more than 70 students achieving 100% attendance rate in Term 2, Wk. 10. When combined with other aspects of our attendance strategy, such as: redeployment of Renee Gorey, focus on high engagement 'authentic learning' activities like the AAAC backed Horse Program, weekly AFLNT and a much-developed incentives and rewards system for high and improved attendance, we got the results we needed. In the August 2021 Census we recorded 129 students* on roll, 22 more than August 2020. *(Excluding Preschool). This improvement accounts for approximately half-a-million dollars greater funding for LACS in 2022.

Alas, in Semester 2, everyone in Santa Teresa realised that the coronavirus pandemic was far from over. Indeed, the Delta variant started in central Australia and spread to the eastern states. Then, in Term 4, the Omicron variant started to appear in headlines. School staff travelling to and / or from Darwin were heavily impacted by this. It was also in Terms 3 and 4 that a long series of Sports Weekends and Sorry Business took their toll on school attendance. It dropped off – returning overall school attendance back to late 2020 figures. Further, we were never able to restore it to 2021 peaks. The challenge of school enrolment and attendance in a remote school is like a rollercoaster, and relentless...

2021 Student Attendance Data and other School Statistics

Student Enrolment by Gender and Year Level (based on 2021 August Census)

Year	T	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	TOTAL
Male	9	8	3	9	9	11	5	3	4	0	3	3	3	70
Female	10	2	8	5	7	9	5	4	6	1	2	0	0	59
TOTAL	19	10	11	14	16	20	10	7	10	1	5	3	3	129

Pre-school Enrolments: Male: 12 + Female: 4 = 16

Indigenous Enrolment: 100%

Student Needs

Students with a disability: **49**

Students with an EAP: **53** (0 x support with QDTP; 12 x Supplementary; 34 x Substantial; 3 x Extensive)

Staff

Teachers: **15** Teachers including eight classroom teachers (in nine classes including Pre-School), three qualified local Arrernte teachers and four teachers in other positions – including the Principal. All four covered classes from time to time.

Support staff: **27** including full-time and part-time, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, classroom and non-classroom.

TOTAL: **42** staff, 26 of whom are Aboriginal and 16 non-Aboriginal.

Teacher Credentials:

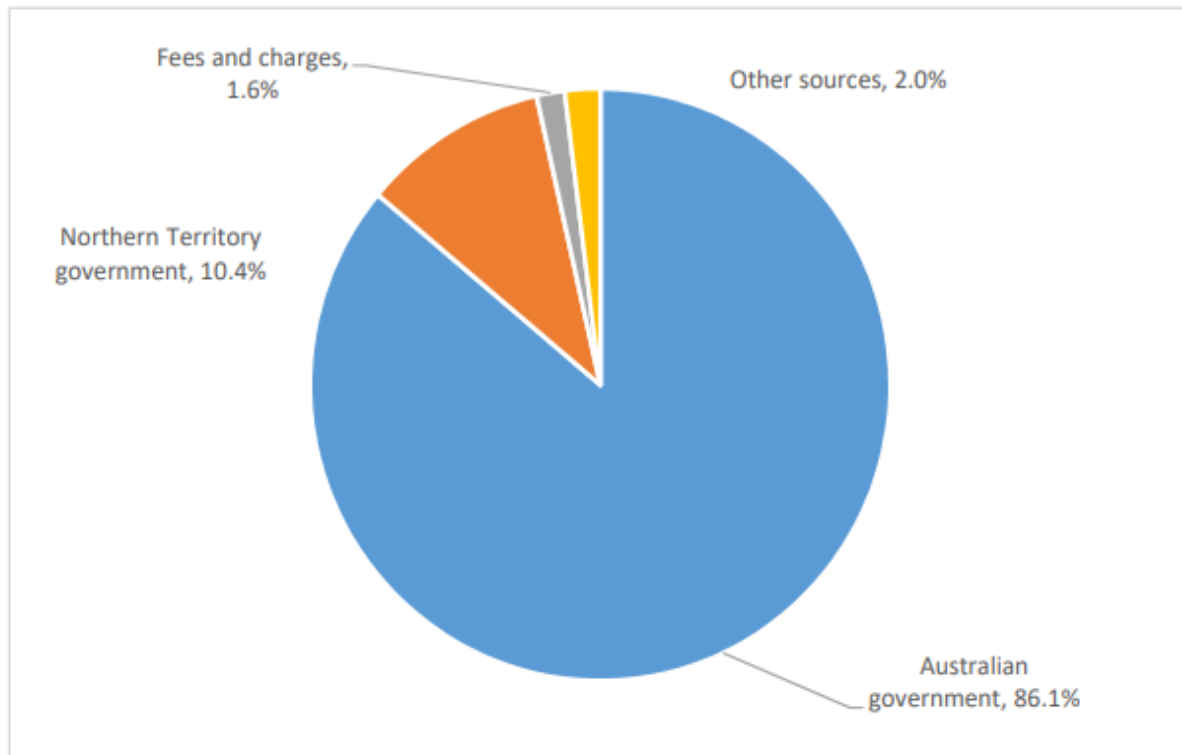
All staff hold a Northern Territory Working with Children or Ochre Card. All teachers have mandatory registration with the NT Teacher Registration Board (TRB).

Masters: 2
 Bachelor: 10
 Diploma: 3

Ltyentye Apurte Catholic School School annual recurrent income 2021

School recurrent income 2021

Source	Amount	Proportion
Australian government	4,026,065	86.1%
Northern Territory government	486,095	10.4%
Fees and charges	72,849	1.6%
Other sources	92,130	2.0%
Total	4,677,139	100.0%



* Note: All figures based on school income (excludes system allocations)

Endorsements:



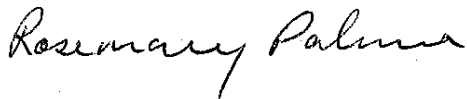
Date: 16 / 05 / 2022

Justin Colley (Principal)



Date: 16 / 05 / 2022

Pamela Brown (Deputy Principal)



Date: 16 / 05 / 2022

Rosemary Palmer (Senior CALT Representative)



Date: 16 / 05 / 2022

Greg O'Mullane (Director CENT)