



DAYLESFORD  
DharmaSchool

Live to be kind. Learn to be wise.



*“When educating the minds of  
our youth, we must not forget  
to educate their hearts.”*

*HH the Dalai Lama*

# ANNUAL REPORT 2019

90 Daylesford-Trentham Road Daylesford

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# WELCOME

*Our vision is to flourish as a school abiding in the view of compassion, interdependence and universal responsibility, nurturing each child's capacity to grow into kind and wise individuals.*

2019 was such a significant and special year for the Dharma School as January saw our staff and parent community give their all to the final moving across from the Perrins St site. Staff then set about unpacking and setting up classrooms and learning areas in 40 degree heat with blustering winds and dust storms, The sheer joy on the children's faces to come into the first day in their new school year and into their new school was truly delightful. Without play equipment in place yet, the children spent their early days at our new home playing with tyres and on haybales- an important reminder that the imagination can find much to feed it without needing an endless array of entertainment items. Throw in a healthy dose of friendship, and play is rich and engaging even in such simplicity. That said, the need to give young bodies equipment to help them develop and things to get their hands deep into is also important, and our staff and parent community did an amazing job of putting in place a new sandpit and reestablishing our playground.

Our new school is a wonderful space and we have enjoyed so much our verandahs and our Bodhi space as places for gathering together as a community and I have loved seeing parents while away hours just enjoying sitting and chatting and looking out across our school and countryside. Moving further out of town, we quickly realised that we would face challenges in our bus travelers getting to the school and that our opportunities to learn within the community became more limited, and so we set about finding firstly a small mini bus for a daily bus run to and from the secondary school, and then larger 22 seater bus so teachers have the freedom to take their classes out and about into our wider community and natural environments.

We also spent time throughout 2019 reflecting upon our teaching and learning and exploring USERS IN ASIA how to enhance our curriculum through increasing authentic and hands-on learning and have since been looking towards the Reggio Emilia view of the child to complement our rich Buddhism inspired approach. We are indeed a very lucky school to have this opportunity to be able to research and experiment and continually grow and evolve in our programs and to have the support of a wonderful community who comes to us with open minds and open hearts and engages with us with thought and consideration as we continue to evolve.

As I write this I am now nearing the end of my third year as Principal of the Dharma School, and I can honestly say that there has not been a day that has passed when I do not feel grateful for the opportunity I have been given to lead and guide and support and learn from our special community. I cannot thank our parents enough for placing your trust in us in the education of your beautiful children, we absolutely adore them and the joy that working at the Dharma School brings to my life is beyond what I imagined possible in many years of working within more structured school systems. I am eternally grateful that I can share this journey with you.

Onward and upward!  
With my loving-kindness,  
Jen

## Chairperson

Arriving home with joyous effort 2019 heralded the Dharma School's arrival at our newhome. Our teachers, staff and students, with support from our parent and volunteer community, began the work of exploring how our education program engaged with our new facilities and grounds. This of course threw up new challenges and needs that required our adaptability and attention. Looking back over the year from a Board member perspective, it is heartening to see how the monumental effort of shifting our school and the naturally arising ripples of impermanence and change, was tempered by our collective Buddhist philosophical perspective. Our school founder Geshe Konchok Tsering advises us to greet impermanence and challenge with the mind training of the 3 powers of joyous Effort:

### Aspiration

Constantly remember the innate good of this project.

The inception of this school arises from a noble aspiration – to benefit the children, the wider community and future generations. So at its very foundation, this project of establishing the school is an altruistic aspiration.

### Stability

Be determined to not be put off by obstacles. Have a determination to not let your noble intentions be turned away or shaken. Be solid and stable in the long term view of this project.

### Rejoicing

Rejoice both when things are progressing well and when things are not going smoothly.

Even when you are experiencing obstacles, continue to rejoice in the positive aspiration of this project.

As a community we were able to see all that arose for us, as merely reality in action to be supported, tempered and stabilised with our kind attention through joyous effort.

### Governance with heart

During 2018 the Board of Governance developed terms of reference for a variety of subcommittees

that could enable active participation of parents and community stakeholders in their membership and support for the school under the guidance of the Board. During 2019 at the governance level, we honed these subcommittees to provide support for our emergent fundraising and grounds development needs.

The Buildings and Grounds sub-committee was convened from a group of enthusiastic and highly skilled parents, to develop a comprehensive landscaping plan within the Master Plan and begin the planting works. This plan was developed as an interface with the teaching and learning program to include active student curriculum involvement.

The Fundraising and Marketing sub-committee absorbed the functions of the Communications & Stakeholder committee and brought together a group of parents with high level professional skills in this area to develop a Strategic Fundraising plan for 2019 to meet our additional fundraising needs. They achieved:

- The Fund a Forest campaign for the Vesak celebration that was shared with our Buddhist and school community and successfully raised money to purchase advanced trees with care packages and other planting stock for the grounds landscaping.
- Our annual Autumn Equinox Fair - a celebration of our children and community. The Blue Lotus group again shared their Vietnamese vegan street food as a major attraction in our delicious celebration. The profits from the Fair enabled us to balance our budget against any unforeseen runoff costs associated with the complex task of moving and building our new school.
- The Dharma Bus Fundraising Dinner - a joint effort of the Quang Minh Temple and the Dharma School community, where more than \$30,000 dollars was raised to buy and maintain 2 mini buses to support our compassionate citizenship curriculum and our bushfire evacuation safety plan.

The Finance and Audit committee met additionally beyond its monthly meeting to closely manage the school relocation budget and support allocation for unexpected financial needs.

# Notes By The Treasurer

## Official launch of the school

A highlight of our year was the celebration of our official school opening on March 22nd with our school founder Geshe Konchok Tsering and the Victorian Senator the Honourable Jane Hume. The Senator spoke warmly and authentically with our children, standing in our Meditation Bodhi Space looking comfortable with the requisite bare feet and blessing scarf that were a part of the occasion. Many past and present parents, teachers and staff joined us to rejoice in the beginning of this new chapter for the school.

## Gratitude to our supporters

We have continued to gratefully develop our partnerships and connections with the wonderfully generous Quang Minh Temple and the supportive Buddhist Council of Victoria in all our fundraising activities.

We continue to acknowledge with thanks the many hours that the members of our various subcommittees dedicate to the school and the support of our parents, carers, volunteers and staff who dedicate their attention to supporting this unique vision of education for our students.

And finally, our new location at the edge of Daylesford with its magnificent country views, had challenged the ability of our students to walk quickly into the township to research and share learning in our community. A

school parent was able to dedicate their machinery and lay the foundations for the bike path to connect our school to the township. This path is to be maintained by the Hepburn Shire council and is the artery that will keep our students mobile and

connected to their community and can be enjoyed by our neighbours and visitors to the area.

On behalf of the Board of Governance, I invite you to connect with our school community through our meditation opportunities, volunteering and eNews sharing. I hope that you will be inspired and involved in our journey as we

cultivate and care-take this beautiful 22 acre school site that is the heart of compassion and wisdom education in

Australia.

## 2019 Board of Governance

Chairperson Andrea Furness  
Vice Chairperson Melissa Ogden  
Treasurer Solomon Li  
Ordinary member Dorje Warren Gibson  
Ordinary member Professor Zane Diamond  
Ordinary member Sevilla Furness-Holland

**Andrea Furness**  
Chairperson  
Board of Governance

In 2018 we finished the year with a final \$5,700 surplus after spending an additional \$368,000, that would otherwise be surplus, on the finalization of construction on our new site. In 2019 we finished the year with approximately the same surplus- \$368,934. As such, we moved into 2020 in a sound financial position. While both donations and fundraising were less in 2019 than in 2018, we were able to reduce spending in 2019 across all areas and reduce staffing costs by 5%.

2020 is proving to be a positive year for the school in both enhancing our school site and also moving forward with increased financial stability, and we have been able to direct funds toward what we are terming the Dharma Beautification project, which includes development of our grounds, gardens and play areas, and repairs and revamping of some of our older buildings.

In our Dharma sense, as a community, we see this as an expression of both love and gratitude for our land, and for this opportunity to inhabit this special space for the teaching of wisdom and compassion. Our audit was again completed by PPT and reflected sound financial accountability with some suggestions for a streamlining of processes that are being adopted. Thank you for the ongoing support of our school as we continue to pave the way in the development of an education inspired by the Dharma.

### INCOME

FUNDRAISING- \$ 59,300.00  
DONATIONS- \$29,000.00 89%  
FEDERAL AND STATE GRANTS- \$970,600.00 (inclusive of VISBGA building grant)  
SCHOOL FEES - \$110,300.00  
SUNDRY- \$12,000.00  
TOTAL INCOME- \$1,181,200.00

### EXPENSES

CURRICULUM EXPENSES- \$12,300.00  
DEPRECIATION- \$94,966.00  
MARKETING AND FUNDRAISING- \$6,100.00  
INSURANCE- \$13,500.00  
GENERAL & ADMIN- \$15,000.00  
WAGES- \$584,300.00  
PROFESSIONAL FEES- \$38,900.00  
PROPERTY BULD AND MAINTENANCE- \$12,500.00  
LOAN INTEREST/LAND-\$34,700.00  
TOTAL EXPENSES- \$812,266.00

**NET AUDITED - \$368,934.00**

With Gratitude,  
**Kim Woodrum**  
TREASURER



# Teachers:

When surveyed, teachers indicated high levels of satisfaction with the following areas of their roles:

- The sense of community in the school
  - The engaged student body
  - The opportunities for professional Dharma development
- Teachers would also like to see more of the following:
- Planning time
  - Simplified planning documents
  - Funds available for classroom resources.

# Parents:

When surveyed, parents indicated high levels of satisfaction with the following areas of their child's schooling:

- Reading, spelling, maths homework
  - Teachers and Leadership openness and engagement
  - Specialist classes- Art, HPE, Chinese
  - Strong sense of community
  - Compassionate Citizenship Program
  - Morning Awareness Program including meditation and Buddhist teachings
  - The Autumn Fair
  - Children's levels of happiness
- Parents would also like to see more of the following:
- STEAM activities
  - Hands-on numeracy
  - Music
  - Indigenous education
  - Structured social connection in playtime
  - Cooking.



# Students

When students were asked what they liked about attending the Dharma School they shared the following:

- That there is no bullying
- The everyone is really friendly
- That they feel very cared for
- The sandpit
- That everyone gets along

Year Level	Year	National Minimum Standard	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar & Punctuation	Numeracy
Yr 3	2019	Above	67%	100%	100%	67%	100%
		At	33%			33%	
Yr 5	2019	Above	100%		100%	100%	
		At		100%			100%
Yr 3	2018	Above	100%	86%	71%	86%	86%
		At			29%		14%
Yr 5	2018	Above	75%	75%	75%	100%	75%
		At	25%	25%	25%		25%
Yr 3	2017	Above	100%	78%	80%	90%	70%
		At		11%			20%
Yr 5	2017	Above	50%	50%	50%	50%	100%
		At	33%	50%	50%	50%	
Yr 3	2016	Above	100%	100%	33%	67%	67%
		At			67%	33%	33%
Yr 5	2016	Above	75%	100%	100%	100%	100%
		At	25%				

During the most recent 2019 NAPLAN testing period our Year 3 and 5 students performed either at or above the National Minimum Standards across all testing areas.

Our results indicated some continued growth in the key learning areas of English and Mathematics. The Year 3 Writing results in particular demonstrated significant growth in comparison to the previous year's data. The introduction in 2017 of Soundwaves as a whole school approach to spelling, and CAFÉ Literacy as our whole school reading structure, has continued to strengthen the consistency of learning embedded through each level of the school.

In Year 3, 67% of students achieved above the National Minimum Standard in Reading and 33% achieved at the National Minimum Standard. 100% achieved above the National Minimum Standard in Writing. In Spelling 100% of students achieved above the National Minimum Standard. In Grammar & Punctuation 67% achieved above the National Minimum Standard and 33% achieved at the National Minimum Standard. In Numeracy 100% achieved above the National Minimum Standard.

In Year 5, 100% of students achieved above the National Minimum Standard in Reading, and in Writing 100% of students achieved at the National Minimum Standard. In Spelling 100% of students achieved above the National Standard Minimum Standard. In Grammar 100% of students achieved above the National Minimum Standard. In Numeracy 100% of students achieved at the National Minimum Standard.

Enrolments by Grade	Male	Female	Total In Grade
Prep	7	8	15
Grade 1	4	5	9
Grade 2	1	4	5
Grade 3	0	4	4
Grade 4	2	5	7
Grade 5	2	0	2
Grade 6	2	3	5

47 is the total students that were enrolled across 2019, including those that exited and enrolled throughout the year.

Attendance is monitored three times daily. All absences, early leavers and latecomers are required to inform the school by phone, email or through Compass. Unexplained absences are followed up by administration via phone, email or text. Attendance rates are reported to parents in the student reports and can be viewed at any time in Compass.

Year Level	Attendance
Prep	89.86%
Grade 1	82.32%
Grade 2	93.62%
Grade 3	90.75%
Grade 4	91.80%
Grade 5	93.50%
Grade 6	85.91%

Jennifer Willis	Principal	Post Grad Dip Ed, MEd, MBA, MAPP
Tanya Wiggins	Learning Manager	Grad Dip Ed (Primary), MEd,
Jaala Freeman	Chaplain	Cert IV Pastoral Care
Rosie Berenyi-Mansell	Office Administrator	Cert IV in Business Management
Anne Fitzgerald	Classroom Teacher	Master of Teaching (Primary)
Karla Popovic	Classroom Teacher	Bachelor of Education
Christina Halvy	Classroom Teacher	Bachelor of Education
Angelique Downing	Classroom Teacher	Bachelor of Education
Annshar Wolfs	LOTE/HPE	Bachelor of Education
Cameron Frost	Arts	Grad Dip Ed
Selena McVeigh	Learning Support	Certificate in Education Support
Neil Jobson	Learning Support	Certificate in Education Support

All teachers employed at the school have the appropriate registration required by the Victorian Institute of Teachers (VIT). Working with Children checks have been obtained for all other non-teaching staff and volunteers working at the school.

Professional development for 2019 included:

- First Aid, CPR
- Specific training, seminars, workshops and events from approved Educational Training Providers in areas including Reggio Emilia, Habits of Mind, Autism.

Type	Gender	ALL STAFF	
		Headcount	FTE
Principal	Female	1	1.0
Teaching Staff	Male	1	0.2
	Female	6	3.2
Specialist Support	Female	2	0.7
Administrative and Clerical	Female	2	1.4
<b>Total</b>		<b>12</b>	<b>6.5</b>

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