

WARRAH



WARRAH SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT, 2004

Warrah School is a registered independent Special School, operated by Warrah Society, an organisation offering services to children and adults with an intellectual disability based on the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner and according to the relevant State and Federal Legislation. The proprietors are the Board of Directors of Warrah Society. The Warrah Board is responsible for the good management and development of the School. The Boards responsibilities include the appointment of the Education Director for the School. The Education Director implements policy in the School under the direction of the Warrah C.E.O. and the Warrah Board. In 2004 Chair of the Warrah Board was Mr. Patrick Tierney; Warrah C.E.O. was Mr. Patrick McDonald and Education Director was Ms. Toni Wright-Turner (nee Russell).

Students 2004

Warrah is a co-educational, non-denominational special school offering educational programs for children with an intellectual disability, from Kindergarten to Year 12. Enrolment is open to all children with an intellectual disability who meet the Commonwealth Guidelines for Disability Funding. All applications will be processed in order of receipt and consideration will be given to the applicant's support for the ethos of the school, and other relevant criteria.

Enrolment procedures at Warrah School have regard to the following:

- All applications should be processed within the school's enrolment policy.
- Consideration of each applicant's supporting statement / interview responses.
- Consideration of each applicant's educational needs. To do this, the school will need to gather information and consult with the parents/family and other relevant persons.
- Identification of any strategies which need to be put into place to accommodate the applicant before a decision regarding the enrolment is made.
- Informing the applicant of the outcome.

In 2004, enrolment at Warrah School fluctuated between 12-16 students. All enrolled students had a diagnosis of intellectual disability or autism across the full assessment range of mild to severe.

There were 4 classes at Warrah in 2004. These were an un-graded Primary class with 3 students, an un-graded Primary-High School Transition Communication class with 3 students, a Junior High School Class with 4-5 students and a Senior High School Class with 4-5 students. The pupil: teacher ratio was approximately 4:1. The average class size was 4 students with one teacher. Each class teacher received assistance from the part-time support, specialist and therapy staff across the teaching week. This Aid and therapist support was applied to class groups as well as individually to address student IEP goals.

Staff 2004

The teaching and support staff at Warrah in 2004 included an Education Director, 4 classroom teachers, a teacher's aide, an Occupational Training student (6 months only), a Remedial (literacy and numeracy) teacher, a Speech and Massage therapist and a Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapist. All have relevant qualifications, training and/or long-term experience which enable them to work effectively in a registered Special School in N.S.W., according to the principles of Steiner Special Education and within the requirements of the NSW Board of Studies. Four of the teaching staff has relevant qualifications in Rudolf Steiner Curative Education, and three Therapy support staff and the O/T student have relevant qualifications in Rudolf Steiner Curative Education and/or relevant therapeutic training. Two of these teaching staff have teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia, one has qualifications as a graduate from a higher education institution within Australia, and two while not having State recognized qualifications as described above, have relevant Steiner training, significant and successful teaching experience and clearly demonstrate that they have appropriate knowledge relevant to the teaching context.

All teachers have been employed due to their expertise and work directly under the supervision of the Education Director. All teachers, therapists and support staff undertake relevant professional development throughout the School year. In 2004 Professional development for staff included renewal of Senior First Aid certification for all staff and

relevant modules presented by the Association for Rudolf Steiner Curative Education and Social Therapy in Australia. Individual staff also attended external workshops and conferences which included the inaugural southern hemisphere Kolisko Conference.

In Term 1 2004, there was a staff development program in the use of augmentative communication technology to address specific behavioural-communication needs of students at Warrah. This was undertaken with Kerry Nelson, an AIS Special Education consultant. While her training and support focused on the needs of a particular student, the methodologies introduced developed staff expertise and these skills have been generalized to meet other student needs especially in the Primary classes.

Learning Programmes and Achievements

The curriculum used at Warrah School is adapted from the curriculum for Rudolf Steiner schools in Australia and relates appropriately to the NSW Board of Studies syllabuses. The curriculum is integrated with literacy, numeracy, communication, creative arts, independent life abilities and physical education integrated throughout all subject areas. Each student has an annual individual educational program (IEP) which is reviewed formally and/or informally each Term with parents and parents receive a written report on their child's progress at least twice annually.

In 2004 students at Warrah made significant progress toward achieving their IEP goals. No Warrah students sat the Basic Skills Tests in literacy and numeracy in 2004, as all students in the eligible age brackets were exempt because of their cognitive levels.

Significant educational achievements by students in 2004 include:

- The successful integration of students into age appropriate lessons at Lorien Novalis, a mainstream K-12 Steiner School. Integration sessions were predominantly in the High School programs in 2004. The Junior High School class participated in the weekly High School Archery Sports Elective. While all of the Warrah students achieved a high level of skill in this sport, individual students excelled, winning the target accuracy award at several sessions in open competition with all students in the elective. Individual high school students from Warrah attended their age equivalent lessons in Drama, languages and technics.
- Students participated in two dramatic productions for the School and wider community across the year, 'St George and the Dragon' and the Christmas Pageant.
- High School students successfully competed in the Music, drama and speech sections of the Burwood and Penrith Eisteddfods in 2004.
- The students participated in a rich cultural enrichment program across the School year, a few of which are pictures below. These events were often shared with the wider School and Warrah community, and included seasonal festivals like the mid-Winter Spiral, Spring Festival with Maypole Dancing, mixed games and sports as well as a variety of artistic performances like the concert by visiting international lyre player John Billing.



The Midwinter Spiral



Maypole Dancing at the Spring Festival



Sack races at the Spring Sports Carnival



International musician John Billing

School Policies

Warrah Society policies are published in a Policy Manual that is regularly reviewed and may be accessed by contacting the School.

Warrah School seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment for students which:

- minimizes risk of harm and ensures students feel secure
- supports the physical, social, academic, spiritual and emotional development of students
- provides student welfare policies and programs that develop a sense of self-worth and foster personal development

Warrah School seeks to achieve this through appropriate policy and procedure which has regard to relevant legislation and requirements in Child Protection, Security, Supervision, Codes of Conduct and communication.

Warrah School recognizes that behaviour in children with disabilities can be a significant language of communication. It is part of our responsibility to strive to understand our students and support each student to develop appropriate communication skills and appropriate behaviour.

Socially negative behaviour which impacts on the emotional or physical welfare of other students must be effectively managed to ensure the continuing safety and well-being of all students in the short-term and addressed with strategies to replace it with constructive behaviour in the long-term. The development of such strategies is achieved in consultation with parents and with external professionals as necessary to develop appropriate positive behaviour support strategies.

Where the school and parents have agreed that the education programs at Warrah are not proving effective for the needs of their child the School's policy is to provide advice and support towards finding a more appropriate placement.

Warrah School recognizes that students, parents and staff members of Warrah School all have the right to make complaints and to have grievances heard. Warrah Society policy for dealing with complaints and grievances includes processes for raising and responding to matters of concern identified by parents and/or students. These processes incorporate, as appropriate, principles of procedural fairness.

The Education Director will investigate all written complaints or grievances and will make a verbal and/or written response as soon as possible.

The Education Director will inform the Warrah CEO, Board of Directors and/or the Chair of the Board of any serious complaints or grievances.

Our grievance policy provides an avenue for staff, students or parents who are not satisfied that Warrah's response to their concern has been adequate or fair.

In 2004 there was a review of fee structure undertaken and the new fee structure, which reflects relevant needs and changes across Primary and High School enrolment was implemented from Term 1, 2005.

Occupational Health and Safety

The Warrah OH&S committee met monthly throughout the year. OH&S inspections were carried out, and issues were efficiently managed by the Warrah Maintenance Officer and monitored through use of a written reporting system.

Buildings and Facilities

In 2004 Warrah School was able to further develop the Primary playground. This was possible due to generous donations from Masonicare and the Year 10 students at Galston High School. These funds provided for a large shade area, the new timber sandpit and the beautiful elevated spiral form cubby house. Maintenance of the buildings and facilities was efficiently managed by the Warrah Maintenance Officer and monitored through use of a written reporting system.

Goals For 2005

In 2005 Warrah School will continue to investigate options for establishing a satellite specialist support class in a mainstream Steiner School where the demand for service and the environment make this viable. This facility could include both current and as well as new students.

Warrah School will undergo re- Registration as a Special School with the Board of Studies in 2005.

Financial Report for 2004

Warrah School is maintained and supported by Warrah Society. Fees charged for each student in 2004 were \$3200 per annum. Warrah is an independent school, and fees are kept as low as possible in recognition of the additional costs to which parents of children with disabilities can be subject. However, the tuition fee is still a significant contribution to the overall budget.

Recurrent funding is received from the Commonwealth and State Governments at the level designated for special schools. Funding for students with disabilities is distributed to Warrah by the Department of Education and Training and through the Association for Independent Schools. Warrah Society also undertakes fund-raising, the major event in 2004 being a major function with the Urban Task Force which provided funds to re-carpet the School hall area and develop a large multi-sensory garden on the main Warrah site which School students will be able to access. There was also a donation from the Kyra Pohl foundation which assisted the refurbishment of the musical bells and installed a flow-form fountain in the sculpture garden in the School playground.

It is noted that expenditure per student is higher than in a regular school because of the high support needs of students which requires small class sizes, a high staff: student ratio, and the employment of therapists and other specialists.

Income and expenditure for the year 2004 is shown in the following graphs.

