

# WARRAH



## WARRAH SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT, 2005

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 Board's 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 2005 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.

In June 2005 Warrah Children's Services ceased to offer residential placement for children, including all 'Boarding' students who required residential support in order to attend the School program. As most students at this time were day pupils and all the students in the residential boarding facility continued as day pupils after June, there has been no immediate impact on School enrolments and viability. The major ongoing change in the School has been in the position of the Education Director, who is now teaching part-time in the Primary classes.

### **Students 2005**

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 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 2005, enrolment at Warrah School fluctuated between 15-17 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 2005. These were an un-graded Primary class with 4 students, an un-graded Primary School 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 2005**

The teaching and support staff at Warrah in 2005 included an Education Director, 3.5 classroom teachers, a teacher's aide, an Occupational Training student, a Remedial (literacy and numeracy) teacher, a Speech and Massage therapist and a Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapist. All teachers have been employed due to their expertise and work directly under the supervision of the Education Director who holds relevant tertiary qualifications and has 30 years experience in Steiner Education. 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. Three of the teaching staff, the three Therapy support staff and the O/T student have relevant qualifications in Rudolf Steiner Curative Education, and relevant therapeutic training. Two teaching staff have teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia, 1 has qualifications as a graduate from a higher education institution within Australia, and 1 while not having State recognized qualifications as described above, has relevant Steiner training, significant and successful teaching experience, clearly demonstrate that they have appropriate knowledge relevant to the teaching context and is undertaking relevant professional development.

Teachers, therapists and support staff undertake relevant professional development throughout the School year. In 2005 Professional development for staff included attendance by individual staff at modules presented by the Association for Rudolf Steiner Curative Education and Social Therapy in Australia as well as attendance at external workshops and conferences.

### **Learning Programs 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 wholistic Steiner education approach creates an 'integrated curriculum' where literacy, numeracy, communication, creative arts, independent life abilities and physical education are woven 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 2005 Warrah School successfully achieved re- Registration as a Special School with the Board of Studies for the maximum registration period of 5 years, from 1 January 2006 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010.

In 2005 students at Warrah made significant progress toward achieving their IEP goals. No Warrah students sat the Basic Skills Tests in literacy and numeracy in 2005, as all students in the eligible age brackets were exempted by parental choice.

Significant educational achievements by students in 2005 include:

- The successful integration of students into age appropriate lessons at Lorien Novalis, a mainstream K-12 Steiner School. Integration sessions were in both the Primary and High School programs in 2005. Primary students attended at least weekly sessions with their age and grade appropriate class at Lorien. The Junior High School class participated with the High School Sports Electives. A senior High School student attended Year 11 Visual Art lessons .
- High School students performed in two major dramatic productions for the School and wider community across the year, 'St George and the Dragon', "The Search for the Hidden King'. All students participated in the Christmas Pageant.
- High School students successfully competed in the Music and Speech sections of the Burwood and Penrith Eisteddfods in 2005.
- The students participated in rich social and cultural programs across the School year. These programs were often shared with our School parents and friends and the Warrah community as well as with the broader local community.

### **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 2005 Warrah School was able to renew a significant proportion of the guttering on the School buildings. The \$7,000 required for this was raised in the major Warrah fundraising by the Urban Taskforce.

Routine 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 2006**

In 2006 Warrah School will again seek to establish an annexed specialist support class in a mainstream Steiner School. This facility would include both current primary enrolments and as well as potential new students who would benefit from an integrated educational setting. The ongoing integration of Warrah students with their individually appropriate classes and activities at Lorien Novalis Steiner School continues to provide a foundation for this program.

Warrah School will continue membership in significant professional disability education bodies, including the National Independent Special Schools Association (NISSA) and the Rudolf Steiner Schools Association in Australia (RSSA). Through this involvement Warrah will continue to strive towards best practice in the education of students with intellectual disability and will continue to support appropriate enrolment for students with disabilities in the Steiner education movement around Australia.

# IMAGES OF WARRAH SCHOOL 2005

## Term 1



*St George and the Dragon*



*Festival Training for Warrah Staff*

## Term 2



*Farewell picnic with the Warrah Community for the Children's Cottage*



*Excursion to the Museum*



*High School Speech and Music students receiving their awards at the Eistedfod*

TERM 3



*Spring planting*



*Junior High Class display at Open Day*

TERM 4



*Flag Pole Opening Ceremony with local State member*



*High School Drama "The Search for the Hidden King"*



*Students are fascinated during the Zoo Mobile visit*



*Families enjoy the Christmas Pageant and End of Year picnic*

## **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, and in consideration of the principles of Rudolf Steiner Curative Education.

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.

## **Financial Report for 2005**

Warrah School is maintained and supported by Warrah Society.

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.

In Term 1, 2005 the planned new fee structure, which differentiates between primary, junior secondary and senior secondary enrolment, was successfully implemented across the School.

Under this, fees for primary students up to 12 years of age, were \$600 per term, for Junior High School students, aged 13-16, \$800 per term and for Senior High School students, aged over 16, \$1,000 per term.

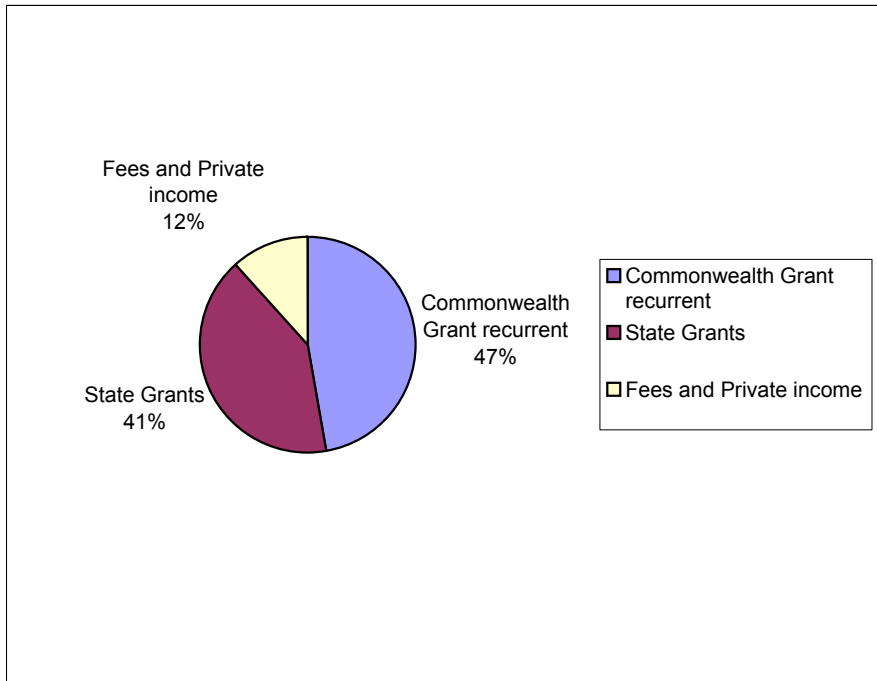
Recurrent funding is received from the Commonwealth and State Governments at the level designated for special schools. Funding for students with disabilities is distributed to Warrah by the Department of Education and Training and through the Association for Independent Schools. Warrah Society also undertakes fund-raising, the major event in 2005 being a function with the Urban Task Force which provided funds to repair roofing and guttering, and repaint the Nordoff-Robbins Hall entrance area.

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

Income and expenditure for the year 2005 is shown in the following graphs.

**Financial Information for Year ended 31st December 2005**  
**School Warrah Rudolf Steiner School of Curative Education**

a) Recurrent /Capital Income Year Ended 31 Dec 2005



b) Recurrent/Capital Expenditure Year Ended 31 Dec 2005

