



2025

Annual Report

FOR THE 2025 SCHOOL YEAR, PRODUCED JUNE 2026



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1.0 CONTEXT

1.1 MESSAGES FROM THE KEY SCHOOL BODIES

Below are the annual messages from the Chair of the Board of Directors, Treasurer, the Principal and the 2025 Chair of College of Teachers.

1.1.1 CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2025 has been a year of continued growth and development for our school community.

At the start of the year, we welcomed a new Principal, Jane Robinson, who brings a wealth of experience in, and dedication to Steiner Education.

Throughout the year, the Board has remained focused on supporting the school's educational vision, strengthening governance, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the organisation.

Among the year's key achievements were the continued delivery of high-quality Steiner education, the strengthening of our school community through family engagement initiatives, and the successful delivery of a range of community events, including our Winter Festival and ever-popular Spring Fair.

With the support of grant funding, the school expanded its solar power system, furthering our commitment to environmental sustainability. This investment has also enabled the installation of new air conditioning systems in many classrooms, improving comfort for students and staff throughout the year. Plans for our new classroom are also well underway.

The school has continued to invest in creating a safe, nurturing and inspiring learning environment for students. We have maintained our focus on attracting and retaining high-quality educators while supporting ongoing professional development to enhance teaching and learning outcomes.

From a governance perspective, the Board has been working with School Management to refresh the Strategic Plan while maintaining oversight of governance and strategic planning processes. The school continues to maintain a strong financial position and is well placed to meet the needs of students, teachers and the wider school community into the future.

I would like to acknowledge and thank our Principal, Jane Robinson, together with our staff, volunteers, families and fellow Board members, for their dedication, expertise and support throughout the year. Their collective contribution continues to make Rainbow Ridge Steiner School a vibrant, resilient and thriving learning community.

As we look ahead, the Board remains committed to supporting the school's strategic priorities and ensuring that Rainbow Ridge Steiner School continues to provide an exceptional educational experience for current and future generations of students.

Tony Kirton
Chairperson (2025)

1.1.2 TREASURER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Firstly, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the Board of Directors, who generously volunteer their time and continue to offer invaluable support. Further, I would like to offer heartfelt gratitude to our staff, students, families and wider community who contribute to the life and warmth of the school, and it is through these shared efforts that our village truly thrives. I would also like to acknowledge the vital support of Noah Nielsen, our Business Administrator, for his ongoing assistance in guiding me through the responsibilities of the Treasurer role, and for his clarity in presenting the financial statements and SBA reports. A special thanks goes to Financial Administrator Ariescia Matheson, as well as to our Principal, Jane Robinson, for their diligent and thoughtful management of the school's finances. I also want to express my appreciation to the College of Teachers representatives who contribute their time and insights at Board meetings—their reports and shared perspectives are deeply valued. Serving as Treasurer on the Rainbow Ridge Steiner School Board continues to be a rewarding and enriching experience. It has offered me a deeper understanding of the careful, considered decision-making that underpins our school community and supports the delivery of a meaningful Steiner education for our staff, students, and families.

Commented [NN1]: I think it would be nice to add a special note to Jane with her first year in the job

I would like to especially acknowledge our Principal, Jane, in her first year in the role. I thank Jane for her leadership, dedication and the care she brings to the life of the school. I also extend our heartfelt thanks to our teachers, whose daily commitment, creativity and patience nurture the children and uphold the spirit of Steiner education within our community.

I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Tony Kirtan for his service as Board Chair throughout 2025, as well as to Nadja McNicol, who served as Secretary, and Nastasja Poullos. While they are no longer members of the Board (as at June 2026), I greatly appreciate their valuable contributions, dedication, and ongoing support of the Rainbow Ridge Steiner Community.

As at the end of 2025, the school recorded a profit of \$218,913, representing an increase from the 2024 profit which was \$85,571. The school and enrolments remain in a strong financial position with 110 enrolments and 98 funded. Total current assets stand at \$1,653,477 with total assets amounting to \$3,408,210. Current liabilities total \$330,851, while total liabilities, including non-current liabilities, are \$375,136. The school's total equity is valued at \$3,033,074. This includes retained earnings of \$2,972,960.

Ongoing, it is important that the school continues to balance rising costs, including inflation, while working towards the priorities outlined in the Master Plan and Strategic Plan. These are living documents that continue to evolve alongside the school, reflecting the growth of our community and the unfolding vision for its future.

As I conclude my final Treasurer's Report, I would like to acknowledge the dedication and care of everyone who contributes to the financial wellbeing of our school. It has been a privilege to serve the Board in this role. Together, we continue to hold the school in trust for future generations, ensuring it remains a place where children, families and educators can flourish within the spirit of Steiner education.

Yours Sincerely,
Naomi Mills, Treasurer

1.1.3 PRINCIPAL

Across the whole school, the students are happy, healthy and working well.

We can relish in the past students' achievements; we congratulated some of our graduates on gaining some of the highest ATAR scores across the state in 2025. Other past students became school captains for 2026, and some of our graduates won full scholarships to the conservatorium of music in Lismore and then performed last week at the art gallery for an opening.

New programs:

We have a few new teachers, and therefore teacher training has been high on my agenda. Understanding all the terms we regularly use when observing child development and working within the Steiner curriculum. Our Set up week program has become a great rhythm with our study for the first 2 days. This unifies our staff and brings depth to our work in every area. All class teachers enjoyed the Newcastle Teacher intensives, this is a week-long wonderful experience with teachers from across the country and beyond, lecturers from Australian schools and overseas, sharing insights and deepening our practices. Our teachers stay together to encourage strong social bonds that help with team spirit over the year.

Facilities...

With the solar upgrade we received split systems in all rooms. This has been extraordinary in positively changing the learning environment for our students. The hall had two huge fans installed which helps keep the mould out of the building.

The building plans are still in process, awaiting the final go ahead... Noah is extremely patient! And we are slowly getting closer to finding a builder.

Strategic direction:

What have we done:

Last year was a focus on increasing our enrolment numbers, we did get quite low, and are now in a much better position, with an aim to increase by another 15 students. Marketing is an area that I spent time on last year and need to bring back into my focus now. Our Strategic plan is out of date, and Rosalie and I held a weekend workshop on re-envisioning our Vision statement, this day gave us a lot of words and ideas to begin with.... We have set the date for the next meeting, which will be a more artistic focus in 2026. Once we have a clear statement with our values, we will create ways to instill these values across the school.... And then we can begin to rework our strategic plan. The Child Safety Standards, and creating the statement for RR, thanks Catherine for all of her work making it so very easy to digest. The Newsletter, twice a term a snapshot across the school of what is happening, thanks to Nicola for creating such great publications.

What is the next focus:

The Website, we are in the process of rewriting all the content, with a freshening up of the images, have been collecting photos all year, and a plan to revamp the layout. Furthering teachers deepening of the understanding of child development and how that aligns with the curriculum. Gaining and continuing a movement program, eurythmy, bothmer gymnastics and sports. The Cultural program, Connection to Country, language and culture...Student well-being, restorative practice and changing the behaviour policy to suit restorative language. We will work towards exhibiting art works in the season shows in Nimbin.

And finally, a HUGE thanks, to everyone... The parent body, entrusting your dear children to us, the parent group for their work on SFOD, The wonderful board of Directors, volunteering so much of their time to the organisational structure of our school, all of the teaching staff who always give so much of themselves

and admin staff, Noah for all of your encouraging support and everyone that keeps our school running in such a cohesive, friendly and healthy way.

Jane Robinson
Principal

1.1.4 CHAIR OF COLLEGE OF TEACHERS

At Rainbow Ridge we currently have nine teachers that meet every week that form our College of Teachers. Lauren Mitchell and Rosalie Shearer (Kindy), Aurelie Billot (Class 1/2), Sari Lokollo (Class 3), Lishia O'Reilly (Class 4), Michelle McDonald (Class 5/6), Tashi Lhamo (Class 7/8), Simone Weihermann (Student and Staff Support / Art Therapist), Jane Robinson (Principal).

The College of Teachers serves as the collaborative and spiritual “heart” of our school. Our regular meetings are not just for administrative logistics but serve as a forum for ongoing mentoring and professional development. This year a new initiative has been birthed on a Monday afternoon where the teachers are able to meet, study, deepen their practice and Steiner understandings through the LIFE (Living Inspired Foundations for Education) course. Every Setup week there is also a valuable opportunity for teaching staff to study Steiner texts together and practice observation skills and insights through nature studies.

This year the College of Teachers has spent time looking at the way we teach and share First Nations and Torres Strait Islander Cultures and History. We are currently in the process of writing a Statement of Reconciliation that will be finalised this year after seeking input from our First Nations Families within our school community.

The College of Teachers is grateful for the ongoing support and time the Board dedicates to our wonderful school here at Rainbow Ridge. We acknowledge the energy and commitment that Board members contribute, and we look forward to welcoming new members as our school continues to grow and evolve.

Thank you,

Rosalie Shearer
Chair of the College of Teachers

1.2 SCHOOL CONTEXT

1.2.1 HISTORY AND SCHOOL VISION

Rainbow Ridge School for Steiner Education is one of approximately 900 Steiner schools in more than fifty countries and was first registered in 1996. It was founded by an enthusiastic parent group with the inspirational backing of Alan and Susan Whitehead.

The School's vision statement reflects our aims:

*We offer a universal education in balance and harmony with the environment,
embracing Rudolf Steiner's deep understanding of child development.
We inspire life-long learning to meet the changing needs of time.*

Rainbow Ridge School grew from the good will of the community, parents and teachers to create the beautiful sustainably designed timber buildings blending into the sub-tropical landscape setting. The School’s property is bordered by forest at the edge of the Wollumbin caldera.

The School is situated 10 km from Nimbin, 43km from Lismore and 25km from Kyogle, occupying 2.5 hectares of bushland at Lillian Rock in Northern NSW. There is a balance of forest, playgrounds and school gardens. Environmental awareness is extended to the buildings, which also includes stand-alone solar power and composting toilets.

The most recent Certificate of Registration for Kindergarten to year 8 was approved in 2023 for the maximum five-year period. The School is not for profit limited by guarantee company registered with ASIC and ACNC.

In summary, the objectives of the School, as set out in the School vision statement are:

- To provide children with a Steiner Education
- To provide a healthy and inspirational school environment
- To recognise the soul-spiritual foundations in all areas of the school
- To provide the community with insight, clarity and ways of exploring Steiner education and anthroposophy
- To maintain a sustainable independent school
- To facilitate healthy community relationships

The School’s College of Teachers, Board of Directors, Executive and the Parent Group endeavor to work together with the students and parents in constructive and co-operative ways to create a positive, fruitful social environment to achieve harmony and to develop everybody’s best potential.

This Annual Report to NESA and the school and wider community (via our website) provides reliable and objective information about the 2025 school year.

1.2.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDENT BODY

In 2025 we had a total student population of 87 (funded) students, 56% were female and 6% were Indigenous.

Class	Total students	Female	Male
Kindy 2	10	6	4
Class 1	8	3	5
Class 2	17	9	8
Class 3	13	8	5
Class 4	10	6	4
Class 5	13	6	7
Class 6	12	8	4
Class 7	1	1	-

Whole school	84	47	37
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1.3 SCHOOL DETERMINED PRIORITY AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Teaching and learning

We are continuing our effort to establish Middle School (class 7/8) and make it attractive for all students to choose the path of staying longer at Rainbow Ridge which will support them better to transition into other High Schools.

Curriculum development is in line with NESA requirements and the National Steiner Curriculum is overseen by the Lead Teachers and the Principal. To ensure quality of education we have established different ways of supporting teachers in their progress and reviewing teaching practices. Teacher educational opportunities are provided which has proven to be a great support in this process.

We intend to progress the teaching and learning goals of commitment to Steiner Education, by deepening the understanding of the relationship between Child Development and the Curriculum. We also continue to mentor teachers to enable them to bring Life Movement (Eurythmy) and Art to their classes.

Improvement in Communication is always worked on. In meetings with parents, we will have either the principal or the School Support person present.

We continue working on effective Student Assessment, Teacher Professional Development, Learning Support and Student Attendance.

The school's Educational Programs include Professional Development, Health and Physical Education, Library, School Environmental Sustainability, Gardening and Building, Languages and their associated Cultural aspects, Indigenous programs, Music and Strings program with the school ensemble. Some of these programs need to be brought to life again because of loss of staff.

Disability: Deeper work for understanding the growing number of students with additional needs and being able to use appropriate strategies to integrate them and to support them to reach their highest potential. We have employed many specialists including doctors, psychologists and naturopaths to observe the students and teachers, and provide strategies that teachers can utilize.

Aboriginal education: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives taught in English, History and Geography and in Science. All classes speak an acknowledgment of country every morning. We have visiting elders telling stories and importance of connection to country.

Mentoring new assisting and teaching staff members to deliver quality Steiner Education. One of our assistants is studying a support course to develop their understanding and ability to support children with additional needs. They share their insights with the other assistants.

Summary of 2025 Priorities for Management, Facilities and Community

Management Priorities	
Strategic and Master Plan	Strategic and Master Plans continue to guide future infrastructure planning. Our vision statement is currently being re enlivened, which will lead to an updated strategic plan.

School website development	Keeping the website updated. A work in progress, rewriting all elements to update our website.
Foster staff morale, health and wellbeing	Aim for more inclusion and clarity of communications, like set up week all staff study, brings harmony and deeper connection with all staff. College meetings, all-staff meetings and Learning Support Meetings. Work on a wellbeing program for all staff.
Facilities Priorities	
Develop additional classroom	Refine designs go seek tenders for additional classrooms for the Middle School
Continue the playground	Build addition swings and playground facilities
Community Priorities	
Engage parents in the school activities and education	Facilitate parent group with enthusiasm to revive social school life. Encourage parents to come to see guest speaker talks.
Promote school's strengths to the wider community	Newspaper articles will continue, and the school website will also achieve this. Flyers created and posted around local towns to attract enrolments.

1.4 INITIATIVES PROMOTING RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY

Rainbow Ridge School is committed to Steiner Education and acknowledges the soul and spiritual aspect of every student. Every student is seen as an individual and the teachers ask them questions about every child where they have come from, who they are and what gift each of them brings into the world. This deep respect is reflected in the children. Our class teachers are together with their students all through Primary and build a stable relationship of trust and respect.

The adults around the students are very aware about their behaviour as role models and teachers treat their students according to their age and development. This influences the behaviour of the students in positive ways, they feel understood and seen for who they are.

Class based activities promote respect and responsibilities in many ways. Building a class cohort through experiences of working together in music, movement, drama plays and supporting each other. The many cultural stories and celebrations foster respect for each other, diversity, and a responsibility to protect and support other people as well as animals and the environment.

Through restorative Practice work students learn to step into somebody else's shoes and understand differences, how somebody feels and learn when they have acted with disrespect and irresponsibility.

The school has vertical learning experiences in the program where students work together with different age groups. The older students take on special responsibilities in the school. They are buddies to the class one student and some of them take on different roles, like being a bus monitor, as a Middle School representative, and leading assemblies.

Active participation in daily chores, preparing spaces for festivals, serving food at celebrations is another avenue to enhance the student's ability to become a responsible person in the community.

The School's Social Behaviour Policy outlines the expected standards of behaviour acting in a respectful and responsible manner.

2.0 STUDENT OUTCOMES IN STANDARDISED NATIONAL LITERACY AND NUMERACY TESTING

In 2025 we had a very limited number of students participating in NAPLAN exams. See <https://www.myschool.edu.au/school/43810/naplan/results> for more information.

2.1 SENIOR SECONDARY OUTCOMES

Rainbow Ridge Steiner School is registered and not accredited therefore we do not provide RoSA (Record of School Achievement) statements to our students.

3.0 STAFFING

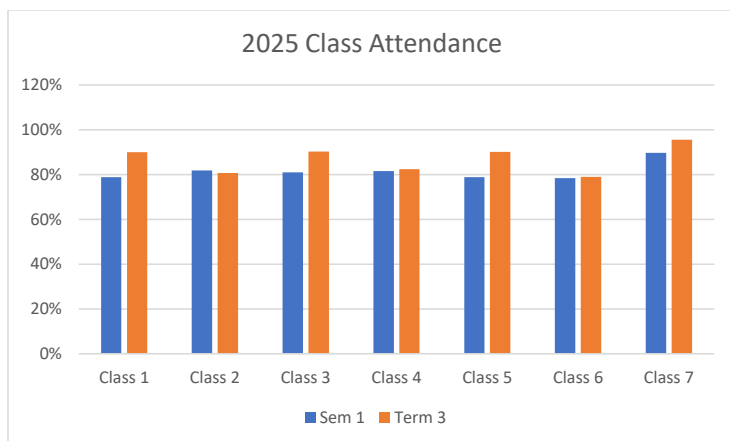
3.1 TEACHER ACCREDITATION AND WORKFORCE COMPOSITION

Our class teachers have conditional, provisional and proficient accreditation and have teacher qualification from a higher education institution within Australia. In 2024, Rainbow Ridge Steiner School employed a team of around 11 teachers plus 1 principal (8.4 FTE) and a non-teaching staff team of 15 members with a 6.2 FTE. In 2025 we had no Indigenous staff.

LEVELS OF ACCREDITATION	NUMBER OF TEACHERS
Conditional	1
Provisional	3
Proficient teacher	8
Highly accomplished teacher (voluntary accreditation)	-
Lead teacher (voluntary accreditation)	-

4.0 STUDENT ATTENDANCE

In 2025, average student attendance was 84%, this was an increase from 81% in 2024. Across the school Term 3 had an equal or higher attendance than Semester 1.



4.1 HOW WE MANAGE STUDENT NON-ATTENDANCE

Rainbow Ridge School has a responsibility to monitor the daily attendance of all students at the school and a legal responsibility to record student attendance, including reasons for student absence.

Teachers use class roll books to register student attendance, absences, and reasons for absence. Roll book records are a daily responsibility of the class teacher.

Parents are expected to inform the school of their child's absence on the day of or before the absence, by phone, by email or by coming into the office with the information.

The Office Staff documents the student absences in 2 documents, one for daily absences cross checked with the roll books and one for a weekly absence list which is used for the documentation into School-Pro and for reporting.

The Office Staff follows up any unexplained absences. The Class Teachers and/or the Principal meet with parents of students who have identified with more than usual absences and may need to make a reintegration plan for the student.

Poor Attendance Record (excerpt from school policy on non-attendance a) If a student is absent for three or more consecutive school days, and the parent(s)/guardian(s) have been unable or unwilling to provide a satisfactory reason, the clerical officer or the Principal contacts the parent(s)/guardian(s) to:

- (1) Outline the School's and the parent's responsibility in relation to attendance and attach a copy or give website of the document 'Compulsory School Attendance – Information for Parents', published by the NSW Department of Education and Communities, and available on the website of the NSW Association of Independent Schools.
- (2) Outline the support the School can offer to assist the family in relation to attendance. Such support may include an appointment with the School Support Facilitator.
- (3) Invite the parent(s)/guardian(s) to a meeting with the class teacher and Principal, to discuss ways to resolve the situation.

Student absence due to pre-arranged family, cultural or religious reasons are notified in writing by the parent or guardian to the School, including the reason for absence and the dates of the absence. The Principal is informed of any leave application and the Principal decides if the leave will be granted.

If a student is withdrawn from the School, notice of the destination school and address must be given to the office using the student enrolment withdrawal form, which needs to be approved by the Principal. The Principal endeavors to meet with the parents for an exit interview. If a student was withdrawn from the school without a destination the Principal reports to the NSW Department of Education attendance@det.nsw.edu.

5.0 SCHOOL POLICIES

Rainbow Ridge School has policies relating to student welfare, anti-bullying, discipline and complaints handling procedures. All of these policies are available in full on the school's website and directly from the school. See the summary of these policies below.

1. **Student welfare and Safe and Supportive Environment Policy:** This outlines steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students in terms of supervision (links to Child Protection Policy), the appropriate use of grounds, buildings and facilities, evacuation procedures, and risk management procedures. The school also has a Pastoral Care Policy which guides the provision of students with access to appropriate pastoral care arrangements. Teachers can counsel children to the best of their ability on site, in conjunction with the parents. In addition, Rainbow Ridge School employs a School Support Person who can be accessed by students, parents, and staff.
2. **Anti-bullying Policy:** The school policy provides the process for prevention of bullying activities and the creation of a safe and supportive environment. Students are taught to recognise, report and participate in the school's social behaviour procedures. The policy sets clear guidelines for the identification and intervention strategies as well as follow-up and monitoring after incidents are reported.
3. **Student Discipline and Procedural Fairness Policy:** Rainbow Ridge Steiner School prohibits the use of corporal punishment as part of the school's discipline policy by both staff and non-school persons (eg parents) on behalf of the school. When dealing with matters of discipline the school follows processes to ensure procedural fairness with clear identification of concerns to both students and parents/caregivers.
4. **Complaints Handling Policy:** We acknowledge that a member of staff, a student, a parent or a member of the wider community can sometimes feel aggrieved about something that is happening at the school which appears unsatisfactory, or unreasonable. Complaints about any policy or procedure, decision, behaviour, act or omission (whether by the principal, member of staff or student) that is deemed to be unsatisfactory or unreasonable may be made using this policy and procedure. Procedure fairness guides the resolution processes of resolving complaints and grievances.
5. **School enrolment Policy:** Rainbow Ridge School for Steiner Education aims to embrace children and their families irrespective of gender, age, religion, ethnicity, sexual preference and marital status and integrate them into our school community. The School endeavours to provide children with age-appropriate learning experiences as well as an environment that serves the freedom of the human spirit by emphasizing the balanced and disciplined education of the child as a whole being.

Copies of all these policies are available on the school's website. <https://www.rainbowridge.nsw.edu.au/>

Live links to each of these policies

- [Enrolment policy](#)
- [Child protection policy](#)
- [Anti-bullying policy](#)
- [Discipline policy](#)
- [Complaints policy](#)
- [Annual report](#)

6.0 PARENT, STUDENT AND TEACHER SATISFACTION

6.1 PARENTS

Families continue to love the celebration of festivals, the performances of music and drama.

Some parents used to express concerns about the lack of Learning Support. Teachers are constantly improving their knowledge and understanding of special needs areas. We have experts coming in to observe teachers with their classes and give feedback on special needs of students and how better we can support them.

Parents value being informed about any incidents or accidents that occurred at school and the follow-up the school is doing.

Communication with parents is staying a strong priority in cases of accidents or incidents at school being documented and communicated straight away. Teachers communicate through emails with parents encouraging their voicing of concerns and addressing these promptly.

6.2 STUDENTS

In Kindergarten and Primary School Students are monitored for satisfaction through teaching practices integral to Steiner schooling generally and Rainbow Ridge specifically. Teachers evaluate lessons and complete daily reflections on their teaching practice. Assessments and observations of students include the teacher's gauge of student satisfaction to ensure that any dissatisfaction issues can be cleared up while minor.

In their PDHPE classes the students are encouraged to talk about experiences where they felt uncomfortable as well as sharing situations where they were able to assert themselves and deal with difficult situations. Restorative practice is held for the students to share openly their thoughts and feelings.

Teachers give ample feedback to the students and encourage them for self-reflections and respectful peer feedback.

Talking with teachers, assistants and sometimes non-teaching staff, they talk about mostly happy children being involved in healthy play and engaging enthusiastically in the learning provided for them.

In a small school like ours everybody knows each other, and a positive atmosphere prevails.

6.3 TEACHER AND NON-TEACHING STAFF

The principal meets with all teaching staff and observes classes, discusses documentation and supports them with challenges they may face. Non-teaching staff speak openly with the School Business Administrator about their well-being and how their position is going. Our staff are happy to speak with each other and work well as a team.

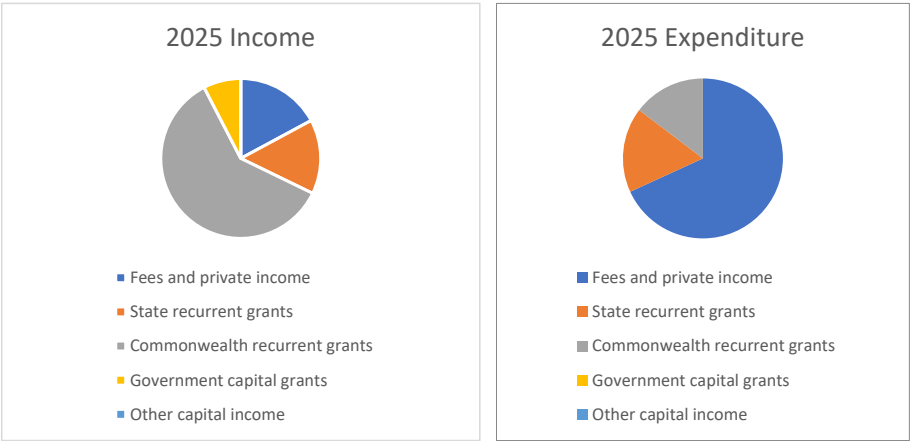
7.0 SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The school, in 2025, generated an income of \$2.37 m of which almost \$1.79 m was government grants, \$406,857 was generated through private fees. Expenditure came in at \$2.16 m with salaries and related expenses being just over \$1.72 m. Capital expenditure for the year was just over \$370,334. See the table below for more information.

2025 Financial summary

Income	Dollars
Fees and private income	406,857
State recurrent grants	357,496
Commonwealth recurrent grants	1,429,984
Government capital grants	180,000
Other capital income	0
Expenditure	
Salaries and related expenses	1,721,723
Non-salary expenses	345,593
Capital expenditure	370,334

The two graphs below show recurrent/capital income and expenditure for the 2025 calendar year.



8.0 PUBLICATION REQUIREMENTS

This report is to be provided to NESAs before the 30th of June and is also available on the school's website ([Rainbow Ridge School for Steiner Education](#)). Electronic and hard copies of this report are available to our school community upon request to the School Business Administrator.