



**BIALA SPECIAL  
SCHOOL  
ANNUAL REPORT**

**2007**

## **Biala Special School**

### **"Our School at a Glance"**

Biala Special School is an independent non-fee paying school for students with moderate to severe intellectual and physical disabilities or have been diagnosed with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

Biala Special School has been a major service provider for students with special needs on the Far North Coast since it was established in 1969. The school aims to offer specialised support to students with disabilities in order to enhance their educational experience.

The school is situated in Ballina and provides a comprehensive curriculum and a range of specialist services for students from Pre – Kindergarten (4 years of age) through to school exit into the Post School Options Program. The student population is drawn from the Brunswick Heads/Mullumbimby, Byron Bay, Lismore, Alstonville, Woodburn, Evans Head and Ballina areas.

Specialist teaching staff, therapists and support personnel combines to offer a wide range of programs which are specifically developed to suit the needs of the individual student. It is the aim of these programs to maximise the potential of the individual recognising that all students have a varied capacity for learning but all have a capacity to develop within a pleasant, supportive, caring and friendly environment. When developing Individual Educational Programs close liaison with parent/carers and the school support team ensure the optimal individual curriculum for each student.

Biala Special School offers a unique learning environment based on the NSW Board of Studies K-10 Syllabuses, extra-curricular activities and individual programmes that best suit the student. The learning has been divided into individual Sensory and exercise programmes, Language and communication and functional Life Skills based from the Years 7-10 Curriculum. Included is Riding for the Disabled, Swimming activities, Hydrotherapy, Bowling, Library visits, Community Access, shopping and cooking lessons. Finally, all Post School Options are explored by the school staff, the student and their parents/carers to help make the transition from school to work as supportive as possible. This includes a Work experience and work skills program for final year students.

### **Principal's Message**

Biala Special School has grown from strength to strength during the 2007 school year. We have grown in enrolment numbers and received constant support from our volunteers. This report focuses on our achievements as well as providing direction for the year ahead.

At the end of 2007 we were fortunate to acquire a Small Equipments Grant from the AIS which has significantly enhanced learning throughout the school. Supplying additional air conditioners, new computers with broadband access and printers in the Communication and Life Skills Rooms, an Interactive Whiteboard and lap-top, new chairs and tables, new classroom play equipment and School resources.

I certify that the information in this report is the result of a rigorous school self-evaluation process and is a balanced and genuine account of the school's achievements and areas of development.

**Bhavni Stewart**

### **BIALA SUPPORT SERVICES INC MANAGER'S MESSAGE**

The efforts of the Board of Management of Biala Support Services Inc during 2007 are notable for the significant contributions that are made toward the overall successful operation of the school.

The Management and Board of Biala Support Services Inc work diligently to support the school in every aspect. The Board meets monthly to review and oversee the complete operations of the school and believe that 2007 saw significant improvements across the school which included increases in staffing, student enrolments, parent participation and community involvement.

Congratulations must go to the Principal, Bhavni Stewart and the team of dedicated teachers and support staff who strive to provide the best in education to the special needs students that attend our school.

**Wendylee Playford  
(Manager)**

## FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE MESSAGE

Biala's fundraising committee is called The Friends of Biala, which is made up from members of the Board of Management, parents and school staff members. Throughout 2007, Biala Special School participated in a range of fundraising directed towards the school.

These included, the 2LM Children's Christmas Appeal which incorporated the annual school Garage sale, Donation Collections at various community events, a Night at the Greyhounds, Theatre Night at the local Players Theatre, selling of raffle tickets at Farmer Charlies in Ballina and Lismore, A Christmas raffle and the continued collection of Norco's Collect-a-cap.

The Friends of Biala would like to thank the school community, the Biala Support Services Inc Board of Management and the local community and businesses for the continued support and financial assistance we have received over the year.

**Carol Milne**  
(School Fundraising Officer)

## INITIATIVES PROMOTING RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY

Biala Special School has always taken initiative in promoting respectful behaviour in the school and outside of school. We have high expectations on our students to behave appropriately and show responsibility for their own actions.

We teach social skills in specific class-based activities from the earliest years, which focus on Co-operation, Respect, Listening and Generosity, to name a few. Our senior students participate in Community access programs which reinforce respect and responsibility in the broader society.

A review of our teaching of values in the school was undertaken during 2007 with the implementation of Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) strategies for the whole school with a review of the school rules, student expectations and consequences of their behaviours. This has been a whole school initiative with positive results in student behaviour and staff support.

## SCHOOL CONTEXT

### Student information

It is a requirement that the reporting of information for all students must be consistent with privacy and personal information policies.

### Enrolments

We have 16 students enrolled with children in Kindergarten, Years 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and Year 10, encompassing ages from 5 years to 18 years of age.

| Year:             | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
|-------------------|------|------|------|
| Students Numbers: | 9    | 13   | 16   |

Biala Special School is registered Under Part 7 of the Education Act, 1990 as a School for Students with Special Needs. Students remain at school until the age of 18 years or beyond. The trend is that students remain enrolled at Biala Special School until they are eligible to enter the Post Schools Options Program in either Transition to Work or Community Participation.

We currently have 7 students in high school and 9 students in primary school all attending full time. Our student attendance has been good throughout the year with some absence due to illness and poor health in a number of our students owing to their disability. We have one student who is currently in his final year of school.

### Classrooms Structure

We have structured the classrooms around the K-6 Syllabus in one room with focus on Early Stage 1 outcomes and the Years 7-10 Life Skills Syllabus in the other room. Some students from each room access the Sensory Room with focus on their individual Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and Speech Pathology programs.

### Programs

Each classroom's programs have been created to best suit the needs and abilities of each student as determined by their Individual Education Program and is constantly revised by the Teachers with opportunities for review by all staff at our regular

staff meetings and parents at the twice yearly parent/teacher interviews. Each staff member uses the combination of Boardmaker Visual aids and sign language to help communication with each student throughout the school.

The School's weekly program remained stable throughout the year with regular Shopping, Cooking, Riding for the Disabled, Bowling, Swimming, Hydrotherapy, Library Visits, Community Access and Work Experience for the older students.

**Staffing**

**TEACHER STANDARDS**

In 2007, the number of teachers in each category is reported below as:

| <b>Category</b>   | <b>Teacher Numbers – Full Time &amp; Part Time</b> |
|---|--|
| Teachers who have teaching qualifications from a high education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) guidelines, or                  | 4  |
| Teachers who have teaching qualifications as a graduate from a higher education institution within Australia or one recognised within the AEI-NOOSR guidelines but lack formal teacher education qualifications, or | 0  |
| Teachers who do not have qualifications as described in (a) and (b) but have relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate knowledge relevant to the teaching context.                                     | 0  |

Due to our increase in student enrolments during the year, we were able to maintain employment of two fulltime Teachers. This allows us to program one-on-one intensive teaching every day with every student in the school. This is part of our unique quality to cater for the individual needs of each student. At the end of the year, one Teacher resigned resulting in the beginning of the 2008

school year with three Teachers job sharing the two full-time positions.

Our Teaching staff consists of:

| <b>Position</b>                | <b>Number</b> |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Teaching Principal             | 1             |
| Classroom Teachers (part-time) | 3             |
| Teachers Aides (full-time)     | 2             |
| Teachers Aides (part-time)     | 2             |
| Administration (part-time)     | 1             |

**Professional Learning**

In 2007 Biala's teaching and support staff all participated in a variety of staff development days programmed for the first day of each school term. The professional learning opportunities developed on these days included Managing Challenging Behaviours, Occupational Health and Safety, Literacy and Numeracy and Assessment and Reporting.

The Principal attended the Australian Association of Special Education (AASE) Conference in Sydney which was an inspiring conference with great networking opportunities.

These targets were achieved through the services of Consultants and visiting therapists, providing further knowledge, tutoring and resources in areas relevant to the Key Learning Areas. These initiatives improved teacher effectiveness and classroom learning environments and have shown an improvement in teaching strategies and staff confidence and skills. This has resulted in improved educational outcomes for all students and enabled better access to communication, information and knowledge of the Key Learning Areas.

**Staff Attendance**

Our teacher attendance and retention rate has been good throughout 2007, with minimal sick leave or any other leave entitlement taken. The school experienced another change in Teaching Principal in 2007 and were able to retain all other staff from the previous year.

**Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction**

In 2007 the school sought the opinions of parents, carers and staff about the school through various communication means. These were attained through

regular parent/teacher interviews, staff meetings and parent and staff evaluations including a send-home survey.

We have received good feedback and satisfaction from the parents, carers, students and teachers about the changes and the new direction of the school. 12.5% of parents responded to the parent/carer school evaluation survey and all staff participated in the staff school evaluation survey and through one-to-one feedback interviews.

The data collected from these sources has been used to guide our directions in 2008 and beyond.

## **SCHOOL PERFORMANCE IN STATEWIDE TESTS**

In 2007 students of Biala Special School did not participate in any form of external testing due to the nature of their disabilities.

### **Literacy & Numeracy Assessments in Years 3, 5, 7 & 9**

#### **BST and PWA**

In 2007, none of our students sat for the Basic Skills Test (BST) and Primary Writing Assessment (PWA).

#### **LANNA, ELLA and SNAP**

In 2007, none of our students sat for the LANNA ELLA and SNAP test.

Each student has an individual education program and is assessed against curriculum outcomes in Stages ES1, 1 and 2 and against the Life Skills outcomes in Stages 4 and 5.

## **GUIDELINES and PROCEDURES**

During August 2004, Biala Special School met all requirements of the Education Act 1990 (NSW) to be registered as follows:

Under Part 7 of the Education Act, 1990 as a School for Students with Special Needs from 1 January 2005 to 31 December 2009 and Under Part 7 of the Education Act, 1990 for Kindergarten to Year 10 from 1 Jan 2005 to 31 December 2009.

As part of this Registration process all Guidelines, Procedures and Policies were reviewed, developed and implemented. These are reviewed by the Board of Management of Biala Support Services Inc. each year.

All Guidelines, Procedures and Policies are available to parents on request and are displayed in a booklet form in the entry foyer of the school.

## **ENROLMENT POLICIES & PROFILES**

### **Enrolment Procedures and Guidelines**

**Purpose:** To establish the procedure that is to be used when enrolling a student at Biala Special School

**Year:** 2007

Biala Special School is an independent non-fee paying school providing services for students who are intellectually/physically challenged or have been diagnosed as having an Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

The school is situated in Ballina and provides a comprehensive curriculum and a range of specialist services for students from Pre – Kindergarten (4 years of age) through to school exit into the Post School Options Program. The student population is drawn from the Brunswick Heads/Mullumbimby, Byron Bay, Lismore, Alstonville, Woodburn, Evans Head and Ballina areas.

Specialist teaching staff, therapists and support personnel combines to offer a wide range of programs which are specifically developed to suit the needs of the individual student. It is the aim of these programs to maximise the potential of the individual recognising that all students have a varied capacity for learning but a similar capacity to develop within a pleasant, supportive and friendly environment. When developing Individual Educational Programs close liaison with parent/carers and the school support team ensure the optimal individual curriculum for each student.

In the education of students with special needs, the criteria used to ascertain the eligibility for services and resources is dependent on a variety of factors. To be deemed eligible for enrolment, the following requirements are mandatory:

- The student must have an intellectual disability, autism, or a multiple disability/impairment that satisfies the stated requirement of NSW Department of Education and Training funding, AND
- The student must have been formally assessed as having the disability/ impairment by a person with relevant qualifications such as psychologists AND medical practitioners/specialists. The specialist's qualifications must be relevant to the particular disability/impairment being assessed.

#### **Aims:**

- To ensure that correct procedures are followed when enrolling a new student at Biala Special School.
- To ensure that specific criteria are addressed to enable students a smooth transition from home or previous school.
- To ensure that forms are correctly completed and a student file is generated to store all pertinent information in a confidential manner.

### **Implementation:**

A Register of Enrolment will be kept in the Admissions Register OR electronically as per the requirements re collection of data for all schools in NSW.

## **STUDENT WELFARE POLICIES**

### **Student Welfare:**

#### **Good Discipline and Effective Learning Guidelines**

**Purpose: The implementation of the Good Discipline and Effective Learning Policy will assist students to accept responsibility for their own behaviour, encourage self discipline and develop attitudes that relate to respect for others and property.**

**Year: 2007**

### **Aims:**

- Students will learn effectively in an ordered and well managed school where they are challenged and motivated.
- Students will feel safe in classrooms, the playground and when travelling to and from school.
- Students have respect for other individuals and their property.
- Courtesy is given to other students, teachers and community members.
- Acceptance is undertaken by parents and care givers of the shared responsibility for student discipline.
- To implement PBS school-wide discipline guidelines.

### **Student Welfare: Discipline Guidelines**

**Purpose: To promote and foster the development of self esteem and self discipline.**

**CORPORAL PUNISHMENT OF ANY KIND DOES NOT FORM PART OF THE STUDENT WELFARE GUIDELINES OF BIALA SPECIAL SCHOOL**

**Year: 2007**

### **Aims:**

- To establish a framework for discipline and communicate this structure to the school community including parents/carers and the board of management.
- The teacher/s should maintain classroom procedures and practices understood by staff and students.

- For children to assist in the development of their own school rules (rights and responsibilities) and to enhance their knowledge, understanding and concern for those rules.
- To encourage the children in their understanding of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.
- To ensure recognition is given to those with acceptable, positive behaviour and general good manners.
- To ensure that children are aware that continuing unacceptable, inappropriate behaviour is their choice and will result in specific consequences.

The following strategies in point form are available to parents/carers upon request.

- Strategies to Promote Good Discipline and Effective Learning within School.
- Strategies to Deal with Unacceptable Behaviour.
- Strategies to Recognise and Reinforce Student Achievement.
- General Principles.

## **COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCE RESOLUTION POLICIES**

### **Complaints & Grievances Resolution Procedure - Summary**

Where there is some disagreement or dissatisfaction with the way that a matter has been dealt with, the school complies with the grievance process of Biala Support Services Incorporated which is the overseeing body of Biala Special School.

In general terms, this grievance procedure means that initial contact for the school is with the teacher or staff member involved, and, if required, to the Principal or the Manager of Biala Support Services Inc. and ultimately to the Board of Management of Biala Support Services Incorporated.

The details of this procedure are available from the office of Biala Support Services Incorporated in the Guidelines & Procedures Manual.

A copy of the organisations guideline for complaints and grievances is also found in the Guidelines and Procedures Manual for Biala Special School and is available to parents upon request.

## **SCHOOL – DETERMINED IMPROVEMENT TARGETS**

**In 2006 Biala Special School recognised some target areas that needed improvement. These included:**

### **Providing all Staff with relevant and on going Professional Development:**

In 2007, Biala's teaching and support staff all participated in a variety of staff development days programmed for the first day of each school term. The professional learning opportunities developed on these days included Managing Challenging Behaviours, Occupational Health and Safety, Literacy and Numeracy and Assessment and Reporting.

The Principal attended the Australian Association of Special Education (AASE) Conference in Sydney which was an inspiring conference with great networking opportunities.

These targets were achieved through the services of Consultants and visiting therapists, providing further knowledge, tutoring and resources in areas relevant to the Key Learning Areas. These initiatives improved teacher effectiveness and classroom learning environments and have shown an improvement in teaching strategies and staff confidence and skills. This has resulted in improved educational outcomes for all students and enabled better access to communication, information and knowledge of the Key Learning Areas.

#### **Enhance Work Experience Opportunities for the Students in Year 9 and Year 10:**

In 2007, Biala developed and implemented a Work experience program designed for students in their final year of school. This package includes a parent/carer consent form, details about the work place, insurance and transport details. As well as information about the Post School Options in the local area that are available to school leavers.

Furthermore, the school has investigated a variety of work places in the surrounding area that are suitable and willing to offer work experience for students which will help expand their work skills to become work ready.

Our oldest student began an extensive Work Experience program throughout the year with the support of a Teacher Aide. This proved to be an important transition process for the student and his family and by the last term, our student had gained supportive employment and access to a Post School Transition to Work Program.

**Biala Special School recognises the need to continually evaluate programs and establish new goals to achieve improvements in targeted areas, as identified through the schools strategic planning/review/evaluation process. We will be continuing to enhance the improvements of 2007 into our targets for 2008.**

In 2008 we aim to:

#### **Provide all Staff with relevant and on going Professional Development:**

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Continue structured professional staff development days each term which provide access to different, relevant learning opportunities.
- Access additional funding to invite certain guest speakers for repeated presentations to help implement specialised Key Learning Area programs.
- Access additional funding to be able to send staff on Professional Development.
- Utilise the expertise of the visiting Therapists and Consultants for tutoring.
- Investigate a range of suitable technology such as an Interactive Whiteboard which may be implemented into the classroom teaching.
- This target follows on from our 2005 aim to provide improved resources and staff confidence in the use of

technology in the classroom and for better teaching strategies.

- The Principal to attend the 2008 annual Australian Association of Special Education (AASE) Conference.

#### **Our success will be measured by:**

- Staff professionalism and satisfaction.
- Outcome based achievements in language, communication, literacy and numeracy.
- The level of staff confidence in using a wide range of technology applications in the classroom.
- All staff developing skills required to access a wide range of resources which enable better understanding of the Key Learning Areas.

#### **Enhance Work Experience Opportunities for the Students in Year 10:**

- Continuing the development and implementation of the work experience program for final year students.
- Continuing the investigation of local businesses that are suitable work places for students to access work experience in Year 10.
- Provide all information to students, parents and carers of the post school options available and help liaise between Transition to Work and Community Participation Providers.
- Network regularly with the local Community Participation and Transition to Work Providers.
- Offer a supported transition for school leavers into their Post School Provider of choice.

#### **Improve Literacy and Numeracy outcomes:**

- All Teachers to use RFF time to revise their classroom programs to ensure outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy are achievable and functional.
- Ensure communication is a priority and teachers are assessing and reporting student progress.
- Utilise Professional consultancy in areas of Literacy and Numeracy development.
- Reflect the Quality Teaching Framework
- Train all teaching staff in the use of technology in the classroom.

#### **Improvement in student behaviour:**

- Utilise the expertise of Consultants in Positive Behaviour Support and Student Manual Handling courses for all school staff.
- Implement Positive Behaviour Support strategies into the whole school.

# SUMMARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION

## BIALA SPECIAL SCHOOL

### INCOME & EXPENDITURE

1 January, 2007 to 31 December, 2007

Retained Earnings / (Accumulated Losses) (\$49,727.00)

#### INCOME

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| Other Private Income   | \$54,287.00  |
| State Government Recurrent Grants  | \$158,812.00 |
| Commonwealth Government Recurrent Grants:                                |              |
| General Recurrent Grants Programme                                       | \$84,959.00  |
| Strategic Assistance for Improving Student Outcomes Programme            | \$146,441.00 |
| Strategic Assistance for Improving Student Outcomes Programme<br>- Other | \$5,142.00   |
| Other Commonwealth Grants  |              |
| - Washups  | \$845.00     |
| - Playground Equipment   | \$400.00     |
| - Arts Grant   | \$3570.00    |

**TOTAL INCOME \$458,426.00**

#### EXPENDITURE

|   |              |
|---|--------------|
| Salaries & Wages – Teaching Staff                               | \$141,289.00 |
| Salaries & Wages – Other (incl. support staff, administration)  | \$135,768.00 |
| Insurance – Workers Comp  | \$3,113.00   |
| Superannuation  | \$23,848.00  |
| Teaching expenses (incl. office supplies and sundry)            | \$82,064.00  |
| Building & grounds operations/Repairs to building & maintenance | \$16,774.00  |
| Other Operating Expenses  | \$25,518.00  |
| Extension to roof over play area                                | \$2,760.00   |
| Arts Grant - Mural  | \$2,298.00   |
| General Play Equipment  | \$10,621.00  |

**TOTAL EXPENDITURE \$444,053.00**

**BALANCE as at 31 December, 2007 (Accumulated Losses) (\$35,354.00)**

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