



biala school
specialised education



ANNUAL REPORT 2022



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Introductory Statement

Vision

To be the leading provider of disability services and specialist education. A known and trusted support community built around the principles of inclusion and equality.

Purpose

Biala is committed to providing high quality educational opportunities and disability support services to enable our customers to live meaningful lives in our community.

Values

INCLUSIVE: We create a sense of belonging and connection with each other and our community. People are welcomed, known and valued.

ENERGISED: We approach our work with optimism and positivity, while celebrating success – no matter how big or small.

INTEGRITY: We act with honesty, transparency and reliability. We take pride in being reliable and dependable.

CARE: We do our best work when it is with a sense of purpose and passion for those around us. We understand the essential role care plays in our work.

Biala is an Indigenous term meaning ‘understand’

Biala School acknowledges that we are here on the land of the Bundjalung people who are the traditional owners of this land.

We recognise the significant role the past and future Elders play in the life of the region.

We are mindful that the Land always was and always will be Aboriginal Land.



School Profile

Biala School is an independent primary and secondary, co-educational, special school registered (Years K-12) by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA). Biala educates students with disability from ages 4-18. The school operates within the broader Biala Support Services which incorporates disability services delivered under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and Specialised Substitute Residential Care (SSRC).

Biala School was established by Marion Barwick and Dorothy Topfer who were teachers and parents of young people with disability. It was during this era that parents like Marion and Dorothy worked on improving conditions in state institutions; creating community services, educational and employment opportunities; initiating legislation; and challenging the conventional wisdom that persons with disabilities could not be helped. After years of treating people with disabilities with guilt and shame, people began to speak about their family members with disabilities.

The two women operated classes from the Lighthouse Beach Surf Club in Ballina, before the school at its current location on Fox Street was officially opened in 1973.

Over the years, the school's enrolment has broadened to include students who have physical needs as well as students with intellectual disabilities and autism. We utilise highly specialised interventions with personalised programs which reflect the assessed individual needs of the students across a range of domains. Our specialised staff work closely with families to support students to access and participate in their education on the same basis as other students and support our high school students into a range of post-school options.

Our teaching philosophy is focused on meeting the individual needs of each student, helping them to develop skills that enable them to take their rightful place in the community.

At the end of 2022, Biala School had a record 32 students enrolled.

In 2022 there were 10.77 full time equivalent (FTE) members of staff – 4 FTE members of the teaching staff and 6.77 FTE members of the support staff. The School Executive, comprising CEO/Principal, Head of Education and Business Manager are responsible for the operational management of the school.



About This Report

Biala School is registered by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and managed by Biala Support Services Ltd the 'approved authority' for the Registration System formed under Section 39 of the NSW Education Act 1990.

The Annual Report to the School Community for this year provides the School community with fair, reliable and objective information about the School performance measures and policies, as determined by the Minister for Education.

The Report also outlines information about initiatives and developments of major interest and importance to the School community during the year.

Accordingly, the Report demonstrates accountability to regulatory bodies and the School community. This Report complements and is supplementary to other regular communications. The Report will be available on the School website by June 30, 2023 following its submission to the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA).

Further information about the School or this Report may be obtained by contacting the School on (02) 6686 4763 or by visiting the website at www.biala.org.au/school



CEO/Principal's Message – Mrs Lisa Smith

It is with great pleasure that I present the Principal's Message for Biala School for Specialised Education in the NESAs Annual Report. This year has been a momentous one for our school, marked by significant achievements and transformative developments.

I am delighted to announce that Biala School experienced a record-breaking enrolment year, with 32 students joining our learning community. This surge in enrolments is a testament to the trust and confidence parents and caregivers place in our commitment to providing specialised education of the highest calibre. We are honoured to be entrusted with the education and well-being of these students, and we remain steadfast in our dedication to their growth and development.

I would also like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Mr. Tom Papworth on his appointment to the role of Head of Education at Biala School. Mr. Papworth's vast experience and expertise in specialised education make him an invaluable addition to our leadership team. With his guidance, we are confident that we will continue to elevate the quality of our educational programs and support services, ensuring that every student receives the best possible education tailored to their unique needs.

Furthermore, I am proud to highlight the Board's development of our Strategic Plan, which has laid the foundation for our school's future. This plan encompasses four pillars that will guide our efforts in the years to come:

1. Quality Intervention and Support
2. Specialised Schooling and Educational Engagement
3. Professional Practice and Workforce; and
4. Sustainable Growth and Development.

Each pillar represents a crucial aspect of our commitment to excellence and underscores our determination to provide a holistic and inclusive educational environment for our students.

In line with our commitment to continuous improvement, we have diligently worked towards implementing the operational priorities identified in the AISNSW School Review. These priorities include the development of a school-wide system to promote academic engagement, social-emotional learning, and positive behaviour among all students. We have also embraced the use of a school-based management system, Compass, to streamline data collection, documentation, and communication across the entire school community. Additionally, we have conducted a comprehensive review of our class structures, programs, processes, practices, and teaching and learning plans. Our aim is to develop a consistent, sequential, and age-appropriate scope and sequence that aligns the curriculum with Personalised Plans, ensuring the individual needs of each student are met effectively.

As we reflect on the remarkable achievements of the past year, we remain resolute in our dedication to providing the highest standard of specialised education at Biala School. We will continue to work tirelessly to ensure our students receive the support and opportunities they need to flourish academically, socially, and emotionally. Together with our committed staff, passionate parents, and supportive community, we look forward to another year of growth, success, and transformative learning experiences for all our students.

Sincerely,



Principal/CEO, Biala School

Lisa Smith



A message from the Chairperson

On behalf of the Board of Directors, it is my privilege to present the Chairman's Message for Biala School in the NESAs Annual Report for the year 2022. As we reflect on the accomplishments and milestones of the past year, we are filled with a profound sense of pride and gratitude.

In 2022, Biala School experienced an exceptional year of growth and achievement. We are delighted to announce that our school achieved a record-breaking enrolment of 32 students, a testament to the unwavering trust and confidence placed in us by parents and caregivers seeking specialised education for their children. This milestone serves as a resounding affirmation of our commitment to excellence and the unparalleled impact of our dedicated staff.

The Board is also proud to have developed a comprehensive Strategic Plan that encompasses four pillars crucial to the future success of our school. By focusing our efforts on our Strategic Plan, we are ensuring that Biala School remains at the forefront of specialised education, providing an inclusive and enriching environment for our students.

We express our gratitude to the entire Biala School community for their unwavering support and commitment. The collaboration between our dedicated staff, passionate parents, and supportive community has been instrumental in the growth and success of our school. Together, we will continue to strive for excellence and provide an exceptional educational experience for all our students.

Sincerely,



Chairman, Biala School

Evan Harding



Student Data

Year	Number
Prep	1
Kindergarten	2
Year 1	4
Year 2	0
Year 3	4
Year 4	1
Year 5	1
Year 6	3
Year 7	3
Year 8	2
Year 9	4
Year 10	3
Year 11	1
Year 12	3
Total	32

Figure 1: Enrolment Numbers by Year Group

Student numbers at Census date was 28.

Student attendance data is collected daily. The attendance figures for each year level averaged:

Year	% Attendance
Prep	99%
Kindergarten	89%
Year 1	56%
Year 2	72%
Year 3	63%
Year 4	91%
Year 5	91%
Year 6	80%
Year 7	87%
Year 8	7%
Year 9	81%
Year 10	88%
Year 11	99.5%
Year 12	72%

Figure 2: Attendance Rates by Year Group

Biala School has a clear policy for managing student absences. Parents are notified by the School for absences and these are followed up daily by the School Administrator.

Year	Year start	Year end	Leavers	New enrolments during 2022
Prep	1	1	0	0
Kindergarten	2	2	0	0
Year 1	2	4	1	2
Year 2	0	0	0	0
Year 3	2	4	1	2
Year 4	0	1	1	1
Year 5	0	1	0	1
Year 6	1	3	0	2
Year 7	2	3	0	1
Year 8	2	2	1	0
Year 9	3	4	0	1
Year 10	3	3	0	0
Year 11	1	1	0	0
Year 12	3	3	3	0

Figure 3: Changes to Enrolment Numbers Throughout 2022

At the completion of the 2022 school year, we farewelled three senior boys who all successfully transitioned to NDIS supports to continue their capacity building.

Teaching Staff

New staff members are provided with a minimum 6-month induction to assist their transition to the School staff community during their first year. Two new staff members were inducted into the School during 2022 and two part time staff left the School during 2022.

Workforce Composition

	Number	Full time equivalent
Teachers	4	3
Learning Support Staff	9	6.97
Administration	1	0.92
Executive	3	3
Maintenance	3	0.65
Total	19	14.54

In 2022 the number of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff members was 1.

Teacher Qualifications

Qualifications	Number
Teachers having teacher education qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR)	5
Teachers having a bachelor's degree from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the AEI- NOOSR guidelines but lack formal teacher education qualifications.	0

Teacher Accreditation

Accreditation Level	Number
Pre-2004 teachers	0
Conditional	0
Provisional	0
Proficient Teacher	4
Highly Accomplished Teacher (voluntary)	0
Lead Teacher (voluntary)	0
Total number of teachers	4

Teaching and Learning

At Biala School for Specialised Education, we approach teaching and learning with a dedicated commitment to providing exceptional support for students with complex needs. Our educational philosophy is centred around creating a comprehensive and individualised student learning experience that embraces the unique nature of each child, while ensuring a seamless integration of curriculum.

As a registered School for Specific Purpose (SSP) with the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA), our commitment lies in delivering exceptional educational programs across all Key Learning Areas. Our teaching practices are rooted in evidence-based methodologies and revolve around student-centred differentiated learning.

Our K-12 curriculum framework is designed to align with the NESA syllabuses, ensuring a strong foundation in learning content and outcomes.

- Primary School: Kindergarten to Year 6 (Fully Differentiated)
- Secondary School: Years 7 to 12 Life Skills.

To ensure that every student thrives and achieves personal growth, our educators collaborate closely with parents/carers, specialists, and other educational stakeholders. This partnership facilitates a deep understanding of each student's individual needs, allowing us to implement Personalised Plans that prioritise meaningful learning opportunities and tailored skill development.

At the heart of Biala's educational philosophy are our inclusive practices and pedagogical perspectives. We firmly believe in the vision that every person with a disability should have a life filled with possibilities and opportunities. This guiding principle underpins our unwavering commitment to empowering students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to navigate post-school pathways and unlock their full potential.

NAPLAN Test Results

Biala had Seven students eligible to sit NAPLAN during 2022. All Seven were given exemption by their parents due to disability.



Professional Learning

Routine Professional Development is a foundational practice at Biala School, empowering our staff to deliver high-quality education. We maintain a multifaceted system of reviews and evaluations, providing constructive feedback to guide teachers' growth. Weekly teacher team meetings, led by educational leaders, cover emerging trends and subject-specific content, enhancing skills and keeping educators up-to-date. Our integrated use of Professional Learning Plans supports individual development and innovative teaching methodologies.

In addition to regular PD sessions, our staff actively participate in specialised term-based workshops, covering mandatory training topics like Child Protection and First Aid. We prioritise safety and well-being, equipping educators with essential knowledge and skills. Our commitment to growth and excellence creates an environment that fosters collaboration, innovation, and exceptional learning outcomes. We support our educators with their professional learning journeys, ensuring that they have the resources and opportunities needed to thrive.

Description of the Professional Learning Activity	No. of Teaching Staff
Disability Legislation: Self-Paced Online Learning Course	12
Consolidating and Extending Teaching during COVID-19	5
Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting: Annual Training.	12
Anaphylaxis Management Training: NSW Anaphylaxis Education Program	12
School Review Analysis and Strategic Planning	12
Provide Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation – CPR Theory and Practical Refresher Training	12
School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SW-PBS) - AISNSW Workshop	12
Compass School Management System – Staff Training	12
AISNSW Positive Behaviour Support (PBS): Functional Assessment & Planning	12
Positive Partnerships: Introduction to Autism	3
Autism Spectrum: Universal Supports (AISNSW Online Course)	2
NCCD: Evidence Review and Moderation	5
Epilepsy and Midazolam Training	4

School Policies

All Policies are available from Biala School and may be accessed by contacting the School. Biala's policies are reviewed annually. Implementation of policies and procedures is part of a process involving information sessions, staff training, staff discussion and signing off on major policies and procedures.

Enrolment Policy and Characteristics of Student Body

Biala School is located in Ballina, Northern NSW. It is the only independent school specialising in disability education in the area. We cater for students aged between 4-18 who have a diagnosed disability. Our student body is primarily made up of children with an intellectual disability or moderate to severe autism. Many of our students present with more than one disability.

We teach the NSW Curriculum from Early Stage 1 (Kindergarten) to Stage 3 (Years 5-6), before students in Years 7-12 transition to the Life Skills course and content. Here, courses provide options for students with disability who are unable to access the regular course outcomes.

The criteria used to ascertain the eligibility for enrolment at Biala School includes:

- Evidence of diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (DSM-V original diagnosis and updated every three years from a relevant professional confirming ASD diagnosis using standardised tools)
- Psychometric Assessment (a current WISC, Stanford Binet or Wechsler non-verbal only, no older than three years), indicating an Intellectual Disability diagnosis
- Recent medical reports or assessments within the past two years;
- Birth Certificate
- Previous school reports

*A full text of the Enrolment Policy is contained at the end of the report – Attachment 1

In 2022, Biala's enrolment policy and enrolment pack was updated.

Summary of Biala School's Pastoral Care Policy

This policy considers pastoral care as part of the school's role, via its teachers, in aiding the personal and social wellbeing of students. Such issues within this framework are health, social and moral education, behaviour management and emotional support. As Biala School is an independent, non-secular school, the policy reinforces any religious denomination for enrolment is accepted, and values, morals, respect, and responsibility are promoted and encouraged as part of the Department of Education and Training curriculum guidelines.

In 2022, no changes were made to this policy.

Summary of Biala School's Student Behaviour Support Procedure

The policy outlines the school's expectations of students to follow the directions of teachers and other people with authority delegated by the School. A structured and safe learning environment helps promote positive behaviour support. Students will be supported through environmental modifications, visual supports and teaching and learning programs to follow those rules related to health, safety and welfare for both staff and students. Student Behaviour Support Plans (BSP) are developed to assist students to learn new adaptive behaviours. The support level of students is constantly monitored. As behaviour is seen as having a communicative function for students with a disability, appropriate environmental supports as well as communication interventions are in place to support the students as they learn new replacement behaviours.

In 2022, no changes were made to this policy.

Summary of Biala School's Student Discipline Policy

The policy promotes and fosters the development of student self-esteem and self-discipline. The policy outlines a school-wide Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) approach to support prosocial behaviour. Our positive behaviour learning approach encourages prosocial behaviour from students, which has been shown to improve their self-concept and motivation to learn. The policy focuses on preventative measures, remedial measures, and personal development to manage behaviour, consequences of action, school expectations, school behaviour code, and strategies to recognise and reinforce student achievement.

In 2022, no changes were made to this policy.

Summary of Biala School's Anti-Bullying Policy

The policy outlines all students and staff have the right to be treated fairly and with dignity in an environment free from disruption, intimidation, harassment, victimisation and discrimination. All members of the school community contribute to preventing bullying by modelling and promoting appropriate behaviour and respectful relationships. The policy also outlines what bullying is, who to contact, and how children with disabilities communicate to support their voice and assist staff to develop social competence and communication with our students.

In 2022 no changes were made to this policy.

Summary of Biala School's Grievance and Complaints Policy

This policy outlines the policy and procedures for complaints, and conflict resolution and prevention for staff. The importance of professionalism, access to training and development courses for collaborative decision-making and the procedures to be used when making or receiving a complaint. The policy is formulated on the grievance policy of Biala Support Services Ltd which is the overseeing body of Biala School.

In 2022, no changes were made to this policy.



School Student Enrolments - Range of Disabilities

Disability	Total
Cognitive - Extensive	13
Social / Emotional - Extensive	15
Total	28

Figure 1: Student NCCD categories as at Census date 2022

Ages	Boys	Girls	Total
4	0	1	1
5	0	0	0
6	3	0	3
7	2	1	3
8	0	3	3
9	0	0	0
10	1	0	1
11	1	0	1
12	1	0	1
13	3	0	3
14	2	3	5
15	2	0	2
16	0	1	1
17	1	1	2
18	2	0	2
Total	18	10	28

Figure 2: Student Demographics by Gender and Age as at Census date 2022

At Census date, total student numbers were 28. In 2022, 7 students identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students, representing 25% of the student population.



Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction

As schools began to open their doors again to visitors in 2022 after COVID-19 restrictions eased, Biala School welcomed families and visitors through formal events, greater involvement in face-to-face personalised planning meetings, attendance at events throughout the school year and an invitation to engage with a formal parent survey and meeting with the AISNSW Consultants as part of the broader AISNSW review.

Results from the parent survey have helped informed school priorities for the coming twelve months. These include:

- roll out of a parent communication app for school communication which will supplement the daily use of our classroom communication through Class Dojo
- actively seeking parent feedback about teaching and learning at Biala School

Staff turnover has again been low at Biala during 2022. School staff have had two formal opportunities to provide feedback throughout 2021 as well as regular informal channels.

The addition of a Head of Education to provide instructional leadership has enhanced our school operations and support to the teaching team. Feedback is encouraged at weekly team meetings and staff have communicated high levels of satisfaction working at Biala.







School Determined Improvement Targets

Biala's Strategic Plan for 2022 continued to provide direction for Biala School throughout the year. Key achievements pertaining to Biala School included:

1. Engagement of the Association of Independent Schools NSW to conduct a School Review to inform strategic and operational priorities for the next three years.
2. Development of a shared understanding of a school-wide system to promote academic engagement and promote social-emotional learning and positive behaviour of all students.
3. Implementation of a school-based management system (Compass) for the collection of data and documentation (Personalised Plans, BSP, Student Profiles etc) related to individual students and for communication across the whole-school.
4. Reviewed class structures, class programs, processes, practices and teaching and learning plans with a view to developing a consistent, sequential and age-appropriate scope and sequence, that includes greater alignment between the curriculum and Personalised Plans.
5. Commenced planning and design development of a fully accessible and inclusive playspace in the grounds of Biala School.

School Determined Priority Areas For Improvement

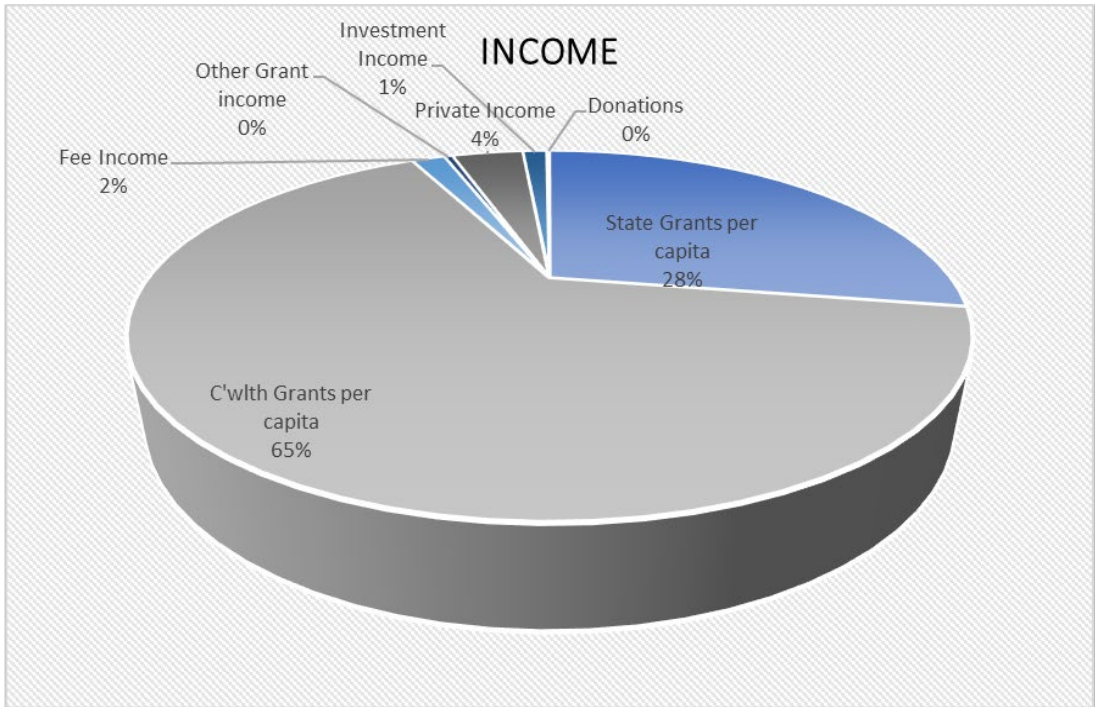
Biala School engaged the Association of Independent Schools NSW (AISNSW) in 2022 to conduct a school review to examine the current policies, procedures, programs, and practices, with the view to providing independent observations and insights around the structural and operational effectiveness, consistency, impact, and alignment across the school environment.

We remain dedicated to implementing the operational priorities identified in the AISNSW School Review. The priority areas for the coming year include:

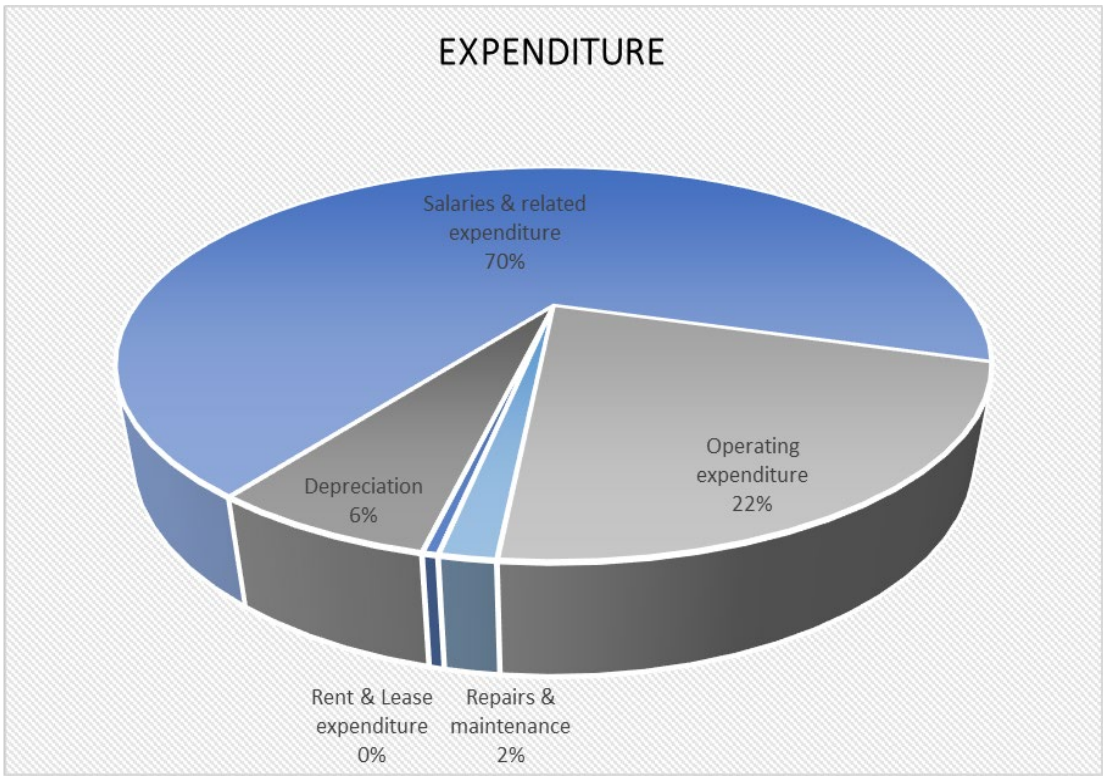
1. Professional learning in the areas of curriculum, adjustments and positive and preventative approaches to behaviour support
2. Build staff capacity to utilise effective instructional practices and strategies to include all students in the curriculum based on age and stage of learning and embed this in practice during the teaching and learning processes.
3. Seek greater opportunities for staff and students to have an authentic, active voice in decisions and actions relating to school improvement.
4. Achieve greater alignment between Biala School and Biala's support services to improve high school transition through the implementation of a collaboration project.

Summary Financial Information

2022 Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement



93% of the School’s income came from the Commonwealth and State Government. Fees, private income and investment income made up the remaining 7% of the School’s income.



Salaries and employee costs made up 70% of expenditure, with operating costs rounding out the remainder.

Attachment 1 – Biala’s Enrolment Policy



NAME:	Biala School Enrolment Policy	Section 6: Safe and Supportive Environment Policy 7
AIM/OBJECTIVE:	Biala School provides individual, specialised education programs for students with disability. The school upholds strong community values and operates within the policies of the New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA).	
RELATED POLICY:	Biala School Enrolment Pack (Feb 2022)	

Ratified By:	Chief Executive Officer
Date:	8 th June 2022
Review:	Term 2 2023
<p>6.1 Biala School recognises that children with disabilities have the right to access services regardless of their gender, race or ethnicity, religion or language. The school will respond sensitively to the needs of applicants, including people from indigenous, culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.</p> <p>6.2 An offer of placement to commence at Biala School is dependent on class vacancy. An offer of a place is subject to a completed enrolment pack and a subsequent interview of parents/guardian and child with the school Principal and Head of Education. Places may be subject to a wait list. Priority will be determined on classroom availability and the specific needs of the student. Completion and submission of the enrolment pack does not represent acceptance of enrolment. All enrolments will be confirmed in writing.</p> <p>6.3 The students come from a wide range of backgrounds. The school is registered to enroll male and female students aged 4 to 18 years. We specialise in educating students with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities and/or Autism Spectrum Disorder (DSM-V). Students may present with additional disabilities of mobility, speech, communication, and challenging behaviours.</p>	

- 4.4 All applications are processed under the school's enrolment procedures (in line with NESA recommendations). Such as: confirmation of disability, forms completed accurately, previous reports (where applicable) and interview with Principal.

Students are placed on the Eligibility List based on the following:

- Letter stating diagnosis of disability
 - A current (within the last two years) psychometric assessment MUST be provided as part of the enrolment process.
 - Other therapist reports (ie: Speech therapist, Physiotherapist, Occupational therapist, Behaviour Support, vision and hearing reports) would be beneficial and appreciated. Previous school reports or Individual Education Programs (IEPs) can be submitted at the same time if available.
- 6.5 The specific educational needs of the applicant will be taken into consideration. The Principal will gather all information deemed necessary from the applicant's previous school, in consultation with parents and any other relevant persons to aid in the smoothest transition possible. In the case where this is the child's first school, consultation with parents/carer and/or early intervention and/or healthcare workers will take place to determine the child's Individual Educational Programme (IEP).
- 6.6 The Head of Education and classroom teacher will work in conjunction with the parent/carer to identify any adjustments required for the student prior to their commencement at Biala School.
- 6.7 In accepting enrolment at Biala School, Parents/Guardians are agreeing to abide by the Policies, Procedures and Guidelines of Biala Support Services Ltd.
- 6.8 Biala's Enrolment Pack is reviewed annually.