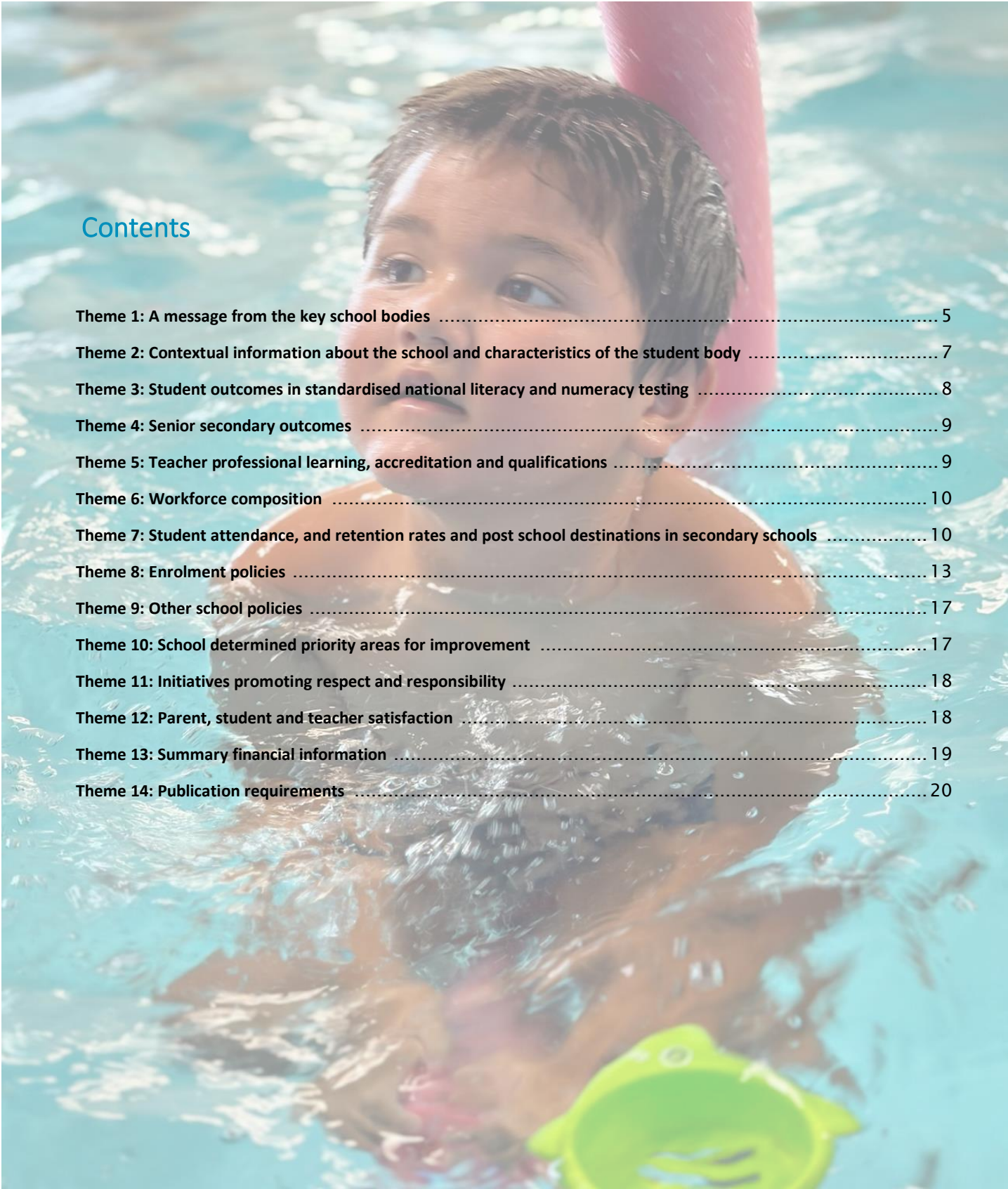




biala school
specialised education



ANNUAL REPORT 2023



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Theme 1: A message from the key school bodies

CEO/Principal's Message – Mrs Lisa Smith

It is with great pleasure that I present the Principal's Message for Biala School for another year. 2023 has seen a new record set for student enrolments and our reputation for delivering individualised education continues to strengthen.

This year, we completed development of Ballina's first inclusive play space within the grounds of Biala School. This has been a welcome addition to our school and has created an environment where all students are benefiting through socialisation and physical activity during break times.

We invested heavily in preparation for our school re-registration taking place in 2024 by reviewing all school policies and appointing a designated curriculum specialist for a six-month period; focussing solely on implementation of the K-10 curriculum and development of Life Skills Curriculum.

Due to increased student enrolments, we established a fifth classroom at Biala School this year and it's filling fast!

Next year, we enter the final year of our 2022-2024 Strategic Plan which has been laying the foundation for our school's future. The plan encompasses four pillars that have guided our efforts over the past two years:

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. I look forward to working with Biala's Board and our school community to develop our new strategic plan from 2024.

As we reflect on the remarkable achievements of the past year, our commitment to providing the highest standard of specialised education at Biala School remains unwavering. We will continue to work diligently to ensure our students receive the support and opportunities they need to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. With the dedication of our staff, the passion of our parents, and the support of our community, we eagerly anticipate another year of growth, success, and enjoyable learning experiences for all our students.

Sincerely,



Principal/CEO, Biala School

Lisa Smith



A message from the Chairperson

2023, another successful year for Biala. The business was able to put the natural disaster of 2022 behind it and look to the future. Biala School's presence and reputation continues to grow in the local area, and this is reflected by the increased number school enrolments. 2023 also saw the launch Biala's School Transition Supports, to provide greater opportunities for local people with disability.

The Board would like to thank the Principal, Lisa Smith and her entire team at Biala School for the hard work and dedication they have shown that makes Biala the success that it is.

2024 for Biala, it's students and everyone else involved either directly or indirectly, is looking bright and positive.

The Board thanks you all for the continued support you have shown Biala School.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Evan Harding". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Evan" and "Harding" being capitalized and prominent.

Chairman, Biala School

Evan Harding



Theme 2: Contextual information about the school and characteristics of the student body

Contextual information about the school

Biala School is an independent primary and secondary, co-educational, special school registered 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 in 1969, operating out of 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 deliver the NSW Curriculum for children with sensory, physical, intellectual and emotional needs. We utilise highly specialised interventions with individual education plans which reflect the assessed 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 2023, Biala School had a record 30 students enrolled.

In 2023 there were 14.21 full time equivalent (FTE) members of staff – 5 FTE members of the teaching staff and 9.21 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.

Characteristics of the student body

Figure 1: Enrolment Numbers by Year Group

Year	Number
Prep	0
Kindergarten	2
Year 1	3
Year 2	2
Year 3	2
Year 4	1
Year 5	1
Year 6	2
Year 7	4
Year 8	4
Year 9	2
Year 10	4
Year 11	2
Year 12	1
Total	30

School Student Enrolments - Range of Disabilities

Disability	Total
Cognitive - Extensive	12
Social / Emotional - Extensive	18
Total	30

Figure 1: Student NCCD categories as at Census date 2023

Ages	Boys	Girls	Total
4	0	0	0
5	0	2	2
6	0	0	0
7	4	0	4
8	1	1	2
9	0	1	1
10	1	0	1
11	1	0	1
12	2	0	2
13	2	2	4
14	3	1	4
15	3	1	4
16	2	0	2
17	0	1	1
18	1	1	2
Total	20	10	30

Figure 2: Student Demographics by Gender and Age as at Census date 2023

At Census date, total student numbers were 30. In 2023, 9 students identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students, representing 30% of the student population.

Theme 3: Student outcomes in standardised national literacy and numeracy testing

Biala had eight students eligible to sit NAPLAN during 2023. Eight students were given exemption by their parents due to disability.



Theme 4: Senior secondary outcomes (N/A)

Theme 5: Teacher professional learning, accreditation and qualifications

Teacher 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	# Teaching Staff
Supporting Students with Challenging Behaviour	2
Whole-school Behaviour and Positive Practices for Classroom Management	1
NSW Surf Life Saving Bronze Medallion	1
Autism Spectrum: Universal Supports - Self-paced Learning Experience	2
Hoist operation (practical training)	12
Teaching Sexuality Education in a Special Education Setting	12
Autism Spectrum: Targeted supports - Self-paced Learning Experience	1
PBIS - Positive Behaviour Support	10
Child Protection Update 2023	14
Gestalt Language Processing and AAC	1
CPI - Safety Intervention Training	10

Teacher Accreditation

Accreditation Level	Number
Pre-2004 teachers	0
Conditional	1
Provisional	0
Proficient Teacher	4
Highly Accomplished Teacher (voluntary)	0
Lead Teacher (voluntary)	0
Total number of teachers	5

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

Theme 6: Workforce composition

	Number	Full time equivalent
Teachers	5	5
Learning Support Staff	7	4.64
Administration and Management	3	3.92
Executive	1	1
Maintenance	3	0.65
Total	19	14.21

In 2023 the number of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff members was 0.

Theme 7: Student attendance, and retention rates and post school destinations in secondary schools

Student attendance

The Education Act 1990 requires all children of compulsory school age to be enrolled in and attend school or be registered for home schooling. In NSW the compulsory school age is from 6 to 17 years of age. Schools are required by law to keep a register of enrolment and daily attendance of all students enrolled at the school.

At Biala School, student attendance is recorded daily by classroom teachers. Any students arriving at school late will be noted by the school's administration staff. In the event of a late arrival, the reason will also be noted, along with who informed the school and how the information was shared. Any student absence is also noted, and families are asked to notify the school. In the event of an unexplained absence, administration staff will follow up with families in the first instance. If the unexplained absence continues for 4 – 5 days, the classroom teacher will follow up with the family via phone; the Head of Education will also be informed.

The purpose of monitoring attendance is to ensure the safety and welfare of students. Biala School's Attendance Policy describes how the school manages student non-attendance, including intervention strategies to improve any unsatisfactory attendance patterns. Biala School will view each student's situation on a case-by-case basis in order to support the individual needs of each student in pursuit of their education and wellbeing. The school will work with students and families to develop strategies to ensure regular attendance.

Student attendance data is collected daily.

Figure 2: Attendance Rates by Year Group

Year	% Attendance
Prep	0
Kindergarten	83%
Year 1	78%
Year 2	64%
Year 3	25%
Year 4	10%
Year 5	77%
Year 6	86%
Year 7	54%
Year 8	76%
Year 9	24%
Year 10	83%
Year 11	81%
Year 12	90%

Figure 3: Changes to Enrolment Numbers Throughout 2023

Year	Year start	Year end	Leavers	New enrolments during 2023
Prep	0	0	0	0
Kindergarten	2	2	0	0
Year 1	3	3	0	0
Year 2	3	2	1	0
Year 3	2	2	0	0
Year 4	1	1	0	0
Year 5	1	1	0	0
Year 6	1	2	0	1
Year 7	4	4	0	0
Year 8	3	4	0	1
Year 9	1	2	0	1
Year 10	5	4	1	0
Year 11	2	2	0	0
Year 12	1	1	1	0

Post School Destinations

Tenure of students remained high throughout 2023, with one student relocating interstate, one transitioning to another school and one graduating to Biala’s NDIS supports to continue their capacity building.



Theme 8: Enrolment policies

ENROLMENT POLICY

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1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the application process and the requirements that must be met for a child to be deemed eligible for enrolment at Biala School.

2 BACKGROUND

The NSW Education Act (1990) (Education Act) mandates that all children must be in compulsory schooling by 6 years of age. Children of compulsory school age are required to be enrolled in, and attend, school or be registered for home schooling (section 22 of the Education Act).

Legally, it is the responsibility of the parent or carer of a child of compulsory school-age, not the school, to ensure that their child is enrolled in, and attending school, or is registered for home schooling (section 22 of the Education Act). Once enrolled, children are required to attend school each day the school is open.

Schools have legal obligations in relation to attendance and enrolment under the Education Act. Schools are required to have policies and procedures for school registration that address the following school responsibilities in relation to attendance:

- maintaining registers of enrolments and daily attendance
- recording and monitoring daily attendance/absence of students
- following up student absence
- processing applications for exemption from attendance or enrolment
- monitoring attendance data
- implementing intervention strategies to improve unsatisfactory attendance.

BIALA SCHOOL

Biala School is a unique learning environment that caters for the needs of students from pre-kindergarten to Year 12 (age 4-18 years) who find a mainstream learning environment difficult because of their neuro-developmental needs.

The student population consists of young people with physical needs as well as students with intellectual disabilities and autism. All students require and are provided with an extensive level of educational support and intervention.

3 SCOPE

This policy applies to all students, parents, management and staff of Biala School.

4 DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply for the purpose of this Policy:

Head of Education	means the Head of Education of Biala School
Parent	means the parent, guardian, carer or person responsible for the primary care of the student
Principal	means the primary person responsible for the executive decision-making in the organisation.
Student	means a young person enrolled at Biala School

5 POLICY STATEMENT

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).

Biala School provides individualised education programs (IEPs) for students who require an extensive level of educational support and intervention.

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.

In accepting enrolment at Biala School, parents agree to abide by the policies, procedures and guidelines of Biala Support Services Ltd.

The Biala School Enrolment Pack is reviewed annually.

6 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be deemed eligible for enrolment, the requirements below must be met. Please note, there is no pre-requisite for ongoing enrolment year on year or for moving from Primary to High School.

- Diagnosis of the child's disability from a relevant professional (e.g. Pediatrician)
- Current allied health assessments (within the past two years) from an Occupational Therapist, Behaviour Support Practitioner or Psychologist
- Medical reports
- Birth Certificate
- Immunisation Certificate
- Any other relevant assessments where applicable, for example, vision and hearing reports, previous school reports or Individual Education Programs (IEPs)

7 EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

- Parties wishing to register interest in a child's enrolment at Biala School are invited to contact the School office.
- In readiness for a pre-enrolment meeting with the Principal, the School Administrator will request relevant background information and details, for example, the age of the child, previous schooling (if any), relationship of child to party making enquiry and nature of the child's disabilities.
- The Principal will arrange a pre-enrolment meeting, provide a tour of the School and facilities, outline education and supports, answer questions and provide an enrolment pack.
- Following each pre-enrolment meeting, the Principal records the child's details on a 'Student enquiry template' which is then logged on a central 'Register of Expressions of Interest'.

8 ENROLMENT PROCESS

- All applications must be made using the Biala School enrolment pack
- Enrolment applications must be submitted in full and will be assessed against the eligibility criteria
- Once an Enrolment Application is received, the Principal creates a 'Student Summary' which is shared with the Head of Education
- Successful applications are followed by an interview with the Parent(s), child, Principal and Head of Education.
- An offer of a place is dependent on class vacancy. Places may be subject to a wait list, with priority determined by classroom availability and the specific needs of the student.
- All enrolments will be confirmed in writing.

Note: Completion and submission of the enrolment pack does not constitute acceptance of enrolment.

9 STUDENT SUPPORT ASSESSMENT

Prior to commencement at the School, and working in conjunction with the parents, the Head of Education will identify any adjustments that may be required for the student to aid in their transition to the School, whether this be from another school or their first time at any school.

In consultation with the parent(s), early intervention and/or healthcare workers and the classroom teacher, the Head of Education will assess the specific educational needs of the child

in order that the appropriate support can be provided and an IEP can be determined.

The support provided to students at Biala is targeted, highly individualised and ongoing. Typical adjustments made to the regular educational program may include:

- intensive, individualised instruction or support for all courses, curricula and activities.
- planned, highly specialised and/or intensive health, personal care and/or safety support or intervention enabling access to learning through:
 - specialised equipment
 - specific planning for access to activities or facilities
 - closely monitored playground supervision
 - modified classroom and/or school environments
 - provision of specialist advice on a regular basis
 - extensive support from specialist school staff

10 RELEVANT LEGISLATION

The NSW Education Act (1990) (Education Act)

11 KEY RELATED DOCUMENTS

Student Enquiry Template
Expressions of Interest Register
Biala School Enrolment Pack

12 NOTES

12.1	Contact Officer	Business Manager
12.2	Implementation Officer	Head of Education
12.3	Approval Authority / Authorities	Principal
12.4	Date Approved	15th January 2024
12.5	Date of Commencement	29th January 2024
12.6	Date for Review	15th January 2027
12.7	Documents Superseded by this Policy	Biala School Enrolment Pack (Feb 2022, January 2023)
12.8	Amendment History	The Policy Unit will complete this section as required.

Theme 9: Other school policies

School Policies

All Policies are available from Biala School and our website <https://www.biala.org.au/school-policies/> . Biala's policies are reviewed yearly. 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.

Summary of Biala School's Student Welfare Policy (Child Safe Policy)

The purpose of this policy is to provide information in regard to the policies, practices and procedures that Biala School has developed and maintains in order to protect the safety and welfare of all students; and to minimise the risk of abuse misconduct and misuse of positional power.

In 2023, this policy was updated.

Summary of Biala School's Student Discipline and Behaviour Management Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide students, parents and staff with information regarding behavioural expectations and the procedures in regard to behavioural management within Biala School. These procedures are designed to ensure that a positive, supportive and productive learning environment is maintained for the wellbeing of all students and that decisions are made using principles of procedural fairness.

In 2023, this policy was updated.

Summary of Biala School's Anti-Bullying Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide students, parents and staff with information regarding behavioural expectations and procedures in regard to bullying within Biala School. Biala School is committed to providing a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students and does not tolerate any form of bullying. These procedures are designed to ensure that a positive, supportive and productive learning environment is maintained for the wellbeing of all students.

In 2023, this policy was updated.

Summary of Biala School's Grievance and Complaints Policy

The purpose of this policy is to outline the principles, expectations and requirements for Biala School dealing with complaints; and to outline the process involved in managing those complaints. Adherence with this policy is designed to ensure best practice occurs for reporting, investigating, recording, finalising, reviewing and monitoring complaints and their outcomes.

In 2023, this policy was updated.

Theme 10: School determined priority areas for improvement

Biala School continues to implement our strategic priorities outlined in Biala's Strategic Plan 2022-2024.

These have included:

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
5. Commenced planning and design development of a fully accessible and inclusive playspace in the grounds of Biala School.

Theme 11: Initiatives promoting respect and responsibility

Promoting respect and responsibility

Biala School promotes a safe and respectful environment that provides students with optimal opportunities to engage and learn. All activities throughout the school day are used as opportunities to model respectful interactions and behaviours. We operate within a Positive Behaviour framework with the values of Be Safe, Be Respectful and Be a Learner. This framework is reinforced through consistent language used by teachers and support staff, as well as being revisited each week during our whole school assembly where students sing and use key word sign to our "Triple B" song. Students are also awarded points for positive behaviour and effort that build towards awards.

Our positive behaviour framework supports students to be mindful and respectful of others including staff, fellow students and visitors to the school. Students are supported to understand appropriate interactions and develop the skills to respond respectfully, both in and outside of the school environment.

If a student displays behaviours of concern, the staff member present will intervene to stop the behaviour and explain to the student why the behaviour isn't acceptable and remind them of our "Triple B" values. Parents / guardians are informed of any significant behavioural incidents at the end of the school day during pick up or via phone. Should the behaviour of concern involve property damage, it is discussed with the parents / carers and any consequences are confirmed. Staff are also trained in safety interventions in order to prevent or intervene in crisis situations where students are at risk to themselves or others.

In the event of increasing, ongoing or persistent challenging behaviours, parents will be invited to meet with the Principal and Head of Education to discuss the behaviours and explore options for ongoing behavioural intervention and supports. This may include engaging the assistance of a qualified Behaviour Support Practitioner.

Theme 12: Parent, student and teacher satisfaction

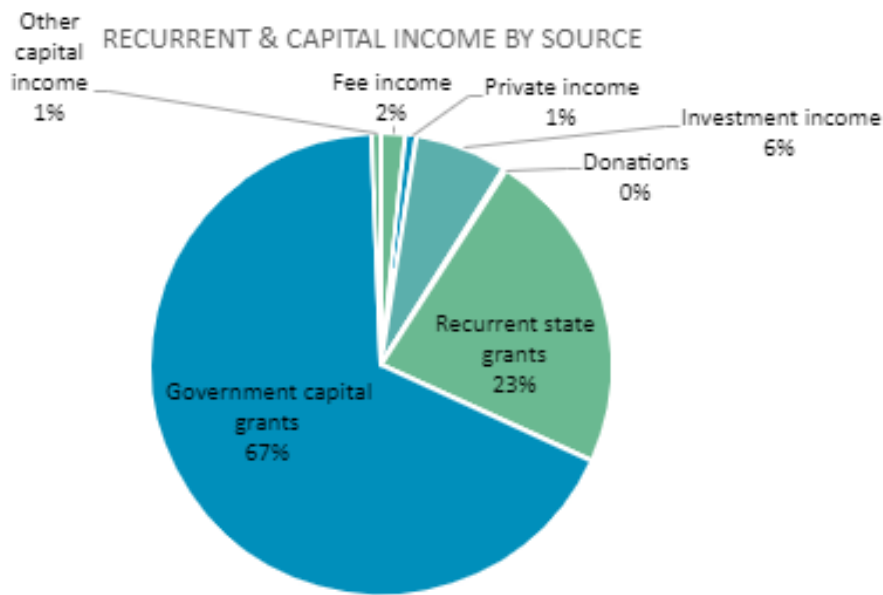
Staff turnover has again been low at Biala during 2023. School staff have had two formal opportunities to provide feedback throughout the year, as well as regular informal channels.

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.

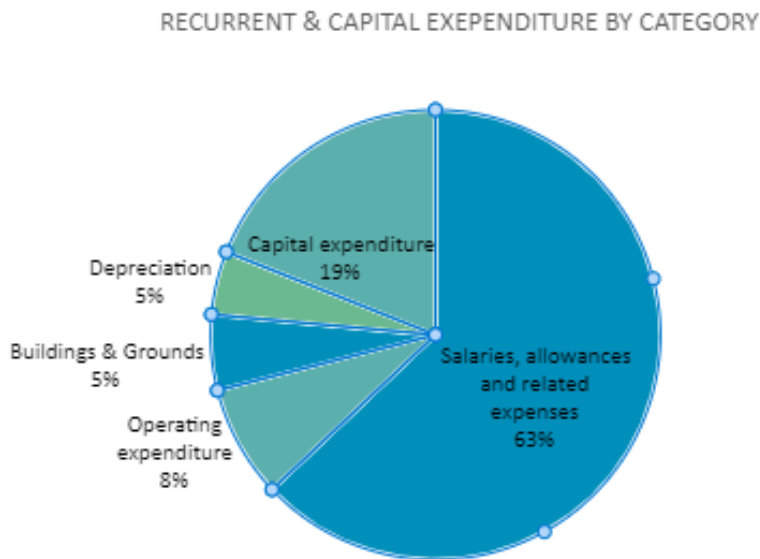


Theme 13: Summary financial information

2023 Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement



90% of the School’s income came from the Commonwealth and State Government. Fees, private income and investment income made up the remaining 10% of the School’s income.



Salaries and employee costs made up 63% of expenditure, with operating costs rounding out the remainder.

Theme 14: Publication requirements

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, 2024 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

