



biala school  
specialised education



# ANNUAL REPORT 2024

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## Theme 1: Context

### CEO/Principal's Message – Mrs Lisa Smith

It is with great pride that I reflect on the achievements and progress of Biala School in the 2024 academic year.

As a specialised setting, our mission remains centred on delivering personalised, evidence-informed education that supports the learning, wellbeing and development of students with disability.

This year, we have continued to strengthen our teaching and learning practices through curriculum refinement, targeted professional development, and investment in assistive technologies. Our staff remain deeply committed to creating a nurturing, inclusive and engaging environment for every student.

We also celebrated student growth across a range of individualised learning outcomes—academic, social and emotional—highlighting the strength of our multidisciplinary approach and the strong partnerships we maintain with families and allied health professionals.

We are excited to progress plans for a future school upgrade through a comprehensive Master Plan and submission of a Block Grant Authority in 2025.

Biala School is more than a learning space—it is a community of care and high expectations. I thank our staff, families, and Board for their continued support and shared vision for our students to thrive.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lisa Smith". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and legible.

Principal/CEO, Biala School

**Lisa Smith**



## A message from the Chairperson

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to present this message as part of Biala School's Annual Report.

The past year has underscored the critical role that specialised education plays in creating equitable learning opportunities for students with disability. The Board has maintained a strong focus on governance, strategic planning, and risk oversight to support the sustainability and growth of Biala School.

We are proud of the leadership demonstrated by our Principal and school staff, whose dedication to student wellbeing and learning outcomes has remained unwavering. In 2024, the Board worked closely with the Executive team on long-term infrastructure planning, in response to both future growth needs and compliance requirements related to site safety.

We also continue to invest in strategic partnerships and community engagement initiatives, ensuring that Biala School remains well positioned as a trusted and high-performing educational provider in the region.

As stewards of Biala's values and future direction, we are committed to continuous improvement and to supporting a culture that empowers students to reach their full potential.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark 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 1: 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 building the capacity of each student, helping them to develop skills that enable them to take their rightful place in the community.

At the end of 2024, Biala School had a record 35 students enrolled.

In 2024 there were 14.12full time equivalent (FTE) members of staff – 5 FTE members of the teaching staff and 9.12 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	1
Year 1	4
Year 2	3
Year 3	2
Year 4	3
Year 5	3
Year 6	1
Year 7	3
Year 8	4
Year 9	5
Year 10	2
Year 11	2
Year 12	2
Total	35



School Student Enrolments - Range of Disabilities

Disability	Total
Cognitive - Extensive	13
Social / Emotional - Extensive	20
Total	33

Figure 1: Student NCCD categories as at Census date 2024

Ages	Boys	Girls	Total
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	2	2	4
7	3	0	3
8	2	0	2
9	0	1	1
10	2	1	3
11	2	0	2
12	1	0	1
13	2	1	3
14	4	1	5
15	2	2	4
16	1	0	1
17	2	0	2
18	1	1	2
Total	24	9	33

Figure 2: Student Demographics by Gender and Age as at Census date 2024

At Census date, total student numbers were 33. In 2024, 11 students identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students, representing 33% of the student population.

Theme 2: Outcomes and Results

Student outcomes in standardised national literacy and numeracy testing

Biala had 10 students eligible to sit NAPLAN during 2024. 9 students were given exemption by their parents due to disability and 1 student successfully completed two components of NAPLAN testing. A Year 9 student participated in the 2024 NAPLAN testing with disability adjustments. These included receiving double extra time and a scribe. The student successfully completed the Conventions of Language and Writing tests and was formally exempted from the Reading and Numeracy components. The outcomes were positive, and the experience provided valuable exposure to the structure and format of the assessments.

Post School Destinations

Two students graduated from Biala School in 2024. Both have transitioned to NDIS supports to continue post school options of work experience and community access.

## Results of the Higher School Certificate

Not applicable for Biala School

## Senior Secondary Outcomes (VET or equivalent)

In 2024, two Biala students participated in the TAFE Youth Engagement Strategy (YES) Program, gaining valuable exposure to TAFE NSW vocational training across various industries.

This program provided opportunities to:

- Develop new skills and explore their potential.
- Increase awareness of career pathways.
- Adapt to new environments and workplace expectations.
- Discover post-school options and work towards becoming job ready.

Building on their TAFE experience and in collaboration with a NDIS provider, students engaged in a pre-employment skills program that fostered connections with local community and business organisations.

As part of this initiative, students participated in hands-on work experiences across multiple trades, allowing them to develop practical skills and gain a deeper understanding of workplace expectations. This program provided valuable opportunities to enhance their capacity, overcome barriers, and explore suitable post-school pathways in preparation for their transition beyond Year 12, including further study and/or employment.

## Theme 3: Staffing

**Accreditation status of all teaching staff (as defined by the TAA 2004) who are responsible for delivering the curriculum**

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

## Workforce Composition

	Number	Full time equivalent
Teachers	5	5
Learning Support Staff	7	4.18
Administration and Management	2	1.92
Executive	1	1
Maintenance	3	0.61
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>12.71</b>

## Theme 4: Attendance

### Student attendance

In accordance with the Education Act 1990, all children of compulsory school age in New South Wales—defined as 6 to 17 years—must be enrolled in and attend school or be registered for home schooling. Schools are legally required to maintain a register of enrolment and record daily attendance for all enrolled students.

At Biala School, student attendance is recorded each day by classroom teachers. Late arrivals are documented by the school's administration staff, including the reason for the delay, the person who notified the school, and the method of communication. Absences are also recorded, and families are expected to inform the school of any student absence. If an absence is unexplained, administration staff will initially follow up with the family. Should the absence remain unexplained for 4–5 days, the classroom teacher will make contact by phone, and the Head of Education will be notified.

The monitoring of attendance plays a critical role in safeguarding the wellbeing and safety of students. Biala School's Attendance Policy outlines the procedures for managing student non-attendance and includes intervention strategies to address ongoing concerns. Each student's circumstances are considered individually to ensure tailored support that promotes both educational engagement and personal wellbeing. The school collaborates closely with students and their families to encourage consistent attendance.

Student attendance data is collected on daily basis.



Figure 2: Attendance Rates by Year Group

<b>Year</b>	<b>% Attendance</b>
Prep	0
Kindergarten	96%
Year 1	90%
Year 2	86%
Year 3	84%
Year 4	80%
Year 5	66%
Year 6	90%
Year 7	84%
Year 8	78%
Year 9	90%
Year 10	89%
Year 11	71%
Year 12	94%

Figure 3: Changes to Enrolment Numbers Throughout 2024

<b>Year</b>	<b>Year start</b>	<b>Year end</b>	<b>Leavers</b>	<b>New enrolments during 2024</b>
Prep	0	0	0	0
Kindergarten	1	1	0	0
Year 1	3	3	0	0
Year 2	3	3	0	3
Year 3	2	2	0	0
Year 4	2	3	0	0
Year 5	2	3	0	3
Year 6	1	2	0	1
Year 7	2	3	0	0
Year 8	4	4	1	1
Year 9	4	5	0	0
Year 10	2	2	0	1
Year 11	2	2	0	0
Year 12	2	2	2	0

## Theme 5: School Policies

The following school policies are publicly available on the website

<https://www.biala.org.au/school-policies/>

[Enrolment policy](#)

[Child protection policy](#)

[Anti-bullying policy](#)

[Discipline policy](#)

[Complaints policy](#)

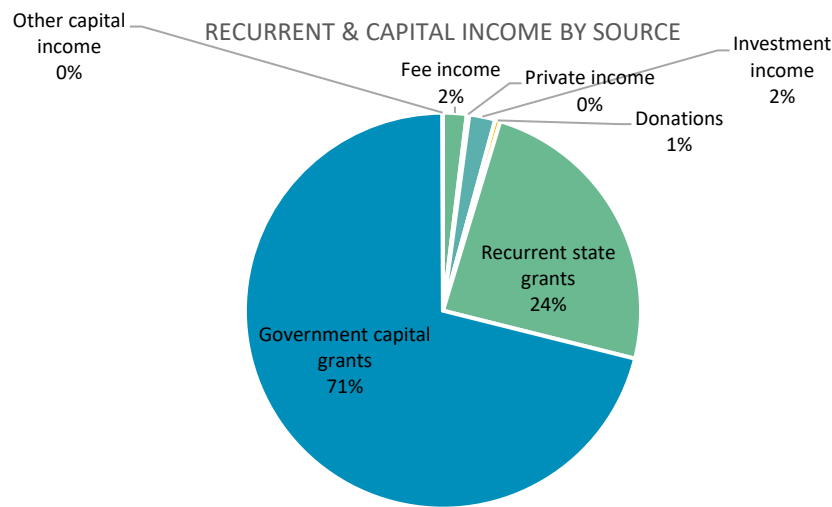
## Theme 6: Stakeholder satisfaction

Staff turnover has again been low at Biala during 2024. 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.

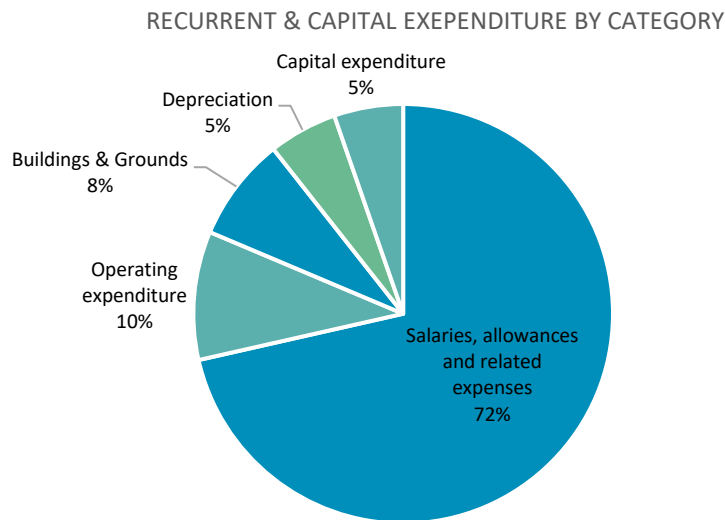
Theme 7: Summary financial information

2024 Recurrent and Capital Income By Source



95% of the School’s revenue was derived from the Commonwealth and State Government. Fees, private income, donations and investment income made up the remaining 5% of the School’s income.

2024 Recurrent and Capital Income By Category



Salaries and employee costs made up 72% of expenditure, with operating costs, buildings, depreciation and capex rounding out the remainder.

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](http://www.biala.org.au)