

2022



•Milkwood•
Steiner School

Annual Report

Together we touch the ground of the land
We reach for the skies that cover the land
And we touch our hearts to care for the land
Blessings on Larrakia Country

By Aunty Tracey Linn Bostock, a descendant of the Bundjalung Nation which is her Grandmother and Grandfather Country (words adapted to Larrakia Country)



INTRODUCTION

The 2022 Milkwood Steiner School Association Annual Report was compiled in May 2023, on Larrakia Land and approved by the MSSA Board. We acknowledge the Larrakia people as the Traditional Owners of the land on which we teach, learn and grow, and approach this task with a recognition of our privilege and responsibility to care for all who live here.

This report meets requirements under the Northern Territory of Australia Associations Act and section 242 of the Education Act. Formal correspondence regarding this document should be directed to board@milkwood.nt.edu.au.

History

Milkwood Steiner School was imagined and materialised by a group of families in 1999, who came together with a shared vision. Their dreams and efforts manifested into a playgroup, guided by the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner, adapted to acknowledge the significance of the seasons, environment and Traditional Knowledge in their region. Their inspiration and the will to work nurtured the roots of our community with unity and vision.

Today, we acknowledge the role of children in growing this school, and the wishes of their adult community to continue to grow a space which will nurture and value the spirit of childhood. Like the founders of this school, today's members hope to build a community for our children which nurtures a deep connection to spirit, country, self and community, which cultivates creativity and inspiration, and which prompts responsibility, courage, belonging and connection. Our understanding of the meaning behind our values of Imagination, Courage, Dignity and Spirit is deep and evolving. The meanings of these values deepens over time, and we explore their wisdom consciously through a group reflective practice at the beginning of each school term, and as individuals through our inner work.

Enrolments

In 2022 Milkwood had 80 full time students across Waterlily Kindergarten and Classes 1 to 6, and 16 part time students in the Bush Apple Kindergarten.



GOVERNANCE REPORT

The MSSA Board is made up of five members.

Role	Name	Team
Chairperson	Amica Gordon	Oct 2020 to present
Secretary	Lincoln Harris	May 2021 to present
Treasurer	Amy Chapman	May 2020 to Dec 2022
General member	Amy Harrison	Oct 2020 to May 2022
General member	Fiona Henry	May 2022 to present
General member	Joe Sciglitano	May 2022 to present

Disclosure of interest

In 2022, five Board members, Amica Gordon, Amy Chapman, Lincoln Harris, Joseph Sciglitano and Amy Harrison had children attending the school. One Board member, Fiona Henry, is employed by the school as a class teacher. When a Board member had a conflict of interest for a particular matter, the conflict of interest was declared. If considered necessary by the Board, that individual was excluded from discussion and/or decisions relating to the matter.

Disclosure of interest

Milkwood Steiner School is a member of the following organisations:

- Steiner Education Australia
- Association of Independent Schools of the Northern Territory
- Australian Association for Rudolf Steiner Early Childhood Education Inc.

Staffing 2022

- Principal Netanela Mizrahi
- Finance Manager Caron Farrell
- Enrolments and Administration Officer Isabelle Kirkbride
- Kindergarten teacher Rhiannon Mounsey
- Class 1 teacher Quyên Đoàn
- Class 2/3 teacher Milly Flook
- Class 4 teacher Bindi Isis
- Class 5 teacher Fiona Henry
- Class 6 teacher Sera Koth
- Violin teacher Clare Gorton, Nakita Nia Staines
- Cello teacher Michael Bardon
- Music teacher Netanela Mizrahi
- Teaching assistants Lara Andropov, Caryn Dunning, Bernie Murray
- Indonesian language teacher Guido Sinaga
- After School Care El Ibo, Alice Riddell, Jiali Wetherall-Fitz
- Playgroup leader Kate Harper, El Ibo
- Cleaners - Regina Andrua, Jean Marie Lukendo
- Learning Enrichment Teacher – Paul Austin
- Teaching Assistant – Maricki Moeller-Levick
- Playgroup - Lucy Neville



BOARD CHAIR REPORT

It is with great pleasure that the Board presents Milkwood Steiner School Association's Annual Report for 2022.

2022 was a year of stability and growth. Milkwood continued to build on sturdy foundations towards a future in which we will be able to welcome increasing numbers of children to an education underpinned by the principles of Anthroposophy, at a school site appropriate to their needs.

The Strategic Plan, a key document which guides the work of the Board, Principal, administration and teaching staff, was developed in 2021, and continues to provide the blueprint for Milkwood's path forward. Our Principal Netanela Mizrahi led a consultative process which drew together the voices of the children, parents and staff of our community. The resulting Strategic Plan set out Milkwood's Mission Statement:

"Milkwood Steiner School exists as a space to grow and nurture a community on Larrakia land with intention, where children are received with reverence, guided by the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner Education, adapted to this Time and Place."

This mission statement and the values articulated in the Strategic Plan have once more informed the work of the Board and school staff in 2022.

As of the end of 2022, Milkwood is in a strong financial position. The school's strengthening financial position has supported our efforts to secure a new school site. The Board is grateful for the tireless work of our Principal have continued to advocate for the granting of a new school site, where the

The Board met 13 times this year. Areas of focus included:

- Review and endorsement of all key policies. This was achieved with the hard work of the Principal, and administration and teaching staff, who consulted closely to ensure the quality and ownership of the policies.
- Lease and land acquisition: The Board would like to express its deepest gratitude to Netanela and the administration team, as well as all those who have worked tirelessly to advocate for a permanent home for the school.
- Governance: The Board has continued to adjust its operations as the school has strengthened.
- Risk assessment and legal matters: The Board has responsibility for ensuring the School's compliance with legal requirements, as well as assessing risk.
- Grievances: The Board receives and deals with grievances under the Communications Policy.

The Board would like to thank the amazing staff at Milkwood – the Principal, Netanela Mizrahi, through whose tireless dedication and incredible skill the school continues to flourish; the Finance Manager Caron Farrell and Administration and Enrolments Officer Isabelle Kirkbride, who have worked very hard to strengthen administrative systems and build relationships with the school community; and the College of Teachers, specialist teaching staff and teacher assistants, whose dedication, love and skill enrich the hearts and minds of our children.

We also acknowledge with gratitude the great contribution made by families to the life of the school, through the many ways that help is extended, as well as by the role that each family plays in fostering a warm sense of community which nurtures all of our Milkwood children.

PRINCIPAL REPORT

Annual Report – Principal’s report 2022

2022 has been a year of remarkable learning and growth for our school.

The introduction of a Learning Enrichment Program and Teacher, an increase in Teacher Assistants and Professional Learning across the school has seen a significant shift in our capacity to support children with diverse learning needs to thrive. Whole school learning projects, led by Larrakia and other Aboriginal Traditional Owners have nurtured our relationship with our community, and provided opportunities for real, deep, authentic learning in areas of Anti-Oppressive Practice. The power of this work at Milkwood is now recognised nationally as a model for best practice, as we featured in publications, conference presentations and are sought out as consultants in these areas, in 2022. Extraordinary work as a College has transformed our school festivals to authentically meet Rudolf Steiner’s indications for meeting the needs of the child and our community. Outdoor Education Camps and rich collaborations with Teaching Artists resulted in a Music Camp in partnership with the Darwin Symphony Orchestra and Tracks Dance Co., and an NT Science Week award-winning STEAM project: the Yolngu Fish Trap.

As our school ages, Milkwood graduates have grown up, furthered their training as Educators and become members of our College! We introduced an additional Primary Class, and expand into Year 7 next year. We have introduced a second Kindergarten for 2023. This decision required faith that the demand for Milkwood’s Steiner Education was great enough to warrant doubling our capacity. We open 2023 with 2 full and healthy Kindergartens and an Early Childhood Team.

Thanks to the advocacy of our community and relentless commitment from our administration and site team, Milkwood is very close to announcing our permanent future site, and celebrating the opportunity after many years of transience, to put down roots. We will relocate to our new site by 2026 as planned! I express sincere gratitude to Duwun Lee, Minister Lawler, Minister Ah Kit, Tony Considerine, Cheryl Salter and all those who have had the power to support our school, who have truly seen Milkwood Steiner School as a vital and necessary part of this community, worthy of support and ready to realise its potential on its own land.

Our Board has invested so much care and time in their governance of the Milkwood Steiner School Association. These volunteers work so hard for us to thrive. They believe in our work, and their support has been immeasurable. We are truly blessed to have a Board who hold the values and impulse of our school with such integrity, and go above and beyond in their care and dedication to our work. Their work is largely unseen, but their impact on this space is profound.

We open 2023 with over 150 children accessing Steiner Education on Larrakia Country a much-loved Playgroup and After School Care program, an expansion on our Learning Enrichment Program, a new Library Program and Teacher, and further increase in Teacher Assistants across all classes. Our Music, Traditional Knowledge and Indonesian Language programs continue to grow through the incredible inspiration and dedication of our specialist teachers. Our Staff and Board commence a major training in the Berry Street Education Model. Professional Learning and Adult Education opportunities continue to expand in our school, and we see the growing interest from our community and beyond, in lifelong learning in a Steiner setting.

I bring the year to a close with an expression of gratitude to all who hold, nourish and create in this space:

Thank you to Milkwood's children, who remind us every day that our work is important, who are our reason for being here, our delight and our inspiration.

Thank you to our families, our first teachers, who sustain our work, who help us grow, who tell us what is most important to them and their children to allow us to serve them best.

Thank you to my extraordinary colleagues. Your courage and dedication are unparalleled. I learn from you every day and words cannot express the awe and admiration I have for the skill, wisdom, creativity and kindness that imbues all you do.

And I express a deep gratitude, on behalf of us all, for the privilege of growing a school on Larrakia Country.

Netanela Mizrahi

Principal



BOARD TREASURER REPORT

Hi parents and friends of Milkwood Steiner School. I'm very excited to take over the role of school treasurer from Amy Chapman this year. We are a new 2023 family – Adelaide (Year 1) and Edith (Year 3/4). Milkwood embodies all of the qualities of the Territory that we value: creativity, independence, and respect for culture, environment and each other.

There's been a few changes recently to Milkwood Steiner School's financial management. In addition to a new treasurer, the school has welcomed a new finance manager, Yanina Gonzalez. We thank the departing finance manager, Caron Farrell, for her hard work during her time at Milkwood.

The yearly audit of the school's finances and financial governance has been finalised for 2022. This year, the audit came back with some minor recommendations, but overall indicates that the school is managing its finances well.

For 2022, the school's total income was \$2,436,506, primarily from government funding and school fees, and its total expenditure was \$1,938,377. This resulted in \$498,129 being retained by the school, taking its cash reserve to \$1,298,973 and its total equity to \$2,172,160. This is a great result for our financial stability and puts us on a great footing for the inevitable move to a new site.

With the assistance of a federal government grant, the 2023 budget included expenditure for a new demountable classroom and ablution block – and it's fantastic to see these have now been completed.

Overall, the school managed its budget extremely well last year. Ongoing sound financial management is critical to Milkwood thriving and continuing to be the wonderful school that it is – and I've no doubt this will continue in 2023.

Cameron McDonald

Treasurer