LINUWEL STEINER SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT 2025

This annual school report has been compiled to meet the reporting requirements of the Commonwealth & NSW State Governments and address those aspects of the school's operation relevant to these requirements.

Linuwel ngarralbaa marrungbu Wonnarua guridjar barray ngarra-baryn Nyiirun marrungbu yii barray-marrung guri guba barrayba ngularu-bang Nyiirun marring gurila bangay butunga ngarraba djuyabarray guwiyn-baa Ginyaang-djukal nguka ngarraba gatha nyiirunang.

Linuwel School respectfully acknowledges the Wonnarua people as the traditional custodians of the land upon which our school lives.

We acknowledge that this beautiful country has been cared for by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for over 60 thousand years, living in harmony with nature.

We give thanks to Elders past, present and future, for sharing, through stories, their spiritual knowledge and wisdom of this land and her sacred places.

It is a blessing to learn, share and grow together.

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Our Vision

Our vision is a school that provides a contemporary, relevant education that empowers students to meet their destiny with certainty through a sense of connection to place and community, self-knowledge, courage, compassion, and creativity.

The aim of the educational experience at Linuwel School is to develop empathetic individuals who can contribute with purpose and direction to the renewal of the world for the betterment of all.

“Our highest endeavour is to develop young men and women who out of themselves are able to impart meaning and direction to their own lives."
Marie Steiner

Linuwel School Mission

Our mission is to provide an educational pathway inspired by Rudolf Steiner’s indications that inspires an inherent love of learning and personal striving along with the capacity for imagination.

The school promotes and protects a feeling for goodness and for beauty in childhood and feeling for truth together with the capacity for critical thinking in the high school years to provide a healthy foundation for the unfolding of individual potential.

In its valuing of community and relationships, the school encourages gratitude, resilience, responsibility, compassion, and creative thinking in our students.

Linuwel School Values

Anthroposophy
We endeavour to align our work with the principles of Rudolf Steiner's spiritual philosophy, Anthroposophy, the study of human beings, our nature, development, freedoms, responsibilities, and potential for spiritual growth.

Collaboration
We value collaboration and co-operation over competition, striving daily to build harmony and nurture every class as a learning community. We enable collaboration by communicating openly and honestly, demonstrating mutual respect, and sharing responsibility.

Evidence-based practice
Teaching and learning programs and practices are informed by Rudolf Steiner's indications and critical engagement with contemporary educational research.

Fairness
Interactions and decision-making are oriented towards the principles of equity and fairness. We commit to the use of due process and restorative practice, balancing individual freedoms with the needs of a healthy social community.

Inclusion
We acknowledge the inherent worth and dignity of all people, positively valuing and respecting diversity and difference. We seek to build a sense of belonging among all involved with the school.

Respect
We are committed to action that advances Reconciliation, shows reverence for the natural world, shows diligent care for resources, and is nourishing to mind, body and spirit.

Service
We strive to be, and to enable children to become, active and contributing citizens. Our work is to make ethical and sustainable decisions for social, environmental and personal transformation, and enable students to do the same.

Message from the School Board of Directors

At the start of 2025, Christie Allen took on the role of Chair of the Linuwel School Board, following Diana Thorvaldson's decision to step aside from the position after many years of dedicated service.

Diana continues her valued involvement with the School in her roles as Director, teacher and Chair of the Education Committee, and the Board is grateful for both her leadership as Chair and her ongoing commitment and support. Christie is pleased to serve the School in this role and to support the Board's collective stewardship through the year.

At the Annual General Meeting in May 2025, Zoë Ambler stepped down from her role as Director while maintaining her Company Membership. The Board thanked Zoë for her service and her continued work both as a dedicated teacher and Company Member.

Following the AGM, Lani Dyer provided support to the Board as Casual Director. Her contribution of time, care and thoughtful attention has been sincerely appreciated.

Under the continued leadership of Head of School, Abigail Sawyer, the School progressed significant operational and regulatory priorities during the year, including the ongoing registration process with NESA. Abigail's commitment to strengthening systems, policies and financial oversight has been central to the School's stability.

The Board farewelled Business Manager and Company Secretary, Siubhan Sadler, at the end of Term 1, 2025. A Linuwel alumna, Siubhan served the School with dedication since 2017, and her contribution across her dual roles is deeply appreciated. We were pleased to welcome Luke Kirkegard as the School's new Business Manager, bringing a wealth of experience and knowledge to support and improve operational systems.

Linuwel staff undertook restorative practice work with Shelley Davidow, an experienced facilitator and educator specialising in restorative approaches in schools and organisations. This work supported staff wellbeing, communication and community resilience, aligning strongly with Linuwel's values.

Significant facilities projects were completed during the year. Following re-turfing works, the primary playground was completed and opened, providing a joyful and functional play space for students.

Mould identified in the library and soft craft room led to extensive remediation, relining and refurbishment. These works resulted in beautifully renewed learning

spaces, featuring new timber shelving and furniture crafted by a local Newcastle carpenter.

The reopening of the library was celebrated with a joint high school and primary school art exhibition featuring work by class 8 and class 4. Students created hand-coloured lino prints to raise funds for the Kaarakin Black Cockatoo Conservation Centre. The exhibition was opened by special guest Gerry Bobsien, Director of the Maitland Regional Art Gallery.

Community life was further enriched through ongoing after-school activities with Nature and Nurture, as well as biodynamic gardening with Gavin Stokell.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all staff, students, families and community members who contribute to the life of Linuwel School. Through shared purpose and collaboration, the School continues to flourish.
'In every moment there is a seed of the future; take care of it.' – Rudolf Steiner

Christie Allen
Chair Linuwel School Board

Message from the Head of School

A Community of Practice is a group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly (Etienne Wenger, 1998).

It is our mutual striving, and ongoing transformation, that make Linuwel, and Steiner Education worldwide, Communities of Practice; living, evolving fields of shared endeavour.

Whether in a kindergarten circle, a collegial study group, or a biodynamic field, the practice of our community is never abstract. The work *is* the philosophy. It is relational work, sustained through rhythms of conversation, observation and renewal.

Communities of Practice, to remain viable, must continually negotiate and renegotiate what the community is for, and towards what we strive. In 2025, our School invested heavily in this work, seeking to strengthen its social life. The year opened with whole-staff engagement in professional learning on *The Art of Communication*.

In July, our Board of Directors gifted the staff community the support and guidance of Shelley Davidow, a leader in the field of Restorative Practices. Shelley facilitated a whole-school restorative process, with the intention of healing past hurts so that Linuwel can walk steadfastly into its future.

Professional learning, restorative circles, staff surveys and community forums are not for 'emergencies'. Steiner schools are founded on the ideal of collaborative practice: A commitment to mutuality means that the work of seeking to understand, committing to both speak and listen, is never done.

In 2025 Linuwel also worked deeply into the question of how feedback, concerns and complaints can be given and received to build and sustain social harmony and enable productive conflict. This work will continue into 2026, when the Board expects to endorse a new whole-community *Complaints Resolution Framework*.

While this work was being done, Linuwel's most important work, the work of teachers guiding children through their developmental journey, continued. as a steady pulse. Using the living tools of Steiner pedagogy - the morning verse, the blackboard drawing, the careful observation of each child's development gesture, the seasonal festival, teachers crafted programs of truth, beauty and goodness.

A healthy social life is found only when In each human soul the community finds its reflection and, when in the community, the virtue of each one is living. (Rudolf Steiner)

Abigail Sawyer

Head of School

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Linuwel Steiner School was established in 1979 and offers Steiner education to children from Preschool to Year 12. It is a co-educational, non-denominational school located in East Maitland in the lower Hunter Valley of NSW. The school is single stream and is set in beautiful grounds with classrooms surrounding a wetlands area.

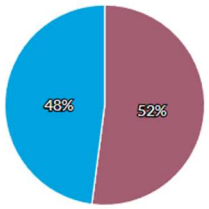
Linuwel School is an active member of our peak professional body, Steiner Education Australia (SEA) and the Association of Independent Schools NSW (AISNSW). The curriculum fulfils all the requirements of NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and offers our students the scope and sequence to develop skills and understanding in all the key learning areas in a deep and enduring way.

In 2025, 244 students were enrolled at the time of the August census. The ratio of girls to boys across the school was close to even. Ten per cent of students (*n* = 27) identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Students

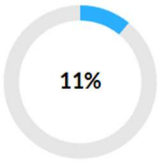
Total enrolments: 244

Boys 117
Girls 127

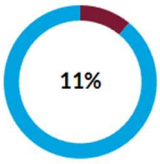


Full-time equivalent enrolments: 244.0

Indigenous students



Language background other than English



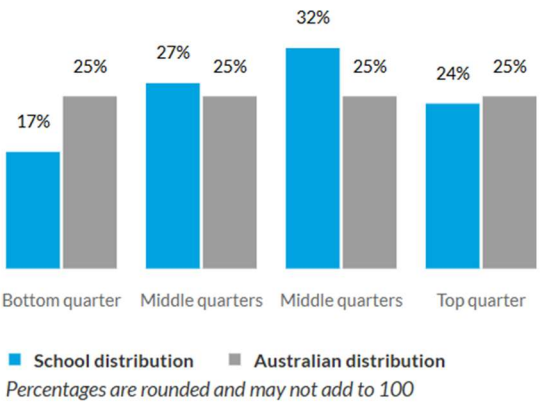
Yes (11%)
No (89%)
Not stated (0%)

In 2025, the distribution of socio-economic advantage among the student cohort was as follows:

Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA)

School ICSEA value	1041
Average ICSEA value	1000
School ICSEA percentile	65

Distribution of Socio-Educational Advantage (SEA)



Percentages are rounded and may not add to 100

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Standardised national literacy and numeracy testing

For a school's results to be compared to others, there must be a minimum of 11 students participating in a year cohort test and an 80% participation rate overall. In 2025, 51% of eligible students participated in NAPLAN.

The table below is shaded grey because insufficient Linuwel students participated in NAPLAN 2025 to facilitate comparison with other schools.

Compare to ● Students with similar background ○ All Australian students

	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar	Numeracy
Year 3	419	378	387	390	408
Year 5	529	456	484	506	498
Year 7	535	497	507	547	534
Year 9	635	617	580	594	634

Student NAPLAN performance data is also available on the MySchool website.

Post-school destinations

Linuwel School has seen many alumni develop the initiative and the moral strength to face the challenges of our times and the future with a positive outlook, and approach their adult life with constructive insight, balanced thought, and a striving to take care of their environment. Linuwel students have successfully obtained university entry via Open Foundations courses, entrance examinations or the Special Tertiary Admissions Test (STAT).

In 2025, 5 students graduated from Year 12 at Linuwel. Of these students, 2 are enrolled in TAFE courses, working towards university entry in 2027. Others are engaged in full and part-time employment while plotting their future life paths. In addition to his TAFE studies, one Linuwel alumnus is making a positive contribution to the community as a volunteer.

Senior secondary outcomes

Linuwel students are not assessed for the NSW RoSA or the HSC. Students at Linuwel complete a Major Project, a substantive piece of independent study accompanied by both oral and written dissertations. This piece of work is presented to the school community prior to graduation and is part of the student portfolio students may use to gain access to university and other post-secondary options.

STAFFING

Teacher Accreditation

By the end of 2025, only one teacher on Linuwel's permanent staff had Conditional accreditation, an early career teacher. Two other teachers had Provisional accreditation. One of these is an early career teacher, the other is in the process demonstrating Proficiency after transferring from an international jurisdiction.

These teachers will be supported by the School's Accreditation Support Teacher to achieve Proficiency by their allocated due date.

In 2025, one teacher sought endorsement to apply for accreditation as an Accomplished Teacher, which was granted.

Level of accreditation	Number of teachers
Conditional	1
Provisional	2
Proficient	24

Workforce Composition

School Staff 2025	
Teaching staff	27
Full-time equivalent teaching staff	22.3
Non-teaching staff	18
Full-time equivalent non-teaching staff	12.5

Head of School	1
Business Manager	1
Property Manager	1
Realm Coordinators	3
Teachers: Full-time	11
Teachers: Part-time	17
Learning Support teachers	3

Female teachers	23
Male teachers	4
Support staff: Full-time	1
Support staff: Part-time	6
Administration staff	4
Facilities Team staff	3
Camp Coordinator	1

Professional Learning

Linuwel staff engage in extensive professional learning each year to ensure currency of knowledge of the Australian Steiner Curriculum Framework, NESA syllabuses and Steiner's indications for teaching, learning, school governance and management.

All Linuwel teachers attend a week of intensive professional learning either immediately before the commencement of the school year or during the Winter Vacation.

This professional learning is designed to facilitate cooperation between Steiner teachers across Australia teaching the same year level and support teachers to do the 'inner work' that will nourish their pedagogical practice year around.

Anthroposophically Sound Teaching	
ACTIVITY	**Number attended**
Teacher Intensives Steiner Education Australia Pedagogical Section	19
National Teachers' Conference Steiner Education Australia	3
Teaching in the Waldorf High School Michael Merle	6
Mentoring the Mentors: Steiner Education Australia	1
Teaching Assistant and Learning Support Course Steiner Education Australia	2
Anthroposophical Nursing: Insights into Child Development Sarah Swingler	28
Curative Education in Early Childhood Steiner Early Childhood Australia	3

Literacy and Numeracy	
ACTIVITY	**Number attended**
New Maths Syllabus: Implementation Planning AISNSW	2
Instructional Coaching AISNSW	3
The Fluency Puzzle: Next Steps in Reading 3-6 SPELD	2

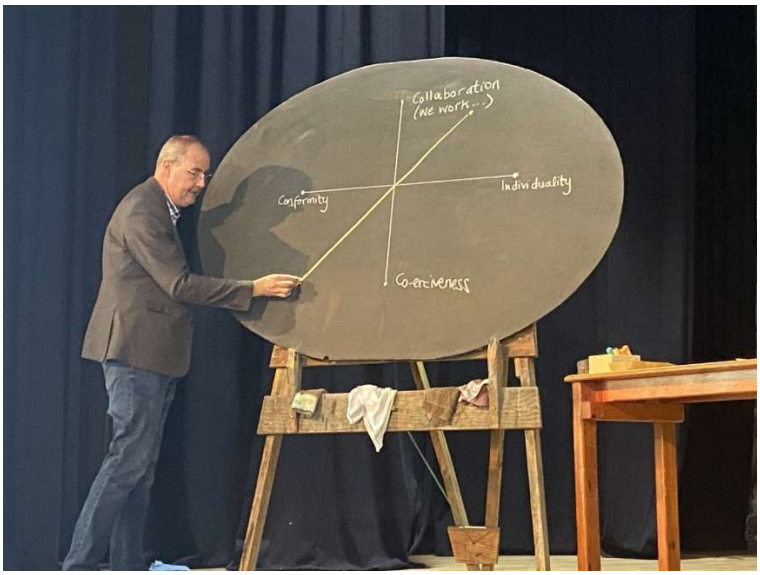
Healthy Social Life: Student and staff wellbeing	
ACTIVITY	**Number attended**
The Art of Communication Melbourne Rudolf Steiner Seminar	45
Heart Maths: Whole-school Restorative Circle Shelley Davidow	45
ASIST: Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training Lifeline	1
Consent Labs: Upskilling with Consent Education	27
Seasons of Life: Supporting children and young people to respond to change, loss and grief Mackillop	1
Anti-Discrimination Masterclass AISNSW	1

Positive Behaviour Support and Management	
ACTIVITY	**Number attended**
Positive Behaviour Support Lou Harvey-Zahra	28
How to dial down the drama Rebecca Sparrow	1

COLLABORATION: Leadership	
ACTIVITY	**Number attended**
Governance, Leadership, Administration & Management (GLAM) Conference Steiner Education Australia	2
SEA Leadership Development Program	1
SEA Delegates' Program	3
School Governance: Chair and Principal Training Association of Independent Schools NSW	2
LawSense: Supporting separated families Association of Independent Schools NSW	1
Introduction to Governance Steiner Education Australia	5
Board Training Australian Institute of Company Directors	5

WHS	
ACTIVITY	**Number attended**
Children Protection and Code of Conduct Training In-house	45
CPR and Anaphylaxis Training Royal Lifesaving	45
CPR Facilitator Training Royal Lifesaving	1
Bronze Medallion Training Royal Lifesaving	11
Arc Welding Training ATWEA	
Managing Psychosocial Health AISNSW	1
School Excursions and Camps *LawSense*	1
First Aid Training (staff off cycle) Royal Lifesaving	1
Working at Heights Training Maxwell Training	1

In addition to participating in offerings from external providers as identified above, in 2025, Linuwel created an additional teacher position, the Education Mentor (0.6FTE). The purpose of this role was to strengthen in-house mentoring of Steiner pedagogy, guiding anthroposophical study and supporting teachers' inner work.



STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Student non-attendance is followed up by class teachers, guardians and mentors. Patterns of absence are monitored and discussed with parents if a concern arises.

In 2025, year group attendance rates were as follows:

Year Level	Attendance Rate %
Kindergarten	86
Year 1	85
Year 2	90
Year 3	88
Year 4	91
Year 5	87
Year 6	89
Year 7	88
Year 8	85
Year 9	78
Year 10	83
Year 11	77
Year 12	83
Whole of school	**85**

School attendance data can also be found on the MySchool website.

SCHOOL POLICIES

The School's Complaints Management policy was reviewed in 2025, along with the School's Enrolment Terms and Conditions.

In 2026, the School will develop a new anti-bullying policy to ensure readiness for mandatory implementation of the NSW Anti-Bullying Framework in 2027.

The following school policies are available via the Linuwel website:

- Student Enrolment Policy
- Student Discipline Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Complaints Management Policy
- Anti-Bullying Statement.

STUDENT, PARENT AND TEACHER SATISFACTION

Parents

Parents are encouraged to engage proactively as partners in their child's education, connecting with their child's teacher, guardian or mentor as the first point of contact to voice satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

Class teachers, guardians and mentors communicate parent concerns or compliments openly to their Realm Coordinators, who support teachers by investigating concerns or complaints when delegated by the Head of School to do so. Parents who voice dissatisfaction will generally meet with their child's teacher, Realm Coordinator and other staff involved or invited to attend.

Parent feedback is actively sought at the point of disenrollment, to generate information about parent satisfaction with school program.

Most parent feedback is positive, with parents appreciative of the school environment and the inspiration the teachers provide to the students. Where there have been parent concerns and suggestions, the school has addressed in line with its complaints management procedure. Follow-up contact with parents continues until the school has confirmed that matters have been dealt with to parents' satisfaction.

Students

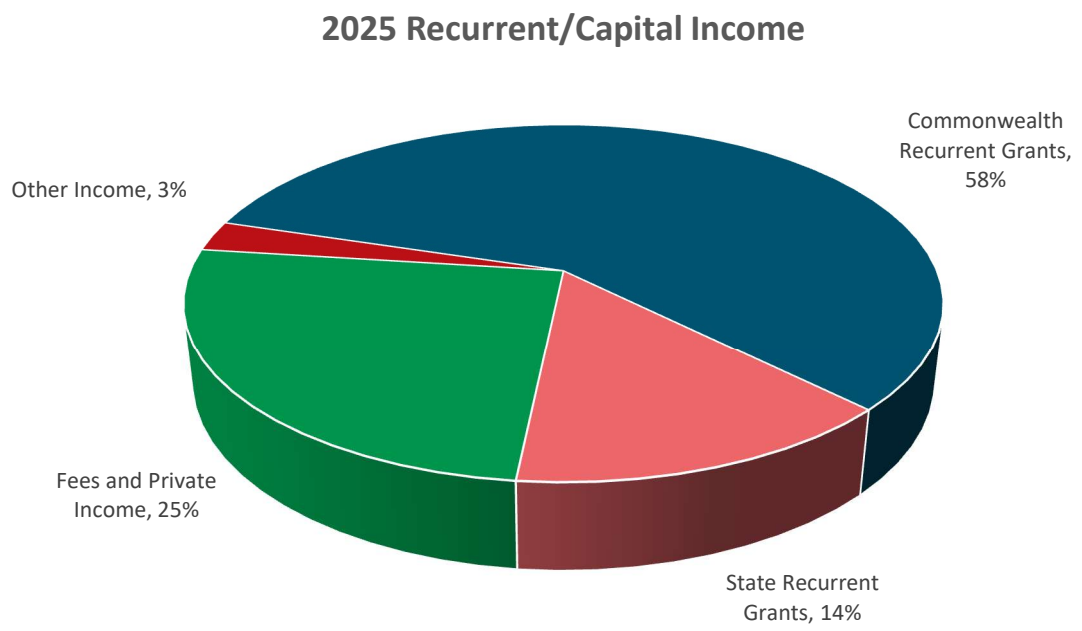
Teachers work to maintain the students' trust and respond to their needs, resulting in a co-operative and productive learning environment, where feedback is welcomed.

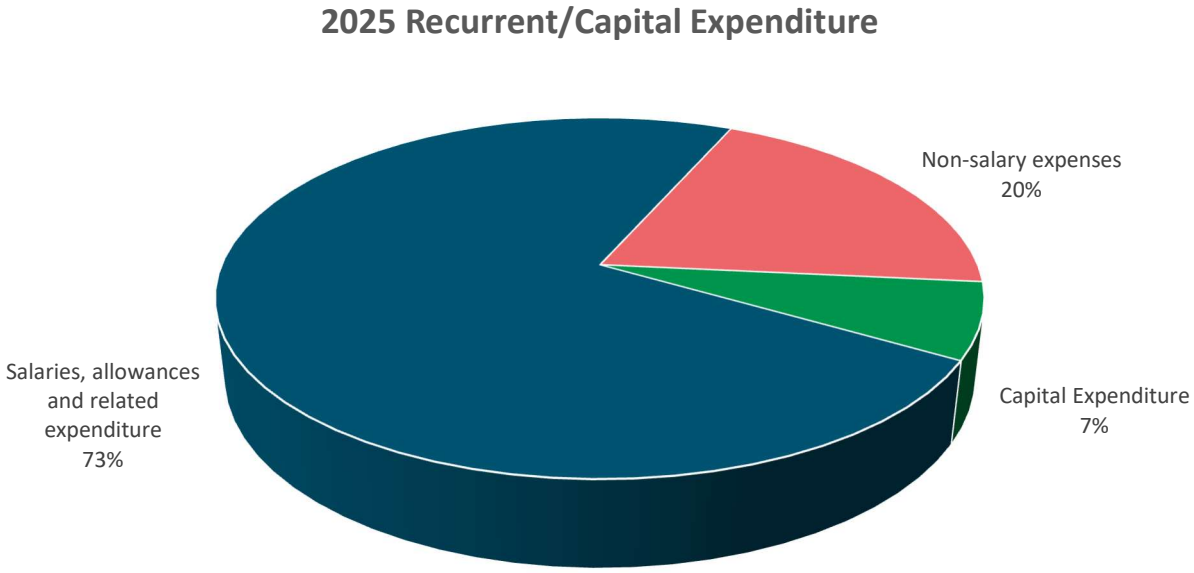
Low levels of problem behaviour and high levels of engagement in school activities are indicative of student satisfaction. Students entering from other schools regularly articulate appreciation for the welcoming and accepting environment and enjoyable learning activities.

Staff

Ideally, our teachers stay with their class from Years 1 to 6 in Primary and Years 7 to 10 in High School, before partnering with a Senior Mentor for Years 11 and 12. All class teachers in 2025, except our Class 1 teacher, were returning teachers. Our Class 1 teacher was also a returning teacher, who returned to Linuwel after a period of working elsewhere. In addition to our experienced Steiner teachers, our school employs specialist support teachers and teacher aides to enable each child's access to quality Steiner education.

Summary: Financial information





With gratitude to all who contribute to the health of our school.