

VILLAGE SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT 2020



"Our aim is to delight and inspire young children to become resourceful and independent learners."

WORD FROM THE CHAIR – Ray Yates

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD IN 2020

Chair:	Ray Yates- Retired principal and municipal mayor
Vice Chair:	Pamela Taylor-Barnett - Parent
Treasurer:	Keith James – Accountant and Lawyer
Principal:	Tanya Heine – Master of Education
Bursar:	Trish Lamb - Accountant
Co-opted Education Consultant:	Ian Bentley- lecturer La Trobe Uni.
Parent Rep:	Amy Buchanan - Parent
Staff Rep:	Melissa Langford – current teacher

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT – Ray Yates

The year has been punctuated by the challenges of COVID epidemic, yet the Village School has withstood these but not without costs, frustrations, and setbacks.

With so many teachers and, the impact of restrictions COVID has been immediate and resounding.

We were gearing up for another creative year of growth, but then the pandemic hit.

The stop- start restrictions initially caused a challenge to the confidence on our teachers, programmes and groups and mentors. While understandable it was stressful experience

Three main barriers needed overcoming, namely, how we recover, personal impacts, and confidence.

The financial position has been a critical matter to the Village School and remains so.

There is no doubt there has been material, monetary and social impacts from COVID-19.

For other such as the live sector side of things, though, the situation is worse. Artists have suffered a distressing loss of income as they had to suspend all programmes,

We have worked long to make sure that Village School provided all with a sustainable model, and now we have to re-establish links and try to fulfill the obligations of our commitment to the Community. It is like starting again.

The resilience and creativity of our members and groups together with their rapid innovative work cannot resurrect the situation without a generous initiative of a financial sustainable model.

We need time to recover and set-in motion all of the pledges we previously promised.

We need to buy time to restore and invigorate ourselves.

The achievement in remaining positive has been a result of the process of excellence in approaches of the Board and the staff. The quality revolution has been profound in its impact and legacy. This condition is achieved by a priority focus on our services to exceed expectations.

These principles have permeated the organization from the top down and the bottom up. As an organization, by putting the emphasis on a continual improvement path, we will see the dynamic nature of the VILLAGE SCHOOL flourish and prosper.

There is no short thinking, no just focussing on the near horizon, there is a mission to bring into focus the long-term goals. While there is an inward focus, Village School has a much more mature and sustainable view from an inside-out approach. A spotlight on aspects on governance -Using precise approaches and Teamwork is the foundational core of the Village School.

In order to create the way forward the continuance of recruiting students needs to be a priority of purpose in 2021 and beyond. Active and transformational leadership, an engaged involvement of the Board Members and parents has been undertaken to achieve this but needs to continue.

There must be change, creating: -

- A constancy of purpose towards improvement
- Awakening the Village School to new challenges
- How to ensure Sustainability
- Encouragement of the Board Members and the Staff to raise to those confronts.
- Building solid relationships with staff and parents and Board
- Instituting a vigorous programme of self-improvement
- Achieving a dramatic transformation of the organization with an emphasis on the ethical mission and goals.
- Encouragement of a shared work ethos, and all tasks are interdependent, all share the responsibility for results and outcomes, and the encouragement to collectively manage our relationships across the organization.

The nobility of purpose of the School must be assisted and embraced by the talented Board Members and Staff and parents: -

Village School forms a natural unit, formidable in its actions, with a wide diversity of talents and skills and culturally supportive of the processes of Excellence.

Adam Smith's, the noted economist from the 18century (known as the Father of Capitalism) in his earlier work, "The Theory of Moral Sentiments," made the observation that the value of any government (*Board*) is judged in proportion to the extent that it makes its people happy."

I think that is a good founding principle for any group to be focussed on promoting well-being. None of us has all of the answers. But in the world, we live in today, with growing divides and inequalities, it is more important than ever that we ask and find the answers to those questions and promote a vision of society (School) that has well-being, not just wealth, at its very heart.

Village School is in 'GOOD HANDS, but the challenges are still there to conquer.

TREASURER – Keith James

At last year's AGM I commented that the statutory financial accounts masked a trading position that needed to be addressed.

Relevantly the receipt of non-reoccurring building grants related to the construction of the new administration building of \$206,201 in 2018 and \$93,700 in 2019, masked operating losses of \$145,664 and \$129,952 respectively. As discussed, the accounts showed that as at 1 January 2020 the school had a deficiency of working capital (current assets over current liabilities) of \$19248.

As discussed at last year's meeting the 2020 budget was to on an operating basis break even. By not spending non cash provisions for depreciation we would restore the working capital position. In a difficult year this was by and large been achieved. Our operating loss was around \$31,000, due in part by not achieving the budgeted student numbers and depreciation being under budgeted.

A decision was made to spend approximately \$10,000 on a long overdue review of the schools website. The budget comparison shows a variance of \$41,000 (loss).

Covid resulted in 2020 being a special year. The Commonwealth government initially announced a relief package for small business's determined by turnover disclosed in their Business Activity Statements (BAS). The school qualified, and over a period of a few months we received 'refunds' of BAS tax remissions totalling \$100,000.

After subtracting the above \$41,000 loss and \$30,000 of additional Covid related costs our cash reserves were boosted by \$29,000.

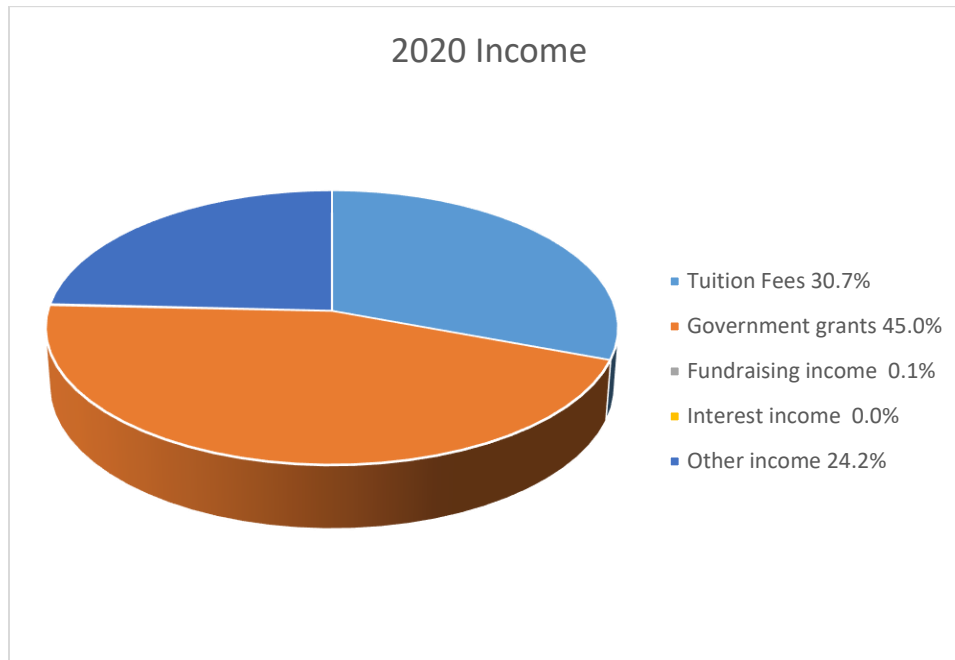
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The Commonwealth government also offered a 'Job Keeper' subsidy to employer entities who in any of a three-month period showed in any month a 30% or more decrease in turnover as measured in their monthly 2019 and 2020 BAS. In March 2019 the school received the \$93,700 building grant referred to above. The decrease in turnover was over 100%. The school automatically qualified.

In total we received \$339,659 in job keeper subsidies from which we had to make unbudgeted payments of \$74,594. Our net subsidy for keeping all the staff employed being \$265,065.

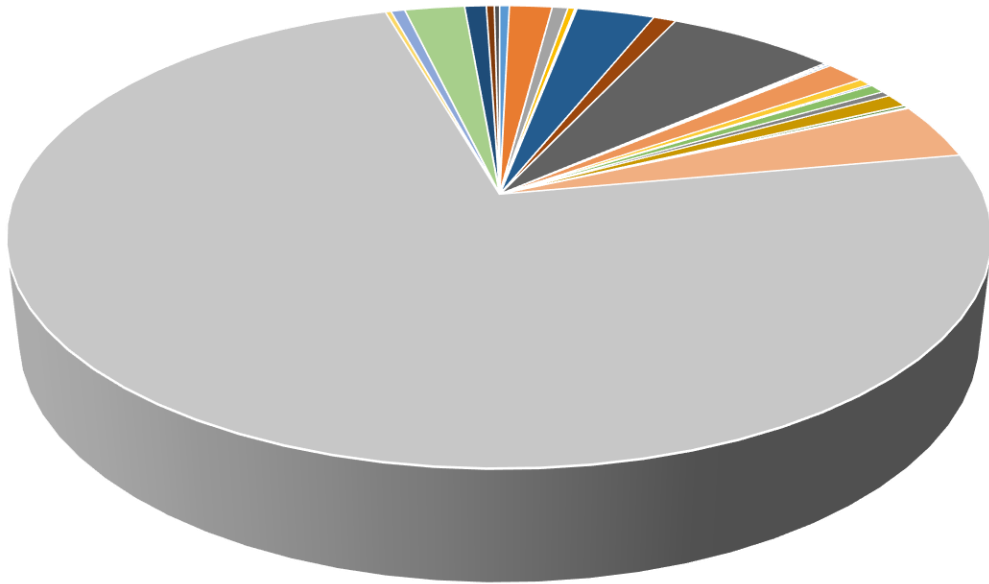
The sum of all of the above is that the accounts record a statutory income of \$294,615. This should be compared to our combined operating losses of \$275,616 for 2018 and 2019. If a small operating loss for 2020 is added the school is effectively in the same healthy financial position it was at 1 January 2018.

The challenge for the Board and the school is to spend this surplus on school improvements not on operating losses. The 2021 budget is again tight. The Board recently agreed to add an unbudgeted \$10,000 to the marketing budget in an endeavour to boost enrolments. This together, with an initiative with Swinburne University will hopefully produce results. The school had the staffing and physical assets to enrol an additional small but financially significant number of students.



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2020 Expenditure



■ Accountancy & audit 0.9%	■ Advertising and promotion 4.7%
■ Bad debts and debt collection 1.8%	■ Bank charges 0.3%
■ Bookkeeping 2.5%	■ Camp costs 2.8%
■ Cleaning 2.0%	■ Computer and software costs 0.7%
■ Depreciation and amortisation 7.0%	■ Debt Collection
■ Farm expenses 0.5%	■ Fundraising Expenses 0.1%
■ General expenses 0.8%	■ Insurance 1.1%
■ Interest 0.0%	■ Lease of equipment 0.3%
■ Library expenses 0.2%	■ Light and power 0.6%
■ LOTE expenses 0.5%	■ Minor equipment purchases 0.0%
■ Music 0.7%	■ Office expenses 0.7%
■ Postage 0.0%	■ Professional development 0.3%
■ Recruitment Costs 0.0%	■ Repairs and maintenance 2.8%
■ Salaries and on-costs 62.0%	■ Security 0.2%
■ Subscriptions 1.2%	■ Teaching (recurrent) expenses 4.5%
■ Telephone 0.4%	■ Waste disposal 0.3%

PRINCIPAL – Tanya Heine

It was ironic that in the 2019 Annual Report I discussed Village's 'real life learning' versus programs online and children being constantly on screens. Due to Covid, 2020 presented us with no alternative but to gracefully embrace online learning and some of our staff were to be commended for their enormous leaps in computer literacy. This was aided in part by parents in the IT field coming to our aid, and also by some of our younger staff members who suddenly stepped up in a leadership capacity. The result was that we adopted two separate programs to run our teaching; See-saw with the lower primary and Microsoft Teams with the upper primary. Both areas of the school also used Zoom for face-to-face communication and for teaching purposes, we used the added feature of break out rooms in Zoom.

Almost all the staff were still on site for most of the lock downs and we also had a daily cohort of students ranging from one or two up to as much as eight, across the week, whose parents were essential workers. Our learning supports took on the roles of being the parent working with the individual children who arrived and teachers ran their online programs for those at home.

We lost three students immediately when we went into lockdown. A parent who had originally been a home schooler decided to withdraw her two and also we lost another student who found themselves locked down in Queensland, and the family decided to stay. We also had a large year six cohort (16) leave at the end of the year and a few others from across the years which left us with lower numbers and we made the decision to scale down from five homegroups to four for the following year.

Last year reminded us of the value of being part of a community. It was something we all missed and it was a great relief when we were all allowed to gather on the last Monday night of our school year. Maintaining a warm welcoming community is something that Village School strives to do. We need to maintain the well-being of our parent community and our teaching community as this has a positive effect on the well-being of the children themselves.

As stated in my last report, this is my last year as principal of Village School. I have been associated with the school since 1985 when I enrolled my children here. In 1987 I became the performing arts teacher and then in 1989, the year 5/6 teacher. I decided to apply for the principal's job in 2012 and took over as principal from 2013. Why so long in one place? Because I've never seen another school similar enough to Village School to make moving an attractive option. I wanted my children to experience an education in a school where they were not talked down to; where their voices would matter; where the teachers would respect them and where they felt part of a community. Village gave those things and much more. The school has fluctuated with enrolments ever since I've known it. Getting the marketing right has always been a challenge. We've seen over 90 students one year and as low as 48 another. The important thing is

that it continues to exist, to evolve and yet still supply a niche in the education market. May it always be there for those who need it.

EDUCATION PROGRAM

The year started with the younger children (preps, ones and twos) looking at our environment. Middle primary were expanding this environment theme and Laura's group was developing a TV show called "Better Schools and Gardens". Leanne's group was exploring colour and how it affects our lives while Yonny's group was confronted with a completely empty school room with the job of designing their room from scratch. This theme was all about them and included research into their families.

The end of term one saw us closing down for the last five days of term and starting term two in Stage One lockdown.

During term two, two upper primary groups did a theme called My Product Rules which integrated mathematics, language, graphics and science as the children created their own food product and then designed packaging which included all the necessary writing to display ingredients, weights and percentages for food value as well as marketing language for their products advertising. It was fortunate that we came out of lockdown at a time when the children could display their products for the parents to see. The younger children looked at Fairy Tales, as a way of strengthening their literacy experiences while the year ones and twos explored "Fractured Fairy Tales" leading to some very interesting creative writing!

Term 3 was once again in lockdown and the scheduled whole school play was put on hold, although the songs were taught through video and we had Zoom sessions for line practice. The year six group had a history theme related to the play, which was comparing life in England in the sixteenth century with today and also looking at the language of Shakespeare, and lots of word study activities. The lower primary went with a "Changes" theme and each week, they looked at aspects of change in different areas, such as Seasons, Toys and Games, Transport as well as activities coming from a the class novel, "The Magic Faraway Tree"

Although we were back at school for term 4 there were still restrictions so we had the unique experience of creating a movie from our play, which worked very well. Other study themes included Passion Projects so that children were able to delve into a subject of their choice. Also, in term 4 the year six students created their own memory book about Village School, researching the history as well as including current information.

SCHOOL EVENTS

Carmel ran a Teddy Bear's Picnic at Lilydale Lake for the new Preps to help aid transition into the start of school.

At the end of the second week in term we ran a Whole School Barbecue which incorporated a Whole School Meeting followed by Homegroup Meetings.

Other whole school events were cancelled due to Covid and instead we ran the AGM through Zoom. The children's Village Idol which usually happens at the end of term 2 with a sleepover was converted into an online event, run by the year sixes. They were to be commended for their ingenuity with this and we were surprised to see so many videos submitted by the children, as far as online events for the year this was probably the highlight. We also changed our "Meet the Graduates" to a Zoom meeting and were able to contact some of them. It was not well attended by the parents but there were still some interesting exchanges between the current year sixes and the year seven graduates. We also had a couple of older graduates who had just completed their year twelve.

Having had to cancel the whole school camp we decided to hire a house in Philip Island and run a camp in the last week of school for the year sixes. We were also able to host a Graduation Concert on the last Monday of term which was a great relief and a wonderful community gathering.

Excursions were replaced with incursions the most popular one was the Melbourne Aquarium.

A.G.M.

After delaying the AGM for a couple of months hoping to come out of lock down, we eventually decided to run it as a Zoom meeting on 7th August and approximately 20 people attended which included the teachers and all the board members.

MARKETING

Tanya and Nikki spent a lot of time rewriting and rebuilding the website, which went live at the end of October 2020. Since then, traffic from searches has more than doubled and continues to grow strongly. We ran a very low-level Google ads campaign during 2020, for both Google searches, and to display ads across the internet to past website visitors (remarketing ads), that resulted in more than 1100 new visitors to the website and a small number of tour bookings, phone calls and emails. We don't know whether they directly resulted in any new enrolments.

and Nikki spent a lot of time rewriting the website so that it would be up and running by the end of the year, which it was. We did not get a huge return for the Google Ads. The

school did not hold a lot of its usual events which would have contributed to marketing due to the Covid restrictions. Marketing took a back seat during this year and in retrospect that was a big mistake.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

There was an emphasis on IT for professional development and all teachers were trained in the use of Microsoft Teams. The lower primary then did workshops on See Saw before deciding that it was the better option for them. Teachers also took part in the IS Connect Seminar, NCCD Webinar at ISV, Melissa did a Differentiated Learning Seminar, Sally and Leanne did the PM Benchmark Readers and all staff did a Athletics Seminar. We were fortunate to be able to put off the annual first aid until we were able to have a face-to-face session for all staff.

TESTING AND ASSESSMENT

Due to Covid our regular formal testing was put on hold and in the case of NAPLAN cancelled outright. Teachers used a revised format for school reports as it was difficult to assess the children due to the vastly different educational experiences the children had during Covid. Some children worked well, completed all the work tasks and were able to receive timely feedback from their teachers. Some struggled to complete the tasks and parent feedback was that it was too hard to make their children complete their work. Others hardly bothered with the online program, with their parent's blessing which in this case, made it more or less impossible for the teacher to make any assessment at all. Once the children were back in term 4 teachers used the Schleiger Diagnostic Maths Tests, some of the ACER PATs and Australian Spelling Test, to gauge the levels reached by the children.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Teachers set up new continuums which reference the Victorian Curriculum documents in order to improve the monitoring of mathematics and literacy skills. The school is still committed to making more links with local indigenous organisations but that was put on hold during Covid. The bush tucker garden was started and is only just surviving due to the baby bunnies on the property being able to slip through the fence palings.

TEACHING REVIEWS

Covid added extra stresses to the teachers' delivery styles and lots of collaborative efforts took place over the year, as the teachers acknowledged their different skills and their need to move out of their comfort zones in order to deliver a rigorous and exciting education program. Teachers shared these challenges with each other during Zoom staff meetings. Some of the teachers led others through the online features which could

enhance their programs. Some of the learning support staff were also very IT competent and were able to support the teachers and help improve the teachers' IT skills. Teachers did not have the chance to view each other's face-to-face time lessons during this very different year.

STUDENT ENROLMENT TERM FOUR 2020

YEAR LEVEL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
PART-TIME PREP	3	2	5
PREP	6	4	10
YEAR ONE	3	5	8
YEAR TWO	5	4	9
YEAR THREE	3	1	4
YEAR FOUR	6	2	8
YEAR FIVE	7	6	13
YEAR SIX	8	8	16
TOTAL STUDENTS	41	32	73

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

It is interesting to see how the attendance of the younger children decreased during the latter months of lockdown. It became harder and harder for parents to keep engaging the young ones with the online delivery.

Grade levels	Semester 1	Semester 2
One	90.53%	77.52%
Two	86.80%	87.71%
Three	96.65%	97.11%
Four	92.64%	99.42%
Five	93.49%	96.18%
Six	88.08%	92.21%

N.B. Due to a server breakdown and a need to change programs mid-year attendance data was compromised. The new program does

not record the prep and part-time preps and while Semester 1 contained both terms 1 and 2, the Semester 2 column relates to term 3 last year only.

PnF/SOCIAL COMMITTEE/FUNDRAISING

Many thanks to Kathy Marsan who tried to keep up the fundraising under very difficult circumstances. She still ran the Hot Cross Buns fund raiser and later a raffle. Generally speaking though it was a very quiet year for the PnF.

STAFFING

The teachers were:

Carmel Arnold	Bachelor of Education	Preps	
Laura Fraser	Graduate Diploma	Years 3/4/5 All years	Enviro/Garden
Melissa Langford	Bachelor of Education	Years 2/3/4	
Yonny Chang	Graduate Diploma Beijing Language and Culture University - intermediate Bachelor of Law UK	Year 6 All years	Mandarin
Leanne Fitch	Graduate Diploma Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Sociology Graduate Diploma in Social Psychology	Years 5/6 All years	Enviro/Garden
Vikki Pickering	Bachelor of Education	All years	Mindfulness/5Rs
Sandra Barnes	Bachelor of Education	All years	Science/Maths
Sally Boyd	Bachelor of Education	All years	Library
Tanya Heine	Master of Education Diploma of School Music	Principal All years	Performing Arts
Samantha Assender	Master of Education Bachelor of Health Sciences (Hons)	All years	Mindfulness

NB: Vikki Pickering left at end of term 1 and Samantha Assender who had just finished her teacher qualifications took over Mindfulness on Thursdays.

At the end of the year Carmel and Yonny announced that they would like to work part time only in 2021, which helped with the decision to move to four homegroups.

Samantha was then able to start her first full-time class with the year 3/4 group in 2021.

Learning support staff were:

Kim Thomson	Certificate 4 Education Support
Meredith Macrae	Certificate 3 Education Support -pending
Angela Heine	Certificate 3 Education Support -pending
Kath McCann	Certificate 3 Education Support
Rachelle Senior	Bachelor of Education
Samantha Assender	Bachelor of Education
Ella Barreiro	Mid years of teacher training
Sam Fox	Mid years of teacher training

NB: These people were not all full-time and they made up the equivalent of just under six learning supports.

Contractors

Glitz Academy	Gym instruction – cancelled after term 1
King Swim	Intensive swimming program cancelled
Georgia Appleton	Pony riding cancelled after term 1
Movement Matters	Exercise/Resilience program – This was provided online during all lockdowns, via video

Administration

Trish Lamb	Bursar
Sally Boyd	Reception/Records
Maia Cruz	Reception/ Newsletter

Cleaning/Maintenance

Shining Knight- Facilities Services

OH&S

We continued our policy of having all teachers and the board collectively manage the OH&S. As well as being an agenda item on the board and staff meetings, it is also an agenda item for the upper primary's Joint Meeting.

The emphasis was on being Covid Safe during this year and the school followed all the guidelines set out by the government.

The other main OH&S focus was the falling trees. We had six fall all together, at least four happening around the same time. This led to an arborist's report followed by some culling and trimming. There was concern from one of the units residents as there were some overhanging trees into his property. This was attended to.

THANK YOU

A special thank you must go out to the teaching staff who spent many extra hours during lockdowns, trying to reach all their children and keep them working productively. It was an uphill battle, and teachers needed to put their personal feelings about their own health and safety on hold as they were required to be at work and continue with face-to-face interactions with the children who did come to school. All staff worked overtime, some even across the weekends in order to try and contact as many children as possible.

Thanks also to the children who adapted very quickly to an online way of learning. In most cases they embraced the technology and in some cases were starting to feel like they'd like to continue studying this way indefinitely!

Many thanks to the parents who became teachers or tutors overnight and who in some cases juggled their own work with their children's work programs. It was pleasing to hear from some of the parents who didn't work, how much fun they had working together with their children.

Thank you to our admin staff who kept our lines of communication open, whether from their homes via email and phone or in the school office.

Thank you to the board for their support for the school in general and also for the principal, who was grateful for their guidance.