

2021 - Year in Review - Fitzroy Community School

The year started in a happy and positive manner, with all of the new students settling in quickly and all of the old ones happy to be back. The energy was especially upbeat, perhaps a reflection on the last two years. The new Tinies quickly demonstrated themselves to be an able group of students, with some showing strong academic aptitude. The year had an easier start with only short lockdowns marking the first half, a nice change to 2020 when a significant part of the settling in process occurred in a remote setting. Summer camps were a highlight of the start of the year, with camps going to Mansfield, Numurkah and Gippsland. Sadly, the second half of the year, especially third term, was again impacted by school closures.

Lockdowns, media and political fearmongering, repeated changing of the Covid rule framework and school operations, and the ongoing fear of site closure were a stress for most of the year. The final weeks of the year heralded a change from the last two years, a welcome change. November saw the cancellation of the close contact /exposure site rule which removed a significant worry for schools and the return to school of all students. The camaraderie of the final weeks was lovely to watch, with the students and staff all being so happy to be back together, and with no worries about being forced into isolation due to being a close contact. The joy with which some students, having spent months at home, returned to school was quite touching.

Significant time was spent in these final weeks of school addressing gaps in knowledge and understanding which were a consequence of lockdown and home-schooling. An attempt was made to ensure all the traditional rites of passage and special events were included in these weeks. The year had started well, and in the end finished well, with only a few small modifications to programs, all set within a joyous hum of connection and activity. The final concerts were inspiring events, held outdoors in the Normanby Avenue Campus back yard, a venue that actually worked really well for this purpose, even if this change meant that some of the younger students were not able to attend.

In reflecting on the year, the transition to the school's remote offerings were much easier the second year around, and our programs better organised and more thorough. During all lockdowns, short and long, our

school continued to be the **only** school in Victoria offering a full day of in classroom (onsite) and remote teaching.

The teachers again deserve a special mention for their dedication to the children in our school. Dedication is the right word, for there were moments in the second half of the year, as lockdown and school closures dragged on that stamina was the pre-eminent quality required. The emails, notes, calls and comments shared daily by our families helped keep the spirits of the staff up and were greatly appreciated, as were the nods, waves and smiles received at the school gate. The joy of seeing the children return to school for the final month, and the happiness that they brought to this return was a precious gift and a lovely reminder of the value that the children place on their school, and the connection that they feel to everyone who is part of it. The final concerts, mentioned above, held outdoor, offered an indication of community spirit that defines our school; an aspect missed over the two years in which parents were not invited onsite.

Zoom, quite fun for some of the students in April 2020 did lose its gloss during the long 6th lockdown, as did the loss of engagement with the community of parents and family – especially as the days turned into weeks and the weeks into months. During this time, consideration of the older members of the extended community were brought to consciousness by the staff, with the children encouraged to get in touch with older friends and relatives. Especially missed were our visits to some of the lonely elders in our community, with our visits to nursing homes suspended. Letter writing and the painting of cards continued, and we do hope that those stuck at home found a few little sparkles of brightness when these arrived by post. We all hope that letter writing remains part of the children's lives.

The ongoing closure of schools was distressing for many of the staff, aware that lockdowns in most other countries and jurisdictions did not include school closures. The data on the impact on children and young people of school closures is grim reading, and especially sad is the disproportional impact born by the less-well off and those on the margins. Our school continued to advocate throughout the year for schools not to be included in lockdowns, referencing health organisations and research bodies across the world that documented the marginal community-wide gains achieved by school closures and the significant costs that these closures impose. Our programs tried to mitigate these costs with regard to our own community, but this at times felt like privileged selfishness.

The camps, outings, concert, Kris Kringle, creek-walks and many games and activities provided in the final month of the school calendar helped the year finish as joyfully as possible, and was our school's attempt to send the graduating year 6 students off to the next stage of their education journey with the feeling that their year had not suffered too many losses. The final graduation concert, conducted in person, but held outside, did embed the pathos and camaraderie of previous years, with the outdoor location having positives as well as negatives.

The school staff continued to receive an ongoing stream of thanks throughout the year, with parents sharing their observations on our dedication, skill, care, enthusiasm and creativity. We received an ongoing stream of thanks for our support of the children in our care. The core mission of Fitzroy Community School is and remains the raising of happy, empowered children. The importance of this mission was clarified and re-affirmed over these two difficult years. Our commitment to helping children has never waned and is embedded in all aspects of our school's culture.

Community, experienced in varying forms, did suffer through the inability to physically connect. Not being in the same place for weeks upon end did leave some fractures and distance as the months rolled along. The absence of the chats around the yard that occur at pick-up and drop-off, the missing parent helpers around the school and the cancelling of soirees and plays and sports days was felt, and missed. The final month was, as noted above, a very positive time. A reminder of what our school is and does, and the importance of this. The effort made by many members of our school community, through calls, texts, emails, letters, presents, flowers and meals speaks to the quality of the families in our school. They deserve a mention here; their efforts were noted and appreciated. The support shown to families forced to isolate by the community was stunning to behold, with the loneliness and anxiety of isolation lessened by the food drops and other presents and expressions of care. Community, missing in so many ways, was also demonstrated continually.

As mentioned in earlier reports, one of the ongoing joys of working at Fitzroy Community School is the strength and longevity of the connections built around our school. In the last two years, this was experienced by the messages sent to our school by former colleagues, students and old school parents. Thank you, former families and students, for your support. The value placed on our school by those former families was apparent, and helped keep the spirits of those still working there up, and for you to

reconnect more fully in the future – hopefully in 2022. The annual re-union of former students at our plays (on Zoom) and concerts (cancelled, outdoors and restricted) will hopefully be back in full swing in the not-so-distant future.

Normanby Avenue started the year with a buzz, and the awareness that again being full meant the Dan O’Connell project was needed. The Biggies felt the first full and true FCS cohort, with the majority of the year sixes, for the first time ever, being students who had started their schooling at our school. There was also a properly full year 5-6 class, and the extra energy that this entails. The Normanby Avenue Campus was closed during Lockdowns with the Brunswick Street Campus catering for all students attending onsite. It reopened fully for the final six weeks of the year, and with the covered outdoor learning space, many classes were able to be delivered outdoors. Chess and basketball continue to be popular at Normanby Avenue, and to some degree are defining features of this campus. The in-house chess competitions have been especially popular, and the medals won worn with pride. Thanks Grant for enthusiasm for chess, and your adaptability in delivering our chess program both onsite and remotely. Cricket was played in the yard on a regular basis, and netball competition was enjoyed by the students, though sadly cut short by the lockdowns at the end of term 2 and in term 3. This was frustrating as we had a much better than usual squad, and were hoping to progress through further rounds.

The Dan O’Connell Hotel move is now looking more like 2024 than 2023, with planning taking significantly more months than expected. In examining this site, it has been encouraging that the already well-served public transport and bike paths are being upgraded – the Nicholson Street tram is adding super-stops and the Canning Street bike path is being upgraded. The iconic nature of The Dan O’Connell Hotel will certainly add to the status of the school. Engineering reports have led to a few design delays, contributing to this project being pushed back further. The conditional planning permit, issued at the end of 2021 became a full-planning permit early this year. The school thanks the City of Melbourne for its support of this project. The vision for this project is exciting, only slightly dulled by the ongoing delays, all attributed, fairly or not, to lockdowns.

People before Things – A Reflection on Guiding Values

In reflecting upon all of the many challenges presented and overcome during these two years of upheaval, the motto of the school, *People before Things*, has offered a clear guide to the values of the school, and

the set of priorities through which challenges and obstacles, and their corresponding solutions were found. The school, founded upon the wisdom of Faye and Philip, managed to overcome and flourish during this year of many upheavals, due in no small part to being founded principles and values which offer a clear guide upon which the manner in which adversity is met, and solutions found. In prioritising the human element in decision making, community was sustained and the whole community felt support and valued.

The two school poems also look to have been very well chosen. *If* by Rudyard Kipling, and *How the Little Kite learned to Fly* both speak to and reflect on character, and the qualities of endurance, striving and persistence. These were qualities demonstrated by the staff and students throughout the last two years.

Around School / Return to School / The Final Month

The return to school was staggered at the start of term 4, with the students on site on specific days, and learning remotely on other days. This added to the logistical challenges of running a full onsite program, as these returnees were joining their onsite peers for part of each week. Still, they did add to the positivity in the school. The final month of the year was especially energizing, with most restrictions lifted, spring sunshine and camaraderie all warming hearts and souls. The children, a couple of weeks after their return to school, appeared to mostly leave their tiredness behind as they found their school feet. In the younger students, this recharge and return to full vibrancy occurred very quickly, with the older students by-and-large taking a little bit longer to find their equilibrium. Time in nature was a common feature of this year, and if possible, had an even higher profile in these last weeks of the year. Considerable creek time, park time and outdoor time featured in all days for all children. The school's chaplains are due a special mention, for their care of the children and their families, and for their flagging of the importance of being in the wilds after being indoors for so much of the last 18 months. Covid-safe practices and the re-establishment of connections were clear in the final weeks of the year, and the return to onsite learning. This time in nature helped to quickly re-establish connections between children, and between the students and their teachers, classroom assistants and mentors.

Highlights of the Year

The Brunswick Street Play, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* was much like *High and Mighty in 2020*, performed at school and live-streamed to families at home. The missing audience was felt, but

perhaps more by the staff than students. The buzz and excitement around the school was palpable, peaking with the donning of costumes and the application of hairspray. The children all enjoyed the show, and shared over the next days that their parents and families at home had also enjoyed it. One of the advantages of the digital aspect was that the play was enjoyed by family members and friends all over not just Australia, but the world, with messages arriving from near and far. The script was an adaptation of this classic story, but one that managed to cover the key plot twists and turns, and the themes and connections apparent in C.S. Lewis's original story. Rehearsals, begun at school, were conducted via Zoom for much of August and September, with a short burst of activity at the end with everyone on-campus. Due to lockdown-imposed restrictions, as in 2020, the children were required to take on additional tasks of backstage management such as costume changes, prop and scene changes. These extra tasks happily did not impinge on the production, but led an additional charm to the end result, and provided the children an extra sense of achievement. Thanks Nikki for the props, Claire and Sue for the costumes (they were stunning) and Lara for direction, energy, inspiration and effort. A massive thank you to all of the teachers and parents who helped bring this show to life, with an especially big thank you to Shong and his lighting and digital team, for their recording and broadcast of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. Choreography was again by Chuby, and the dances were fun and demonstrated a high level of artistic merit.

The Normanby Avenue play was replaced with a show written by the children themselves, and performed at the final concert, allowing for a live, if restricted, audience. Thanks Jono for your skill as a script writer, or in this case, as a coordinator of ideas, plots, themes, characters and varieties of narrative. The students involved in this play deserve a special mention, for their creative talents and acting ability.

Our annual plays continue to be highlights of the school year, and it was considered important by the teaching team that despite lockdowns, restricted rehearsal times, and the inability to perform in a theatre, that this rite of passage still find a place in an interrupted year. Many graduates have shared, sometimes years later, on the place of the play in their life, reinforcing a determination to still have a play. During and after the performance, the children appeared to be as engaged and proud of their play as they had been in previous years, which is a credit to them, and all those involved making this year's play a reality. While these plays took on different formats this year, it was felt by all of the staff that, despite additional challenges, it was important that they still occurred.

NAPLAN

NAPLAN was reinstated this year after being cancelled in 2020. Our students again did well, with the individual progress and raw scores demonstrating that our school continues to be one of the highest performing schools in Victoria, with various ranking websites placing our performance in the top 1% of schools. Another good year for results.

Camp continues to play a significant part in the experience of students at Fitzroy Community School. Summer camps, with one exception, all occurred as scheduled, with one camp impacted by one of the short lockdowns. Autumn camps all occurred, with a number of students enjoying their first night on camp, all returning to school a bit tired and dirty, but in fine spirits and with enhanced confidence. Camps in term three and the first half of term four did not occur, with a lot of re-arrangements required to run camps in the final month of the year, with the additional challenge of quite a number of Covid protocols. By the end of the year, most classes had been on camp, with a couple of classes lucky enough to go twice.

Despite the challenges of running camps this year, due to Covid protocols, a considerable effort was made to get the children on camp in the final month due to the benefit camps bring. Camps connect the children to each other, their teachers and the wild world of nature. The children also gain in confidence and independence through the experience and the understanding that they can spend a day or two away from their parents. Locations visited were not as wide as they were in the years prior to 2020, due to restrictions on sharing spaces with other groups. Areas visited included: Numurkah, Mansfield, Gippsland and Kinglake West. A big thank you to the staff who took these camps: Nick, Warren, Wayne, James, Miranda, Joelle, Sue, Kate, Bridie, Jono and Ben. Thanks for giving your time and energy to our children, and for helping make these camps a great success. It was pleasing that, unlike 2020, the Tinies did get to attend a camp. The benefit of not running camps in the colder months is warmer weather.

It was re-affirming that despite camps being a less regular feature of the year, the children still took to time in the bush with aplomb, quickly immersing themselves in nature, and adapted to a routine aligned with the cycle of day and night. In a similar vein to 2020, the value of the camps squashed into the final month of the year clearly indicated the benefit of time in nature. Again, like 2020, after a lot of time at home and on screens, the bush was an invigorating experience, an antidote and re-charge after too much time cooped up. The simplicity of the children's experience is charming: collecting and observing sticks,

leaves and rocks, painting, digging, exploring, sitting, chatting, building simple stick cubbies and creating artworks of leaves and mud.

Building Projects / Maintenance / Repairs

No major projects were undertaken this year. Maintenance was squeezed into the school holidays to avoid the risk of site closure due to maintenance staff being onsite and the potential that they may later test positive to Covid. Maintenance included plaster repairs, painting, attention to doors and locks. Underfloor air circulation fans and air-pumps were installed in the oldest part of the school to improve air circulation in subfloor areas of the school. The long-awaited awning at the rear of Normanby Avenue was added at the end of the year as well as a small re-organisations of storage spaces. Trip hazards were continually checked, and some small changes to lighting were conducted. The Dan O'Connell continued to see roofing repairs undertaken, and some plumbing work conducted. Box gutters and downpipes have been slated for further checks after large downpours.

Micro Documentaries – none produced this year

Digitising the Fitzroy Literacy Method

Work started on the digitisation of the school's literacy program continued in 2021. Faye and Nick deserve significant thanks here, for the time and expertise donated to this project, time that allowed our program to be more effectively utilised at home during lockdowns, and provided families with additional supports during normal onsite curriculum delivery. This digitisation will, when complete, provide a great asset to all families, a means of further supporting their work at home with their children. Nick and Faye, thanks for continuing to work on this project throughout the year; not the most fun way of spending your out-of-classroom time. Your introduction and explanation of the rules and oddities of the English language are a gift to our students, and does represent a considerable enhancement of our curriculum offering for many years to come.

Media

The school received an unprecedented amount of media coverage this year. The school's publicly stated position of putting children's welfare above fearmongering was received as a breath of fresh air by hundreds and hundreds of parents. The messages we received from members of the broader community may provide an indication of the significant concerns about children's wellbeing experienced due to school closures. Our approach was to follow the evidence and findings of the experts, evidence and findings that were sadly and tragically cast aside by those allocated the task of advocating for our children. Despite some fairly serious inaccuracies in many of the details, the broad position of the school did manage to emerge – that in balancing harms and risks to children, the equation falls on the side of schools staying open. The tragedies and costs borne by the children of our state are enormous and widespread, and will likely be apparent for years to come. The broad data on school closures speak to this, made real and personal by the many messages of support received by our school, messages that shared the pain and difficulties felt by parents.

Sport / Park / Bush time

Sport continues to be part of the daily experience of school, with time in the park for games of chasesy and Zombie Tiggy a frequent event. Interschool sport was significantly interrupted this year, with cross-country District and Regional races occurring the Division and State cancelled. Netball ran for half a season (we were on top of the ladder before it was suspended). Basketball competitions and Hoop time similarly did not occur. At a school level, some sports classes were replaced with bushwalks and time in the outdoors, particularly the large Edinburgh Gardens that faces onto our Brunswick Street Campus.

Sporting Grants again came our way, with these being utilised on basketball and swimming. We again thank the Commonwealth Government for this additional funding, and the expansion of existing programs that it allowed.

Blog

Timothy's Blog (his thoughts on education) continues to prompt conversation and examination of the educational landscape, with a termly reflection on a range of pedagogical and parenting themes providing the central tenets of exploration. 'Challenging', 'incisive', 'reflective', 'critical' and 'misguided' (who

would have thought that) are all comments that have accompanied its publication, leading to ‘long, deep and engaging’ conversations around dinner tables and in educational settings. The emails and notes that follow from its circulation are affirming that the topics covered are of interest, and explored in a helpful manner. Framing all of Timothy’s blogs are two clear threads: on a personal level it is a commitment to children being raised in an open, diverse and caring manner; while at a global level it is a clear commitment that all families have the right not just to a high quality school experience, but also the right to choose schools that reflect their values, faith and aspirations, and that the role of government is to enhance this choice, not frustrate it.

Visitors

The numbers of visitors onsite was greatly restricted, due to the potential for consequential site closure after a positive case identification. We hope that 2022 will see our school re-open to visitors.

MySchool Website

Our school continues to rank very well and remains well within the top 1% of schools for our academic programs. Our results were again very strong, and our student improvement measures, a truer measure of the quality of a school’s programs adding further evidence to our being one of Victoria’s highest performing schools. Our raw scores place our students one to two years ahead of the level normally expected of a student in year five. As mentioned above, our NAPLAN data on student improvement demonstrates the quality of our teaching program through clearly highlighting the significant boost we achieve in our student’s literacy and numeracy levels. In comparing these results to that of other schools, it should also be kept in mind that our school dedicates a fraction of the time of most schools to the pursuit of literacy and numeracy: our camps, plays, adventures and diverse curriculum point to this.

Yours,

Timothy Berryman (Principal)

The following sections of this document present aspects of school operations that we are obliged to write on. Perhaps jump to the final paragraph, Schooling for Life.

Student Learning

Students at this school continue to make great gains socially, emotionally and academically. Participation in standardised testing (NAPLAN/MySchool) shows that our school is one of the top performing schools not only in the State, but in Australia, finishing within the top 1% of primary schooling in the last two years. Our flow of visitors from schools across Asia report that our level is comparable with that achieved in their schools. We would like to add to this that we achieve this with far fewer hours dedicated to literacy and numeracy. Our high achievements in literacy and numeracy continue to reinforce the approach we take to literacy and numeracy. It remains encouraging that a growing number of schools have contacted us and sent staff to investigate our program and methods.

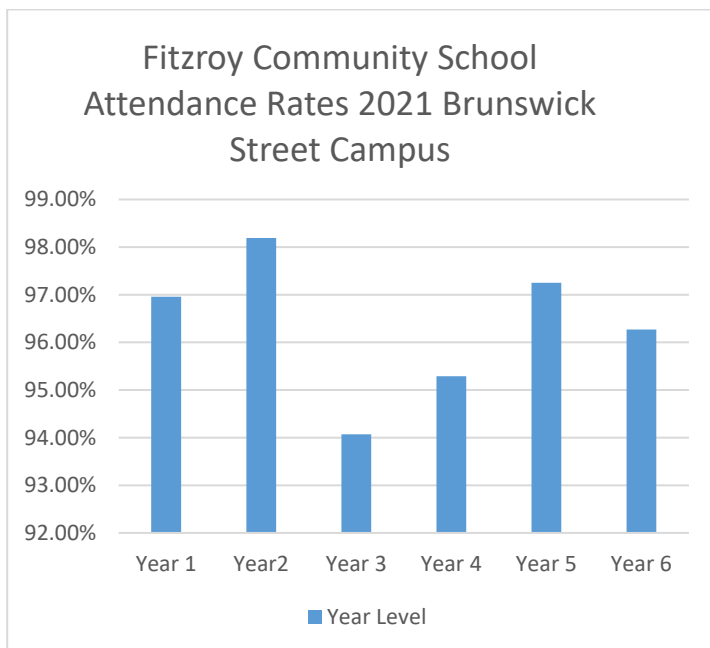
Attendance

We officially report our attendance data to the Commonwealth, and one of the ‘please explains’ we run into in completing this item of compliance concerns the high level of attendance we achieve as a school. We continually run into a data driven query along the lines of ‘your students seem come to school quite often... too often’ – from which the implication would seem to be that they should be away sick more often than they are. Our overall rate of attendance for this year dropped slightly, due to families exempting their children from consecutive days of looking at screens. When school re-opened to all students, attendance was very high, illustrating the enthusiasm that students had to return to school. This is greatly pleasing, and we believe contributes to our academic success, as well as our ability to help turn around struggling students whose first school experience was unsuccessful.

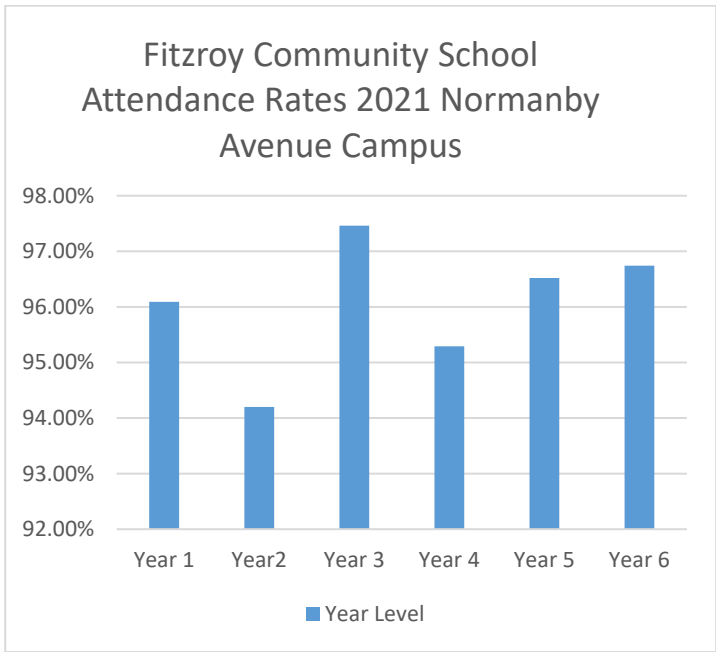
While significant absences and truancy continue not to be significant issues, attendance monitoring is not without some frustration, with the additional challenge of children being split between remote and onsite learning. We continue to request families to notify us of student absences early in the day, or if a child is clearly unwell and will be absent, to notify us the day before. Chasing absences does continue to waste teacher and staff time. We would again encourage all families to call, preferably early, when their

child wakes up unwell and is unable to attend, or if they are clearly unwell one evening, to email their absence in when it becomes clear that they will not attend.

Fitzroy Community School Attendance Rates 2021 Brunswick Street Campus	
Year 1	96.96%
Year 2	98.19%
Year 3	94.07%
Year 4	95.29%
Year 5	97.25%
Year 6	96.27%



Fitzroy Community School Attendance Rates 2021 Normanby Avenue Campus	
Year 1	96.09%
Year 2	94.2%
Year 3	97.46%
Year 4	95.29%
Year 5	96.52%
Year 6	96.74%

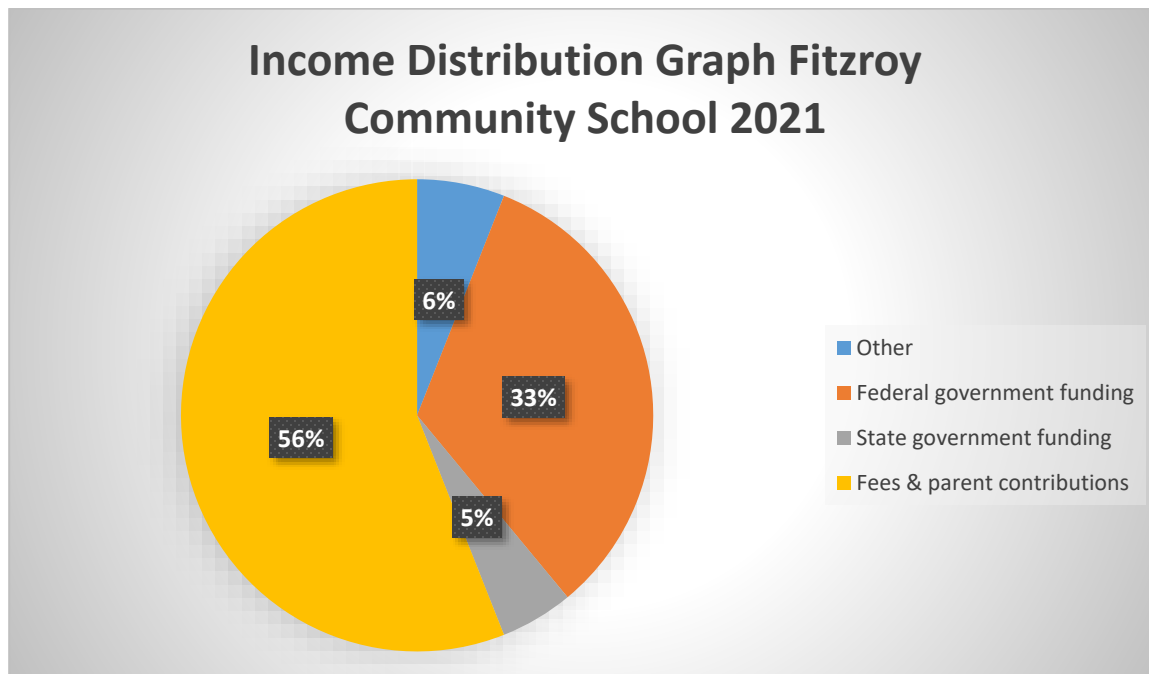


School Finances

Fitzroy Community School receives more than half of its income from school fees, a quarter from Commonwealth Grants, 5-6 % in State Government Grants and 2-3% through additional parental

contributions. The fact that the majority of the school’s income is predominantly derived via parental fees means, meaning that one of the principle tasks of the bookkeeper and school principal is to ensure that fees are collected and bad debts minimised. This year saw some fee deferrals, but not to the same extent as 2020. Fee reductions also fell, and fee collection was significantly easier than 2020. This said, the work of our bookkeeper in managing the school’s finances and chasing recalcitrant payers, continues to minimise the escalation of bad debts. It looks like there will not be a significant expansion of bad and doubtful debts, but that the level of these will not continue to decline as it has in the last few years. The school engages an external accountant to prepare future budgets, and to provide another perspective on the school’s financial position. Increased Commonwealth Government and State Government funding, combined with a better rate of fee collection and some economies of scale in a two-campus model all continue to contribute to school fee increases remaining below education CPI for a number of years. The low increases in fees seen for many years reflect a commitment to keep our school accessible to families on average incomes, and to pass on all additional funding provided by State and Federal educational authorities. The benefit of having moved to a two-campus model should not be understated in its contribution to a very small increase in fees – our school has actually become cheaper, in real terms, over the last five years.

Income Distribution Graph



The school did not receive any Commonwealth Capital Grants in 2020. Maintenance, small improvements, repairs and a couple of room re-allocations and renovations best sum up 2020. Painting is a constant in school. 2020 also saw a number of electrical improvements undertaken. In short, our maintenance program continues to target repairs, repainting and monitoring our school site for areas of wear and tear, as well as potential hazards.

Teacher Standards/Qualifications/Satisfaction

The school only employs the most talented and engaging teachers, reflected in both our ongoing successes and parent and student satisfaction. The school continues to be encouraged by the number of talented student teachers undertaking their placements in recent years, and we feel that this situation bodes well for the profession as a whole. Sadly, the number of placement requests does occasionally exceed the school's capacity to accept all student teacher applicants. We have again received comments from our graduates, after they have moved into secondary schooling, on the quality of their primary school teachers: their talents and abilities align with our commitment to recruit teachers of the highest standard, and we then give them the space to be themselves and to offer their best.

Fitzroy Community School is committed to providing a happy, fun, engaging and challenging learning environment. Many of our part-time teachers visit the school on their day off, again reflecting their enjoyment of their working environment, and the friendships and community that constitute their work environment.

List of Teachers and their Qualifications

Principal - Timothy Berryman Bachelor of Arts (Melbourne), Graduate Diploma in Education (Melbourne), Postgraduate Diploma in Educational Studies (Melbourne), Bachelor of Letters (Melbourne), Master of Letters (University of New England), Master of Arts (Universidad Jaume I – Spain). Currently undertaking a Doctorate of Education.

Teachers

Jeannette Howden Bachelor of Education (comprised of Diploma of Kindergarten Teaching Melbourne Kindergarten Teachers' College and Graduate Diploma in Curriculum Melbourne College of Advanced Education)

Faye Berryman Bachelor of Arts, Diploma of Education, Diploma of Social Work, Master of Arts

Warren Howden Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Music, Master of Teaching

Miranda Frankel Bachelor of Arts (Melbourne University), Diploma of Education (University of Western Australia)

Wayne Wearn-Jarvis Bachelor of Education (Flinders University)

Joelle Wearn-Jarvis Bachelor of Education (Flinders University)

Nicole Frankel Bachelor of Fine Arts (Painting), Diploma of Education

Claire Collings Bachelor of Arts Hons (Computing and Information Systems) Brighton University (UK), Graduate Diploma in Education (La Trobe University)

Nicholas Berryman Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Law, Master of Applied Positive Psychology Melbourne University, Graduate Diploma in Education (with Honours) Charles Sturt University

Lara Brooks Bachelor of Arts (Musical Theatre), Master of Teaching

Workforce Composition

The school believes that one of its strengths is the diversity and composition of its teachers and assistants. The school has a broad mix of genders, ages and experience (with teachers of forty plus years' experience working side by side with teachers in their first year), a good mix of men and women, and a range of cultural and religious backgrounds. The school does not currently employ a staff member who identifies as Indigenous Australian. The single greatest hindrance to our school (and many other workplaces) in Australia employing a more diverse workforce is compliance in the form of licensing, qualifications and certification. This results in, for instance, a foreign-born teacher, a graduate of a prestigious foreign university, being denied registration to teach in Australia irrespective of their abilities and despite being able to demonstrate the desired skill or academic talent to a higher level than their Australian-born counterparts. If the Government were serious about workforce composition rather than political point

scoring, schools would not be required to comment on composition of their workforce but would rather be allowed to employ suitable, qualified and able teachers. Teaching ballet or French should be assessed on one's ability to dance and speak, alongside an ability to impart these skills, not whether they have completed a Victorian recognized qualification. In a country where 25% of the population were born overseas, this restriction is especially problematic. Sadly, in Victoria, the regulators all too often get in the way of employing able teachers through preferencing the geographic location that awarded the certificate rather than the skill or ability of the teacher. If the Victorian Government really intended to enhance the ability and composition of the teaching workforce, then skills and teaching ability, rather than place of birth and locale of the awarding university, would be the measure. Still, in the weird bureaucratic dystopia we exist in, writing on this seems to have greater importance than actually empowering schools to employ a more able, diverse group of teachers. It is ironic that schools are required to write on workforce composition while at the same time being denied the right to employ a higher skilled, more diverse workforce.

Schooling for Life

We work to maintain a school lifestyle in which camps are enjoyed, hi-fives are acts of spontaneous camaraderie, chasey is played, skipping is fun, applying Band-Aids is what caring adults do, and hugs are regarded as a standard expression of friendship.

Timothy Berryman (Principal)

BA DipEd GradDipEdStud BLitt MLitt MA