



## 2020 Annual Report to the School Community

**School Number: 1721**



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## 1. The School Context

The Learning Cooperative Primary School, “the Co-op”, is an independent primary school set on 6.5 hectares of natural bushland. Established in 1973, the Learning Cooperative operates as a consensus-based cooperative of families. The group is committed to working together to create a stimulating alternative to the children’s education.

### 1.1. *Facilities and Surrounds*

The land and buildings are totally owned by the Learning Cooperative. The facilities include a kitchen as an integral part of the learning program, a library, an Arts space, an instrumental music space, a fully equipped theatre space (built with assistance of the BER grant), a small group workspace, a kiln room and a multi-purpose room for indoor games and performing arts.

The surrounds include adventure play equipment, cubbies and plenty of space to play. There is an abundance of creative garden spaces, a chook shed, and an organic kitchen garden including wicking beds and a food forest. The facilities accommodate enrolments of 30 – 35 students from ages 5 – 12 and include a shared open classroom space that encourages and supports multi-age learning, interaction, and child-to-child mentoring. The intimate size of the Learning Cooperative creates a community much like an extended family.

### 1.2. *Sustainability and Environmental Responsibility*

The Learning Cooperative supports environmental sustainability through its use of solar energy, tank water only supply, and is working towards becoming a carbon neutral environment. The children participate in the “Kids teaching Kids” conferences where environmental issues are explored as part of the learning program. The Learning Cooperative manages the bushland around the school and holds regular ‘Bushcare’ working bees to conserve the habitat. Children are involved in regular gardening activities in our organic kitchen garden.

### 1.3. *The Learning Environment, Philosophy & Curriculum Model: Overview*

The Learning Cooperative Primary School offers learning opportunities based on the Victorian Curriculum in an environment where children are given a true voice with regards to their learning. Working within a dynamic educational framework, we provide a learning environment which is creative and constantly evolving; children work with their friends, in a peer based but cross aged learning environment, guided by parents and teachers to develop their unique passions. We do not use age-based grade levels, preferring broader groupings of ‘Biggies’, ‘Middlies’ and ‘Littlies’. We believe that every member of the community can contribute to the learning and raising of its children.

Choice, co-operation, open-mindedness, non-judgmental attitudes, wonder and curiosity are defining features of the learning environment. Free play is a feature of their learning environment, whether it be social skills or physics in the sandpit.

Core units of numeracy, literacy and the other competencies of the Victorian Curriculum are delivered via a range of experiences to cater for all learners. The teaching staff and parents offer two focus-time sessions per day, where the children work on core competencies based on their individual needs and interests. The remainder of the day is spent on child-initiated projects and tasks, as well as activities created by the parent-body and teaching staff and plenty of time to play.

During the 2020 Covid lockdown, the program was continued via Zoom to keep the students connected to the Learning Cooperative community. Regular sessions were offered to engage and support the children in their learning across the curriculum, including literacy and numeracy support and individual instrumental lessons. Social connection was encouraged through these sessions with the other students. Parents as well as teachers ran online lessons such as first aid and comic club. The older students also ran sessions such as animal quizzes, coding and craft ideas, that were extremely popular with the other students of all ages.

An Indigenous cultural program, through the Boite schools chorus experience and related activities and stories, has been a feature of the learning program at the Learning Cooperative. The children started learning the songs but unfortunately the performance was cancelled.

We also incorporate learning units on the environment, sustainability and social justice.

The school has a long history of performing arts and LOTE (Italian) and these form a central part of our curriculum. The learning is showcased through drama performances, songs and games. The annual concert features a wide range of plays written and directed by students and each year includes a Shakespeare play and Italian play.

Themes in the concert included instrumental performance, solo and group singing, dance items, stilt walking, fantasy, comedy and puppetry as well as a series of child-created animations and movies.

For more detailed information please refer to Student Learning..

#### ***1.4. Parent Involvement and Responsibility***

Since inception, parents have been heavily involved in the management of the Learning Cooperative. Responsibilities include parent involvement in presenting activities and participation in the learning programs at Learning Cooperative, administration, maintenance, cleaning and transport. Decisions regarding all aspects of the Learning Cooperative's activities are made via consensus at fortnightly adult meetings attended by all staff and parents. Typically, meetings include discussion about what occurs in the school, organisational matters and planning. Importantly, they provide a forum for philosophical debate and an opportunity to discuss the challenges and milestones occurring for individual child and their families.

## **2. Student Learning**

The school has implemented changes in Curriculum and Learning to ensure a comprehensive program. Methods of recording the learning program include a daily Chronicle kept by the children and a Day book which records the activities, participation and achievements of each student. English and Mathematics are taught as stand-alone subjects but are also integrated into other areas of the curriculum.

The school uses ongoing fortnightly discussions as one means of measuring student performance and readiness for learning. All parents are involved and guided by the teachers/coordinator in these discussions. This forum supports planning and provision of learning opportunities for the next fortnight. The school uses semester-based Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) to facilitate parent/child development of specific goals and to create strategies to address learning needs for each child. This process is a collaborative exchange among the parents, child, and the teacher/coordinator and the goal is to create a balance between interests and learning needs.

In 2020 we continued to streamline the Individual Learning Plans in a format which includes all eight learning areas. The plan is to further support child-initiated learning through these ILPs. Each family is encouraged to develop goals and agreed measures of achievement in these eight areas. A folio is also kept of each child's work to complement the ILP and to monitor student progress, along with teacher and parent observations.

In 2020 written reports were prepared as per requirements but not provided. All parents wrote letters expressly requesting not to have such reports provided, preferring to communicate directly with the educators and other parents in the community regarding their child's progress.

## ***2.1. Engaging Children***

Co-op children are engaged in their learning and enjoy having access to programs that provide them with a target for their passions. They benefit from the breadth and richness of ideas and activities offered by parents during their time on with the children, supported by the teachers and coordinator. In 2020, the themes were All About ME, Quests and the Bayeux Tapestry, Biodiversity, Space and our extensive concert and camp programs.

Learning activities link in with integrated theme studies or are multi-faceted and involve a high level of student decision-making and participation. The range of activities offered during 2020 was varied and vibrant and demonstrates the Learning Cooperative's commitment to providing a tailored, inspiring education for our students and families.

## ***2.2. Activity highlights in 2020:***

The following groupings are arbitrary, as many of the projects listed are aspects of larger integrated projects and therefore include invaluable social and interpersonal learning, as well as providing authentic avenues for students' ideas and passions.

## ***2.3. Language and Literacy***

- Chairing daily meetings, sharing and discussion at meetings
- Student Council
- Daily Chronicle and Journals
- Learning Italian
- Performing in Italian
- Multicultural nature of Australia, sharing of words in other languages from students' families
- Learning Indigenous language songs from around Australia for Boite Schools Chorus
- National Reconciliation writing and poster
- Literacy activities based around Term 1 Theme of All About Me
- Lost Words project and book publication about My Environment
- Nature Journal Writing
- Indigenous Flower and Bird Presentations at meeting
- Stories inspired by Delora Quest books' illustrator Marc McBride exhibition at Monsalvat Barn Gallery
- Retelling stories from the Medieval Bayeux Tapestry quests
- Discussions re returning to Co-op after lockdown
- Parks Victoria biodiversity survey





- Biodiversity discussions and presentations
- Script writing for plays
- Shakespeare script reading and learning for our performance of The Tempest
- Children's Rights writings, Rights and responsibilities discussion
- Camp and excursion stories, Writing camp (cancelled due to Covid)
- Personal story boards
- Wellbeing journals
- Kids Reading with Kids, Reading with and to the children
- Letter formation, spelling conventions, Word games targeting spelling, Phonics and M100W words, Grammar games – writing conventions
- Playing board games
- Creative storytelling and writing circle
- Writers' Group, Book Clubs, Comic Club
- Writing recounts, Story writing, Letter writing, Project writing, Recipe writing
- Ball of string story writing game
- Reading in nooks and crannies, bush writings
- Reading and writing instructional texts
- Magazine articles, Newspaper articles
- Reading Eggs online literacy program
- Creating fantasy characters
- Group discussions
- Poetry, including Halloween poems
- Response to Art Gallery visit
- Project oral presentations

#### 2.4. *Technology*

- Stop-motion animation
- Film making
- Movie night showing movies made by students
- Photoshop editing
- Boat building for dam
- Engineering Club
- Aboriginal artefacts research and stone tool making
- Evolution of tools and weapons
- Archaeology dig – technology through time
- Bird and animal nesting box construction
- Dungeons and Dragons scenes out of Lego
- Electronics -Design and construct a Buzz Drawer
- Cubby building and maintenance
- Cardboard constructions and creations
- Playing with motors and electronics
- Building props for Concert
- Using a sewing machine
- Scratch coding program
- Woodwork
- Building insect hotels
- Kite making
- Sand pit creations
- Board game making



## 2.5. *Maths & Logical Thinking*

- Problem solving
- Basketball court maths games and activities
- Data collection and graphs from quadrats for Biodiversity project
- Maths for archaeology dig
- Geometric shape constructions, Tangrams
- Orienteering
- Concept Drawing – Architectural Design – Scale
- Maths through woodwork
- Maths of astronomy
- Maths and Strategy Games
- Kangaroo Ground Tower and Hurstbridge town measurements, directions, models
- Writing in code and code breaking
- Timing and graphing physical actions
- 2D and 3D drawings and construction
- Probability and chance, Pie Graphs
- Maths projects for lockdown
- Maths problem solving – logic puzzles, thinking backwards
- Jigsaw puzzles
- Mathematics of music
- Aussie Backyard Bird count tally and graphs
- Making obstacle courses
- Body measurements and graphs
- Cooking maths
- Distances and area
- Equations
- Lengths, volume and mass
- Food miles
- Planet fractions
- Analysing patterns
- Drawing tables
- Maths workbooks
- Multiplication and division
- Decimals and fractions
- Measuring heights
- Delivering ‘Roundabout’ maths
- Minibeast surveys and mapping



## 2.6. *Science*

- Buried Undies science project
- Frog species and Habitat at Co-op
- Mini beast survey



- Peregrine falcon online nest observing and discussions
- Field identification and sketching trips, bushwalks
- Nature journaling
- The effect of nature on different cultures
- Nature in different countries, adaptations to climate
- Seasons in different parts of the globe/ tilts
- Backyard Bird Count
- Fungi hunting
- Bird migration
- Imaginary spider field guide
- Life in the Freezer - Antarctica presentation from Amy's time as an educational researcher there
- Discovery of new type of dinosaur
- Lost Word project – Indigenous flora and fauna Genetics
- Bird-identification and drawing, native wildlife and local plants, insects
- Hooded Plover research and discussions when seen at family camp
- Surveying hollows in dead trees for animal and bird life with drone
- Marine Environmental Stewardship and Marine life identification
- Biodiversity of Co-op bush, plant sampling quadrats and rabbit proof fence research
- Participation in annual Victorian bird count
- Natural Science in the Grampians and Coastal environments
- African animals
- Marine Animals around the World
- Kitchen chemistry experiments
- Engineering Club
- Metals, periodic table, elements, molecules
- Microscopy
- Microbiology
- Vet Club
- Physics of music
- Favorite scientist project
- Raising Chickens, Egg Science, Composting, Worm garden, recycling, sustainability
- Kitchen Garden
- Space: Planet making; space buggy construction, rocket making, moo anniversary, black holes, astronomy, space junk etc.
- Archaeology dig – What is rubbish?
- Hydraulics in the sandpit
- Making things explode
- pH of soil tests and discussion
- Soil sediment test
- Bottle flipping to test for mass and volume
- Egg drop experiment
- Edendale Farm visits
- Dentist visit – importance of teeth and nutrition
- Edible potions, Lotion and slime making
- Change states of matter
- Density of liquids
- Sundials
- Aerodynamics
- Electrical circuits
- Hot air balloon making



- Light and color
- Habitats and adaptation

## 2.7. *Humanities*

- Bush walking excursions in Kinglake, St Andrews and Panton Hill
- Map reading for touring camp and orienteering at Westerfolds Park,
- Globe study, unusual places around the world
- Wurundjeri history and culture, timeline, flag, seasons
- Visit from Wurundjeri elder and smoking ceremony
- Discussion about Aboriginal people connection to country
- Wurundjeri acknowledgement
- My Place 1786
- History timeline
- My culture – my country: maps , flags, currency of family and ancestors
- The effect of nature on different cultures eg oak trees for boat building and weapons, gum trees etc
- Food of the world
- Children’s rights around the world
- Archeology dig at Co-op – What is Rubbish? Burial sites around the world
- Human evolution
- Seasons around the globe
- Flags for Buried Undies science project
- Landmarks of the world etchings
- History of Eltham , Montsalvat
- My Place – home, town, country, planet
- Diwali celebration, Henna and Rangoli, discussion of cultural significance
- Bayeux Tapestry
- Leonardo da Vinci and the Renaissance
- Timeline game
- Halloween activities, community Christmas decorations
- Visiting Healesville Sanctuary
- Café: Planning, cooking, serving (and eating!)
- Anzac biscuits – making and history
- ‘Roundabout’ delivery (local Hurstbridge newspaper)
- Life-Skills
- Teddy Bears picnic
- Fire Drills and Emergency training
- Organising Fire clothes – with kids help
- Interpersonal management
- Survival kits
- Reconciliation week discussions
- Qi Gong
- Reading a globe, mapping, flags
- Immigration and refugees
- Stories of children from around the world, including aboriginal Australia

## 2.8. *Performing Arts*

- Co-op Annual Concert
- Creative dance, multicultural folk dancing
- Shakespeare 'The Tempest'
- Script reading, rehearsal and performance
- Puppet shows
- Spontaneous plays
- Music through marimba, violin, cello, guitar, ukulele, piano, ensemble
- Percussion workshops with Kate Adam
- Boite Schools' Chorus performance Melbourne Town Hall (practised but performance cancelled due to Covid)
- Doorstep concerts
- Drama games
- Film making workshops
- Songwriting
- Playwriting
- Script analysis
- Theatre improvisation and sports
- Physical theatre
- Making your own band with singing and instruments
- Stagecraft and management
- Set and costume design
- Costume Box Play
- Singing together at meeting
- French, Italian and indigenous language songs



## 2.9. *Art Design*

- Lost Words poetry and art project for published book of children's work
- Draw house and design town mural
- Mask and costume making
- Drawing emotions, anger, fear, isolation in lockdown.
- Weaving lanterns for Hurstbridge community
- Aboriginal artwork and cultural significance
- Mandala and globe decorations for Diwali
- Local wildlife sketching trips
- Microbiology drawings
- Nature drawing of local flora and fauna, landscapes
- My culture mini items for paper bag project
- 10 Little Monsters Co-op book
- Wood burning etchings
- Self-portraits in various media
- Chicken posters and cardboard houses, painting chickens on fence palings inspired by Eltham artist Joan Denison during lockdown
- Ephemeral art
- Clay projects
- Examination of various artists and their works
- Sewing, doll, cushion and bag making.
- Portrait project
- Animation & Film Making



- Art/Craft activities, Drawing in various media, painting on canvas
- Drawings inspired by visit to Montsalvat Gallery for Marc McBride, illustrator of Deltora Quest books, exhibition
- Leonardo da Vinci- discussion of art history, paintings and techniques
- Designing and drawing characters and props for Co-op Quest
- Knitting and knitting nancies
- Dream catchers
- Painting workshops
- Woodwork: bird houses and boxes
- Sewing & Clothes Design.
- Cubby Building
- Nature photography
- Flower pressing and picture making
- Halloween lanterns
- Collage, sculptures
- Natural boat building
- Bush art
- Paper Money making for café
- Concert posters and programs, props and sets
- Reverse garbage excursion
- Gingerbread constructions
- Art Gallery Visits
- Puppet making
- Fairy Garden design
- Christmas lanterns for Hurstbridge community



## *2.10. Sport*

- Swimming - Term 1 and 4
- Gymnastics Terms 2 and 3 (cancelled due to Covid).
- Bike riding at Diamond Creek
- Basketball
- Ball games, especially poison ball
- Yoga, Qi Gong
- Circus Skills
- Running Games
- Dance
- Crocodile, crocodile (In Italian!)
- Bush walking
- Soccer
- Outdoor games – Capture the Flag etc.
- Skipping
- Archery



## *2.11. Excursions/incursions*

- Annual Family Camp at Cape Patterson
- Biggies camps – Pre-Family camp at Bear Gully
- Touring Camp at Buandik in the Grampians.
- (Writing Camp, music camp, Middlies camp were all cancelled due to Covid)



- Equine Therapy
- Healesville Sanctuary
- Bookshop, Library
- Reverse Garbage
- Funfields Excursion
- Museum visit
- Botanic Gardens
- Boite Schools' Chorus (Cancelled due to Covid)
- Bushwalks



### 3. Student Engagement and Wellbeing

The Learning Cooperative requires parents to participate and contribute to the learning programs for a minimum of half a day per week for each family. This involvement allows an intimate understanding of any issues regarding student engagement and wellbeing; this enables appropriate support to be given and individual learning plans tailored for each child. The fortnightly meeting of all families is the forum for discussions and the development of strategies to support individual needs.

The teachers/coordinator are also available to privately consult with parents regarding student engagement and wellbeing. Student engagement and wellbeing is also addressed through whole-school meetings held twice daily. The children lead meetings and are part of a democratic process that promotes inclusion and respect for their views. The children have a voice in any issue that may affect their engagement or wellbeing.

The Learning Cooperative uses inclusive approaches to empower children to manage social interactions. The groupings for learning vary; often they are interest-based, but when appropriate, age-based groupings are organised. The children negotiate the context for learning and this greatly enhances social maturity and engagement. The children take part in regular wellbeing discussions and journal entries.

The emphasis on play in learning also supports the development of social skills and results in a high level of proficiency amongst all the children within the social-emotional context. Areas of interest and passion are identified, as are gaps in knowledge, skills or proficiency, and activities are tailored to address these areas and maintain a high level of student engagement and inclusion.

The school provides a camping program for the older children; it involves a number of five-day under canvas experiences where the children are expected to erect their own tents and share in the day to day responsibilities of camping. The children are directly involved in the planning and costing of the camp. The children plan the menu, cooking and cleaning roster, activities, and are responsible for budget-management. The school also includes sleep-overs for all children at the school as part of the transition to this extended camping program.

An extracurricular support program is provided for children who it is felt will benefit from personal growth and social skills development and utilizes equine therapy with a qualified psychologist.

The school is a very close community where children can develop sibling-like relationships with the other students. The parents are supportive of each other and contribute to the wellbeing of families with their natural generosity and support.

## 4. Student Pathways and Transitions

The Learning Co-operative has specific strategies to support Student Pathways and Transitions:

- Preps for 2021 – Inclusion in Term 4 in the Co-op learning environment.
- Year 6 – Transition Program to secondary school

In term 4 we invite children enrolled for Prep in the following year to engage in our programs for one day a week. The parents attend with their child; this provides a gradual introduction to the Learning Cooperative's approaches and operation. By the start of the Prep year they are ready for a full day at school. Preps attend only a maximum of four days a week until parents feel they are ready to come full time.

The transition to secondary schools is managed through orientation days and reports to high-school coordinators. Some high schools send a representative to visit prospective students at the Learning Cooperative. This program is largely coordinated by the various high schools.



The Learning Cooperative does not use an age-grade approach and we find that the children move through the Victorian Curriculum recommended Levels of Learning at their own pace. We have children of a young age capable of literacy skills of the older children and those children participate at this higher level quite naturally. The differentiated learning available at the Learning Cooperative allows for children to find their own ability level and receive scaffolding into their next level of learning without experiencing undue pressure; children largely choose their learning.

## 5. Staff Profile

### 5.1. Teaching Staff

In 2020 the Co-op employed one additional part-time teacher.

#### **Elizabeth Bennet**

Role: School coordinator / teacher

Appointed in 2010 as specialist LOTE/music/literacy teacher. Moved to School coordinator/ teacher role in 2014.

VIT registration No: 321908

Qualifications:

- Education: BA Majoring in French (also studied Italian, music, psychology and linguistics) at Melbourne and Latrobe Universities.



- Dip Ed (Alternative education stream) 1987 Latrobe Uni.  
Methods: Modern Languages and ESL
- Lived and worked in Italy 1984 - 1985 and France Jan- April 1985
- Cert IV in Education and Training 2011

Previous and  
current positions

- Teacher/Coordinator LOTE/Music Strathewen Primary School 2007-2013
- Teacher/Coordinator LOTE Plenty Valley International Montessori School 2012-2013 Curriculum Development
- Teacher/Coordinator ESL and ESL/Literacy Kangan Batman TAFE Broadmeadows 1988 – 2011 working with traumatized refugees and migrants, Student Welfare, Integration Programs and Curriculum Development.
- Teacher Italian evening classes, Diamond Valley Learning Centre and Swinburne Uni 2000-2006
- Tutor for Music Workshops, including Roses Gap Folk Festival & VOSA marimba camp

## Amy Rogers

Role:

School teacher

Appointed 2018

V.I.T registration 404348

Qualifications:

- PGCE Fast Track Science QTS, University of Warwick, UK (2005-2006)
- PhD 'The Ecology and Song of the Eastern Whipbird', University of Melbourne (2000-2004)
- BA (Hons), MA (Cantab)-Natural Sciences (Ecology & Zoology), First Class, University of Cambridge, UK (1995-1998)

Previous and  
current positions

- Learning Facilitator, Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne (Nov 2015 – present)
- Urban Ecologist, City of Melbourne (Sep 2015 – Sep 2016)
- Science Engagement Project Coordinator 'Chemistry for All', Nottingham Trent University (Jan 2015- Apr 2015)
- Assistant Forest School Leader, volunteer 'Into the Forest'(Sep 2013 – Apr 2015)
- OPAL Community Scientist, University of Nottingham (Sep 2008 – May 2013)
- Fuchs Foundation Antarctic Expedition (May 2006 – Dec 2007)
- 'Fast Track' Science Teacher, Higham Lane School, Nuneaton (Sep 2006 – July 2008)
- PhD Research, University of Melbourne, Australia (June 2000- Dec 2004)

## 5.2. Other Staff

## **Shiva Vasi**

Role: Office Manager/Book-keeping  
Appointed: 2019

## **Omi Baskar**

Role: Administration  
Appointed: 2019

### ***5.3. Parents with Education Qualifications in 2020.***

Ruth O'Dowd (VIT: 392109)

Lisa Kanto (VIT: 412854)

Gemma Elliott (VIT: 402294)

## **6. Student Enrolment Data**

The Learning Cooperative is a small school of around 25 students on average, the enrolments were 24 in the 2020 school year, with strong Prep enrolments for 2021.

The Learning Cooperative highlights personal growth and strives to create individual learning streams for each student across their primary years rather than relying entirely on the more concentrated and specific standards expected through the Victorian Curriculum. This approach allows the teachers and community to take each child's specific circumstances into account on a daily, and even momentary basis.

In 2020 we had one full-time teacher/school coordinator and two part-time teachers. This has proven to be of great benefit as there is a greater ability to focus on each child's passions and learning needs and desires as outlined in their Individual Learning Plan.

'Focus-time', the twice-daily session that focuses mainly on core literacy and numeracy, continues to be an important part of each day. These scheduled focus times not only improved literacy and numeracy, but also had a positive effect on the children's interest in these subject areas.

The Learning Cooperative gathers performance data via student feedback, teacher observation and small-group intensive focus times. All parents are also involved in monitoring student progress, meeting with the coordinator on a fortnightly basis. This allows for a targeted response to each child's individual learning needs.

School performance data is more difficult to track and report on with any accuracy given the small cohorts of students at any specific year level. Much of the data involves examination of the value added for each student as they move through the school year.

All relevant families are given information relating to the NAPLAN testing scheme. In 2020 there were 4 children in the relevant NAPLAN cohorts. The families of these students all submitted a request to withdraw from the NAPLAN test.

### ***6.1. Enrolment Profile***

In 2020, the school had a total of 24 students full-time enrolled (see Table below). The gender mix consisted of 13 boys (54%) and 11 girls (46%). 45% of the students had a language background other than English. . The numbers at each year level were evenly balanced, we have strong intended enrolments of Littles Group at the start of 2021. The school aims for enrolments between 25-30 students to ensure that we can maintain the special character of our community.

Table: 2020 Enrolment Profile

	Prep	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
Female total	3	1	3	1	0	2	1	11
Male Indigenous only	2	2	4	0	3	1	1	13
Female Indigenous only	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	5	3	7	1	3	3	2	24

Enrolment levels are currently within our target zone; we had 5 new enrolments at the Prep level in 2020. We had 5 children who transitioned to secondary school in 2020. We expect the numbers to build up over the next few years due to solid intended enrolments across the younger levels of the school by 2021.

We anticipate that enrolments will remain steady into the future, due to strategies put in place to increase awareness of the Learning Cooperative's programs and approaches. In 2020 we had 24 students as at the August census, and we have strong interest for 2021 due to three Open Days and great interest within the local community.

## 6.2. *Socio-economic background*

ICSEA value – 1057

Average ICSEA value - 1000

School ICVEA percentile- 72

	Bottom quarter	Middle quarters		Top quarter
School				
Distribution	11%	33%	29%	27%
Australian				
Distribution	25%	50%		25%

The school is deemed metropolitan despite its bush location north of Hurstbridge. Parents choose the Learning Cooperative School based upon philosophy not location.

The ICSEA value provides an indication of the level of the school's educational advantage. This is worked out by looking at certain factors – for each student and for the school:

- parents' occupation
- parents' education

- a school's geographical location
- proportion of Indigenous students.

## 7. Student Attendance Data

This report was generated from the school roll and offers a data snapshot of the period February 6th through to September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2019. Note that prep attendance is not included in this snapshot, as in Victorian schools it is only compulsory from age 6.

Attendance is always very strong at our school. This reflects the extraordinary enthusiasm and engagement of our students; they are usually disappointed when it is holiday time. Absences are all communicated to the Coordinator / Teachers directly. The school is able to address any long-term absence of a child through the community network, though this is a very rare occurrence due to the high levels of engagement of both parents and children. In 2020 we had some families exposing their children to other worthy educational experiences such as travel and outings whilst all other absences were due to illness.

	Semester 1	Term 3
Student attendance rate	94%	90%
Student attendance level*	93%	89%

\*Proportion of students attending 90% or more of the time.

## 8. Parent, teacher and student satisfaction

The Co-op is committed to working together to the benefit and satisfaction of the students, parents and teachers.

The school operates as a consensus-based cooperative involving parents, teachers and students. Decisions regarding all aspects of the Learning Cooperative's activities are made at fortnightly adult meetings attended by all staff and parents. Students also have the opportunity to express their views and opinions at meetings held daily; these meetings are attended by all students and staff as well as those parents who are at the school on the day.

These discussions provide a forum for philosophical debate and an opportunity to discuss the challenges and milestones occurring for individual children, families and staff.

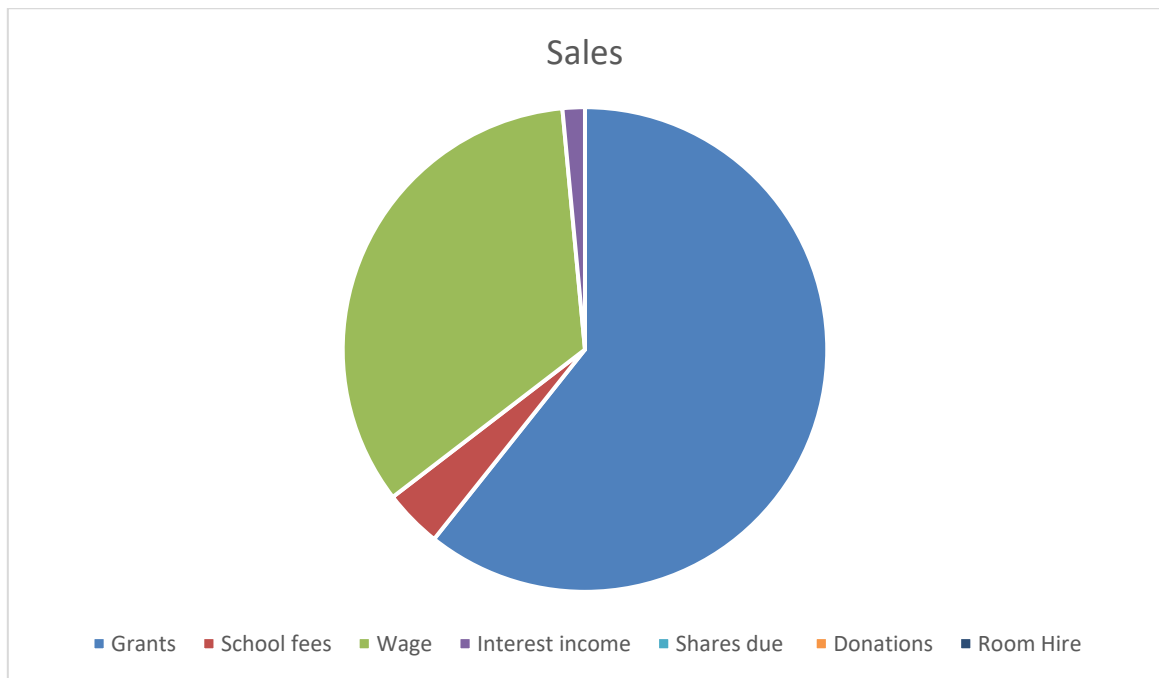
## 9. Financial commentary

### 9.1. Grants

The total amount received from Government Grants for 2019 was \$402,166.75.

These grants included the State and Commonwealth grants, Resiliency and the Camps, Sport and Excursion Fund.

### 9.2. Income summary 2019



### 9.3. *Savings and term deposits*

The school has a solid financial safety net. The Investment Term deposits at 31.12.19 were \$420,253. The balance of the school's operating account at 31.12.2019 was \$41,644.

The School maintains a debit card account which is used for small purchases and is kept at an approximate \$1000 balance.

### 9.4. *Expenditures and other items*

The Learning Co-operative had to renew some outdoor play structures in 2019. The old big playground with the iconic wide slide had to be partly rebuilt due to termite infestation. Also the biggies cubby had to be completely renewed due to age.

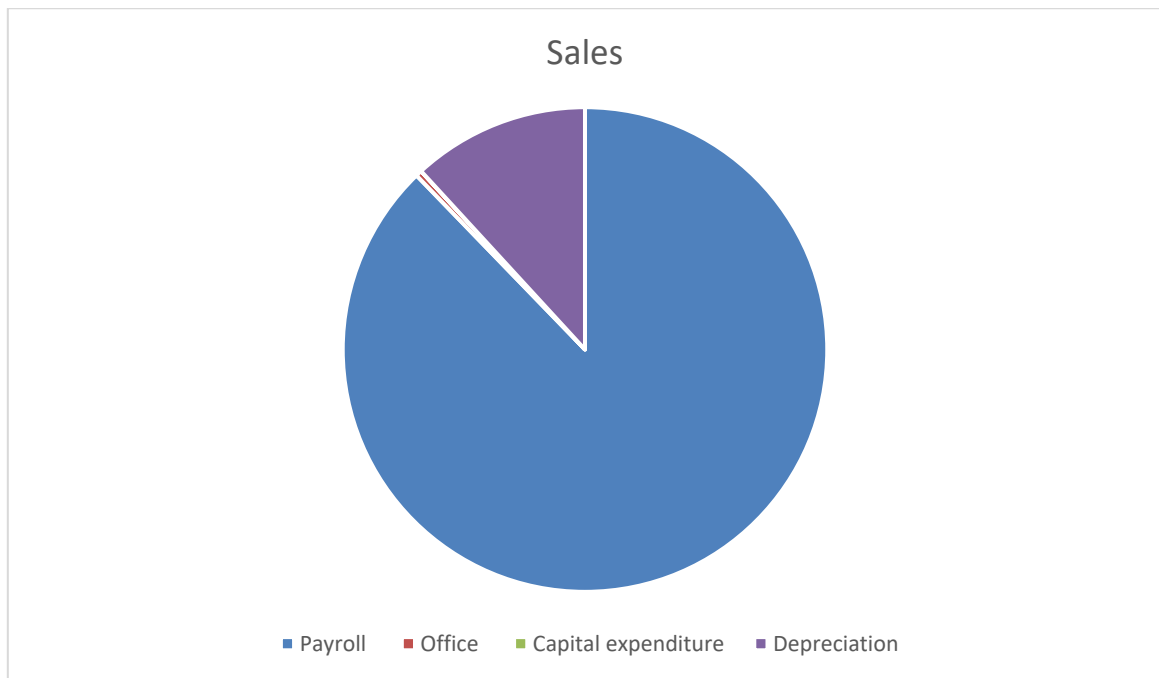
The school continues to maintain a low-fee structure, to enable maximum access. There are social justice policies around fee payments to support families on Health Care Cards or when multiple children are enrolled. In 2019 the school continued to provide free babysitting for all families to assist with the demands of evening meetings.

The Learning Cooperative also supplied at least one free home cooked lunch per week.

The school purchased a closed box trailer for camps.

### 9.5. *Expenses summary 2019*

10.



## 9.6 *Future financial considerations:*

### 9.6.1. *Professional Development*

Budget for ongoing professional Development for staff and parents responsible for:

- Occupational Health and Safety
- Human Resources
- Financial management/ Governance
- Education
- Student welfare

### 9.6.2. *Solar Energy*

- Review Grant opportunities to extend current system.

### 9.6.3. *Welfare fund:*

- Review methods we use to offer assistance to families facing short and long-term challenges.

### 9.6.4. *Babysitting*

- Maintain the current mode of paying for babysitting to enable all parents to attend meetings.

### 9.6.5. *Facilities Upgrade*

- Possible strategies/ideas for the future include:



- The car park area to be planted with trees for future shading.
- The installation of big decorative rocks is still being considered for beautifying the entrance area
- Plans for the wood working building have been abandoned due to supervision problems for a further learning area.
- Plans for an upgrade to the current bus shelter including catering for the second bus and the new trailer are still in planning stage.
- The creation of a new office room in the old storage room, adjoining the main building, commenced in 2019.

#### **9.6.6. Staffing**

- Our casual and relief teacher continued with 2 days per week.
- The Learning Cooperative decided towards the end of the year that we needed a further part time casual and relief teacher to help children with some one on one work in numeracy and literacy. We employed former parent Ron Fuhrer in this role for around 12 hours per week. The school received a wage subsidy for the cost of this position.
- A paid office administration position was created in 2019 for 5 hours a week with parent Tracy Alamanos taking on the role.

## **10 Goals, Targets and Key Improvement Areas**

Our comprehensive professional development program is supported by 1% of our annual school budget and has strong links to the Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework.

