



2025
**EDUCATION
REPORT**



**Blue Mountains
Steiner School**

Inspiring a love of learning.

"The heart of the Steiner method is that education is an art – it must speak to the child's experience. To educate the whole child, the heart and the will must be reached, as well as the mind."

RUDOLF STEINER

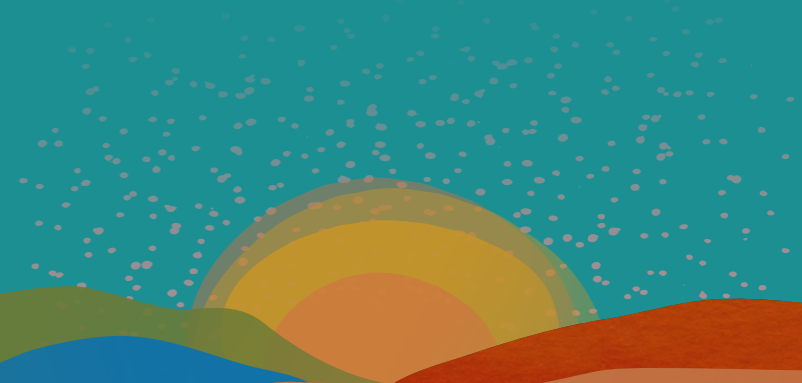


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We acknowledge and pay our respects to the Dharug and Gundungurra people, the traditional custodians of the land upon which our school stands.

We pay our respect to elders past and present, and acknowledge the contributions of Aboriginal Australians and non-Aboriginal Australians to the education of all people on this land.



1. MESSAGES FROM KEY SCHOOL BODIES

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

As we reflect on the year that has been, I would like to begin by warmly welcoming the new members who have joined our School Council: Caroline Dale, Bart Denaro, Jerlilee Murphy and returning member, Francine O’Dea. Your willingness to contribute your time, skills and care to our school community is greatly appreciated. The strength of our school lies in the collective commitment of those who serve it, and I look forward to working together in the months and years ahead.

This year has also brought about significant change. The closure of our preschool marks the end of an important chapter in our school’s story. This decision was not made lightly, and we acknowledge with gratitude the educators, families and children who have been part of the preschool community over the years.

Increasing enrolments remains a key priority as we focus firmly on the future of Blue Mountains Steiner School, and we are actively exploring ways to share the unique value of Steiner education with a wider audience. We know that our school offers something deeply meaningful: an education that nurtures the whole child, cultivates imagination and resilience and fosters a genuine sense of belonging with each child received in reverence.

Alongside this work, Council has begun developing a new Strategic Plan that will guide the school from 2027 onwards. This process provides an opportunity to listen carefully to our community, reflect on our strengths and articulate a clear vision for the years ahead. We are excited by the possibilities before us and remain committed to ensuring the plan reflects both our Steiner principles and the evolving needs of our students and families.

Throughout all of this, I continue to be inspired by the dedication of our staff, the enthusiasm of our students and the support of our families. Schools are far more than buildings or programmes; they are living communities shaped by relationships, shared purpose and deep care for one another.

Thank you to everyone who contributes to the life of our school. Together, we continue to steward a place where children can grow, learn and flourish. I look forward to the journey ahead and all that we will create as a community.

With warmth and gratitude,

Sharmila Agnihotri

Council Chair

June 2026

“Receive the children in reverence, educate them in love,
and send them forth in freedom.”

- Rudolf Steiner

REPORT FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Throughout the year, our students continued to grow through meaningful experiences that nurture thinking, feeling, and willing in balance. Through seasonal festivals, outdoor education, creative arts, practical learning, music, movement, and rich classroom experiences, our students have been supported to develop confidence, resilience, imagination, and a deep connection to community.

Community and Connection

Our school community continued to strengthen through shared purpose and participation. Families, staff, and students worked together to create a warm and vibrant learning environment grounded in the values of Steiner education. Community events, including the Autumn Harvest Fair and the Winter Festival, provided rich opportunities for connection, service, and joy.

This culture of belonging begins with our tenderest offerings. Our Playgroups have continued to support families in the early parenting years, providing a nurturing introduction to Steiner education for babies, toddlers, and caregivers. Through seasonal songs, hands-on baking, and imaginative bush play, our Playgroups foster meaningful connection and soul nourishment during this unique stage of family life, weaving the foundational community ties that sit at the heart of our school.

Experiential Learning and Staff Dedication

Experiential learning remained a defining feature of our educational program in 2025. Through bushwalking, environmental studies, cultural excursions, and class camps, students supported their development of independence, social confidence, and a vital relationship with the natural world.

The dedication and care of our teaching and support staff remains the backbone of these experiences. Engaging in ongoing professional learning and collaborative reflection, our faculty maintained a steady focus on wellbeing, restorative practices, and inclusive education, ensuring students were supported both academically and emotionally.

Meeting Challenges with Courage

The year 2025 also delivered challenges, which we faced with quiet courage and trust in the unfolding of the human spirit. As a school, we strive to transform all challenges into learning opportunities for future wisdom and human development.

As Principal, I extend my sincere gratitude to our families, Board members, volunteers, and staff for their commitment to the life of the school. In a time where education can often feel hurried and outcome-driven, Blue Mountains Steiner School continues to hold a vision of childhood that honours wonder, creativity, relationship, and healthy human development.

We look toward 2026 with optimism and purpose as we continue to strengthen enrolments, deepen community engagement, and provide a rich, developmentally appropriate education for every child.

Martin Buckmaster

Principal



REPORT FROM THE COLLEGE OF TEACHERS

Our Journey Through 2025

The year 2025 was a time of conscious consolidation, deepening our roots as a K-6 Primary School while continuing to nurture the tender early childhood and family offerings that form our foundation.

Throughout the year, the College of Teachers met regularly to hold the pedagogical heart of the school. In a period of ongoing organisational change, the College provided a steady anchor for students, families, and staff. Our work remained grounded in the essential striving of Steiner education: shared anthroposophical study, deep collegial dialogue, and intentional child observation. These living practices continue to illuminate our understanding of child development and guide our teaching.

The College worked closely alongside the School Council and leadership, harmonising our spiritual and pedagogical intentions with the school's operational structures. Together with our vibrant Playgroups, Little Kindy, and Outside School Hours Care, we continue to weave a warm, connected community around the developing child.

Areas of Warmth and Strength

- **Deepening identity:** A consolidated and clear focus on our K-6 Primary School path.
- **Pedagogical striving:** A vibrant commitment to inner work, Steiner study, and reflective practice.
- **Collegial harmony:** Strong collaboration, mutual support, and shared responsibility among the faculty.
- **Community roots:** Continued nourishment of our early childhood programs, fostering a strong sense of belonging.
- **Collaborative governance:** Positive, aligned workflow between the College of Teachers and the School Council.

Areas for Conscious Cultivation

- **Harmonious form:** Bringing greater harmony and consistency to our pedagogical and operational documentation.
- **Clear rhythms:** Refining roles, responsibilities and decision-making processes to support transparency, shared understanding and effective collaboration.
- **Sustainable balance:** Cultivating healthy, sustainable rhythms for study, artistic reflection and administrative duties within a growing school organism.



Looking Ahead to 2026

In the coming year, the College of Teachers will focus on cultivating stability, clarity, and breath across the school life. As we enter 2026, our primary intentions include:

- **Weaving the curriculum:** Deepening pedagogical collaboration and artistic exchange across all class levels.
- **Documenting the living word:** Refining our curriculum and program documentation to reflect our Steiner impulses.
- **Nourishing the faculty:** Supporting staff wellbeing by establishing sustainable working rhythms.
- **Holistic growth:** Further aligning our daily operational systems with the spiritual and pedagogical intentions of the school.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our teachers, staff, families, and Council members for their dedication, warmth, and conscious contribution to the destiny of our school.

In collaborative striving,

Francine O'Dea

On behalf of the College of Teachers

2. CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDENT BODY

Students travel to the Blue Mountains Steiner School from a wide catchment extending from the Central West, the Upper, Mid and Lower Blue Mountains, and including parts of Greater Western Sydney and Southwestern Sydney.

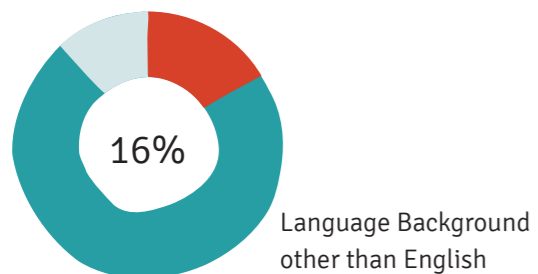
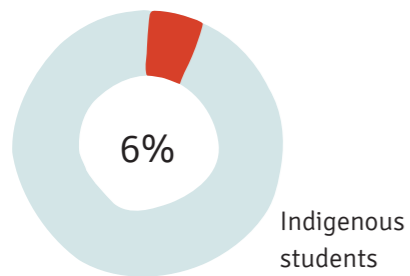
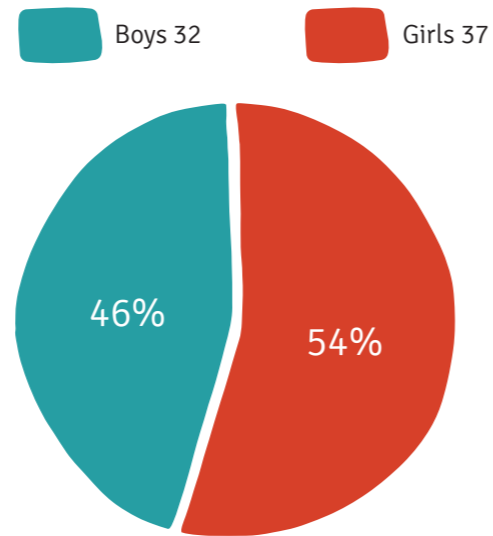
In the 2025 Census, BMSS reported 69 enrolments from Kindergarten to Year 6, with a gender ratio of 32 male to 37 female students. Of these, 6% identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Our students come from a range of language backgrounds other than English (LBotE) with 16% from LBOTE.

<https://myschool.edu.au/school/43754/profile/2024>

Students

Total enrolments: 69

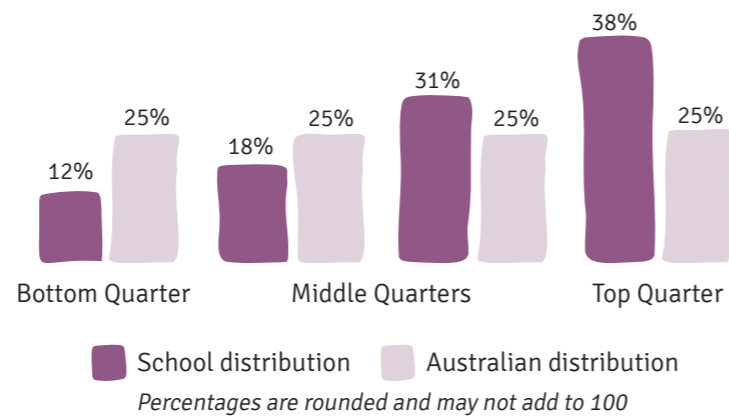


Yes No Not stated

INDEX OF COMMUNITY SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL ADVANTAGE (ICSEA 2025)

School ICSEA value	1073
Average ICSEA value	1000
School ICSEA percentage	76

DISTRIBUTION OF SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL ADVANTAGE 2025



SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Founded in 1983 by a dedicated group of parents, teachers, and professionals, Blue Mountains Steiner School has grown into a well-established independent school offering quality Steiner education. Our programs are aligned with the Australian Curriculum and thoughtfully adapted to meet the needs of today's world.

Nestled on six acres of beautiful bushland in the vibrant Blue Mountains village of Hazelbrook, NSW, our school provides a nurturing and inspiring environment for learning.

We deliver excellence in Steiner education by engaging the thinking, feeling, and willing aspects of each child. Our rich and developmentally appropriate curriculum fosters curiosity, creativity, and a lifelong love of learning.

As a member of Steiner Education Australia, we are part of a national network of Rudolf Steiner/Waldorf schools. While proudly independent, we maintain strong connections with like-minded schools across the country. Blue Mountains Steiner School is registered with the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA).



OUR VALUES

Our school has delivered over 40 years of holistic educational programs, guided by our core values, representing the four foundational pillars of not just what, but how, we do what we do.



CARE

For self, students, community and environment.



CONNECTION

Nurturing the growth and unfolding of each child's curiosity and imagination through our shared work, hope and purpose as global citizens.



CAPACITY

Cultivating students who are positive and see the beauty in the world, are confident in themselves, thoughtful in their observation and self-expression, and who pursue these practices with enthusiasm and creativity.



EXCELLENCE

Achieving excellence through academic rigour, child-responsive teaching and a curriculum that is thematic, developmental and integrated.

Our integrated and thematic curriculum is designed to meet children at the appropriate stage of their development. Central to this approach are Main Lessons—immersive, multi-week units developed from the pedagogy of Rudolf Steiner. These lessons draw on elements from the Key Learning Areas (KLAs) and address all NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) requirements across the school year.

We cater to children and families from birth through to Year 6, offering Playgroup, Little Kindy, After School Care, Kindergarten and Classes 1-6 Primary School. Creative learning and imaginative play are woven throughout our programs, supporting healthy neural development and laying the foundation for a lifelong love of learning. Students are encouraged to engage and learn across age groups, fostering a strong sense of connection and community.



OUR SCHOOL

Primary School

The Primary School includes four classrooms: three composite classes (Class 1/2, 3/4, and 5/6), a dedicated movement room, and a shared library for Kindergarten and Primary students. Students also access specialist subjects such as Digital Literacy, Outdoor Education, PDHPE, Art, Movement and Dance, Music, Languages, and Gardening.

Actions taken to promote respect and responsibility

Respect and responsibility are embedded across school life at Blue Mountains Steiner School, from daily rituals like Morning Circle and Acknowledgement of Country to school-wide restorative practices and environmental care. Students engage in cultural incursions, seasonal festivals, and reconciliation activities that deepen their connection to community and Country. Programs like Bush Kindy and Buddy Reading foster mentoring, collaboration, and a sense of shared responsibility, while creative and integrated learning supports inclusive values and a respectful school culture.

Parent Education

In collaboration with the Steiner Parent Education Initiative, our Parent Education Program offers 4–6 seminars each term on child development, family wellbeing, screen time, holistic health, and more. Parents are welcomed into school life through weekly Craft Mornings, Working Bees, fundraising events, and a vibrant volunteer community facilitated by our Parent Coordinator.

Outdoor Education and PDHPE

Our PDHPE program includes Eurythmy, dance, gymnastics, Futsal, basketball, netball, and circus skills, as well as bushwalking and obstacle courses. Students participate in events such as Futsal Gala Day, Cross Country, Swimming Fun Day, and the Greek Olympics. From Year 2 onward annual school camps build outdoor skills and confidence. The Blue Mountains National Park provides a rich environment for regular bushwalking and nature connection.

Learning Support

The Learning Support Team ensures all students' individual needs are identified and supported. This team includes the Principal, class teachers, aides, specialist staff, and, where relevant, parents. The team coordinates collaborative planning to foster inclusion and access to meaningful learning experiences.

Literacy and Numeracy

Each composite class has a dedicated Teacher's Aide who supports individuals and the whole class. Aides work closely with teachers to assist with reading, spelling, and maths, provide concrete learning tools, and help with classroom dynamics, play, and excursions.

Movement Programs

Movement is woven throughout the school day through structured movement activities informed by Steiner pedagogy, as well as games, art, drama, practical tasks, bush play and outdoor exploration. These experiences support sensory integration, fine and gross motor development, and provide an important foundation for cognitive, emotional and social learning. Extra Lesson sessions provide additional one-to-one support for students, with a focus on motor development, auditory/sound-based work, and body-mind integration.

Facilities

Blue Mountains Steiner School spans nine buildings on six acres, including a library, music and drama rooms, ball court, mini oval, amphitheatre, Gaga Ball pit, giant swing, organic garden, and kitchen facilities. Students access these spaces according to their timetable, with the playground open to all during breaks.

Transport - Getting to School

Located in Hazelbrook we draw families from across the entirety of the mountains, and our transport links connect our community from end to end.

Students travelling from the upper mountains can access a direct public school bus operating from Katoomba straight to our Hazelbrook campus. For those living in the lower mountains, our private school bus weaves a dedicated path morning and afternoon between Lapstone and the school. This private service also seamlessly integrates with public transport lines running between Mount Victoria and Lapstone, creating a reliable, gentle, and consistent commute for every child, whether they travel from the high peaks or the lower valleys.



3. OUTCOMES AND RESULTS

2025 student NAPLAN performance and outcomes in standardised national literacy and numeracy testing is available for viewing on the MySchool website <http://www.myschool.edu.au>



4. STAFFING

TEACHER ACCREDITATION

Accreditation status of all teaching staff responsible for delivering the curriculum.

Level of Accreditation	No. of Teachers
Conditional	0
Provisional	1
Proficient Teacher	8
Total number of teachers	9

Category	No. of Teachers
i. Teachers having teacher education qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) guidelines	8
ii. Teachers having a bachelor degree from a higher education institution within Australia or one recognised within the AEI-NOOSR guidelines but lack formal teacher education qualifications	1



WORKFORCE COMPOSITION

This description of the Blue Mountains Steiner School workforce is extracted from the information published on the ACARA website from the August 2025 census.

We are inclusive of culture, race and spiritual or religious beliefs for all our staff and students. One of our staff members identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, and we continue to strongly encourage applications from First Nations teachers and potential staff.

Workforce	Total
Teaching staff	9
Full-time equivalent teaching staff	5.7
Non-teaching staff	13
Full-time equivalent non-teaching staff	6.5

STAFFING LOADS

Business stream	Load
Playgroup	Leaders – 1 x 0.1 FTE Casual staff – 2 x 0.4 FTE
Primary School	Primary School Kindergarten – 1.0 F/T Class 1/2 – 1.0 F/T Class 3/4 – 1.0 F/T Class 5/6 – 1.0 F/T Teachers Assistants – 5 FTE 3.4 PE Teacher – 0.2 Language Teacher – 0.2 Leadership/Welfare/NCCD supervisor – 1.0 F/T Learning Support – 0.4 Bus Driver – 5 days p/w P/T 0.5 FTE Office Administrator – 1.0 F/T Accounts – 0.2 P/T Cleaners – contract Communications and Marketing – 0.4 P/T

5. SCHOOL POLICIES

Please refer to the school website for current Policies and Procedures.

<https://bluemountainssteiner.nsw.edu.au/about-us/policies-and-procedures/>

The following school policies are publicly available on the website:

- Enrolment policy
- Child Protection policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Discipline policy
- Complaints policy

STUDENT ATTENDANCE – 2025

The average student attendance rate across **Kindergarten to Year 6** in 2025 was **87.5%**, slightly higher than 2024.

Attendance was lower during **Term 2 and early Term 3**, likely influenced by our school’s mid-Mountains bushland location, where seasonal and temperature changes are more extreme during winter.

Attendance includes absences due to illness, extended sick leave, or other approved leave.

Year	Attendance Rate %
Kindergarten	87.8
Class 1	83.8
Class 2	91
Class 3	80.7
Class 4	89.8
Class 5	87.3
Class 6	91.8
Whole School	87.5

Attendance Records and Compliance

As a registered non-government school, BMSS maintains electronic records of enrolment and daily attendance in accordance with the NSW Education Act. These records comply with all government requirements and are regularly audited.

Explaining Absences

Parents/guardians can notify the school of absences via:

- Note or email
- The BMSS mobile app
- Phone call
- In-person explanation

Applications for exemption from school attendance must be submitted to the Principal for approval.

Management of Non-Attendance

The school has clear policies for managing student non-attendance. Parents are expected to notify the school when a child is absent and are regularly reminded via the school newsletter.

*Unexplained absences are followed up promptly. Where attendance concerns arise, the school meets with families to offer support and find solutions. **Mandatory reporting procedures** are followed if absences are extended or if a child may be at risk.*

For full details, refer to our [Policies and Procedures](#) on the school website.





6. STAKEHOLDER SATISFACTION

PARENT SATISFACTION

We are grateful for the thoughtful feedback received through our regular informal Parent Satisfaction Surveys. These insights help us recognise what is working well within our school community and identify areas for continued growth and improvement. Due to staffing and resource constraints, surveys were conducted informally throughout 2025. The next formal survey is scheduled for July 2026.

What parents appreciated

- Improved communication across the school community
- Authentic and caring relationships between students and teachers
- Opportunities for families to be involved in fairs, festivals, and working bees
- The school's stunning bushland setting
- A strong focus on outdoor education and connection with nature
- A warm and supportive sense of community

Suggestions for improvement

- Providing dates and times for festivals, class plays, and class activities earlier in the term
- Continued streamlining of communication processes and platforms
- More regular updates on student progress between formal reporting periods

TEACHER SATISFACTION

Teachers continue to describe our school as a beautiful and deeply rewarding place to work. Staff are drawn to the school's unique natural environment, nestled alongside the Blue Mountains World Heritage and National Park areas, as well as its collaborative culture and strong sense of purpose. Our core values of care, connection, capacity, and excellence are reflected in daily school life and are often immediately felt by visitors to the campus.

Many teachers and staff members have served the school community for more than 20 years, reflecting strong staff commitment and long-term job satisfaction.

What teachers value

- A supportive and creative teaching environment
- A strong and steady College foundation
- Ongoing professional development, including Restorative Practices and Steiner studies
- Weekly Faculty meetings that support collaboration and collegial connection

Areas for growth

- Continued development of a whole-school communication plan
- Greater leadership capacity within the College
- Strengthening literacy and numeracy integration across the curriculum
- Sustainable workload practices and increased opportunities for skills-sharing and mentoring

STUDENT SATISFACTION

Throughout 2025, students were provided with a range of regular and accessible feedback opportunities to support student voice, wellbeing, and connection within the school community. These included:

- Student suggestion boxes available in each class
- Restorative circles and regular class check-ins
- Student wellbeing check-ins with teachers, particularly following playtimes and social interactions.

The next formal student survey is scheduled for June 2026.

What students enjoyed

- Most students reported that they enjoyed coming to school
- Strong friendships and positive social connections
- Outdoor activities and learning experiences
- Creating, producing and acting in class plays
- Feeling heard and supported by their class teachers
- Warm and positive teacher-student relationships.

Areas for growth

- Some specialist subjects, including language and music in Class 5/6, showed higher engagement levels
- Some students expressed mixed feelings about peer support structures, highlighting opportunities to further strengthen connection and participation
- Students shared ideas for enriching school life, including more opportunities for active play, social connection and whole-school celebration.



BLUE MOUNTAINS STEINER SCHOOL



Blue Gum Building
CLASSES 5/6

Lilly Pilly Building
CLASSES 3/4

Banksia Building
CLASSES 1/2

BALL COURT

Wattle Building
PLAYGROUP

The Knoll

Fuchsia Building
CRAFT and
MUSIC ROOM

LIBRARY

Tea Tree Building

Boronia Building
KINDERGARTEN

Waratah Building
OFFICE

Eucalypt Building
PLAYGROUP

Clearview Parade

7. SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL INFORMATION



RECURRENT INCOME 2025

● Fees and Private Income	\$815,474	28.56%
● State Government Recurrent Grants	\$937,805	32.84%
● Commonwealth Government Grants	\$1,102,409	38.6%
Government Capital Grants	\$0	0%
Other Capital Income	\$0	0%
TOTAL	\$2,855,688	



EXPENDITURE 2025

● Salaries, Allowances and Related Expenditure	\$2,406,936	78.43%
● Non-Salary Expenditure	\$661,818	21.57%
Capital Expenditure	\$0	0%
TOTAL	\$3,068,754	





Blue Mountains Steiner School

PLAY GROUP | LITTLE KINDY | K-6 | AFTER SCHOOL CARE

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