

Rossbourne School

Annual Report 2025





Acknowledgement of Country

Rossbourne School respectfully acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our school stands.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present and recognise their continuing connection to Country, culture and community.

We honour the knowledge, wisdom and traditions that have been shared across countless generations and acknowledge the important role Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples continue to play in caring for this land.

As a school committed to inclusion, belonging and lifelong learning, we embrace the opportunity to listen, learn and walk together with respect.

We recognise that reconciliation is an ongoing journey, and we are committed to creating a culture where every person is welcomed, valued and empowered to reach their full potential.

Board Chair Report

2025 was a productive year. Enrolment remained strong, reflecting the confidence families place in the school. Demand continues to exceed available places, and we remain mindful of families on the waiting list. Our teaching and support staff continue to be the school's greatest asset. Their commitment to students and families is consistent and evident. It was pleasing to see across ongoing focus on strengthening the school's operational capacity through several strategic appointments.

The Board continued to focus on uplifting governance in areas that support child safety, completing a full skills matrix review and establishing two sub-committees: a Remuneration and Nomination Committee, and a Finance, Audit and Risk Management Committee. These structures sharpen focus and accountability across key areas.

The Board has identified three priorities for 2026:

Child safety. The Board will continue to support the school in building a genuine, embedded culture of child safety across all operations.

Organisational sustainability. The school operates in a challenging environment, funding pressures, rising costs, and the ongoing need to invest in its foundations. The Board will work with leadership to make clear decisions about where to invest and what to defer.

Strategic renewal. The current plan cycle concludes in 2026. The Board will work with school leadership to develop the next strategic plan, grounded in the school's strengths and the Rossbourne is, at its core, a place of belonging, where every student is seen, valued, and supported to grow.

Students thrive here because the school understands how they learn and builds around that.

We are grateful to our staff, families, and community for their continued trust and partnership.

Principal's Report

2025 was a year of growth, innovation and continued commitment to the mission of Rossbourne School, enhancing the life opportunities of neurodiverse young people and students with disability.

Throughout the year, Rossbourne remained steadfast in its commitment to providing an inclusive, strengths based educational environment where students are known, supported and empowered to achieve their potential. Guided by the School's values of Respect, Sharing, Inclusion, Honesty and Resilience, staff worked collaboratively to ensure that every student had opportunities to learn, connect and thrive.

A significant focus throughout 2025 was the continued development of educational pathways and programs designed to prepare students for life beyond school. The School strengthened vocational learning opportunities, work experience, transition programs and senior pathways to support students' diverse aspirations and future goals. Partnerships with external organisations further enhanced opportunities for students to explore tertiary education, employment and community participation.

Rossbourne also continued to embrace innovation in teaching and learning, including the integration of technology to support personalised learning and student engagement. Staff participated in professional learning and shared their expertise nationally through presentations at educational conferences, showcasing the School's commitment to evidence informed practice and innovation in neurodiverse education.

Student voice and leadership remained an important priority throughout the year. Students were provided with opportunities to develop leadership skills, contribute to their community and explore global citizenship, sustainability and social responsibility. These experiences empowered young people to make meaningful contributions both within and beyond the School.

The performing arts continued to play a central role in the life of the School. The 2025 production of *Grease* was a highlight of the year, bringing together students, staff and families in celebration of creativity, courage and collaboration. Participation in the arts provided students with opportunities to develop confidence, communication skills and a strong sense of belonging within the Rossbourne community.

Students also engaged in a rich program of camps, excursions, outdoor education, sporting competitions and community experiences. These opportunities fostered resilience, independence, teamwork and social connection while supporting students to develop the skills and confidence required for life beyond school.

Rossbourne's greatest strength continues to be its people. The dedication, expertise and care demonstrated daily by staff make a profound difference in the lives of students and families. The School also acknowledges the invaluable contribution of parents, carers, volunteers and Board members whose partnership and support enrich our community.

As Rossbourne approaches its 60th anniversary in 2027, the School looks to the future with optimism and purpose, continuing the legacy established by Mabel Ross nearly six decades ago. Together, we remain committed to creating a community where difference is valued, strengths are celebrated and every young person is empowered to flourish.

Our Story

Founded in 1967 by Mabel Ross, Rossbourne School was established to provide educational opportunities for young people whose needs were not being fully met in traditional educational settings. Guided by a belief that every student deserves the opportunity to learn, belong and thrive, Mabel Ross created a school that recognised the importance of personalised education and respectful relationships.

Nearly six decades later, Rossbourne continues this legacy as a specialist independent school supporting neurodiverse young people and students with disability. As the School approaches its 60th anniversary in 2027, it remains committed to its founding purpose: creating an inclusive learning environment where students are known, supported and empowered to achieve their potential.

Our Vision and Values

To be a world leading specialist school recognised for its innovative neurodiverse educational programs, where every student's potential is unlocked so they can achieve their best as engaged learners and global citizens. Our School values are Respect, Sharing, Inclusion, Honesty and Resilience.

Our Students

Rossbourne School is a specialist independent school supporting neurodiverse young people and students with disability from Years 7 to 12.

The School provides an inclusive and strengths based learning environment for students whose educational, social and emotional needs may not have been fully met in traditional school settings. Many students come to Rossbourne seeking a learning community where they feel safe, known, supported and able to experience success. Rossbourne's student population reflects a diverse range of learning profiles, strengths and aspirations. Students travel from across metropolitan Melbourne, regional Victoria and, on occasion, interstate and overseas to access the School's specialist educational programs.

Central to the Rossbourne approach is the belief that every student can learn, thrive and contribute meaningfully to their community when provided with the right supports, relationships and opportunities. Through personalised learning, wellbeing support and strong partnerships with families, Rossbourne seeks to enhance students' life opportunities by fostering independence, resilience, respectful relationships and social connection.

Our People

Rossbourne School's greatest strength is its people. Our staff bring expertise, compassion and a deep commitment to supporting neurodiverse young people to learn, grow and thrive.

As a specialist school, Rossbourne recognises that effective education extends beyond academic achievement. Our multidisciplinary team of teachers, psychologists, allied health professionals, education support staff and administrators work collaboratively to create an inclusive learning environment where every student feels safe, known and supported.

Staff foster strong relationships with students and families and strive to understand each young person's unique strengths, interests and support needs. Through personalised learning, wellbeing support and high expectations, Rossbourne staff empower students to develop confidence, independence and a sense of belonging.

The School is also committed to continuous improvement and professional learning, recognising that contemporary education and child safe practice require ongoing reflection, growth and collaboration.

Rossbourne acknowledges and thanks its staff for their dedication, professionalism and unwavering commitment to students and families throughout 2025. Their care, expertise and advocacy continue to make a profound difference in the lives of young people.

2025 Staff

Department	Staffing
Teaching Staff	30
Specialist Support Staff	4
Administrative Staff	6
Maintenance/Canteen Staff/General Support	3

Governance and Leadership

Rossbourne School is governed by a dedicated Board committed to ensuring strong governance, strategic oversight and stewardship of the School's mission and values.

The Board works in partnership with School leadership to support high quality educational outcomes, promote child safety and wellbeing, ensure regulatory compliance and guide the long-term sustainability of the School.

The School acknowledges and thanks its Board members for their expertise, service and commitment to the Rossbourne community.

School Board Members

Board Member	Start Date
Rowena Stocks (Board Chair)	2020
Des Cook	1984
Lee Wills	2014
Philip Martell	2006
Christine Georgiou	2019
Darralyn Cusack	2020
Kylie Payne	2023

Progress Against the Strategic Plan (2021–2026)

Throughout 2025, Rossbourne School continued to make meaningful progress towards the strategic priorities identified in the 2021–2026 Strategic Plan. While a number of initiatives remain ongoing, the School strengthened its commitment to providing a safe, inclusive and innovative learning environment for every student.

Safe and Supportive School

Status: Ongoing

The School strengthened its child safe culture through ongoing policy review, professional learning, wellbeing initiatives and multidisciplinary collaboration. Staff continued to foster safe, respectful and inclusive learning environments that support the diverse needs of Rossbourne students.

Quality Teaching and Learning

Status: Ongoing

Rossbourne continued to strengthen personalised learning through differentiated curriculum, Individual Learning Plans and evidence informed teaching practices. Students participated in a broad range of academic, vocational and community learning experiences designed to support independence, engagement and successful transition beyond school.

Nurturing Staff Development

Status: Ongoing

Professional learning remained a priority throughout 2025. Staff engaged in training to strengthen contemporary teaching practice, child safety, student wellbeing and neuro affirming approaches. The School also continued to promote staff wellbeing through a collaborative culture that values professional growth, inclusion and shared leadership.

Community and Partnerships

Status: In Progress

Rossbourne strengthened partnerships with families, tertiary providers, employers and community organisations to enhance learning opportunities and transition pathways for students. The School also continued to build connections across the wider education sector while preparing to celebrate its 60th Anniversary in 2027.

Technology to Strengthen Teaching and Learning

Status: Ongoing

Technology continued to play an important role in supporting personalised learning and student engagement. Throughout the year the School reviewed digital learning practices, strengthened cyber security measures and continued to enhance technology infrastructure to support teaching, learning and communication.

Stewardship and Sustainability

Status: Ongoing

Rossbourne remained committed to responsible governance, financial sustainability and continuous improvement. Investment in facilities, technology and educational programs continued to support the School's long term strategic priorities while ensuring strong stewardship of community resources.

Attendance

Rossbourne School's priority is the wellbeing and welfare of its students and our processes and protocols are designed to support the safety of our students and know where they are at all times throughout the school day. Parents are required to notify Homeroom teachers by phone or email if their child will be late or absent from school for any part of the day by 8.15 am. When arriving late to school or leaving early, students must sign in/out at the main school reception area. The table below provides the attendance levels for 2025. The figures reflect not only the commitment of students to attend school but also the fact that a number of our students do have regular appointments with external professionals in support of a range of neuro developmental challenges.

Year	Gender	Semester One	Semester Two	Year Average
7	Female (8)	94.97	95.23	95.10
	Male (16)	89.88	81.63	85.75
8	Female (10)	80.71	74.90	77.80
	Male (13)	86.55	89.45	88.00
9	Female (11)	90.62	90.42	90.52
	Male (13)	90.87	94.00	92.43
10	Female (8)	84.09	86.00	85.39
	Male (16)	86.61	88.72	87.66

**Reportable Attendance 2025 – Semester 1 & Term 3, full-time students, Year 7-10 or equivalent*

Survey Results

In 2025, Rossbourne School introduced its inaugural Student Voice Survey to better understand students' perceptions of their learning, wellbeing and overall school experience. The survey provides an important baseline against which future progress can be measured and will become an annual component of the School's continuous improvement cycle. Student voice is a valuable source of feedback, enabling the School to celebrate strengths, identify opportunities for growth and ensure that strategic decisions continue to reflect the experiences and needs of our students.

Student Attitudes to School

	Strongly Agree/Agree	Neither Agree/Disagree
I always try to attend school	83%	13%
I feel like I belong at this school	79%	10%
I take responsibility for what I do	75%	21%
I usually pay attention in class	70%	26%
I ask my teacher for help when I find my work difficult	62%	20%
I enjoy tasks that challenge me	61%	27%

These results indicate strong levels of student attendance, belonging and personal responsibility, while identifying opportunities to further strengthen students' confidence in seeking support and embracing academic challenge.

Teaching & Learning	Strongly Agree/Agree	Neither Agree/Disagree
Teachers communicate learning outcomes clearly	82%	10%
Teachers give me feedback on my work	78%	13%
My learning prepares me for the future	77%	15%
Teachers have my respect	75%	20%
The school respects me	75%	21%
Teachers set clear expectations	75%	17%
Teachers provide extra help when needed	74%	19%
I like my teachers	73%	24%
Teachers explain things another way if I don't understand	71%	19%
Teachers are prepared for class	70%	20%
I like what I am learning	52%	37%
Learning is exciting	46%	37%

Students reported positive perceptions of teacher relationships, communication and feedback. The survey also identifies opportunities to continue enhancing student engagement and creating increasingly meaningful and stimulating learning experiences.

School Culture & Wellbeing	Strongly Agree/Agree	Neither Agree/Disagree
I have friends at school	89%	4%
The school provides a safe environment	79%	16%
I like this school	73%	16%
The school supports me	71%	23%
I have a trusted staff member	68%	18%
The school makes me feel good about myself	58%	29%
Students respect each other's differences	54%	30%

The survey demonstrates that students feel well supported, connected and safe within the Rossbourne community. The results also provide valuable direction for future initiatives that continue to strengthen inclusion, belonging and respect for individual differences.

Parent Feedback Survey

In 2025, Rossbourne School also introduced its inaugural Parent Feedback Survey to better understand parent and carer perceptions of their child's learning, wellbeing and overall school experience. The survey provides an important baseline for measuring parent satisfaction and will become an annual component of the School's continuous improvement framework. Parent feedback plays an essential role in informing school improvement priorities, strengthening partnerships and ensuring the School continues to meet the needs of our students and families.

Student Experience & Wellbeing	Strongly Agree/Agree	Neither Agree/Disagree
My child is happy at this school	92%	3%
This school treats my child with respect	92%	5%
My child feels the school provides a safe environment	89%	8%
The school provides opportunities to build my child's confidence	89%	8%
I feel comfortable approaching the school with concerns	87%	5%
Overall, I am satisfied with my decision to send my child to Rossbourne	87%	8%
Teachers understand the different abilities of students	84%	13%
My child enjoys the learning they do at school	82%	13%
Teachers are enthusiastic and positive about teaching	82%	13%
The school provides opportunities for my child to express ideas	82%	8%
The school promotes mental health and wellbeing	79%	13%
The school takes parents' concerns seriously	79%	13%

These results reflect strong parent confidence in Rossbourne's commitment to student wellbeing, respectful relationships, safety and inclusive educational practices.

Teaching & Learning	Strongly Agree/Agree	Neither Agree/Disagree
The school is effective at helping my child achieve their best	76%	18%
The learning program meets the needs of my child	74%	21%
My child feels motivated by their teachers to learn	74%	16%
Positive behaviour is reinforced and rewarded	71%	21%
I receive the information via school communication channels	66%	18%
Effective two-way communication exists	63%	16%
I am given opportunities to find out how my child is progressing	58%	26%
My child receives additional help from teachers when needed	55%	37%
The school uses a broad range of communication strategies	53%	24%
Teachers communicate with me often enough about my child	47%	21%

Parent feedback identified many strengths in teaching and learning, while also highlighting opportunities to strengthen communication, reporting and partnerships between home and school.

Interpreting Survey Results

As this was Rossbourne School's inaugural Student Voice Survey, the results provide an important baseline for understanding students' perceptions of their learning, wellbeing and overall school experience.

A notable feature of the survey was the proportion of students who selected the neutral response option (Neither Agree nor Disagree) across several areas. Within a specialist school setting, this is not unexpected. Many Rossbourne students are neurodiverse and experience differences in communication, language processing, emotional regulation, executive functioning and self reflection. These differences can influence how students interpret survey questions and may result in more considered or neutral responses rather than definitive positive or negative ratings.

For many students, selecting a neutral response may reflect uncertainty, fluctuating experiences, or a preference not to make an absolute judgement, rather than dissatisfaction. As such, the neutral responses provide valuable insight and should be viewed as an opportunity for further exploration rather than a negative outcome.

As Rossbourne continues to embed student voice within its continuous improvement framework, future surveys will enable year on year comparisons, providing a richer understanding of trends over time. The School will also review the survey design to ensure it remains accessible and meaningful for neurodiverse learners, including consideration of simplified language, visual supports and additional opportunities for students to provide qualitative feedback in ways that reflect their communication strengths and preferences.

The 2025 survey data overall establishes an important baseline for Rossbourne School. Future Annual Reports will compare results over time, enabling the School to monitor trends, evaluate the impact of improvement initiatives and ensure student voice continues to inform decision making and strategic planning.

Student Outcomes

Rossbourne is a Specialist School, and as such we have the flexibility to provide personalised curricular that are based on the specific needs of our students. Our holistic approach to providing education is integrated, combining academic programs with life skills as well as supporting students to develop independence and social capacities that will enhance their chances of achieving their defined success in school and socially as they mature into young adulthood. Students' learning outcomes are based on specific goals that relate to a student's neuro developmental challenges and these goals are set within Individual Learning Plans that are reviewed and adjusted as students progress through the year.

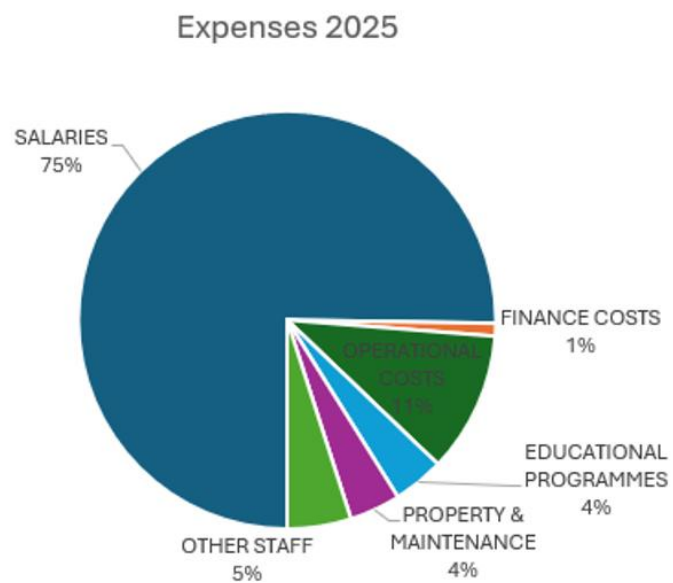
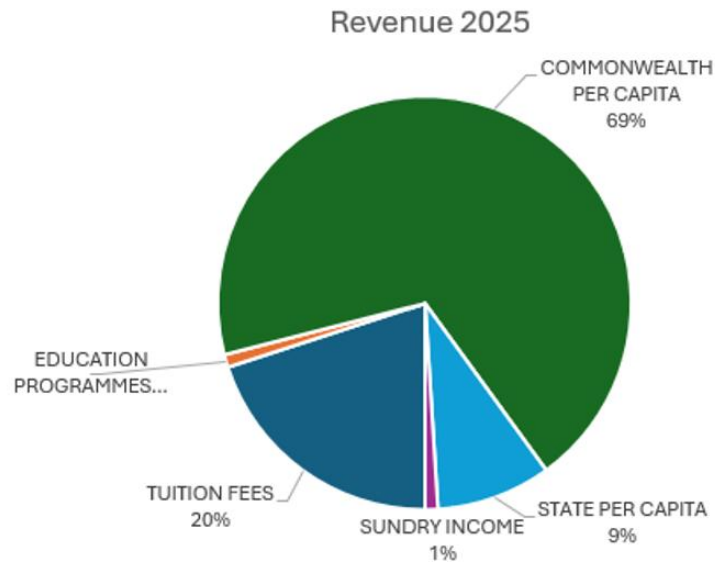
Student Pathways

The majority of our Year 12 graduates transitioned to the TAFE sector. Below is a table showing the percentage of Year 12 2025 Rossbourne graduates and their destinations for 2026.

Course	% of graduates
TAFE Courses Cert I Work Education, Holmesglen Cert I Work Education, Box Hill Institute Cert II Hospitality, Box Hill Institute Cert III Childcare, Box Hill Institute Cert III Sport, Aquatics and Recreation, Box Hill Institute Cert III Animal Care, Box Hill Institute Cert IV Screen and Media, Swinburne Diploma of Sport, Richmond Institute Applied Diploma in Theatre, Melbourne Polytechnic	53.4%
Year 13 VCE/VM VDSS Cert II Community Services/Active Volunteering, IVET Cert III Tourism, Holmesglen Cert III Music Performance, Box Hill Institute Cert III Creative Industries, AIE Cert III, ICT, AIE Cert III Automotive, Box Hill Institute	23.3%
NDIS-Funded individual program All Things Equal	3.3%
Volunteer work Local primary school	3.3%
ADF	3.3%
Not Known	13.3%

Finances

Operating Revenue & Expenses for the Year Ending 2025



Looking Ahead

As Rossbourne School continues its journey towards its 60th anniversary in 2027, we remain focused on honouring our proud history while embracing the opportunities that lie ahead.

Throughout 2025, our students, staff, families and Board have continued to demonstrate resilience, collaboration and a shared commitment to ensuring every young person is known, supported and empowered to achieve their potential.

While there is always more to do, we look to the future with confidence and optimism.

Guided by our values of Respect, Sharing, Inclusion, Honesty and Resilience, Rossbourne will continue to strengthen its child safe culture, invest in high quality teaching and learning, support staff wellbeing, foster meaningful partnerships and create opportunities that enable every student to thrive.

Together, we will continue building a school community where difference is celebrated, strengths are recognised and every learner has the opportunity to flourish.

Together, we honour our past, embrace the present and continue to shape a future where every learner belongs.