

LYREBIRD COLLEGE

Annual Report  
2021



• Coldstream Yarra Ranges Victoria •

# Statement of Commitment

The Principal attests that:

- All teachers at the school are Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registered;
- The school has met the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) minimum standards for registration (except where any exemptions apply);
- All expenses and commitments of funds have been to support educational outcomes and operational needs; and
- The school complies with the Child Safe Standards as prescribed in Ministerial Order 870 and the introduction of Ministerial Order 1359.

## Child Safe Commitment

Lyrebird College is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices promoted and heard about decisions that affect their lives. Lyrebird College is committed to acting in children's best interests and keeping them safe from harm. We regard our child protection responsibilities with the utmost importance. We commit to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations with robust policies and procedures to maintain a child safe culture. All members of the Lyrebird College community have the responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play both individually and collectively to ensure the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of every decision made.

## Lyrebird College has a zero tolerance for child abuse

Children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder can be particularly vulnerable and it is fundamental that Lyrebird College supports students to develop their capacity to communicate their needs and build their understanding to involve them in decisions, especially around matters that directly affect them. We listen to and observe our students knowing that student behaviour and actions are communication methods enabling staff to value, understand and respect what our students have to say. Children who disclose child abuse or are linked to suspected child abuse will be assisted and supported.

We promote diversity and tolerance in our College, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular we:

- promote the cultural safety, expression, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- promote the cultural safety, expression, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally

Families will be made aware of child safety matters and supported, encouraged and enabled to understand, identify and discuss and report child safety matters for the benefit of children.

Lyrebird College has a zero tolerance of racism and incidents of racism will be addressed by the College leadership

# Vision Statement

Lyrebird College pursues excellence in the education of young people with an Autism Spectrum Disorder.

# Mission Statement

**Lyrebird College will:**

- deliver an individualised curriculum that recognises every child's right to be supported in a joyful and caring learning environment that enables them to meet their full potential
- develop and promote good practice amongst professionals and carers in the delivery of the individualised curriculum
- promote an understanding of autism in the wider community



## Our Core Values

- Learning while happy; happiness through learning.
- Safety for children; peace of mind for parents.
- Belief that every individual can learn and has the right to learn.

## Our Commitment

- Continually strive for a deep understanding of each individual student.
- Celebrate the achievements of our students.
- Foster and maintain a culture of best practice.
- Create and nurture a team of the highest quality professionals.
- Encourage commitment and dedication from our staff.
- Recognise the skills and strengths of our staff.
- Seek continuous improvement in all we do.
- Remain open to the acceptance of new ideas and approaches.
- Maintain prudent financial and risk management whilst pursuing growth opportunities.
- Promote constructive involvement within the community.
- Create positive and beneficial parent-school partnerships.

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## Lyrebird College

Lyrebird College is a purpose-designed and built independent specialist school, nestled amongst the rolling plains of the gateway to the Yarra Valley in Coldstream, Victoria. Lyrebird College opened its doors to the founding students in 2021 catering specifically for students with high needs Autism Spectrum Disorder. Through the provision of rigorous learning frameworks that integrate an Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA) program specifically tailored to their individual needs, students have opportunities to learn new skills and acquire knowledge to prepare them for adulthood and the future.

Our students receive a quality outcome-focused education in a fun and safe environment delivered by expert staff. In providing an intensive education and therapeutic program developing individual point of need skills tailored to each child, Lyrebird College enables all students to reach their full potential.

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## What's in a name?

The name "Lyrebird College" was chosen for our school not only because the Lyrebird is native to the Yarra Ranges, but because a number of the traits the Lyrebird exhibits are mirrored in many people with an Autism Spectrum Disorder.

**Lyrebirds** are natural mimics which is one of the first skills all children are taught, and mimicry is a vital skill for all children with an ASD to learn. This can be in the form of echolalia or the imitating of movie scripts and turning them into their own conversations. A Lyrebird will create a cacophony of complex sounds from those around them such as a laugh from a kookaburra, a song from a magpie or even a chainsaw. It then fashions these sounds into its own unique song. This uniqueness is also aligned with people with an ASD.

**Lyrebirds** are known for being socially shy and difficult to see in the wild. They keep to themselves and just like some people with an ASD, they prefer their own space.

**Lyrebirds** are beautiful.



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## Student Profile

Lyrebird College was purposely founded for children with high needs Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and related complexities.

Lyrebird College promotes collaborative learning partnerships with families by encouraging the lessons learned to continue outside the school environment.

Lyrebird College is the first autism specific independent school in Victoria that has a whole school approach to applying the principles and strategies of Applied Behaviour Analysis.

### ***What is Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA)?***

*ABA is the process of systematically applying interventions based on the principles of learning theory to improve socially significant behaviours to a meaningful degree. Specific 'socially significant behaviours' may include academics, communication, social skills and adaptive living skills.*

*The target behaviour is broken down into small, manageable steps that the child is then taught to apply together as a meaningful, independent skill. The focus is on success and positive reinforcement, and thoughtful goal and strategy selection based on a child's individual interests, abilities and needs, and data based decision making.*

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## Enrolment

In 2020 the school enrolled 10 students aged between 5-12. The student population is from a culturally wide and diverse background with many families having a language background other than English.



## Principal Message

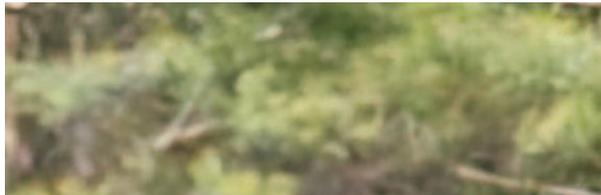
I am honoured to be the first or foundational principal of Lyrebird College and to be in a position to set the tone and educational opportunities for students in 2021 and the years ahead. My vision and hope for Lyrebird College is to provide an opportunity for students with ASD to be given the education that they deserve and to make certain we cater for the unique individual needs of our students in a safe, nurturing and happy environment.

As Principal I place high importance on educational excellence, on students working towards achieving their goals and for students to experience genuine success and to celebrate their accomplishments. I have a deep belief that as people we naturally thrive in settings that are inclusive, in classrooms that are cheerful and joyous, where students are active and engaged learners, and when there is an overall feel throughout the college of welcoming warmth and sense of community.

Our College ethos promotes strong home-school partnerships, where we collectively strive towards developing a comprehensive Individual Learning Plan (ILP) that allows for relevant and measurable goals for our students. With a heavy focus on functional literacy and numeracy skills as well as personal and social goals, we will endeavour to meet the needs of our students. Lyrebird College is committed to providing a quality outcome-focused education employing a tailored Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA) program.

As an educator I am inspired by the personal achievements of students, I take great delight in celebrating success and viewing students through a positive and admiring lens. Moving forward I very much look towards making the hopes and aspirations of our families and students part of the educational programs of Lyrebird College.

***Julie Kugler***  
***Principal***



# Curriculum

Lyrebird College provides an inclusive learning environment for students from foundation to year 10. The school provides a highly individualised curriculum based on assessment using the Victorian Curriculum F-10 and Ability Based Learning and Education Support (ABLES).

Learning at Lyrebird College will focus on functional communication, literacy, mathematics, and social and emotional skills to enrich our student's lives and prepare them to be active members of society. Our curriculum embraces all areas of academic learning at a level that meets each student's educational needs. We use scientifically proven behaviour interventions to achieve clearly defined goals for each student, ensuring progression, continuity and coherence in learning.

## The curriculum:

- Reflects current educational reforms at an international, national and state level, and is informed by the principles and practices of inclusive education.
- Supports inclusive education and the rights of every student to participate in, or have access to, the full range of programs and services offered by the education system on the same basis as their neurotypical peers.
- Provides an inclusive curriculum so teachers can equip all students with the knowledge, skills and behaviours to help them succeed to be active community participants

The curriculum is delivered by highly trained staff who receive ongoing training and professional development in autism-specific methodologies.

Our educational provision is based upon the principles of Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA) and Assessment of Functional Living Skills (AFLS).



# Student Progress

All students have Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) developed and monitored by Student Support Group (SSG) members. Each SSG is responsible for short and long term goal setting and assisting progress against specific goals.

Teachers continuously monitor student outcomes using a variety of assessment strategies and tools. Both formative and summative data is collected, monitored and analysed on a regular basis.

Standardised testing measures provide numerical measurement of student growth and collection of student work and teacher observations provide ongoing formative assessment to track student progress.

Teachers prepare formal reports to parents and students twice a year. The report informs parents and students of student progress and achievement in relation to student learning outcomes developed utilising the Victorian Curriculum A-D and F-10.

Individual teacher-student spreadsheets are maintained on each student's progress as mapped against the Victorian Curriculum, including stages A-D.

As well as reliance on VCAA resources, the college utilises a range of ASD specific resources such as:

- ABLLS (Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills)
- AFLS (Assessment of functional Living Skills)
- Playfulness Observation Scale
- Play Lesson Engagement Scale

Lyrebird College provides parents and guardians with a clear picture of their child's progress at the end of a specified period of time that demonstrate:

- Where their child is on the learning continuum
- How well their child is progressing against expected levels of achievement and their personalised learning goals and targets
- Where their child needs to improve and what the next steps in their learning will be



# Staff Employed 2021

**A Total of 11 Staff were Employed in 2021.**

**PRINCIPAL**

Julie Kugler BA, GD-Education

**TEACHERS**

Sharryn Veto BTeach, Bed, GC-Inclusion, GC-Autism, Master of Autism Studies

Isabella Oates BA Education

**ADMINISTRATION**

Rebecca Parsons Dip Children Services, Cert IV Ed Support

Betty Fang BCom

**ABA THERAPIST**

Sharlene Spiteri BPsych, GD-Psych, MEd & Dev Psych candidate, provisional psychologist

**EDUCATION SUPPORT**

Rebecca Gibbs

Linda Delaney DipTeach-Early Childhood, Post Grad-Childrens' Lit, Cert IV Ed Support

Catherine Slattery Dip Teach

Traci Male Dip Children Services

Max Draper BA, Candidate Master of Teaching

**PSYCHOLOGIST**

Perri Ashton BA, GD-Psych (Adv), MEd & Dev Psych, MAPS, Behaviour Support Practitioner  
(External Provider)

**SPEECH THERAPIST**

Archie Sailesh BA, B SpPath

(External Provider)

# Professional Development

Staff professional learning and capacity building is a key focus for all team members on a weekly basis. Staff participate in workshops and professional learning sessions to ensure a collective approach to our students and to maintain a high level of professional knowledge and skill.



# Attendance

Due to the small number of students Lyrebird College does not report attendance rates against grades as there may only be one student per level.

The attendance rate was stable throughout the year in consideration of the health advice and schooling arrangements across the country in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The school recorded an **\*overall attendance rate of 83.23% with 71.46% of students attending at least 90% of the time** (ACARA).

Families are required to notify the school of an absence in person or by telephone, email or note. All absences are recorded daily and systematically by the school. We encourage regular attendance for consistency of learning, school routines and wellbeing, yet maintain flexibility for students to access additional allied health and paediatric services as required. Our data reflects the fact that many of our students have regular appointments with external professionals in support of a range of neuro-developmental challenges.

*\*Reportable Attendance 2021 – Semester 1 & Term 3, full time students*

# Student Pathways

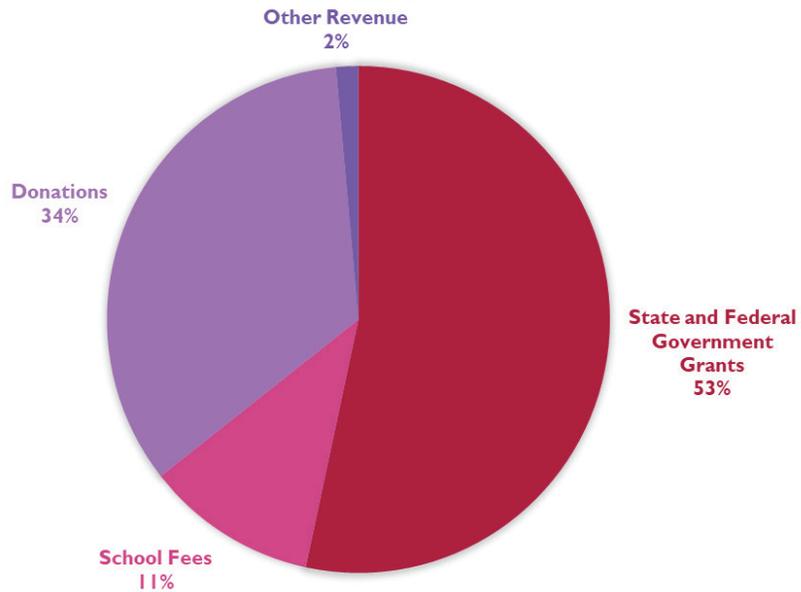
Lyrebird College's Strategic Plan focuses on furthering the secondary school educational program with increased emphasis on community inclusion and future pathways and connections. Lyrebird College aims to empower students to find their voice and their place and prepare students to participate meaningfully in society.

Student pathways may include:

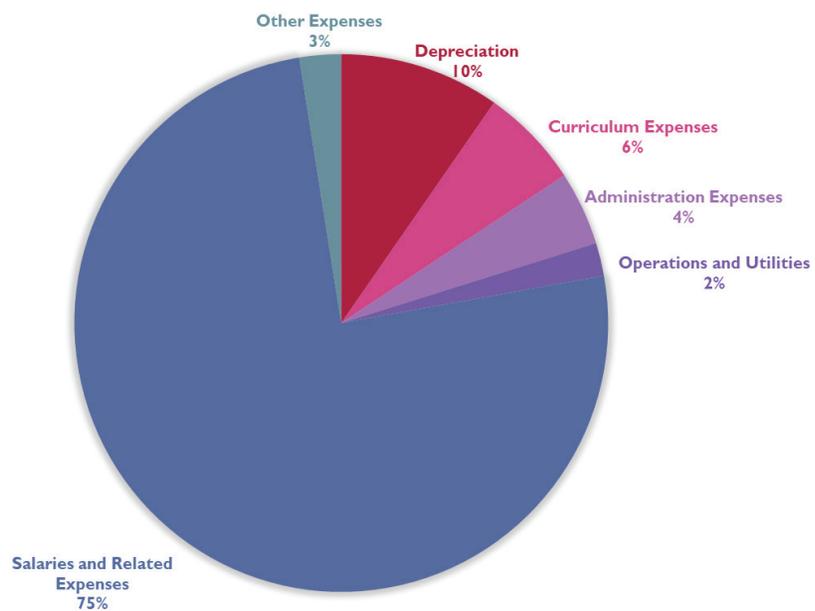
- *Higher Education*
- *Employment*
- *Apprenticeship*
- *Community Access*
- *Participation Programs*

# Finances Operating Revenue & Expenses for the Year Ending 2021

## 2021 INCOME



## 2021 EXPENDITURE



# Governance

Lyrebird College Limited (ACN 622 757 389) is a not-for-profit organisation and is registered as a charity by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission.

Lyrebird College was officially registered with VRQA on the 27 November 2020

## Our board

Lyrebird College is currently governed by a group of professionals with proficiency in their respective areas of expertise. The College brings together these experts to ensure all aspects of the College are catered for: financial integrity, educational underpinning, clinically driven and professionally managed.

The elected members for 2021 were as follows:

**Melissa Handbury – Board Chair**

B Com, CA

**Garry Embry – Deputy Chair**

DataWise

BSc(Education), Grad Dip Ed-Admin, Grad Cert

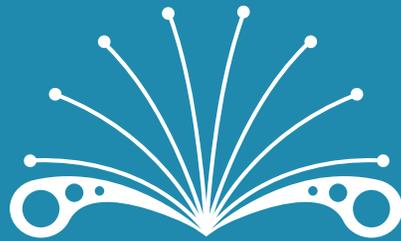
**Aaron Gleisner**

BA (Hons)

**Ashlee DeRooy**

*BAppSc, MEd ABA (BCBA)*

**Selena Thomas**



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