

# 2023 Annual Report to the School Community

School Name: Rubicon Outdoor School (8294)



- all teachers at the school meet the registration requirements of the [Victorian Institute of Teaching \(VIT\)](#)
- the school meets prescribed Minimum Standards for registration as regulated by the Victorian Regulation and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) in accordance with the [Education and Training Reform Act 2006 \(Vic\)](#) (this includes any exemption granted to this school by the VRQA, for the most recent calendar year, in relation to minimum student enrolment numbers and/or the curriculum framework requirement to deliver a languages program)
- the school meets the requirements of the Child Safe Standards as prescribed in [Ministerial Order 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in schools \(PDF\)](#).

Attested on 29 April 2024 at 09:19 AM by Andrew Monson (Principal)

- This 2023 Annual Report to the School Community has been tabled and endorsed at a meeting of the school council and will be publicly shared with the school community

Attested on 29 April 2024 at 09:27 AM by Geoff Hyland (School Council President)

## How to read the Annual Report

---

### What does the 'About Our School' commentary section of this report refer to?

The 'About our school' commentary provides a brief background on the school and an overview of the school's performance over the previous calendar year.

The 'School Context' describes the school's vision, values, and purpose. Details include the school's geographic location, size and structure, social characteristics, enrolment characteristics, and special programs.

The 'Progress towards strategic goals, student outcomes, and student engagement' section allows schools to reflect on highlights related to implementation of and progress towards the School Strategic Plan and Annual Implementation Plan, and efforts to improve student learning, wellbeing, and engagement.

---

### What does the 'Performance Summary' section of this report refer to?

The Performance Summary includes the following:

#### School Profile

- student enrolment information
- the school's 'Student Family Occupation and Education' category
- a summary of parent responses in the Parent Opinion Survey, shown against the statewide average for Camp schools
- school staff responses in the area of School Climate in the School Staff Survey, shown against the statewide average for Camp schools

Key terms used in the Performance Summary are defined below:

#### NDP and NDA

'NDP' refers to no data being published for privacy reasons or where there are insufficient underlying data. For example, very low numbers of participants or characteristics that may lead to identification will result in an 'NDP' label.

'NDA' refers to no data being available. Some schools have no data for particular measures due to low enrolments. There may be no students enrolled in some year levels, so school comparisons are not possible.

Note that new schools only have the latest year of data and no comparative data from previous years. The department also recognises unique circumstances in Specialist, Select Entry, English Language, Community Schools and schools that changed school type recently, where school-to-school comparisons are not appropriate.

---

### Updates to the 'Performance Summary' in the 2023 Annual Report

Reporting on the following measures has been updated in the 2023 Annual Report to align with changes to departmental and public reporting products.

#### Parent/Caregiver/Guardian Opinion Survey, School Staff Survey and the Attitudes to School Survey

The calculation of the percentage endorsement for all survey measures has been revised to no longer include skipped responses. This applies to all survey measures reported in the Performance Summary. The change to the calculation reduces the negative impact of skipped responses on school results, particularly where there were a small number of respondents to the survey.

Additionally, the Parent Satisfaction measure has been revised to use the percentage endorsement of the 'General School Satisfaction' factor of the Parent/Caregiver/Guardian Opinion Survey only. Previously, this measure reflected an average of multiple factors in the survey. The change to reporting a single factor is consistent with how Parent Satisfaction is reported to schools and in other public reports.

# About Our School

---

## School context

Rubicon Outdoor School is a specific purpose school working with government secondary schools across Victoria. The school was established in 1978. The school has a funded enrolment of 88 students with an average of 3200 students enrolled annually and with an extensive waitlist. The school's vision is to empower students to develop life - long positive growth. We work towards realising this by providing meaningful learning for students through developing co-curriculum that supports the development of an enhanced understanding of self and others, as well as the skills required to contribute to a positive community and sustainable environment. This vision assists the school to directly support the broader Victorian education foci of: *Learning for life, happy, healthy resilient students, and breaking the link between disadvantage and outcomes*. The School's values of *Sustainable Futures, Shaped by Challenge, Building Community, and Meaningful Experiences* alongside the Department of Education values are key to the work the school engages in and supports both decision-making and behavioural expectations of our community. The school has two campuses. The Thornton Campus, in the Rubicon Valley 100km north-east of Melbourne and The Nayook Campus, located approximately 100 km east of Melbourne. The majority of student attendance is for five days.

The school works with up to 120 students on a weekly basis with class sizes being an average of 12 students. These classes are distributed across the two campuses based on cohort sizes, student level learning requirements and the geographical settings of the campuses to the students' home school. Students attend from across Victoria, with the majority from metropolitan Melbourne, the demographics within the school can be seen to reflect state trends. All learning is drawn from the Victorian Curriculum (VC) with curriculum foci being identified and learning design being co-designed with schools as part of a collaborative process. Students attend classes in local natural environments using adventure activities as part of the instructional core including engaging in overnight expeditions in a range of environments in Victoria.

The staffing profile of the school in 2023 included one Principal and two Assistant Principals, two Leading Teachers, three Learning Specialists, nineteen Teaching Staff, fifteen Education Support Staff, five Trainees and one paraprofessional. The school in 2023 had one First Nations staff member. Each attending school has a staffing profile of visiting teachers (VTs) to support meeting overnight supervisory ratios. Attending teachers/staff work alongside Rubicon staff to engage in the teaching practices of the school, supporting continuity for students in their learning as they transition between the two schools with teachers working together throughout this time. The school council is active in policy making and supports the priorities and resource, allocation planning across the school along with working to secure improved governance through proactive engagement with the DOE and government. Student demographics reflect the broad demographics of the state with students from a range of backgrounds attending, this is supported by extensive wellbeing and engagement information to increase support for every student who attends the school. The school undertook the development of a new strategic plan in 2023 following a school review conducted in Term 1. This not only highlighted the sustained work that was occurring within the school in 2023 but also the progress the school had made in improving our teaching practice.

---

## Progress towards strategic goals, student outcomes and student engagement

### Learning

Student learning in 2023 was again reflective of the broader curriculum challenges faced by schools with much of the curriculum engaged with by students focused on developing their *capabilities* and strengthening these within the context of a lived curriculum with their peers, providing contextual and varied environments to engage in improving understanding of self and others. The school continued its focus on improving assessment and reporting practice for a consecutive 12 month period and as a result saw significant growth and improvement as systematic and improved use of evidence to drive priorities was undertaken by staff in their classes. This was further supported by strategies and practices being more consistent and staff acted on feedback received and began to discuss student growth and attainment alongside wellbeing capabilities. 2023 saw significant gains in staff ability to monitor effectiveness using data up to 68% with 50% growth from 2022 staff opinion data. Staff also reported improved confidence in using feedback to improve practice 79% (20% growth), and increased understanding of Formative Assessment - 58% (23 % growth) and improved capacity to moderate assessment tasks together 53% (47% growth). A concentrated emphasis of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in focusing this effort contributed significantly to this growth and assisted in creating the environment for collegial support and shared professional learning. Whilst only a limited number were recorded in 2023 the school's learning walk data and 360-degree survey data (Observations) identified focus areas for improvement that included differentiation (Calibrating Difficulty) with those who worked at this (n=3) experiencing significant growth (11%). This was further supported by parents surveyed by the school reviewer who were overwhelming in their appreciation of the experience their child had whilst learning at the

school and commonly expressed their belief that they had developed resilience and leadership qualities as a result of their time at Rubicon.

## Wellbeing

Student positive endorsement to measures associated with "respect for diversity" dipped slightly in 2023 from 82% to 77%, potentially reflective of the school's work at targeting cohorts who would "benefit most" by attending. In anticipation of this the school developed a focus on ensuring that there were common behaviour support strategies in place in the school and that staff engaged in professional learning with a focus on *Trauma Informed Practices/Approaches* supported by Department of Education (DE) Regional staff. Positive endorsement of "Parent and Community Involvement" continued to grow over the years with the 2023 school year see an average 6% growth towards the positive endorsement for the measure from staff, this was reflective of improved parental engagement practices by the school as more proactive approaches were adopted in supporting students to attend. Staff continued, throughout 2023, in engaging in pre-visits to gather wellbeing and student behavioral insights to best support teachers and students during their time at the school. The 2023 school year also saw a continuation of the increased sharing of student wellbeing data between schools including Individual Education Plans (IEPs), which have been supported by both longer term school partnerships and the broader Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM) reform. This information enabled teachers to better prepare supports and to allow the school to invest in appropriate supports when and where necessary/required.

## Engagement

The school worked to support improved student engagement in 2023. This was seen in efforts to adjust curriculum delivery to meet the needs of learners whilst also working with individual schools to determine the enablers and barriers to student attendance in 2023. Attendance at Rubicon is determined by the variability between those students who indicate they will be attending the school and the number of students who attend in the week of their learning at Rubicon. Those students who did attend the school reported a high level of engagement evidenced in student attendance which saw 6% of students experiencing absenteeism or "non-attendance" compared to 10% in previous years. Improved relationships with schools and longer term narratives around learning at Rubicon have supported this sustained improvement with 2023 seeing attendance data at a 6 year high. Increased parental engagement has contributed to this sustained improvement as has the continual focus on purpose of attending being linked to continuity of learning and the notion that Rubicon supports learning in a different context for students outside of their regular classroom setting.

---

## Other highlights from the school year

In 2023 the school expanded on the First Nations program piloted in the previous year, providing targeted programs, co-designed and provided in collaboration with students, families, schools and Traditional Owner Corporations. Through this targeted year long extra curriculum program that was provided in two schools (across two regions). The school has supported common improvements for students that have since growth in *cultural connection, peer connection, learner confidence* as part of supporting students at their particular point of need. This has further been evidenced by schools reporting improved *Attendance, Resilience and Engagement* by participant students and their families at the conclusion of the 2023 school year. The program sees students work with Rubicon at two points in the year, learning on country and with their peers and community members in both residential and expedition experiences. This work is supported by a number of school based visits throughout the year where Rubicon teachers visit students and continue the focus that students developed and identified as areas they would like to work on. The program is set to expand in 2024 with other schools including those in NWV region.

---

## Financial performance

Rubicon Outdoor School is in good financial position with school council working to identify future expenses and requirements whilst also supporting the school leadership in focusing investment on improving student outcomes. There are significant capital works that fall outside of entitled facilities that require investment and school council has been working to address these. In 2023 the school council finalised the acquisition of additional adjacent land on behalf of the Minister of Education, to support the remediation of these facilities matters. This is reflected in expenditure in 2023 along with increased professional learning costs, maintenance of assets as

assets were renewed through staged investment or those that had been inaccessible for a number of years due to restricted access. Additionally insurance contributes to the schools outgoings with the majority of buildings and equipment needing to be insured by school council owing to historical policy implications. Whilst the school operated in surplus in 2023 locally raised funds did reduce owing to the school's effort to remove financial barriers to attendance for students, this was further amplified by increase costs associated with implementation of the new Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA). This along with the removal of assets that had reached end of life and were no longer educationally functional, contributed to the school's financial commitments in 2023. Revenue was reflective of first deposits being received for the following year from visiting schools (2024). The school received a number of grants during the year across a range of areas including; *Bushfire preparedness*, *Koorie Partnerships funding*, *Boost funding for wages* and *wellbeing support*. Funds present within the school's surplus are attributed to program funding on hold, these funds have been allocated by school council for expenditure in 2024.

**For more detailed information regarding our school please visit our website at**  
<https://rubicon.vic.edu.au/>

# Performance Summary

The Performance Summary for government schools provides an overview of how this school is contributing to the objectives of the Education State and how it compares to other Victorian government schools.

All schools work in partnership with their school community to improve outcomes for children and young people. Sharing this information with parents and the wider school community helps to support community engagement in student learning, a key priority of the Framework for Improving Student Outcomes 2.0 (FISO 2.0).

Refer to the 'How to read the Annual Report' section for help on how to interpret this report.

## SCHOOL PROFILE

### Enrolment Profile

A total of 0 students were enrolled at this school in 2023, 0 female and 0 male.

NDA percent of students had English as an additional language and NDA percent were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

### Overall Socio-Economic Profile

The overall school's socio-economic profile is based on the school's Student Family Occupation and Education index (SFOE).

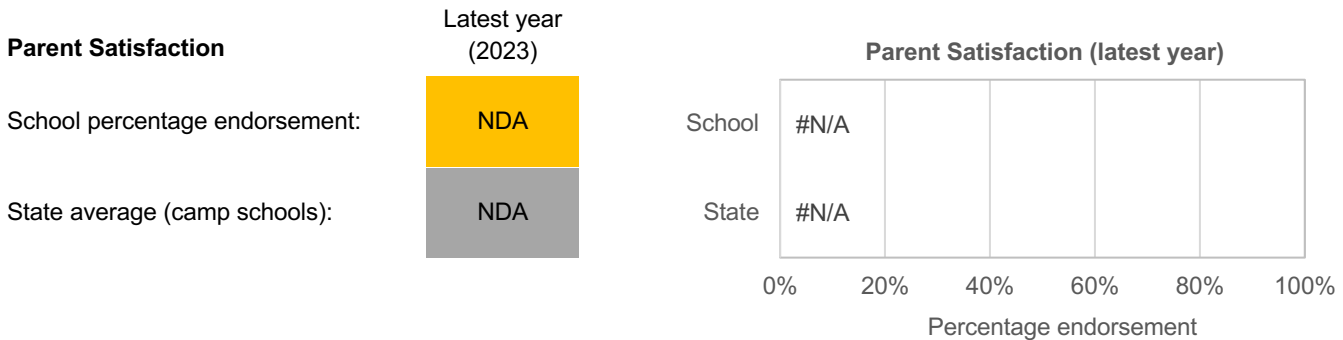
SFOE is a measure of socio-educational disadvantage of a school, based on educational and employment characteristics of the parents/carers of students enrolled at the school. Possible SFOE band values are: Low, Low-Medium, Medium and High. A 'Low' band represents a low level of socio-educational disadvantage, a 'High' band represents a high level of socio-educational disadvantage.

This school's SFOE band value is: NDA

### Parent Satisfaction Summary

The percent endorsement by parents on their General School Satisfaction, as reported in the annual Parent/Caregiver/Guardian Opinion Survey.

Percent endorsement indicates the percent of positive responses (agree or strongly agree) from parents who responded to the survey.

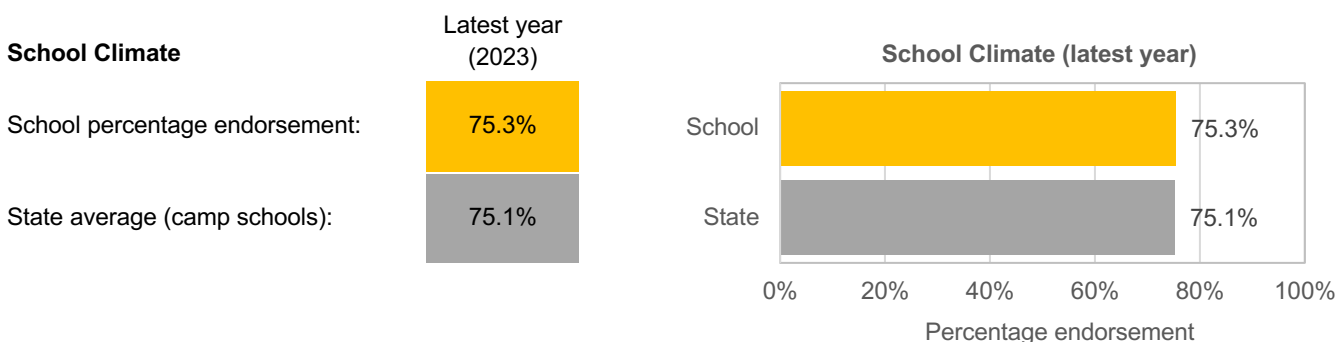


### School Staff Survey

The percentage endorsement by staff on School Climate, as reported in the annual School Staff Survey.

Percentage endorsement indicates the percent of positive responses (agree or strongly agree) from staff who responded to the survey.

Data is suppressed for schools with three or less respondents to the survey for confidentiality reasons.



# Financial Performance and Position

## FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE - OPERATING STATEMENT SUMMARY FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER, 2023

Revenue	Actual
Student Resource Package	\$5,989,743
Government Provided DET Grants	\$609,950
Government Grants Commonwealth	\$32,671
Government Grants State	\$0
Revenue Other	\$56,727
Locally Raised Funds	\$248,830
Capital Grants	\$0
<b>Total Operating Revenue</b>	<b>\$6,937,921</b>

Equity <sup>1</sup>	Actual
Equity (Social Disadvantage)	\$5,000
Equity (Catch Up)	\$0
Transition Funding	\$0
Equity (Social Disadvantage – Extraordinary Growth)	\$0
<b>Equity Total</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>

Expenditure	Actual
Student Resource Package <sup>2</sup>	\$4,016,698
Adjustments	\$0
Books & Publications	\$463
Camps/Excursions/Activities	\$15,200
Communication Costs	\$48,026
Consumables	\$198,919
Miscellaneous Expense <sup>3</sup>	\$27,291
Professional Development	\$105,095
Equipment/Maintenance/Hire	\$256,503
Property Services	\$233,702
Salaries & Allowances <sup>4</sup>	\$289,978
Support Services	\$79,871
Trading & Fundraising	\$957
Motor Vehicle Expenses	\$104,682
Travel & Subsistence	\$3,960
Utilities	\$54,548
<b>Total Operating Expenditure</b>	<b>\$5,435,892</b>
<b>Net Operating Surplus/-Deficit</b>	<b>\$1,502,029</b>
<b>Asset Acquisitions</b>	<b>\$442,235</b>

- (1) The equity funding reported above is a subset of the overall revenue reported by the school.
- (2) Student Resource Package Expenditure figures are as of 16 Feb 2024 and are subject to change during the reconciliation process.
- (3) Miscellaneous Expenses include bank charges, administration expenses, insurance and taxation charges.
- (4) Salaries and Allowances refers to school-level payroll.

## FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

<b>Funds available</b>	<b>Actual</b>
High Yield Investment Account	\$428,299
Official Account	\$37,489
Other Accounts	\$0
<b>Total Funds Available</b>	<b>\$465,789</b>

<b>Financial Commitments</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Operating Reserve	\$214,301
Other Recurrent Expenditure	\$17,389
Provision Accounts	\$0
Funds Received in Advance	\$71,730
School Based Programs	\$19,900
Beneficiary/Memorial Accounts	\$0
Cooperative Bank Account	\$0
Funds for Committees/Shared Arrangements	\$0
Repayable to the Department	\$0
Asset/Equipment Replacement < 12 months	\$262,996
Capital - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	\$0
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	\$20,000
Asset/Equipment Replacement > 12 months	\$0
Capital - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	\$1,400,000
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	\$0
<b>Total Financial Commitments</b>	<b>\$2,006,316</b>

*All funds received from the Department of Education, or raised by the school, have been expended, or committed to subsequent years, to support the achievement of educational outcomes and other operational needs of the school, consistent with department policies, School Council approvals and the intent/purposes for which funding was provided or raised.*