



**Silver Tree**  
STEINER SCHOOL

# Annual Report

## 2014



**As part of our funding agreement with the Australian Government, we are required to ensure that specific school performance information is made publicly available to the school community.**

Silver Tree Steiner School began in 1997 with a Playgroup, which has, over the years developed into the wonderful school and community we have today of over 135 students.

In 2014, The Silver Tree Steiner School offered Mothers' Group, Playgroup, Kindergarten and Primary classes for children. The school is set in beautiful rural grounds in the Perth Hills approximately 36kms from Perth CBD.

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*Silver Tree Steiner School educates the head, heart and hands of your child.*

**MISSION STATEMENT**

To provide pre-school and primary education based on the pedagogy and indications given by Rudolf Steiner.

**CORE VALUES STATEMENT**

We believe that: Every individual human being is a spiritual person on a journey of development in the world and that the aim of education is to assist in this process of development. The teacher needs to be free to respond to the needs of the student.

Each school likewise needs to be free and independent, in order to properly educate young people to be free and independent.

The pedagogy of the Rudolf Steiner Curriculum is holistic and supportive of the art of teaching. It is not exclusive, allowing compatible methods to be assimilated into the program.

Teaching is an art.

After a year of consolidation, 2014 was considered to be a year of growth and stability for Silver Tree Steiner School. Single Streaming continued into its second year which prompted the urgent requirement for the building of a fifth Primary General Learning Area (GLA). The immediate need to increase the capacity of future Class 1 cohorts resulted in the building of our third kindergarten.

**PERSONNEL**

The average attendance rate for our staff in 2014 was 93% and the proportion of teaching staff retained in the school 2014 was 98%. All our class teaching staff members are registered members of the Teacher Registration Board of Western Australia and have undertaken studies in mandatory reporting. The staff members and their qualifications are tabled below. There is no teacher recorded as from an Indigenous or Torres Straight Islander background.

| <b>TEACHING STAFF 2014</b>             |                     |   |
|--|---------------------|---|
| <b>Title/ Group</b>                    | <b>Staff Member</b> | <b>Qualification/s</b>  |
| School Administrator                   | Donna Bieundurry    | BA Ed Primary   |
| Playgroup                              | Julie Walton        | Foundation Studies in Anthroposophy, Cert III of Children's Services Teachers Assistant   |
| Playgroup and Mothers Group            | Lesley Willow       | Reg Nurse, Reg Midwife, Foundation Studies in Anthroposophy, Certificate in Early Childhood Education (Rudolf Steiner College), Pastoral Care Practitioner. |
| Kindergarten Teacher Monday - Thursday | Jo Blundell         | BSc Hons, Post Graduate Cert Education, Foundation Year in Anthroposophy, Waldorf Teacher Training  |

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|   |                      |   |
|---|----------------------|---|
| Kindergarten Assistant<br>(Three days / week) | Tonia Reid           | Cert. 1 in Childcare  |
| Kindergarten Assistant<br>(Two days / week)   | Sharron Burns        | Co-Author of Darlington and Surrounds Local Flora and Bushlands   |
| Kindergarten Teacher - Friday<br>(K6 only)    | Paddy Frere          | B.Ed K – 10, Double Major Art Ed, Brain Gym Teacher, Thought Field Therapy Certificate                          |
| Kindergarten Assistant<br>(4 days /week)      | Marissa Lavell       | Cert 1 in Child Care  |
| Class 1 Teacher                               | Yvette Ghouse        | BA Hons, Dip Ed, Foundation year in Anthroposophy   |
| Class 2 Teacher                               | Anne Marie McShannon | Grad Dip Ed   |
| Class 3/4 Teacher                             | Anna Brindal         | B.Ed., Specialization in Steiner Education, Advanced Diploma of Rudolf Steiner Education                        |
| Class 5/6 Teacher                             | Megan Carter         | B.Ed, Diploma of Rudolf Steiner Education, Cert of M & L  |
| Class Assistant and Craft Teacher             | Melissa Harvey       | Foundation Studies in Steiner Education. Currently completing Diploma of Steiner Education - Curriculum Journey |
| Learning Support & Extra Lesson Teacher       | Kaye Simpkin         | B.Ed, Extra Lesson Practitioner   |
| Music Teacher                                 | Julia Humphreys      | A.Mus.A , Goethean Studies, G.L.A.T. (Alexander Technique)  |

One of the many strengths of Silver Tree is the stability of the people who work here. In 2014 Yvette Ghouse commenced her second cycle of teaching in STSS with the 2014 Class Ones, who became known as the Alchemists. Sonya Crowther resigned from the Assistant of Light Keepers and Katie Southall was appointed to this position. Di Hill resigned as Koordjenangin assistant and Karolina Pawlowski was appointed to this role. We also fare-welled dedicated cleaners, Doris Keifer as the wonderful cleaner who tended to our school with great care. Contract cleaners were appointed. A contract gardener (Fiona Blackham) was also appointed. In addition to her role as Kindy Care Teacher, Sheoaka Kingston commenced as the Acacia K4 teacher with Julie Walton as assistant. On behalf of Silver Tree Steiner School I would like to express my sincere and loving gratitude to all those staff who have left as employees, as well as the extraordinary dedication and commitment of the staff members who continued their employ at the school. In term 4 Dawn Steel resigned from her role as Business Manager. The sincere thanks and

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gratitude of all of the staff and students is extended to all of the many people who have contributed in so many ways to making our school a thriving educational community. Staff participated in professional development activities relevant to the professional growth, including workshops, study groups, Anthroposophical Course (The Life Map), the WA Steiner Schools Day and national conferences in music, curriculum development and leadership.

### **GOVERNANCE**

The Board of Governors welcomed Bruce Uchiyama Lee onto the Board and fare-welled Jenny Hill after many years of service. May Wang was a member of the Board for a short time in capacity of Treasurer before resigning due to relocation to Queensland for employment. It was with sadness that we said our most final farewell to former Board Treasurer, John Taylor, who passed away on May 8 2014. John's many years of commitment to the educational, spiritual and governance spheres of Silver Tree are treasured. As of the end of this AGM two members will be resigning their positions on the Board, Peter Grant and Lisa Payne. I would like to extend sincere thanks to Peter and Lisa for all the work they have done for the school in their time on the Board and the support they have shown to Donna in previous years and myself this year.

### **GROUNDS AND BUILDING**

The GEMS committee facilitated several busy bees on weekends and holidays whereby gardens were weeded, tidied, mulched and planted. Retaining walls were constructed and many metres of mulch was spread. Orchard fencing and planting was completed and weekly gardening classes were hosted by volunteers from the GEMS committee and Class Teachers.

Building was a big focus of 2014 with the school Planning and Development (PAD) Committee overseeing the construction of a General Learning Area and Kindergarten Building. These classrooms were made possible by a Commonwealth Grant and a Low Interest Loan as well as fund raising by the P and F and some generous private donations. The building process was overseen by contract project officer Christel Mathelot and the dedication of the PAD volunteers who contributed many hours to ensuring the buildings were functional for the commencement of the 2015 school year. There have been many parents and staff contributing volunteer hours getting the classrooms painted, fitted out with furniture, landscaping and playgrounds. Another Class 3 Building project was completed, with the creation of the Koordjenangin bell tower. The children were instrumental in the design, location, and construction and unveiling of the bell tower which is now used to signal important times in the school day. Parent volunteers were integral to the success of this project.

### **ENROLMENTS AND MARKETING**

#### Enrolments:

2014 was another year of growth for Silver Tree. The school enrolled an additional 38 children during the course of the year.

#### Open Day:

Open day was the highlight of the year and an outstanding representation of the educational

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journey offered by the school as well as a reflection of the friendly Silver Tree Community. Over 800 people attended the day from the hills and beyond. Many of our enrolment enquiries came from families who initially attend our Open Day, so this event is an invaluable resource to introducing families to Steiner Education as well as providing a wonderful day out for the wider Hills Community.

*Advertising:*

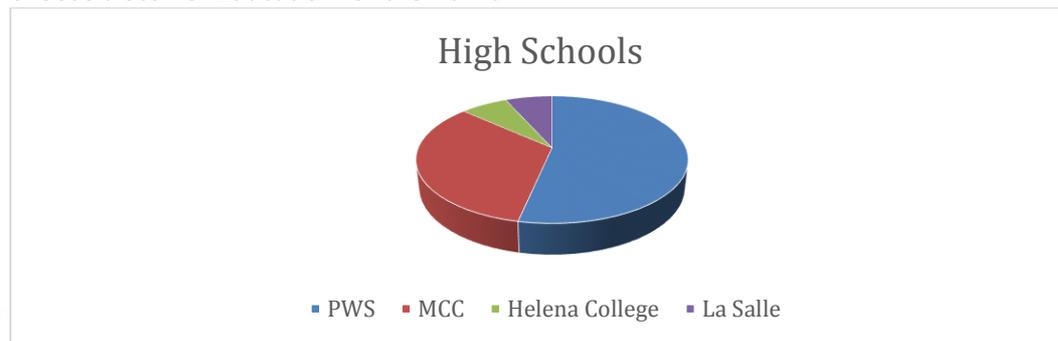
Silver Tree continued to publish editorial in the Darlington Review and advertise in the Hills Gazette and The Echo Educational supplements. Mother's Group and Playgroup were successfully advertised through social media.

*The Curriculum Journey:*

The Curriculum Journey was held in October. This talk is an ideal event for our current and prospective parents to gain greater insight and understanding of the Steiner Curriculum.

*Exits:*

The 15 leavers from The Wayfarers class in 2014 were either graduating or leaving to the high school of their choice. The high school of choice for Silver Tree graduates was once again Perth Waldorf School, with the direct bus service making it possible for our parents to continue to choose a Steiner Education for their child.



**STUDENT LEARNING**

The quality of the teaching and learning program at Silver Tree continues to be an influential factor in attracting and retaining enrolments in our school. The Kindergarten Teachers deliver a warm and authentic early year's program in accordance with Steiner Education curriculum and pedagogy while also meeting the outcomes of the National Quality Standards as set by ACECQA. The Primary Teachers bring to the children meaningful and rich learning experiences to achieve the standards identified in the ACARA- approved Australian Steiner Curriculum. Main lessons cover the core subject areas in an integrated way, while specialist lessons in Games, Craft, Music, and German are taught by specialist teachers. Children in Class Four, Five, Six and Seven continued with their strings lesson, choosing either violin, viola or cello.

The outstanding learning support program, led by Kaye Simpkin continued to be a valued and valuable resource available to ensure that all children are supported to achieve their potential.

The Festivals were again a highlight of the school year, serving to connect the school community to the changing seasons and giving the opportunity to celebrate these as

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family groups. The Festivals celebrated in 2014 included the Autumn/Easter Festival, Winter Festival, Spring Festival, and the Christmas Carols evening. Many of these Festivals highlight the importance and quality of the music program at Silver Tree Steiner School with the children's voices and instruments on the hill and across the valley. Weekly assemblies allow the Primary school classes and parents to come together and share information, songs and current classroom learning activities.

Student progress and achievement was reported to parents with formal written reports in Terms 2 and 4, as well as through individual parent interviews. Reports are written for the parents and are not shared with the children. The teachers provide feedback to the children in various ways appropriate to their development. The Primary Teachers write a new birthday verse for each child on the milestone of their birthday and the child recites this verse regularly.

Camps and Excursions form a valuable enriching component of the learning program at Silver Tree. In 2014 the Light Keepers experienced their first camp with a sleepover at school. The Wayfarers attended a three day camp at Bickley Camp School which supplemented their Astronomy Main Lesson as well as many other enriching activities. Excursions included visits to Perth Mint, Kelmscott Farm School, St Georges Cathedral, Hebrew Congregation Centre, participation in the Class 5 Greek Olympics at Perth Waldorf School, visits to a variety of building projects, Indoor Climbing Wall, Archery, Rowing, Swimming at Bilgoman Pool, attending Class plays at West Coast Steiner School and Perth Waldorf School. This extensive program was supplemented by many guests and visitors to our school, including a Capoeira group, Indigenous artists and performers, and parents with specific areas of expertise.

## **NAPLAN**

As part of the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), national tests are conducted in May each year for students in years 3, 5, 7. All eligible children at Silver Tree were offered the opportunity to sit the NAPLAN tests. Some parents choose for their children not to sit the tests. The 2012 school results can be found at the My School government website. <http://www.myschool.edu.au/>

## **MANAGING STUDENT ATTENDANCE**

Parents of Primary School aged children are asked to ensure that students arrive at school at least fifteen minutes before the school day. Persistent lateness without reasonable cause will lead to an investigation.

Students leaving school early are required to be signed out by a parent at the office. All student absences must be accounted for by parents/guardians either by phone (by 9am), note or email.

For students who are absent without an explanation, parents will be phoned on the day.

Students absent for three or more consecutive days will be contacted via phone and email if necessary to ascertain the reason for the absence. Upon the student's return to school, parents or guardians are required to send a note to the teacher outlining the reason for absence. Student attendances are recorded on class lists for the week and collected by Friday afternoon. All absences are recorded electronically on a spreadsheet, including the submission of an absentee

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note. If an absentee note is not included the school will automatically issue a reminder letter which is sent home with the child. The secretary telephones families if a child is absent from school.

## COMMUNITY

### PARENT SATISFACTION

The main role of Silver Tree Steiner School is to support parents as the primary educators in the faith of their children. Parents play an extremely important role in the life of the school and contribute in many positive ways to the education of their children at Silver Tree Steiner School. When children see their parents and teachers sharing common beliefs, attitudes and goals, they feel more secure and demonstrate a greater sense of self-worth. On the whole parent satisfaction with the school is very high as indicated by the level of parent involvement in the following:

- As parent helpers in the classroom, particularly in areas such as literacy activities, art and craft and physical education.
- As volunteer helpers for various activities such as busy bees, or helpers on excursions.
- As members of the school community they elect, and may be elected, as members of the School Board.
- As parents in the school they are members of the Parents and Friends Association and may be elected to serve on the committee each year. The Parents and Friends Association was ably led by Clare Ng and a team of hardworking parents. The P and F report should be consulted for details but I would like to acknowledge here the commitment and dedication of this energetic group in raising much needed funds and also in providing some excellent community events including the bushdance. A highlight of the 2014 year was the Spring Fair and Open Day which was a positive showcase of our school as well as being a fun and engaging day for the many visitors who attended. The P and F markets held each Thursday are also a valued part of life at Silver Tree Steiner School and it is wonderful that the markets continue to be so well supported each week. The P and F also hosted weekly lunchtime fundraisers by selling pure fruit ice-cream in the hot months and mugs of homemade soup in the cold months. The funds raised by these activities supplement the work the teachers do in the classroom by enabling the purchase of costly resources such as class sets of dictionaries and reading book.
- By supporting various social functions and fund raising activities held throughout the school year.
- Mother's Group continued, based in the playgroup building. This weekly meeting of Mothers and their babies provides a nurturing environment with a wholefoods lunch and a positive space for sharing and learning about the parenting journey with a Steiner

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underpinning. This group also hosted an information session presented by Lesley Bolton, Anthroposophical nurse.

- Playgroup continued to be well-subscribed and is important as a supportive loving environment for young children and their parents, as well as a stepping stone into the Kindergarten program.
- Kindy Care continued to be offered, staffed by a registered Teacher. This program allowed a nurturing afternoon environment for Woylie and Possum children after their attendance at kindy in the mornings.

## STUDENT SATISFACTION

The students at Silver Tree have access to a wide range of excellent and up to date facilities. The school is well resourced and these are constantly upgraded to cater for the needs of the children. There are numerous cultural and sporting opportunities afforded the children and they are encouraged to actively participate in these. The staff are extremely supportive of and encourage the children to achieve their potential through various Educational programs. Specialist teaching programs are offered in Craft, Physical Education and German. Silver Tree remains a school of choice within the local community and enrolments are consistently high, with Junior Primary classes full to capacity.

## STAFF SATISFACTION

Staff participates in collaborative decision making processes relating to education and their contributions are valued and respected by the Leadership Team. They regularly attend Professional Development which ensures that they are cognisant of contemporary teaching pedagogy. They are provided with the resources necessary to maintain a challenging learning environment for the children.

## CHALLENGES

In the running of any organisation there are always challenges that must be faced. In 2014 the most significant of these continued to be the available classroom learning space to cater for learning support, strings lessons, parent teacher meetings, etc. This was somewhat alleviated by the installation of a temporary office space and the commencement of the building project.

## ADMINISTRATION

In March 2014 the School underwent the Re-registration visit from the Department of Education Services. It is vital here to acknowledge the mammoth effort undertaken by all staff; particularly the Registrars, Business Manager, Learning Support Teacher, Primary Teachers and Early Childhood Teachers, and ground staff (cleaning, gardening, maintenance). The school was given a one year registration with several recommendations to attend to, specifically with reference to the provision of educational hours for early childhood children. This is an area that Silver Tree, along with the staff of the other WA Steiner Schools and with the support of AISWA and Steiner

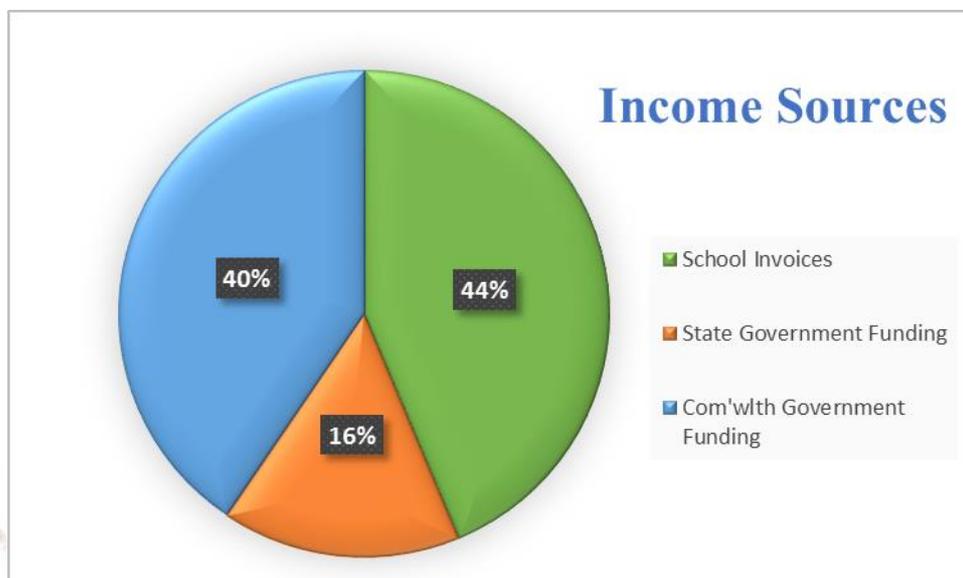
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Education Australia have been working through with the Minister for Education and DES to ensure we are able to deliver an authentic and high quality Steiner education.

## FINANCES



For further Information about the school please contact our  
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For enrolment enquiries contact our Community Development Officer -  
[community@silvertree.wa.edu.au](mailto:community@silvertree.wa.edu.au)

Our highest endeavour must be to develop free human beings who are able of themselves  
to impart purpose and direction to their lives. *Rudolph Steiner*

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