

**NextSense School**  
Blind and Deafblind Program

**2022**

Annual report



# Message from key bodies

The NextSense School - Blind and Deafblind Program shares its Annual report with the community, offering a comprehensive overview of the school's activities and accomplishments over the course of the year. This report serves as a detailed record of the school's advancements in delivering exceptional educational opportunities to every student.

The enduring impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on schools, encompassing mandates related to disabilities and health, as well as the prevalence of staff and student illnesses, extended beyond initial expectations. Despite the most severe consequences of the pandemic being felt in the preceding two years, we found ourselves grappling with its aftermath throughout 2022. This situation demanded that we draw upon our reserves and resilience once again. The school exhibited adaptability by diligently enforcing COVID-19 safety protocols aligned with government and public health directives. Our unwavering commitment ensured the wellbeing and safety of our students, staff, and stakeholders, as NextSense went above and beyond to safeguard their welfare.

Throughout the year, the students persevered in their pursuit of attaining their goals outlined in their Personalised Learning Plans, making advancements across all Key Learning Areas. Our dedicated staff actively engaged in various activities like assemblies, whole school staff meetings, and professional learning sessions, which were conducted virtually through platforms like Teams and Zoom. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to our students for their unwavering commitment and determination to give their best efforts each day, despite the constantly shifting circumstances around them.

In 2022, we remained committed to promoting student progress and achievement. Building upon the NSW Curriculum Review final report and the State Government's response, the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) took the lead in an ambitious initiative to enhance the curriculum taught in schools across NSW. Over the course of the year, our school leadership team diligently worked on developing a comprehensive K-2 Scope and Sequence for Maths and English. Additionally, we provided extensive professional development opportunities to empower teachers in effectively integrating these new syllabuses into their classrooms.

Lastly, we express our heartfelt gratitude to the exceptional staff members who persevered through challenges every day to support their students. Witnessing the dedication of teachers and the extraordinary lengths they went to assist their students is truly inspiring. The valuable skills we demonstrated throughout 2022, such as adaptability, compassion, teamwork, and maintaining high standards, will remain ingrained within us as we move forward.

Please refer to the subsequent pages for crucial details regarding the school's achievements in 2022. For further information about NextSense and NextSense School, you can access the NextSense Annual Report by visiting the NextSense website at <http://www.nextsense.org.au/annual-report>.

Sandi Ambler  
Head of Education

# School context

NextSense School is a specialist campus for children with hearing or vision loss.

NextSense School - Blind and Deafblind Program is a fully inclusive, accessible program that prioritises high quality teaching to achieve positive student outcomes. Within our program, students not only acquire academic knowledge but also cultivate a sense of belonging, confidence, and essential life skills for their future.

Through a rigorous individual planning process, we identify learning outcomes, teaching, and learning activities, assessment strategies, necessary adjustments, accommodations, and resources. Our program aligns with the key learning areas outlined in the syllabus documents provided by the New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA). Additionally, we incorporate selected areas from the Expanded Core Curriculum designed for students with vision loss. By combining academic and functional skills, we create individualised educational programs for each student.

Our specialised team of educators, supported by teaching assistants, conduct classes in small groups to ensure personalised attention. And, we have a team of allied health professionals who work collaboratively to facilitate students' access to various teaching and learning activities. We firmly believe that through intensive teaching and systematic instruction in relevant environments, our students can make remarkable progress and actively contribute as engaged members of the community.

# Student outcomes

To ensure personalised support, we collaborate with families and students, as applicable, to develop an Individual Plan (IP) for every student. Each student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) outlines their specific learning objectives in the Key Learning Areas and areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum, tailored for students who are Blind and Deafblind or have low vision. Furthermore, the IEP incorporates the development of functional daily living skills.

In addition to academic content, the IEP identifies the necessary adjustments and accommodations to facilitate students' access to all teaching and learning activities. These accommodations are carefully listed to ensure that students can fully engage in their educational journey. By addressing the unique needs of each student, we strive to create an inclusive environment that promotes their overall growth and success.

We cater to students with complex and high support learning needs. As a result, many of these students are exempt from the National Assessment Program for Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). In 2022, there were two blind students, one in Year 3 and another in Year 5, who successfully completed the NAPLAN assessment using the online format. These students demonstrated their exceptional abilities and achieved results that reflected their true potential.

NextSense School is pleased to report that all students have shown significant progress in achieving their individual learning outcomes. This progress has been facilitated by utilising modified resources, assessment tasks, and tailored teaching and learning strategies that address

their specific needs. We are committed to ensuring that each student receives the necessary support and resources to thrive academically and holistically.

### **Higher School Certificate (HSC)**

In 2022, the school did not have any Higher School Certificate graduates.

### **Recognition of School Achievement (RoSA)**

There were no Year 10 school leavers.

One student was awarded the RoSA upon leaving school, having partially completed Year 12, and transitioning to community participation programs.

This student achieved the requirements of the RoSA by addressing Life Skills content and outcomes.

## **Workforce composition; professional learning and teacher standards**

### **Teacher accreditation**

Every teacher possesses teacher education qualifications obtained from higher education institutions. Furthermore, all teachers are accredited by the New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA), qualifying them to teach in schools across NSW. We place great importance on professional learning and teacher accreditation, considering it a vital aspect of our educational approach. Our teachers actively pursue higher levels of accreditation and engage in ongoing professional development, including pursuing master's-level studies to enhance their knowledge and expertise.

<b>Level of accreditation</b>	<b>Number of teachers</b>
Conditional	1
Provisional	1
Proficient	1.6

Throughout the school, there were a total of 5.8 full-time equivalent positions filled by eight teaching assistants. These teaching assistants are highly experienced and had completed the Certificate III in Education Support - Teacher's Aide (Special) from TAFE or an equivalent qualification.

In addition to our teaching assistants, specialist services were provided to support and enhance the educational programs. This support came from orthoptists, audiologists, access technology consultants, psychologists, and a librarian. Each member of our expert team hold recognised tertiary qualifications relevant to their respective fields. Some have higher academic qualifications, including master's degrees.

To cater to the students' healthcare needs, the school's Health Centre employed a qualified registered school nurse throughout the year. This nurse was responsible for managing the students' health care requirements.

## Our team

Position	FTE*
Principal	1
Deputy Principal	1
Teacher(s)	3.6
School psychologist	.5
School assistants (support staff)	5.8
Librarian	.3
School administration	1
School nurse	1

## Professional learning

In 2022, our unwavering commitment to student progress and achievement remained at the forefront of our focus. One notable accomplishment was the proactive approach taken by our school curriculum teams in developing a new K-2 Scope and Sequence for mathematics and English. To support the successful implementation of these new syllabuses, the leadership team organised and facilitated extensive professional development opportunities for our teachers. These sessions equipped them with the necessary skills and strategies to effectively deliver the revised curriculum. Additionally, our leadership team actively participated in courses offered by the AIS Leadership Centre, further enriching their leadership skills and knowledge. Our dedicated staff also engaged in a range of activities throughout the year, contributing to our students' educational experience and overall growth. Some of these activities included:

Professional learning activity	Number of staff participating
K-2 English New Syllabus (3 workshops)	15
Implementing the New English Syllabus K -2 AISNSW	4
K -2 New English Syllabus AISNSW	13
K -2 New Maths Syllabus Anita Chin (3 workshops.)	15
Implementing the New Mathematics Syllabus K -2 AISNSW	3
Leading Mathematics across the School: 4 days	7
Transforming Classroom Practice: Maths Place Value	13
Visual Models in Language in Maths: Addition/ Subtraction	8
Autism: Supporting mealtimes and fuzzy eating	13
Orientation and Mobility	13
Maths Scope and Sequence with Anita Chin ( 3 workshops)	8
Mathematics: Teaching Place Value with Anita Chin	8
How to Feedback on Difficult Conversations	4
Supporting Social Skills	14
Cybersafe for Teachers	6
Diabetes Management	10
CPR training	13
Understanding Autism and Positive Behaviour Management ( 5 workshops)	13
Manual Handling	3

First Aid Training (1 day)	13
Staff Wellbeing workshops with Black Dog Institute: (1 day)	13
Spoken Language assessments /Language samples	6
Auditory Verbal Philosophy and practices	6

## Student attendance and retention rates in secondary schools and post school destinations

Regular school attendance plays a crucial role in shaping the long-term outcomes for children and young people. When students are absent from school, they miss out on valuable learning opportunities, the chance to foster friendships, and the development of important skills through play. Therefore, ensuring regular attendance at school is a shared responsibility between schools and parents. By working collaboratively, NextSense School positively impacts and supports our children and young people in maintaining consistent school attendance.

To fulfill our obligations regarding students' education, safety, protection, and wellbeing, our school diligently monitors and maintains accurate attendance records. We have established policies and procedures to manage student non-attendance effectively. When a child is absent, the primary parent receives an automated text message, providing an opportunity to provide the reason for the absence. Additionally, parents can communicate via email or our online class communication system to inform the school about the absence. Our teachers actively promote and monitor regular school attendance, and our schools have implemented effective measures to record attendance and promptly address student absences. These practices are guided by the School Attendance policy, which outlines the procedures for managing non-attendance.

Throughout 2022, the overall student attendance rate was documented as 67.36%. It is worth emphasising that this figure is significantly lower than previous years, primarily due to the impact of student illnesses related to COVID-19 and isolation measures. Specifically, students with complex high support needs encountered difficulties in maintaining regular attendance during periods of COVID outbreaks. These circumstances presented unique challenges that affected the ability of certain students to attend school consistently.

Year level	Attendance rate %
Year 1	-
Year 2	-
Year 3	87.5%
Year 4	89.5%
Year 5	97.9%
Year 6	13.54%
Year 7	-
Year 8	-

Year 9	25.0%
Year 10	100.00%
Whole School	67.36%

## Enrolment policy

NextSense is committed to providing a high-quality education to children and young people with a sensory disability. While acknowledging and supporting the principle of inclusion for students in keeping with the Disability Discrimination Act and Standards 2005, our mission is to provide specialist education to students with a significant level of sensory disability, who are expected to require individualised support.

Applications for enrolment may be made at any time by the parent/carer(s) of students to commence at NextSense School.

Students must have a level of sensory disability which is significant including:

- vision acuity levels of 6/48 or less after correction in the better eye; or a visual field of 10 degrees or less; or
- hearing loss of 50 dB or greater; or
- deafblind children.

Each school program offers a specialist school program with additional enrolment criteria:

- Sign Bilingual Program offers a specialist Auslan bilingual program for Deaf students.
- Spoken Language Program offers a specialist spoken language program for Deaf and hard of hearing students.
- Blind and Deafblind Program offers a specialist program for students with vision loss/blindness or who are deafblind with no greater than moderate cognitive disability.

The Principal will base an enrolment decision on whether the student's primary special educational needs are related to their sensory disability through review of:

- specialist reports by a qualified professional that confirm they meet eligibility criteria
- the student's reports from previous schools/preschools or early intervention services
- the order of applications received.

In cases of dual sensory disability and/or significant language delays, the Principal may determine that a lesser level of hearing and/or vision loss satisfies eligibility requirements.

The school will meet with parent/carer(s) and the student before offering a place. Parent choice will be considered for school placement, provided an applicant meets the criteria for admission to the school for which application is made.

- Parents/carer(s) must disclose all relevant information about their child's disability and additional needs. Failure to disclose at the time, or during enrolment, may result in an offer being revoked.
- Non-Australian citizens can be admitted as full fee-paying students if they meet the general entry criteria and visa requirements.
- NextSense requires an immunisation certificate on enrolment and a record of each child's immunisation status will be recorded. Copies of immunisation certificates will be retained for a minimum of three years after the child has ceased to attend the school.
- Continued enrolment at the school depends on the student and the parent/carer(s) observing all behavioural codes of conduct and other requirements of the school described in the Parent Handbook.
- In all cases, a duty of care to students is paramount. NextSense reserves the right not to enrol students if a threat to the school's capacity to meet its duty of care to students and staff is considered.

## School policies

NextSense School – Blind and Deaf Blind program seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment for students and teachers. The school seeks to minimise risk of harm and ensures students feel secure; supports the physical, social, academic, and emotional development of students; and provides student wellbeing programs that develop a sense of self-worth and foster personal development. Clear guidelines outlining expectations of communication and conduct are provided for staff and students which aim at maintaining an environment of mutual respect, openness, and trust. Policies are developed and reviewed on a regular basis in consultation with the NextSense quality and risk team.

Positive, respectful relationships are evident and widespread among students and staff and promote student wellbeing to ensure optimum conditions for student learning across the whole school. NextSense School wants all students to recognise that they are valued and integral members of the school community. All staff interactions with students promote and engender self-esteem, responsibility and mutual respect in teaching and learning activities. All students have an individual learning plan to develop their talents and skills.

To ensure that all aspects of the school's mission for providing for a student's welfare/wellbeing are implemented, the following policies and procedures were in place during 2022. The policies below address student welfare, discipline and reporting of complaints and resolving grievance. Policies are developed by the School Principal in consultation with NextSense Quality and Risk Advisor, NextSense Head of Education and NextSense Director, Services.

### Positive behaviour support

The school adopts a positive and encouraging approach towards student behaviour, emphasising appropriate conduct. We model desired behavior by showcasing videos, photographs, and engaging in discussions that highlight positive actions. Students who demonstrate commendable behaviour are acknowledged and rewarded with praise. Additionally, we engage in conversations with students to foster their understanding of how to be safe, caring, and effective learners. At our school, we maintain high expectations for all students, firmly believing in their ability to succeed both academically and within the community.



Recognising that students may require different levels of support throughout their learning journey, we provide additional assistance when needed to promote positive behavior. Collaborative discussions with parents, therapists, and other stakeholders help us develop effective strategies to support students at school, in the community, and at home. In certain cases, we create resources such as social stories to aid their understanding. Moreover, our school psychologist is available to provide support to students and families when necessary.

It is important to note that all disciplinary actions, including consequences such as suspension, expulsion, or exclusion, adhere to processes rooted in procedural fairness. We ensure that all students are treated equitably and that disciplinary actions are carried out in accordance with established guidelines and principles.

The school's positive behaviour support policy which includes discipline and associated procedures is referenced in

- The Staff Portal: Document Library
- School website
- Staff Code of Conduct
- School Drive

The school expressly prohibits corporal punishment and does not sanction the administering of corporal punishment by non-school persons, including parents, to enforce discipline at the school.

### **Policies for student welfare:**

NextSense conducts regular policy reviews every two years. These reviews are examined by the Head of Education and a member of the Senior Leadership Team to ensure the effectiveness and relevance of our policies. By adhering to this cycle, we maintain up-to-date and robust policies that align with best practices and evolving educational standards.

In line with our commitment to safeguarding children, all staff successfully completed the Australia Children Foundation's online course on safeguarding children. This course equips our staff with essential knowledge and skills to create a safe and secure online environment for our students.

We prioritise the wellbeing and protection of our students in all aspects of their educational journey.

NextSense School – Blind and Deaf Blind Program seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment which:

- minimises risk of harm and ensures students feel secure
- supports the physical, social, academic, spiritual and emotional development of students.
- provides student welfare policies and programs that develop a sense of self-worth and foster personal development.

Changes in 2022		Access to full text
<b>Child Protection policy</b> Definitions and concepts Legislative concepts Preventative strategies Reporting and investigating 'reportable conduct' Investigation processes Documentation <i>Working with Children checks</i> required for all staff and volunteers. Mandatory Reporting procedures	New policies were developed for: NextSense Safeguarding Policy NextSense Mandatory Reporting Procedures NextSense Reportable Conduct Procedures Saff reviewed all policies and signed off.  All staff completed Safeguarding Children online course by Australia Children Foundation	The full text of the school's child protection policy can be accessed by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• request from the Principal</li> <li>• School reception - <i>Policies and Procedures</i>.</li> <li>• NextSense Document Library.</li> <li>• NextSense website</li> </ul>
<b>Security guidelines policy</b> Procedures for security of the grounds and buildings Use of grounds and facilities Emergency procedures	Fire Warden training is undertaken on a yearly basis and evacuation procedures practiced and outcomes/actions updated and discussed with the Nextsense risk manager. Individual plans developed for students with complex needs.	The full text of the school's security policy and procedures can be accessed by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• request from the Principal</li> <li>• School reception - <i>Policies and Procedures</i>.</li> <li>• NextSense Document Library.</li> </ul>
<b>Code of conduct policy</b> Code of conduct for staff and volunteers Relationships with students	A new policy NextSense Code of conduct was developed/ reviewed and signed off by all staff	The full text of the school's Code of conduct policy and procedures can be accessed by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• request from the Principal</li> <li>• School reception - <i>Policies and Procedures manual</i>.</li> <li>• NextSense intranet Document Library</li> </ul>
<b>Pastoral Care Policy</b> Effective teaching and learning guidelines Home-school communication Social and emotional development Role of school Psychologist	Policies were updated and reviewed to provide additional support during lockdown and pandemic.  Cybersafe training to families and staff	The full text of the school's Pastoral Care policy and procedures can be accessed by: request from the Principal School reception - <i>Policies and Procedures manual</i> . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NextSense intranet Document Library</li> </ul>

## Policies for complaints and grievances resolution

We believe that feedback processes including compliments, suggestions, and complaints that people may have regarding the quality of service and/ or its delivery are crucial in ensuring high quality service delivery and continual improvement. We recognise, respect, and encourage the rights of individuals who choose us as their service provider to provide feedback and raise

complaints without fear of retribution. Complaints are resolved in a fair, respectful and efficient manner, without negative implication for service provision or client interaction.

Families can provide feedback face-to-face, through the home school communication book, via email and via our school's compliments and complaints feedback box located at reception. An outline of the policy and processes is also provided in the school's Parent Information Booklet and Policies and Procedures Manual. The full text of the school's Feedback and Complaints policy and procedures can be accessed by request from the Principal, in the school reception and the NextSense intranet Document Library.

### School determined priorities for 2022

Area	Priorities	Achievements
Excellence in teaching and learning	Further refine Individual Planning process	A streamlined and transparent individual planning procedure and documentation that actively engages families and caregivers in the planning process and documents adjustments clearly.
	Curriculum reform K -2 curriculum English K – 2 maths	Scope and Sequences for K-2 English and maths curriculum developed. Units of work for all courses in the refined and implemented.
	Student access to text, graphics, and 3D models for learning	Increased provision of and access to braille, large print, tactile graphics and 3D models books through Access and Inclusion team
	Areas of Expanded Core Curriculum students with vision specified as discrete teaching curricula:	Expanded Core Curriculum goals taught, and achievement reported. All students use appropriate access technology. Staff performance and development process that embeds the Australian Professional Standards -Teachers of Vision Teachers' capacity for using Access Technology for student learning is increased and is reflected in their teaching practice
	Braille training	Staff completed RIDBC Unified English Braille Online training program for sighted people
	Mandatory training	All mandatory training completed by all staff
	Professional Learning Communities	All staff participated in weekly PLC meetings

<b>Student Achievement</b>	Students achieved a high number of individual planning outcomes	Outcomes attained and then generalised. Reported upon in Semester 1 and 2 school reports
<b>Facilities and Resources</b>	Additional STEM and technology resources Additional purchase of readers Purchase of additional sensory resources Production of readers and books into braille for the braille library Purchase of braille resources	New iPad PROS purchased for students and teachers. Additional sensory equipment Additional braille books in the school library Braille resources such as rulers, talking calculators.

## Parent satisfaction

The school highly values and actively encourages feedback from parents and families, as it plays a crucial role in improving our school community. In Term 4 of 2022, we conducted a Parent Feedback Survey to assess the level of parent satisfaction regarding various aspects of our school's program. The survey questionnaire was distributed to all families of NextSense School - Blind and Deafblind Program through an online survey platform.

While we received a lower number of responses this year, the feedback from the sample indicates that parents:

- agree that teachers demonstrate a genuine interest in their child's learning
- agree that their child is encouraged to do their best work
- agree that their child feels safe at school
- agree that staff members actively listen to their concerns.

The parent survey results indicates that parents feel well-informed about their child's social and emotional development, as well as their progress at school. This open communication and transparency is vital to ensuring parents are actively engaged in their child's educational journey.

In our school, we strongly encourage students to express their opinions and share their perspectives on all aspects of their learning and school life. Here are some examples of the feedback we received from our students:

- I love learning at school.
- I like reading and writing and doing maths in braille.
- We are lucky at our school because we have lots of special equipment to use like Mountbatten brailers, Focus 40 refreshable braille and maths grids.
- Our school has good students and good teachers.
- I love Friday morning sport.

We greatly appreciate the feedback provided by both parents and students, as it helps us continuously improve and create a supportive learning environment. We remain committed to fostering open lines of communication and collaboration between all members of our school community.

NextSense School actively promotes and values staff feedback, both through informal and formal channels. Our staff are encouraged to provide feedback, including positive and constructive comments, fostering a culture of open communication and continuous improvement. As part of this commitment, staff were given a formal opportunity throughout the year to present suggestions for enhancing the school's future development.

To support professional growth and development, all staff participated in fortnightly professional learning sessions. These sessions aimed to enhance their skills and knowledge in various areas. Additionally, staff were provided with regular professional enhancement opportunities where they could set their own professional learning goals, allowing them to tailor their growth to their individual needs and interests.

# Summary financial information

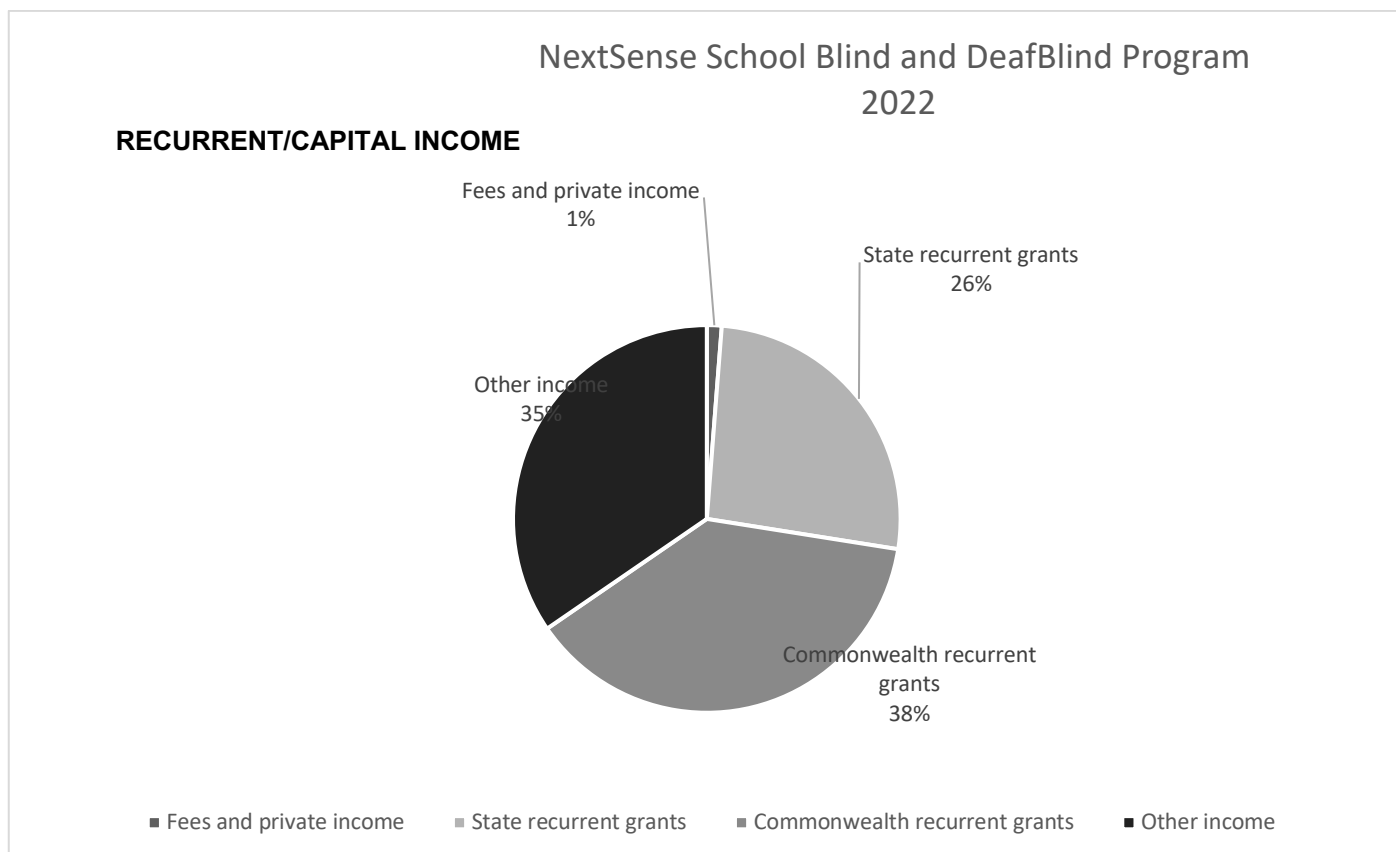
## DEEWR - schools - financial questionnaire

Financial statements - year ended 31 December 2022

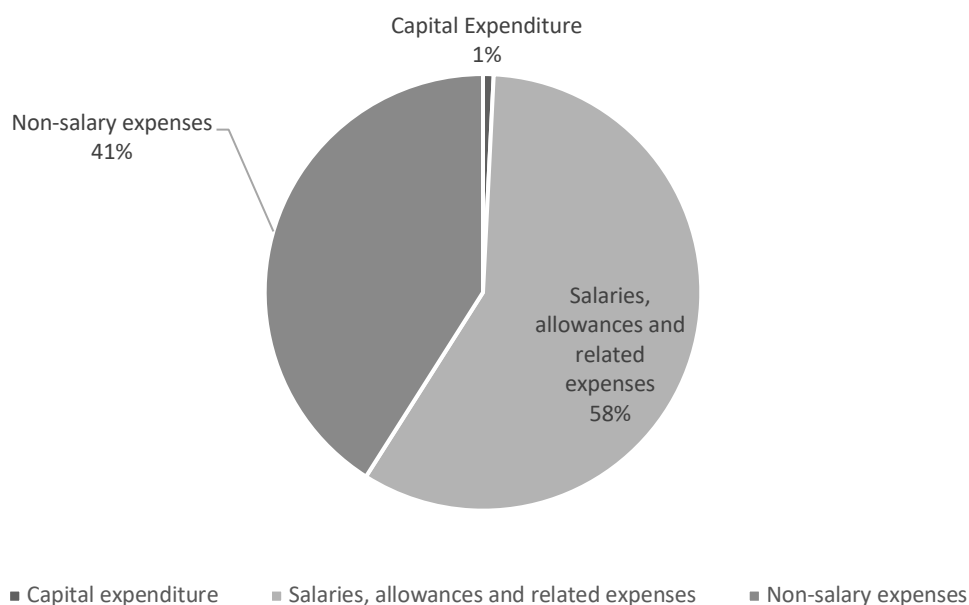
### Description

Fees and private income	18,850
State recurrent grants	400,097
Commonwealth recurrent grants	577,705
Other income	526,777
Government capital grants	-
<b>Recurrent/capital Income</b>	<b><u>1,523,429</u></b>

Capital expenditure	11,959
Salaries, allowances and related expenses	886,955
Non-salary expenses	624,515
<b>Recurrent/capital Expenditure</b>	<b><u>1,523,429</u></b>



## RECURRENT/CAPITAL EXPENDITURE



### Preparation of this report

This report is submitted to meet the educational and financial reporting requirements for 2022 as laid out in the Registered and Accredited Individual Non-Government Schools (NSW) Manual. In preparing this report, the School Principal is the person responsible for:

- coordinating the final preparation and distribution of the annual report to the New South Wales Education Standards Authority and other stakeholders as required
- determining the specific content to be included in each section of the report and reviewing this each year to ensure ongoing compliance, relevance, and usefulness
- preparing the report in an appropriate form to send to the New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA).

For the areas relating to school description, policies and procedures, the Principal is responsible for the collection, analysis, and storage of the relevant data and for inserting the relevant information into the report. The Director of Services is responsible for the collection, analysis and storage of the financial data and for providing this to the Principal for inclusion in the report.

The Principal, in consultation with the Nextsense Head of Education, is responsible for setting the annual schedule for:

- preparation and publication of the report
- distribution of the report to NESA and other stakeholders.