



MATER DEI
INCLUSION FOR ALL

Mater Dei School



ANNUAL REPORT

2010



MATER DEI SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT 2010

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

◆ VISION STATEMENT

The vision of Mater Dei School is to create a family centred school that focuses on the education of students with mild to moderate intellectual disability, to maximize their potential for participation in their communities.

◆ SCHOOL PROFILE

Mater Dei is a co-educational school offering programs of study for students ranging from 5 years old through to 18. Programs offered include a primary program, a junior secondary program, and a senior secondary program. Throughout their secondary schooling, students have the opportunity to attain both the School Certificate and Higher School Certificate (Life Skills), take part in the Mater Dei Structured Work Placement Program, undertake the Business Services Course (VET) and be part of the Mater Dei/ John Therry Satellite Class.

Mater Dei School has a fine reputation as an educational facility that offers high quality education and services for all students. The underpinning philosophy for all that we do is "Inclusion for All" and at Mater Dei each of our programs is aimed at developing the skills and competencies that will allow our students to take their rightful place in their communities.

◆ MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD – Mr. Rob Burns

The Mater Dei school community has grown in 2010, with student enrolments increasing to 144 and many new opportunities opening up for the students of Mater Dei. However, this has not diminished in any way the close community that is Mater Dei. It has again been wonderful to see so many parents attending the end of year assemblies, Masses & Liturgies and all of the exciting events that happen at Mater Dei during the school year.

The Board has worked very hard this year planning for the redevelopment of the Mater Dei site and working with the Wollongong Diocese as they discuss and plan for a Secondary school on the Mater Dei Property. In 2010 we saw the commencement of new school buildings. Mater Dei has been successful in securing a Commonwealth Block Grant for the construction of the new classrooms and administration centre. This project will essentially see the building of a new Mater Dei school and while it has caused some inconvenience in the 2010 school year, it will certainly be worth it. We believe we have a very exciting year ahead of us at Mater Dei and I look forward to reporting on wonderful outcomes in the 2011 Annual School Report.

I would again like to acknowledge the generosity of time and energy from my fellow directors who give so generously of their time and expertise at Mater Dei. I would also like to acknowledge and thank the Principal and staff of Mater Dei for the outstanding work that they do, often in very trying circumstances, for the students and families of Mater Dei. They are an outstanding team who deserve our thanks and our congratulations on another excellent year. We hope that our various building projects will provide learning environments that are conducive to high quality education in facilities that are innovative in design and comfortable for students and staff alike.

This is my fifth year as Chair of the Mater Dei Board and during 2010 I have met regularly with the CEO/Principal to provide support particularly regarding building matters, plan board agendas and review the progress of our organisation. I am continually impressed by the professionalism of the staff and the great work that they do with and on behalf of the students and families in their care.

The Year's Highlights include:

- ❖ Complete redevelopment of the Mater Dei Orphanage Building and building the new school Hall using BER funding from the Commonwealth Government.
- ❖ The commencement of the new school classrooms and admin building.
- ❖ Another very successful fundraising year with an outstanding Foundation Dinner, Golf Day, Race Day, our inaugural Mater Dei Pigeon Race and an outstanding Country Fair.

Finally, I would like to thank the Sisters of the Good Samaritan for the privilege of serving on the Board and to thank the staff, the families and the many supporters who work so hard to assist those in most need, children with intellectual disabilities. I look forward to reporting on the progress of our new projects in the 2011 Annual School Report.

Robert Burns

Chair of the Mater Dei Board

Principal's Message

It has been another busy and challenging year at Mater Dei but overwhelmingly, a year of great achievement and innovation. Much of the focus of the year has been on the significant capital development of the campus that will produce first class teaching and learning facilities for the staff and students of Mater Dei. This has been possible only because of the Commonwealth Government's Building the Education Revolution (BER) program as well as a \$3.02m grant from the Commonwealth through the Block Grant Authority for the rebuilding of the school. The BER funding has provided much needed specialist facilities as well as a new school hall, neither of which would have been possible without the program. The commonwealth grant, together with a loan undertaken through the Catholic Development Fund has facilitated the complete rebuilding of administration, primary and secondary classrooms. The teachers and students of Mater Dei now enjoy contemporary and first class facilities and although this has come at the cost of considerable disruption and inconvenience, our community now looks forward to a period of consolidation in the new facilities.

As well as the considerable building program, our school successfully applied for and was granted registration and accreditation for a further five (5) years from the Board of Studies following inspection in June 2010. A number of adjustments have since been made to the school timetable to better accommodate mandatory requirements of the Life Skills School Certificate and Higher School Certificate courses. The staff of Mater Dei continue to work conscientiously to deliver curriculum outcomes that are consistent with Board of Studies mandatory requirements but that also meet the specific learning needs of the students of Mater Dei.

2010 also saw the introduction of lunch time groups with the aim of engaging students more meaningfully in activities during breaks. Students of Mater Dei often encounter difficulties in initiating play and engaging successfully with peers. The aim of lunch time groups is to provide more structured opportunities for learning based play in areas of interest for the students such as choir, dance, soccer,

art, gardening, music and reading. Thanks to the support of the Mater Dei staff, these groups have proven to be very successful not only in engaging students but in significantly reducing the incidence of first aid reports during breaks. We look forward to building on the success of this initiative.

Mater Dei once again hosted the Special Education Conference in November at The Cube Convention Centre Campbelltown. The conference was once again an outstanding success with over two hundred delegates in attendance. Key note speakers included Dr Gerry Tindal from Oregon USA and Dr Lorraine Hammond from Western Australia. All members of the Mater Dei staff attended both days of the conference.

The staff of Mater Dei has worked very hard this year and they continue to provide excellent education for the students in their care. The educational outcomes achieved by our students were excellent, with students making very good progress in the key areas of literacy, numeracy, social development and personal care. The staff has embraced the development of new facilities and they are working hard to make sure that the students needs are considered in the new development. The staff is again to be congratulated for the great work that they do and for the care and attention they provide to the students of Mater Dei. They do an outstanding job and they deserve recognition and congratulations for their effort.

Mater Dei has a wonderful Board of Directors who are dedicated to supporting the staff of Mater Dei in achieving the best outcomes possible for our students. They give very generously of their time and their expertise and we all benefit from their great contribution. I would like to take the opportunity to thank all members of our Board and particularly our Chair, Mr Rob Burns, for the work that they do for and on behalf of the students of Mater Dei. We are blessed to have such people on our Board and we greatly appreciate their contribution.

Finally I would like to thank and acknowledge our wonderful parents who really are an inspiration to the staff and supporters of Mater Dei. Their energy, their enthusiasm and their advocacy on behalf of their children is quite inspiring. The parents of our school are tremendously motivating to our school community, as they provide the support, the inspiration and the hard work required to gain the best outcomes for their children. The kindness they show, the acknowledgement and appreciation they demonstrate and the lengths that they are prepared to go to in achieving even the smallest of successes for their children is a great example to us all. The 2010 school year has been a time of great challenge and significant change at Mater Dei and we look forward to continuing to pursue our vision of 'inclusion for all' as we work to provide new and exciting facilities and opportunities for our students.

STUDENT DATA - Mater Dei's Student Population for 2010 was 144

Kindergarten	19
Year One	8
Year Two	3
Year Three	9
Year Four	7
Year Five	10
Year Six	14

Year Seven	13
Year Eight	17
Year Nine	14
Year Ten	7
Year Eleven	11
Year Twelve	12

Total	144
--------------	------------

In the 2010 school year, there were twelve class groups, matching as much as possible student's chronological age and ability level to form ability groups that best met student needs. The average class size in 2010 was 12 students, with classes containing higher ability students having slightly higher numbers and classes in which students needed higher levels of support containing fewer students. Each class was allocated a teaching assistant for the majority of the day, with the lower ability classes having a teacher assistant for the entire day.

Student attendance in 2010 was 92.8%. This is a positive figure considering the complex medical needs and physical capacities of a number of our students. We believe these figures indicate enthusiasm and a joy for learning as students are very positive with regard to school attendance.

Student retention rates at Mater Dei are excellent with very little student turnover. The retention figure for students moving from Year Ten to Years Eleven and Twelve is 100%, again indicating high satisfaction with our programs.

All programs of study offered at Mater Dei are based on the Board of Studies mandated courses and are modified to meet the individual needs of students. At Mater Dei each student has an Individual Education Program (IP) and it is essential that parents and students are a part of all education plans to ensure the best outcomes for all students.

Mater Dei continues to offer opportunities for students in Year 11/12 to enter our Satellite Class program in partnership with the Wollongong Catholic Education Office and John Therry Catholic High School. Located on the John Therry campus for 3 days per week and Mater Dei campus for 2 days per week, this program provides students with access to a mainstream campus and all of its benefits, while also providing time for a more practical and individualised program on the Mater Dei campus.

Inclusion is a very important aspect of the education program at Mater Dei. Students are involved in Inclusive Schooling programs, Community Access Programs and Leisure and Life Skills Programs. Students in Years 11 and 12 are involved in our Work Placement Program, providing students with access to work opportunities in both open and supported employment situations.

Post School Destinations Mater Dei students all qualify for Post School Programs in either Community Participation or Transition to Work. Generally all students take up the option of Post School Programs unless paid work is an option. In 2010, 100% of graduates undertook Post School Programs.

TEACHING STAFF

In 2010, Mater Dei employed 13 F/T teachers and 6 P/T teachers (15.8 FTE) and the equivalent of 11.7 FTE teacher assistants. The majority of the Mater Dei teaching staff has 4 year training and a number of staff are working toward postgraduate qualifications in Special Education.

Teacher qualifications fall into 1 of 3 categories for all teaching staff responsible for delivering the curriculum.

1. Teacher qualifications from a higher education institution from within Australia or as recognised by AEI-NOOSR * **(100%)**
2. Have qualifications as a graduate from a higher education institution from within Australia within AEI-NOOSR * guidelines but lack formal teacher qualifications. **(0%)**
3. Do not have qualifications as above but have relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate knowledge relevant to the teaching context. **(0%)**

*Australian Education Institution – National Office of Overseas Skill Recognition

Teacher Attendance & Retention Rates

The average Teacher Attendance rate in 2010 was 91.8% and the average Teacher Retention Rate was 95.

LEARNING AND TEACHING

The students and teachers of Mater Dei work consistently to improve outcomes and provide a stimulating and challenging learning environment. Student progress in the areas of Literacy and Numeracy has been very pleasing throughout 2010. We have also continued to work in the areas of nutrition and physical education, with ongoing work taking place on student fitness levels and healthy eating habits. We are delighted with the improvements shown by our students in the areas of social skill development, personal care and independent living skills in 2010, as it is in these areas that we make a real difference in the lives of our students and in the support of our families.

Mater Dei students in the appropriate age categories for NAPLAN testing were exempt due to their level of cognitive disability. In 2010 we went through an extensive process of assessing our students using previous NAPLAN papers to provide them with opportunities to have exposure to the tests without the pressure of sitting the tests in the first instance. This was a very interesting exercise and it convinced us that our students were unable to sit the tests in any meaningful way. It allowed us to trial this measure to try and analyse the benefits to Mater Dei students. While they enjoyed the experience the data to emerge was not particularly useful. Mater Dei will continue to explore relevant mechanisms for assessing literacy and numeracy outcomes that are meaningful for families and provide a positive direction for further skill development and future planning to meet each student's individual needs.

The analysis of collected data showed that over 90% of priority outcomes from IP's were achieved, with significant progress again measured in the areas of literacy, personal hygiene, personal care and social development. We continue to be delighted by the effort that students make in skills development and their determination to succeed in all areas of education. We will continue to work closely with families to further develop the potential of each of our students, particularly in the areas of literacy, numeracy and personal development.

As a result of a review of our inclusive schooling program in 2009, modifications were made to the delivery of this program in 2010. Rather than placing small groups of students in mainstream schools, in 2010, whole class groups (10) were immersed in mainstream classes for one teaching session (90 minutes). This has been quite successful in particular in minimising disruption to students who had previously not been included in the experience and in facilitating a more comprehensive inclusion of more students with the support of both their pastoral teacher and a teacher's assistant. This trial will be continued to be monitored and modified if and when necessary.

The staff continues to be involved in professional development activities in ICT, Behaviour Management, OHS, Child Protection, designing Individual Education Plans and in reviewing the various disabilities and syndromes of our students. The Mater Dei staff members have also developed their own Professional Development Plans, with staff undertaking training in areas that will increase expertise and further enhance the learning and teaching taking place at Mater Dei. Mater Dei staff have also spent time reflecting on their mission as Christian educators and on how they build living faith communities in their classrooms. Mater Dei held its biennial Special Education Conference with quality speakers from overseas and Australia. All Mater Dei staff attended this important professional development event.

Significant Programs and Initiatives

Aboriginal Education

Mater Dei has a number of indigenous students enrolled and every effort is made to create an environment that is inclusive and respectful of cultural heritage for all students and their families. Every class undertakes study in Aboriginal culture and history, with students creating art works, cooking 'bush tucker' and gaining an appreciation of Aboriginal music and dance through various school programs and cultural visits. As a school for students with intellectual disability, we have a community that is accepting of all cultures and our students proudly embrace all aspects of our Aboriginal as well as our European history.

Multicultural Education

Mater Dei has a strong focus on Multicultural Education with a Multicultural Day being held every year as a culmination activity of the units studied as part of the multicultural programs in place. Students are genuinely interested in other cultures and this is evident in our cooking programs, our art works and in the literature studied in our classrooms. The diverse mix of cultures that make up our school population provides a rich source of knowledge and a valuable resource, with parents contributing to our programs by supporting staff with resources, information and assisting in the organisation of our special celebrations.

SCHOOL POLICIES:

Policies reviewed in 2010 included Child Protection, Child Protection Code of Professional Standards, Code of Conduct and Staff Leave. Policies are developed and then forwarded to the Mater Dei Board for comment and adoption. All policies are available from Mater Dei and may be accessed by contacting the school.

Policies are regularly reviewed with staff to ensure that all staff members are aware of their rights and obligations. There are also opportunities for staff discussion around policies and procedures to ensure that policies are still relevant and procedures are still appropriate. O.H&S. is a very important issue at Mater Dei and this is an area that a great deal of work has been done over the course of the last six years. In an effort to keep all members of the Mater Dei community safe, regular meetings of the O.H.S. committee are conducted to review accidents and injuries, to conduct risk assessments and to raise concerns with regard to the safety of our practises, environment and plant.

CATHOLIC IDENTITY

The staff and students of Mater Dei are part of a community of faith with a very long and proud tradition. As a Catholic School, we follow the teachings of the Catholic Church and endeavour to live out the values inherent in the Gospels. We are very closely aligned to the principles and charism of the Good Samaritan Order. It is from this foundation that our ministry to the poor, the marginalised and the disadvantaged has its basis. We are also very much committed to working with children who have an intellectual disability and their families and supporting them in ways that reflect the teachings and the actions of Jesus.

Students at Mater Dei have formal religion lessons each week. They also have opportunities for formal and individual prayer and reflection each day. Liturgies and school masses are a part of our school routine and we assist parents in preparing children for the sacraments as part of our mission in sharing our faith. The liturgical ceremonies that are part of life at Mater Dei are occasions of great celebration and enthusiastic prayer. Our students are most respectful and reverent in our chapel and the faith that we teach is an important part of life for students of Mater Dei and their families.

PASTORAL CARE

Mater Dei has a strong commitment to pastoral care and this commitment extends to our students, their families and our staff. An essential part of our pastoral work as a school community is to treat people with dignity and compassion. Therefore, we promote very actively the rights and the responsibilities of all members of the Mater Dei community. Mater Dei is very fortunate to have the services of Sr Jeanie Heiningner to work as a school chaplain for 3 days each week. Jeanie continues to work with students and families to build resilience and provide pastoral support across a variety of settings in 2010. The Nurturing Independence Program developed and presented by Jeanie was an outstanding success and provides parents with an opportunity to explore issues of grief, faith and the future possibilities for their

children. Sr Jeanie has been a great gift to Mater Dei and we look forward to Jeanie working further with students and families in areas of need.

Our students are the focus of all that we do at Mater Dei and their interests are placed before any other administrative or logistical consideration. We have a positive approach to behaviour management that provides students with a safe and secure environment in which they are able to be themselves and to face challenges and make mistakes. Our approach is very much based on actively acknowledging positive behaviours and treating negative behaviours by offering 'good choices' or ignoring the behaviour. This provides students with opportunities to gain positive attention and removes the opportunity for students to gain negative attention. In cases where behaviour becomes an issue, staff and parents work together to formulate individual behaviour management plans that are collaborative and consider all aspects of a child's life situation and disability. We have found this positive and cooperative approach to be both successful and inclusive as it focuses on all areas of a child's life and builds positive partnerships between school and home.

Mater Dei works to build positive relationships with families and to care for them as much as is possible. We provide child and family counselling as part of our service, we organise in-service opportunities for families and we take an active interest in ensuring that families have the advice and support required to negotiate often difficult life situations. Mater Dei also provides opportunities for families to network and we attempt to foster on-going connections with our organisation through our work with the Mater Dei Ex Students Reunions. Mater Dei links and brings families into contact with various community services and supports them in negotiating what can be difficult or confusing situations with both government and non government agencies. We recognise that caring for and educating a child or children with disabilities is a tremendous emotional and financial strain and we endeavour to do all that we can in supporting families in this very difficult work.

The staff of Mater Dei is its greatest asset and as such we recognise the need to care for and nurture our staff. In an effort to support our staff we have an Employee Assistance Scheme (EAP) to provide support and counselling in times of stress or crisis. All staff and their families have access to this program and we actively encourage staff to take advantage of this service as needed. Mater Dei staff work very closely in ensuring that the needs of students and families are met as effectively as we can, however, we are aware that staff can often become quite emotionally fatigued in this environment. In an effort to care for staff, Mater Dei has an on-going commitment to providing opportunities for staff care through professional development days that focus on nurturing staff and providing opportunities for self care. It is hoped that by maintaining a healthy staff we will be able to provide the best outcomes for our students.

STUDENT WELFARE AND DISCIPLINE

Mater Dei is a place of peace, belonging, respect, justice, hope and celebration. Our values are based on the dignity of the whole person and through living out these values we provide witness to Gospel values as a way of living out daily life.

Our values are captured in many of our policies and procedures. We have a Behaviour Management Policy in place at Mater Dei that is based on this values system and very much reflects our focus on dignity and compassion. Our approach to pastoral care and safety is reflected in the Mater Dei Staff Handbook, the Mater Dei Code of Conduct and the Mater Dei O.H.S policies, giving witness and structure to our commitment to the welfare and safety of our students.

Mater Dei's Primary and Secondary Coordinators are responsible for student welfare. The Coordinators role is to work with parents and students to ensure that the rights of students and families are respected, that welfare matters are dealt with confidentially and sensitively, and to act as a bridge between families and the school in matters where sensitivity and compassion are required.

The Staff of Mater Dei is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all students. They are further committed to providing support and assistance to families and care givers in any areas that they can be of assistance. The staff are supported by the Mater Dei Board in this commitment and this is very much at the centre of the Board's agenda in providing each student at Mater Dei with opportunities to achieve their full potential and to take their rightful place in their communities.

ENROLMENT POLICY

Mater Dei is a co-educational K-12 Special School, catering for students with a mild to moderate intellectual disability. While Mater Dei is a Catholic School, our enrolment policy is inclusive of all students regardless of religious orientation or culture. Our enrolment policy is non denominational in nature and our criteria is that students must have a diagnosed intellectual disability falling in the mild to moderate range.

Before a place is offered at Mater Dei, there is a process of consultation, interview and visits to current educational settings in order to determine whether Mater Dei is the most appropriate educational placement. If a placement is offered and accepted, a period of transition is organised and students and parents are provided with a thorough orientation to Mater Dei.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Mater Dei School is committed to a safe and supportive environment that is characterised by fairness, mutual trust, and reconciliation. Parents and caregivers, or indeed any member of our community who has a complaint or grievance, has the right to have this issue addressed.

Mater Dei has a comprehensive Complaints Handling Policy and an accompanying brochure that provides an outline of the process and a mechanism for making complaints or airing grievances in a safe and confidential manner. Copies of the Mater Dei Complaints Handling Brochure are available at the Mater Dei reception desk or may be posted to parents or carers on request

It is a commitment of the Mater Dei Board to provide a learning and pastoral environment that promotes the dignity and development of each individual in a fair and just manner. To this end, the Chair of the Mater Dei Board, Mr Rob Burns, can be contacted directly to work through issues of concern or situations in which conflict may arise.

PARTNERSHIPS

Mater Dei has a number of partnerships with community groups throughout the Macarthur region. Mater Dei works closely with local schools, providing inclusive schooling opportunities for our students and visits to Mater Dei for students in mainstream schools. The benefit to Mater Dei students and students from mainstream schools is the provision of opportunities for sharing of experiences, building relationships and fostering partnerships in a supported and nurturing environment.

Mater Dei has a partnership with the Wollongong Catholic Education Office and John Therry Catholic High School, Rosemeadow, resulting in the Stage 6 Mater Dei Satellite Class. This class is a joint venture between John Therry High School and Mater Dei in the provision of a Stage 6 program for students that provides opportunities for an inclusive education and the expertise and networks of the Mater Dei community. This program is structured in a way that allows the students to attend school on the John Therry campus three days per week and the Mater Dei campus two days per week. During their time at John Therry students are provided with access to a diverse range of academic and social opportunities available only on a mainstream campus. While at Mater Dei, students are able to take part in the Mater Dei Work Placement Program, the Business Studies VET Course and various community access opportunities.

Mater Dei also has a partnership with St Clare's Primary School Narellan, St Anthony's Primary School Picton and St Paul's School Camden, with students working with mainstream students one day per week. As a result of this program we have seen our students grow in self esteem and confidence and we are very happy to further develop this relationship.

Mater Dei has excellent relationships with our local community and this has allowed the Mater Dei Work Placement Program to flourish. Students in Years 11&12 are provided with opportunities to undertake a work placement one day per week as part of their regular school program. The opportunity to work in a safe and well-supervised environment allows students to gain on the job training. It also allows students to learn the social skills that are a vital part of the workplace. This program also provides Mater Dei with the opportunity to build understanding and educate our community on the talents and capacities of Mater Dei students.

PARENTS AND FRIENDS

Mater Dei has a small but active Parents and Friends Association that provides support and assistance to Mater Dei School. Through the running of our Annual Country Fair, assistance with our Easter fundraiser and assistance with the Mater Dei Christmas Cards, our parents play a vital role in building community at Mater Dei. A number of wonderful initiatives were undertaken by our parents in 2010, including very successful Mother's Day and Father's Day stalls being organised, Mater Dei Car Raffle and another wonderful Trivia Night. The Mater Dei Tuckshop continues to thrive as an important service and support.

The Mater Dei P&F does much more than raise funds. Its most important work is in providing a network of support and advice for new families and families who may be suffering hardship or difficulty. Through the hosting of information evenings, organising guest speakers and simply sharing wisdom, the Mater Dei P&F provides a vital source of support and information for the Mater Dei community.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Mater Dei has spent much of the 2010 school year occupied with the development of the campus. This has been particularly challenging and disruptive however with the building program drawing to a conclusion, our community looks forward to initiating ways in which we may best utilise wonderful new facilities to deliver a contemporary and innovative education curriculum. Much time has also been devoted to negotiating the commencement of a new Catholic secondary systemic high school on the Mater Dei site with the Diocese of Wollongong. As a consequence of the planning throughout 2010, there were high expectations and great hope for an innovative partnership between Mater Dei and the mainstream secondary school. The failure of the project to come to fruition at the very last moment has forced a rethink about ways in which Mater Dei might approach the notion of *inclusion* in the years ahead. In 2011, we have commenced a process of engaging with our community to identify key priorities that will focus our minds, energies and resources in the next five years. We look forward to the outcome of this *Future Directions Statement* later in 2011. The ongoing challenge of funding remains and again, considerable attention will need to be devoted to this dimension of our work to ensure the continuation of many of our programs in to the future. Mater Dei is a vibrant learning community that is also the source of great hope and security for our parents and carers. In 2010, we built on the wonderful work of the leadership and staff who preceded us. We look forward to building on that platform in 2011.

PROGRESS ON 2010 TARGETS

Target 1

- *The completion of the Mater Dei building works and the utilisation of new learning and teaching spaces in specialist areas throughout the 2010 school year*

As a consequence of a number of factors beyond our control, building works continued throughout the whole of 2010 severely limiting our capacity to access new teaching and learning spaces. This will remain a key priority for 2011.

Target 2

- *An ongoing focus on the area of ICT, with staff further building the use of laptops into their daily routines and continuing to take advantage of PD opportunities to develop their own skills in this area*

With the commencement of the new school buildings in 2010 part of our technology focus changed slightly due to restrictions with the building. In 2009 we had an Interactive Whiteboard set up in a digital learning space. When we commenced our building project this area had to be removed. We then had one mobile board to use across the school setting. Some classes accessed this board during this time but it was difficult with the building works to find a suitable place to use it.

The laptops continued to be used during the year. There are 40 laptops across the school. The use of the laptops was integrated across a number of Key Learning Areas to support student's learning needs. For example some classes accessed laptops for literacy development and others used them as a research tool. The laptops were also used to develop student's skills in using technology for example using word documents and saving data. The students also used the laptops in the area of Creative Arts. They developed musical compositions and animations as well as produce artworks.

The wireless network proved to be a huge success with the use of the laptops. This allowed the staff to use the internet as a learning and teaching tool.

Peer mentoring formed a large part of our PD focus. This ranged from using the Interactive Whiteboard and its applications to the use of word documents in areas of programming. Three staff members attended the Spectronics Learning Conference on the Gold Coast. This provided an insight with tools and software that are available to enhance and support students learning needs.

All teaching and learning programs are now in an electronic format.

Target 3

- *A continued focus on healthy lifestyles, with education programs focusing on nutrition, physical activity and making safe and healthy choices in the school and in the community.*

Our PDHPE programs across the school have continued to focus on the importance of healthy lifestyles and healthy choices. This year students from K – 12 also participated in supplementary interactive lessons with "Happy Harold" from Life Education, learning about healthy food choices, the importance of physical activity, safety, emergency procedures and individual needs for medicines.

Target 4

- *To refocus our school starters program to better meet the needs of students entering Mater Dei in Kindergarten and to evaluate the effectiveness of our current approach to transition to mainstream schools*

A current review of the enrolment process at Mater Dei has meant an enhancement of our preparation for individual student needs transitioning into Mater Dei as more information about the individual needs of students is collected initially. By reviewing our transition program both with students entering and leaving Mater Dei, we are endeavouring to make our transition programs more flexible in their timing and duration based on the individual needs of each student.

Target 5

- *A review of our Inclusion Program*

At the commencement of 2010 a new Primary Inclusive Schooling Model was implemented following a review and trial of a new model in 2009. This saw all classes (not Kinder) attend one of our local Catholic schools for one session per week or fortnight. All students from the pastoral class attended. They attended a buddy class and participated in a range of activities including sport and creative arts. The class teacher and assistant accompanied their class. This allowed teachers to gain an insight into areas that can be developed in the students individual plan in a variety of areas including social skills and safety. Mater Dei Staff were able to support individual's needs whilst visiting.

IMPROVEMENT TARGETS FOR 2010

- The completion of the Mater Dei building works and the utilisation of new learning and teaching spaces in specialist areas throughout the 2011 school year
- The development of co-curricular opportunities to engage students more meaningfully and to build on the capacity to teach through play.
- To further develop the scope of opportunities available to students in the performing arts.
- A review of the K-12 school timetable to better reflect mandatory requirements of the Board of Studies

RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY

Mater Dei promotes a respectful and caring environment through its focus on its motto of Peace and on the Rule of Benedict. Respect and responsibility at Mater Dei are promoted and worked toward in the following ways:

- Mater Dei has a clearly articulated set of positive behaviour guidelines that are displayed throughout the school.
- Mater Dei promotes respectful and responsible behaviour through the various awards presented at the weekly and monthly assemblies.
- The focus for all that we do is "Love of neighbour" and we regularly discuss and demonstrate the concept of neighbour at assemblies and liturgies.
- Stewardship is a strong focus area at Mater Dei and there is a particular emphasis on care and protection of our environment.
- Mater Dei students are proud of their school and their country and this is demonstrated in the way they wear their school uniform and sing the National Anthem at our weekly assemblies.

SCHOOL SATISFACTION LEVELS

Mater Dei is a special school that educates students with significant intellectual difficulties. This can lead to quite a stressful learning environment for students and staff. However, it would seem that Mater Dei scores very highly on the issue of satisfaction in terms of student, parent and staff experience.

Student satisfaction: In terms of student satisfaction, Mater Dei scores very highly, with students expressing great satisfaction with regard to their education and the school itself. Discussions with Year 11 & 12 students again indicated very high levels of satisfaction with the education programs, the work opportunities, community access programs and the social aspects of school life. These findings were replicated when we discussed the success of this program with parents of graduating students.

Parent Satisfaction: Parent satisfaction has been high again this year. We conducted informal focus group sessions at P&F meetings to gain an idea of satisfaction levels with school programs and to provide parents with opportunities to make recommendations for changes that they may have thought about for the future.

Staff Satisfaction: Mater Dei staff undertake appraisals each year and the general view one gains from reading appraisals is that staff are happy in their work. We work in a high stress environment and staff can often feel quite pressured when behaviours are problematic. However, our staff are a very committed and hard working group who put the students needs before all others. In terms of the accepted indicators of work satisfaction, staff retention rates and levels of sick leave, Mater Dei has excellent retention rates and reasonably good attendance figures for work.

Throughout the course of 2010, staff has met with the CEO/Principal to discuss their perceptions of life at Mater Dei and how we may improve the education programs, communication with families, internal communication and the work environment.

Financial Report Year Ending Dec 2010

During the year Mater Dei has received capital building grants which have been fully applied to the construction of the new school and hall. The students and staff are very excited to occupy new facilities. As these funds have been fully allocated to the capital building project, the grants received for this project have been excluded from the following analysis.

Mater Dei remains significantly dependent upon government funding with 82% of total revenue prior to capital income coming from recurrent funding. Fees generated from students makes up 8% of the total revenue. The remaining 10% of income is derived from fundraising and other activities. It is only with the generous support of our community that we are able to provide the services that our children and students need.

Employment costs are by far the largest expense to Mater Dei, which reflects the importance of our greatest asset, our staff. Without them we could not deliver the quality of service that our students and families receive.

A moderate surplus from recurrent operations is a good result with the challenges the board and management have faced with a dual focus of provide the students with the best education possible and managing the significant redevelopment of the school.

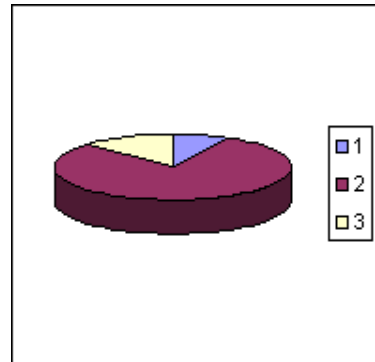
The aim of the Board and Management will be to continue to work on the sustainability of the organisation and its financial management without compromising our service.

Tony Fitzgerald
CEO/Principal
Mater Dei 2010

INCOME & EXPENDITURE FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2010

Recurrent Income

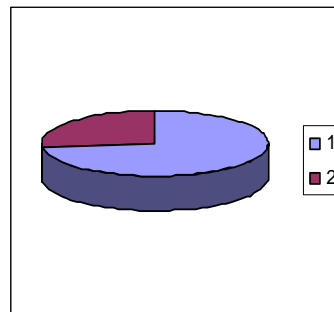
Fees (1)	412,727
Government Grants (2)	4,298,116
Net Fundraising/Other (3)	548,458
	5,259,301



Recurrent Expenses

Employment Costs (1)	3,744,237
Other Overheads (2)	1,383,800
Total	5,128,037

NET PROFIT FROM RECURRENT ITEMS 131,164



Capital Grants

One off capital building grants 3,656,637