



Engage – Educate – Empower



River Nile School students and staff at our inaugural school camp, Anglesea, 2-4 December 2019.

**We empower young refugee and asylum seeker women through education,
to acquire the language, life and work skills to
integrate and thrive in our community.**

Annual Report 2019

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Reg. Association No. A0048482L
Registered school no.: 2111

You can 'follow' and 'like' us
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/RiverNileSchool/>
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Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/rivernileschool/>

Foundation Principal’s Message

Every refugee and asylum seeker who comes through our door brings with them a story of **resilience**, **courage** and **hope**. They have shown immense bravery and resolve to flee harm and persecution in their birth country. They want what we all want – a safe and peaceful future and the opportunity to gain an education, be part of a community and get a job so they can live independently.

At RNS **we change student’s lives** through a personalised approach to learning, using specialist English as an Additional Language (**EAL**), applied-learning pedagogy. Our professional team take on an **authentic mentoring approach**, empowering students to address the complex challenges and trauma in their lives and build healthy and respectful relationships which strengthen their **wellbeing**, **engagement** and **learning achievements**. Each student is supported to **plan a career pathway**, specific to their aspirations and goals, as they transition from our school.

Our mission is to empower young refugee and asylum seeker women through education, to successfully integrate and thrive in our community. In pursuing our mission, we believe we are not only **changing our students lives**, but making an important contribution to help secure a **thriving, harmonious multicultural society** – which benefits all in our community.

RNS grew out of the **River Nile Learning Centre (RNLC)**, which was established in 2006 to assist the African refugee community. 2019 was our 3rd year as a **registered, specialist, independent school**.

This Annual Report speaks to the passion and commitment of our staff, students, Board, volunteers and many supporters, and recognises our unique and growing place as a specialist, multicultural education provider. I thank and congratulate all concerned for what has been achieved in 2019.

– Lisa Wilson



RNS School Leaders welcome guests to our Identity and Wellbeing Art Expo

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RNS is a registered independent school and charitable organisation.
All programs and services are free.
Donations of \$2 and above are tax-deductible.



THE RIVER NILE SCHOOL INC

Context

The River Nile School (RNS) is an independent, specialist, inclusive, senior-secondary school, established in 2017. RNS delivers VCAL curriculum, to young refugee and asylum seeker women, who have had disrupted schooling or are struggling to cope with mainstream school. We are also a registered charitable organisation that delivers everything we do with our students for free.

RNS provides a high-challenge, high-support learning environment with a strengths-based approach. We offer small class sizes and teachers and student support staff work collaboratively to achieve the best possible outcomes for each student with individualised learning and wellbeing programs for all students. RNS adopts a holistic model for supporting the unique educational and support needs of each student, so developing strong student-staff relationships is essential. As our students come from backgrounds where they may have experienced significant trauma and torture, we adopt a trauma-informed approach to our practice.



Identity & Belonging Art Exhibition, Ample Café, North Melb., October 2019



Life Saving Victoria, Multicultural Education Program, South Melbourne

Student Population Characteristics

The young women enrolled at the River Nile School are aged 15 – 20+ years, and are refugees, asylum seekers or disadvantaged new arrivals of **EAL** backgrounds. Our student cohort is at the lowest end of the socio-disadvantage profile and among the most marginalised and isolated in our community. Some are preliterate or have limited prior years in education, while some have attended school but have limited English language and literacy. All have an interest in learning, but many have struggled in mainstream education settings and have either stopped attending or been excluded. Our programs aim to **re-engage** our students in their own measurable, visible academic growth, simultaneously teaching them strategies to become independent and autonomous learners in their schooling, pathway choices and adulthood. In 2019, as at the August census, the RNS had:

- 74 full-time students, of which 48 (65%) were enrolled in Year 11 and 26 (35%) were enrolled in Year 12.
 - 64 students (87%) were on Visas; a number of which were Permanent Residents and through 2018 several were assisted to progress Citizenship applications.
 - 30 students (41%) had a disability or documented learning intervention need – of which 3 were extensive, 12 substantial, 14 supplementary and 1 QDTP. Most of the supplementary and QDTP being social-emotional trauma related.
 - 17 students (23%) were 18 years or younger.
 - 57 students (77%) were over 18 years of age and their own legal guardians, a few live with their sibling but the vast majority live independently.
 - The vast majority (85%) of our students are orphans or have no parent connection.
- Birth regions represented by our students in 2019 included 58% of African heritage (Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and the Congo), 17% of Middle Eastern heritage (Afghanistan, Iran/Persia/Kurdish, Turkey, Syria) and 25% Asia (Myanmar/Karen/Chin, Tibet, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Vietnam).

Student Educational Engagement and Wellbeing

River Nile School has a strong commitment to student wellbeing, health and safety and commits significant resources to student engagement, wellbeing and advocacy.

Our school environment is safe, professional, welcoming and orderly. Students often refer to it as being like a home. Staff are seen as positive role models of relationships, actions and behaviours.

Most of our students, some with children, are totally alone in Australia with no family support. Social welfare support is critical in assisting our students to manage the complex demands placed on them with language barriers, finance, housing and trauma present in their lives with often no stable presence apart from our staff to offer advice or practical help. Most of our students live on a Centrelink Youth Allowance but unlike most Australian born youth, have no family to fall back on for support for periodic high costs essential needs. After paying board or rent and utilities, most of our students typically have only \$50-60 per week to pay for all other essentials. We also have a small number of students who receive a Centrelink Special Benefit payment, which is even less and has strict rules (for example any earnings above \$20 per fortnight are deducted from payments). In addition, we have growing student numbers who have arrived on sponsored humanitarian visas and are not entitled to any Centrelink support whatsoever for 2 years from arrival. We have quite a

number for whom the relationship with the sponsor has broken down (e.g. due to abuse) and they are left completely cut off with no support.

All RNS programs and services are completely fee-free and RNS provides all students with an annual MYKI public transport card, notebook computer, food staples and material aid to reduce barriers to their engagement.

Most students have experienced significant trauma, both physically and emotionally, by the experiences that caused them to seek refuge or asylum and we work with other agencies to assist and address this.

In 2019, we had 6 RNS students who were mums of pre-school aged children or who became pregnant through the year. RNS provides students with a **free childcare** service on-site to enable students who are young mums to remain engaged in their education. We are assisting these students and their children to return to a more normal family life. Assisting mothers and children to at times be apart and independent is also essential to enable these young children to transition successfully to kindergarten and school.

We also strive to develop our students' life skills and foster their capacity for independence and self-determination by building bridges and links into the community and to access vocational pathways.

River Nile School is compliant with the **Child Safe Standards prescribed in Ministerial Order 870 – Child Safe Standards, Managing Risk of Child Abuse in Schools.**

School Program

The River Nile School delivers Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority (VCAA) approved Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) curriculum to Year 11 and 12 students. The RNS Learning Program is linked to the VCAL strands of Literacy and Numeracy Skills, Personal Development Skills, Work Related Skills and a VET (Vocational Education Training) qualification which meets the Industry Specific Skill strand. The Program aligns with a whole school, integrated approach to curriculum and is organised and designed to run over the course of two years.

At RNS the VCAL program is run over two years in recognition of the complex needs of learners that may impact upon their learning. Students may commence the course at different times during the year and are expected to complete the course within two years of commencing.

Over the course of two years, each student must complete 1,000 hours of VCAL including a VET (Vocational Education Training) program. By providing a two-year program, RNS allows for a diverse range of personal and external

circumstances and issues of our student cohort to achieve VCAL Learning Outcomes.

The timeframe allows for our student cohort to work within their literacy and language abilities and work at a pace that they can realistically achieve.

As our student cohort is from **EAL** backgrounds, language is identified and utilised as a resource across all areas of the curriculum. RNS uses VCE **Foundation English** (Unit 1) and **Bridging EAL** (Unit 2) to support the formal English learning area with our Intermediate learners.

The Learning Program includes **specialist programs** such as swimming, craft and music which form a core part of the curriculum which students are required to attend. Each of the specialist programs has been chosen to support the personal development and learning of our specific student cohort.

Students also complete a **VET** program, covering industry specific skills. Our VET program is run by the Inner Melbourne VET Cluster (IMVC) under a contractual partnership arrangement with RNS.

Individual Education Planning

The development of **Individual Learning Plans** (ILP) is a key strategy in ensuring success for every student at the River Nile School. Students are supported by key staff to develop a plan that identifies clear learning goals, strategies and outcomes as well as broad life and behaviour goals.

The curriculum program for each student is then designed around this plan, based on a program that focuses both on setting goals for improvement and allowing students to develop skills in their area of interest.

Each student's ILP is reviewed and updated every term in student-teacher conferences.



Identity and Belonging Art Exhibition, October 2019



Staff

In 2019, a total of 22 staff worked for the River Nile School, of which we had:

- 6 full time and 16 part-time staff by Head Count.
- 7.5 FTE were the Principal and teaching staff and 6.6 FTE were specialist support or administrative
- All but 1 staff member were female
- No staff of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage.
- 10 staff from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds, all but one of which came to Australia on refugee pathways.

All teachers are fully qualified, with VIT registration. Two teachers have completed a Masters of TESOL from The University of Melbourne, another has post-graduate qualifications in special education, disability and learning intervention.

Support staff include a Welfare Director, Social Support Workers, Learning Support Workers, an Engagement Coordinator and Education Aides.

The high ratio of staff for the number of students is a reflection of the River Nile School's belief that our students require a high level of specialist, individual support in order to support their educational progress.

River Nile School teachers meet the registration requirements of the **Victorian Institute of Teaching** (www.vit.edu.au) and the school meets the prescribed minimum standards for registration as regulated by the **Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA)** in accordance with the Education and Training Reform Act 2006.



RNS was the Education Winner - 2019 Premier's Sustainability Awards



Student Celebration Day – 9 December 2019

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2019

- **23 students successfully Attained the VCAL with 21 at Intermediate and 2 at Foundation** – this is a 92% increase on VCAL Attainment numbers in 2018!
An outstanding achievement given our students' language difficulties and complex personal challenges.
- **A further 27 students achieved VCAL units** in 2019 – 7 at Intermediate and 20 at Foundation level.
- **17 students are graduating** with the majority beginning their journey on a range of pathways, including Health Services and Nursing, Health Sciences and Medicine, Beauty Services, Legal Studies and Education.
Examples of courses RNS students have enrolled in for 2020 commencement include:
 - Certificate III **Health Services Assistance** – Victoria Uni.
 - Certificate III **Individual Support** – SuniTAFE
 - Certificate III **Beauty Services** – Victoria Uni.
 - Certificate IV **Education Support** – Victoria Uni.
 - Certificate IV **Tertiary Preparation** – RMIT & VU
 - A further **2** students are seeking **employment** and have been referred to the BSL *Given the Chance – Jobs Victoria* employment program. Both are likely to pursue further study once they have work.
 - A further **2** students are exploring **Student Based Apprenticeships & Traineeships (SBATs)** for 2020 in Certificate III **Cookery** and Certificate III **Children's Services**, whilst still accessing RNS classroom support.
- 13 students participated in and all successfully Attained the **Provide First Aid Certificate** over 2 days in August.
- Vocational Education Training (VET) Certificate success:
 - **12** students Attained Certificate II in Business
 - **9** students Attained Cert. II Kitchen Operations (partial)
 - **24** students Attained Cert. II Retail Cosmetics (partial)
 - **6** students Attained Cert. II Salon Assistant (partial)
- **10** students undertook **Structured Workplace Learning (SWL)** during non-term weeks. Workplaces included The Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL), Doutta Galla Age Care Homes, Port Melbourne and Albert Park Library, Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria and The Langham Hotel.
- **3** students successfully completed a **Work Readiness Program** with **Service Stars** and then obtained paid casual work in Hospitality roles for the Spring Racing Carnival with strong prospects for further work.
- **5** students participated in the **Scarf Hospitality traineeship** and mentor program. 3 undertook the whole program and 2 undertook the Taster.
An Alumni from 2018 also undertook the full program.
- **12** students participated in **volunteering** with *Conservation Victoria Volunteers* at Organ Pipes National Park and future potential volunteering partnerships were developed through student site visits, for example to Lort Smith Animal Hospital.
- Foundation and Intermediate students planned, organised and ran a successful **Wellbeing Expo** in Semester 1.
- Intermediate students planned, organised and ran a successful **Identity and Belonging Art Exhibition** at Ample Café, North Melbourne, in Semester 2.

Academic growth

RNS students' cohort are Year 11 and 12 EAL learners, however a significant number have no or limited prior schooling. Many students commence at our School with no prior academic records from which to measure growth. Others have found learning challenging in their previous education settings. There is considerable observed growth of student personal satisfaction and engagement in the learning, completion and attainment of VCAL units and progress onto pathways to which they aspire, including further study and paid employment.

In 2019, the RNS VCAL program was offered at Foundation and Intermediate levels to address the individual learning needs of the cohort. A further five students completed Work Related Skills Unit 2 at Senior level, as they were identified as having the ability to play a leading role in planning the Sustainability Market.

A significant number of River Nile School students achieved their VCAL certificate in 2018. Twenty-one students successfully attained Intermediate VCAL and two students attained Foundation VCAL. This was a 92% increase on the completion rates of 2018 and demonstrates the success of both our program and student engagement.

Students at Intermediate level also completed VCE Unit 2 Bridging EAL (English as an Additional Language) in order to

further develop English language and literacy skills and provide an extra unit for their VCAL. In 2019, RNS was approved by the VCAA to introduce VCE Unit 1 Foundation English for students undertaking Foundation VCAL, which strengthen English language and literacy development.

VET is also an essential component of the Industry Specific Skills strand of the VCAL curriculum. River Nile School continued to partner with Inner Melbourne VET Cluster to offer VET certificates. In 2019, we expanded our VET offering from two to four options, providing partial courses starting in Terms 2 and 3 to cater for the significant numbers of students who enrol at RNS through the year and to enable student to "taste" different VET options. In 2019, 12 students attained Certificate II Business, 9 a partial Certificate II in Kitchen Operations, 24 a partial Certificate II in Retail Cosmetics and 6 a partial Certificate II in Salon Assistant. This was a great achievement and showed the commitment of both trainers and students.

These achievements demonstrate the ongoing commitment of the students and staff of River Nile School to engage in learning that is high challenge and high support within a flexible setting, enabling the achievement of academic goals.

Student Attendance

RNS is a re-engagement School, with students enrolling across the school year. Of its 2019 student cohort, 41% had a documented disability or learning intervention need (many of which relate to emotional trauma), 8% of students were pregnant or mums of pre-school age children, 77% were their own legal guardian and all were managing complex personal challenges, RNS has relatively high rates of approved and health related absences.

RNS has a coordinated, school-wide approach to attendance implemented by core staff. Teaching staff, social support workers and the Welfare Director made contact with students who were not in attendance each school day. Teaching staff, social support workers and the Welfare Director could also gauge from daily phone communication any potential welfare concerns or issues which could impact on student engagement and wellbeing before they arrive at River Nile School; for example, housing concerns, Centrelink, family or financial issues. Students were also able to directly contact their teachers, Welfare Director and Principal and were encouraged to communicate if running late or not attending that day. Students were provided with various options to communicate with staff, for example, through a WhatsApp group, WhatsApp private messages, text message or phone call and email. A RNS Student Support Mobile is managed by social support workers, and Teacher, Welfare Director and Principal mobile numbers are provided to all students.

Students were also encouraged to discuss with their teacher if they knew they wouldn't be coming in on specific school days due to appointments, family situations or external welfare needs. We also encourage social welfare and case workers to hold meetings in private rooms at our school, where possible, to minimize absences due to such meetings.

Compared with our operations in 2016 (prior to becoming a school), attendance has improved noticeably not only due to better communication strategies but also higher organisation wide expectations. While allowing for a degree of flexibility, expectations have been set for students to take greater responsibility for their own learning and attendance. Students who demonstrate inconsistent attendance meet with their teachers to discuss strategies and develop a learning program that best meets their needs and their current circumstances.

Attendance levels also drop during June coinciding with the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, due to ~50% of our cohort being of Muslim faith at RNS, there is an expectation that this would occur because of preparations and the physical and mental effects of fasting. Adjustments are made to the curriculum to allow for students to miss some days without significant impact on their learning and achievement.

Attendance Rates (%) – Year 11 & 12	<u>Term 1</u>	<u>Term 2</u>	<u>Term 3</u>	<u>Term 4</u>	<u>Average</u>
50th percentile of students	86	80	87	75	82
All students	60	55	69	63	62



Students experienced canoeing for the first time at our Anglesea camp



13 students participated in and Attained the Provide First Aid Certificate 22-23 August 2019

Student Survey

Forty-nine (66%) of students completed the RNS Student Satisfaction Survey, that was designed and delivered initially in 2017. Of these; 42 students completed the survey independently, with instructions and the option of support from non-VCAL teaching staff so that it was objective and 7 students with low levels of literacy in English completed the survey with the assistance of an interpreter, and an aid or teacher (not associated with their class).

More than 90% of students responded **always** to key questions including “*I like coming to school*” (90%), “*My teachers help me in class*” (92%), “*I feel safe when I am at school*” (96%), “*My school gives me the things I need to learn*” (94%) and “*Do you have a friend/friends at school?*”(90%).

An area identified for further review over the past two years is to the question “*The other students treat me with respect*”, for which 60% indicated **always** but 38% indicated **sometimes** and 2% said never. RNS is committed to reviewing its Student Code of Conduct and school values in 2020. RNS continues to invest in strengthening its wellbeing program as the school grows. Our Student Leadership and Peer Support model has developed through 2019 supported by the appointment of an Engagement Coordinator, which has provided another opportunity to strengthen respectful peer culture at RNS. It’s thought rolling enrolments across the year may be a contributing factor.

In prior years a school camp and school uniform were suggested areas for improvement by students. RNS has no intention to have a uniform but the introduction of a RNS branded hoodie at the start of 2019 and running of an inaugural camp in December were extremely well received and, by observation, have improved connectedness to school and the sense of community. This also demonstrated to students that RNS is striving to be responsive to their voice and suggestions.

Meet Ayan



Hi, my name is Ayan. I speak English and Somali. My friends would describe me as not very chatty, friendly, helpful and a good listener. I was born in Muqdisho and lived there and in Galkacyo in Somalia, then Addis Ababa in Ethiopia. I arrived in Australia in 2010. We came to Australia when my uncle sponsored us.

I heard about River Nile School from a staff member from my old school, who said that River Nile School would give me more support with my education. I came to the school on my own to enrol in 2018.

The River Niles school helps their students in all kinds of ways, learning, lodging forms, for example citizenship papers, to fill out paperwork for a passport, when you’re eligible. The school provides food and snacks in the kitchen for when you haven’t had breakfast or didn’t bring lunch.

My aspiration is to be a nurse, and I have enrolled in a health services assistant certificate III at Victoria University Polytechnic for 2020.

Meet Senait



Hi, my name is Senait, I’m 18 years old. I came from Ethiopia and I speak four languages, Amharic, Tigrinya, English and a little bit of Arabic. My friends describe me as funny, kind, talkative and caring. I’m punctual, I’m always early. I’m organised, I’m a very good cook and I like very clean things. I came to Australia with relatives in 2016 (but living with them didn’t work out).

I heard about River Nile School from the social worker at my old school. They said that RNS would be better for my needs. VCAL has been a better option for me, than staying in VCE. I found learning hard at my old school. I didn’t get all the help that I get from the teachers at RNS. Since being at RNS I’ve noticed the improvements in my English reading, writing and speaking skills. I look forward to even more improvements.

River Nile School helps their students by supporting them with everything. They understand their students’ needs and they understand the different cultural background of their students too. They are good at helping their students to reach their educational goals. My dream is to continue studying and work and become independent. Next year I am hoping to undertake training and secure an apprenticeship to become a chef, I am exploring for this.

The advice I would give to students is to believe in yourself, keep going, and don’t give up.

What I would like to see in the world is where everyone has access to their human rights, including food, clean water, education and gender equality.

Parent Engagement

77% of students are over 18 years of age and their own legal guardians, a few live with their sibling but the vast majority live independently. English is not the first language of our student's parents/guardians and most have had limited schooling. A parent survey was not offered as it was considered that it would be difficult to achieve engagement or statistically significant feedback. For students that do have a parent/guardian/carer, RNS strives to involve them in their child/wards education planning but has very limited uptake. A very small handful attend student-parent-teacher meetings and school celebrations.

Staff Satisfaction

Staff have been offered the opportunity of a Staff Satisfaction Survey, but this has not previously been implemented as staff felt it would be difficult to achieve statistically significant or anonymous feedback (by staff category) while the school was small. Discussions were held in 2019 with the Australian Heads of Independent Schools Australia (AHISA) and RNS will be conducting a **360-degree School Leadership Survey** of perceptions of its Principal in 2020, using the survey developed by the Voice Project which is endorsed by AHISA and benchmarks 1179 school leaders across Australia.

RNS has maintained high staff retention with its teaching staff, the Principal and Welfare Director since its inception. This provides an indication of staff satisfaction with the organisational direction, goals, management style and type of work undertaken at the school.

As the school has grown, there has been scope to employ more staff to ensure diverse student needs were being met, and to support additional learning intervention needs. With additional expertise in the school, there is more opportunity for staff collaboration, as well as specialisation; and staff can focus on their specific area(s) of expertise and passion. Staff across the board have indicated greater confidence in the security of their employment since RNS became a school, which is positive for staff morale. To support staff wellbeing, RNS has offered regular professional **psychological debriefing**

sessions with a registered psychologist to staff since mid 2017, through **Mandala Staff Support (MSS)**. In 2019 we strengthened this by contracting MSS to provide our formal **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)** and provide one-on-one professional **psychological supervision** to social work staff. In 2019, RNS also boosted employee benefits by introducing a salary sacrifice, **Employee Benefits Card**, administered through PBI (Public Benevolent Institution) Solutions.



Staff celebration lunch, STREAT Social Enterprise, December 2019

Teacher Professional Learning

In 2019, Professional Development (PD) opportunities for RNS focused on developing staff capacity around trauma-informed teaching practice, ensuring excellence in teaching and learning, and maintaining and delivering a strong VCAL curriculum which is underpinned by EAL teaching practices.

To develop staff capacity around trauma-informed practice, seven staff members (including the Principal, four teachers, our Engagement Coordinator and a Social Support Worker) participated in the **Berry Street Education Model (BSEM)** training over 4-days across 2019. This has led to RNS being quickly able to implement some school-wide practices such as circle time, brain breaks and other strategies to support student emotional regulation.

To enhance EAL and VCAL teaching provision, all staff were given time release to attend workshops and webinars dedicated to various aspects of EAL and VCAL teaching (those auspiced by **VicTESOL** and **VALA** being often accessed). Time was allocated in internal meetings post-PD so that staff could share their key learnings with the team. Further PD opportunities for staff have come through the **Flexi Schools Network**, through the **City LLEN**. The schools that attend this network's meetings are "like schools" to RNS in many ways, including delivering VCAL with an emphasis on re-engagement and flexible learning opportunities for students. This network has provided opportunities for staff to network and share ideas and resources across schools. With RNS being such a unique setting, RNS staff, especially the Principal, are often invited to share our experiences and story at professional practice sessions, which supports our reflective practice.

RNS supervised and mentored one provisional registered EAL teacher, in her 2nd year of teaching, to gain full **VIT registration** in 2019.

RNS became a member of the **Australian Association of Flexible and Inclusive Education (AAFIE)** in December 2019, to provide staff with access to this growing specialist school professional network and it's resources, in 2020 and beyond.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS – RESOURCES AND FACILITIES

The River Nile School is working towards a future where we can support even more young disadvantaged refugee, asylum seeker and new migrant students through our engaging and caring school model in innovative and responsive ways, to meet the evident demand for our specialist education service.

To develop the resources and facilities of RNS to support the school's growth, key steps taken in 2019 included:

- **An additional 161 square metres of premises** was leased so that we now have **654 sqm** of space at Capel Street, North Melbourne
- **A small business office property was purchased** in nearby Cobden Street, North Melbourne, comprising 93 sqm of land and 170 sqm of floor area. This also provides RNS with an initial start in property ownership from which we hope to leverage from to secure a property from which the school might fully operate and grow in the next 3-6 years.
- **Compass electronic student record management system** was purchased and operational from July 2019, strengthening our student attendance recording, consent tracking, communications and student profile and report management – to support our school's continued growth.

In 2020, further planned steps to support our growth include:

- **School Leadership 360-Survey**, by the AHISA endorsed the Voice Project, to be undertaken to benchmark perceptions of the RNS Principal's performance and identify opportunities for continuous school leadership improvement.
- **Human resource capacity development** to support the growth of the school, including appointment of an inaugural Assistant Principal for RNS to strengthen management of curriculum and our teaching, learning and wellbeing programs.
- **ICT infrastructure services review** to strengthen our ICT environment.
- **bksbLIVE, Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) assessment tool**, licence to be purchased to strengthen LLN skills test learning for students to support pathway planning.
- **Strategic Planning 2021-2025** process to be planned and commence.
- **Negotiate to lease the remaining 212 square metres**, once available, so that RNS has **866 sqm** and is the sole occupant of the entire first floor at Level 1, 117 Capel Street, North Melbourne.
- **Development of a school infrastructure and property plan** to ensure the school has property infrastructure that is modern, efficient, cost effective, environmentally sound and provides a secure base from which the school can flourish in the years ahead. Progressing this is anticipated to be a key strategic plank in the next RNS Strategic Plan 2021-2025.



Students experienced rock wall climbing for the first time at our Anglesea camp, which was great for team work and personal skills development



Our students found many creative ways to share their identity and belonging, through this study theme in Semester 2, 2019

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

For the 2019 school year:

Income from operating activities

Private income – subscriptions, interest, rent	7,652
Donations, Philanthropic Grants & Service Fees	125,901
State Government Recurrent Funds	501,755
State Government Education Allowances (CSEF, Conveyance, Students with disabilities)	59,606
Commonwealth Government General Recurrent Funds	2,657,285
Other Commonwealth Funds	4,091
Other income – Independent Schools	14,510

Total operating revenue	3,370,800
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Expenses from operating activities

Salary, wages and employee benefits related

Principal and Teaching staff	690,974
Education support, welfare and all other staff	243,806
WorkCover	8,194
Superannuation (Employer contribution only)	88,061
Long Service and Annual Leave Provisions	46,863
Other staff – HR consulting, First Aid Allowance, Welfare	10,774

Total salaries, wages & related	1,088,672
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Non salary expenses

Teaching Programs, Resources, Office & Administration	258,191
Student ICT - computers, iPads, technology consumables	66,869
Building and Occupancy – maintenance, lease rent	127,765
Depreciation	26,950
Professional Management – accounting, audit, consultancy	58,032
Other expenses – insurance, finance, communications	104,524

Total non-salary expenses	642,331
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Total operating expenses	1,731,003
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Operating Surplus for the year	1,639,797
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CAPITAL – as at 31 December 2019, RNS had:

- **Total Assets** of **\$2,989,356** the major item being a **\$2.05 Million property** purchased in Cobden Street in November 2019
- **Total Liabilities** of **\$916,214**, the major item being **\$498,550 in borrowings** to support the Cobden St property purchase
- **Total Equity** of **\$2,073,142**

An Independent Auditor's Report, prepared by Simon Aukstin (CA), McBain McCartin & Co., is available on request.

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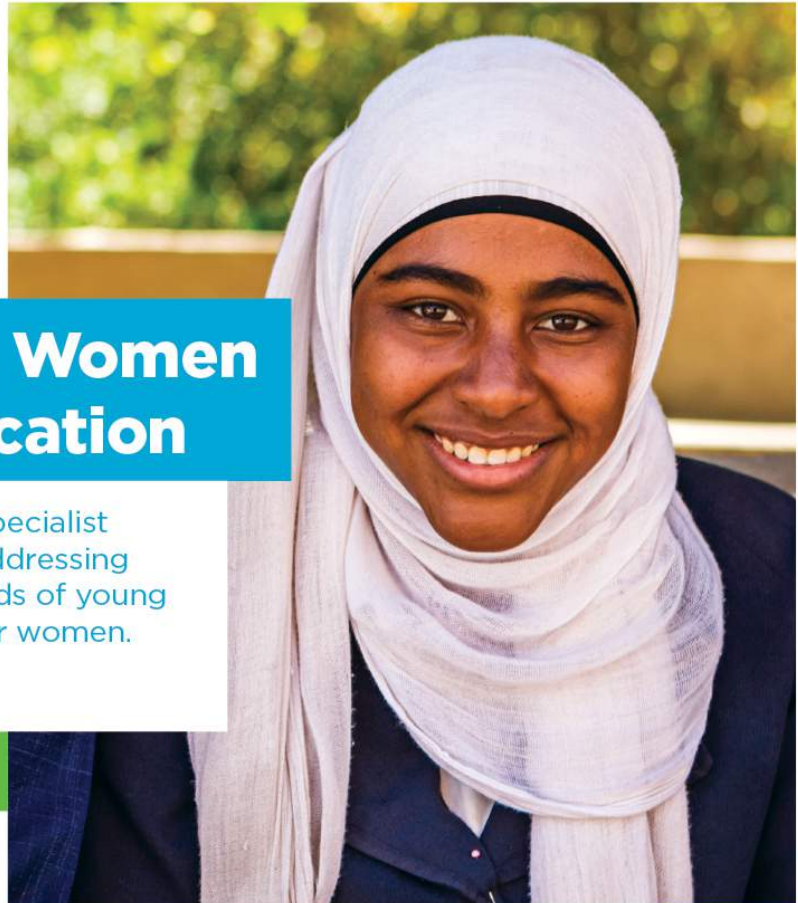
Reg. Inc. Assoc. No. A0048482L

Endorsed Charity & Deductible Gift Recipient

Reg. School Number 2111

VCAA Provider 15457

DHS (Centrelink) Reg. School No. 32111



Empowering Women through Education

The River Nile School is a specialist senior-secondary school, addressing the unique educational needs of young Refugee and Asylum Seeker women.

All services are free.

rivernileschool.vic.edu.au

- Re-engages & empowers young Refugee & Asylum Seeker women, 15 - 20+ years, in an award winning, multicultural school
- Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) at Foundation, Intermediate & Senior Levels
- Pathways to further education and employment. Intermediate & Senior VCAL Certificates support entry to TAFE & university
- Flexible learning delivery with individualised learning and support
- Strong language, literacy and numeracy focus for *English as an Additional Language* learners
- Student Welfare & Empowerment Program includes advocacy, material aid, free food staples, MYKI & childcare
- Specialist Programs such as work readiness, driving and swimming

The River Nile School Inc

Level 1, 117 Capel St, North Melbourne VIC 3051
T (03) 9329 8425 E admin@rivernileschool.vic.edu.au

Registered School Number 2111

River Nile School is located close to the Queen Victoria Market and to public transport in North Melbourne



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