

Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2022

Kamaruka Inc.

ABN 82 267 854 859



KAMARŪKA

Respect for Self

Respect for Others

Responsibility

Annual Report 2022

Chair's Message

2022 was a year of consolidation for Kamaruka in what continues to be a challenging environment for educational institutions.

Our Principal, Michelle 'Zinny' Zintschenko has settled in well and reaffirmed the warm and welcoming culture of Kamaruka but has also embedded her own version of positivity and excellence.

Zinny has led a review of Kamaruka's Strategy which included seeking input from parents, staff, students and the Board. The Strategy, to be finalised and presented to the School community in mid-2023, will set Kamaruka's direction for the next five years.

The Kamaruka Board has undergone a period of renewal during 2022 with long term Board members, John Bibby and Natalia Zarzycka stepping down. John was on the Kamaruka Board for over 10 years and saw the School through the difficult period after the passing of Kamaruka founder Alfonso Scibilia in 2020. Natalia had previously worked as a psychologist at the school and then served on the Board for over five years. I would like to pass on my sincere thanks to John and Natalia for their contribution to the School and for their sage advice, particularly during the past three years. We look forward to them remaining part of the extended Kamaruka family.

We also welcomed two new members to the Board, Sue Ellen Mackintosh and Rachel Meisner. Sue Ellen has extensive marketing experience and will provide assistance in defining Kamaruka's brand and marketing strategy in what is a competitive market place. Rachel is a Chartered Accountant with deep financial management experience.

I am proud of the service that we are able to provide to our students this year and look forward to making further improvements in 2023.

I would like to extend a sincere thank you to all the staff at Kamaruka for their dedication and commitment to the students.

I would also like to thank all the Members of the Board for their unending contributions in what has been another challenging year.

Darren Giri

Chair of Kamaruka Inc.

Philosophy & Rationale

Kamaruka is a specialist school in located in South Yarra. Kamaruka caters to boys from Years 2 to Year 10. The Kamaruka approach is designed for neurodivergent boys, such as those diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Students generally have an IQ of 80 or above.

Students who enrol at Kamaruka have often found it difficult to navigate the mainstream education system, which may not have been able to accommodate and support their unique needs. Through a modified curriculum, positive experiences, and a sense of belonging at Kamaruka, self-esteem is restored and a pathway towards a rewarding future becomes possible.

The Kamaruka approach, proposes to address the social/ emotional, as well as the academic and behavioural challenges, often exhibited by the students enrolled. Adopting a multi-modal approach, the teachers collaborate with parents and carers, as well as external professionals (where applicable), to increase on-task behaviour, reduce anxiety and aggression, improve wellbeing, as well as behavioural and academic progress.

Expectations are clear and firm, and all activities are designed to be slightly beyond their zone of proximal development, whilst taking into consideration the individual's capabilities and capacity. The clear boundaries and routines within the school allow every student to feel safe, accepted and valued.

Empowerment and self-determination are the ultimate goals that Kamaruka staff strive for as educators of any student with a learning challenge. Therefore, at Kamaruka we ensure that student wellbeing is addressed by providing students with access to two School Counsellors, as well as weekly Social/Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) lessons.

Research has demonstrated that complex physical activity, such as martial arts, strengthens neural networks within the brain, enabling young people with ADHD to practice self-control and manage symptoms like impulsivity and distractibility. In addition to this, the martial arts program also enables young people to develop their physical coordination, provides opportunities to release energy and enables young people to focus on their own individual growth. Consequently, Kamaruka has incorporated martial arts into its educational program and throughout the years many students have developed their self-esteem and be extremely proud of what they have been able to achieve from participation in this structured physical activity.



Governance

The Kamaruka Inc. is a Public Benevolent Institution, registered as a Charity. The Board acts as the governing body, establishing and monitoring the strategic direction of the school. The operation of the school is delegated by the Board to the school principal.

The Board meets at least once per term to review policies and oversee the general operation of the school.

The elected members for 2022 were as follows:

Darren Giri – Chair

Deneille Sutton – Treasurer

Cameron Crampton – General Member

Sue Ellen Macintosh – General Member

Rachel Meisner – General Member

Staffing

The teaching staff at Kamaruka are committed to maintaining a stable environment with minimal disturbance to the daily routine. Building a rapport with students and understanding each student's individual needs is vital to the successful implementation of the behavioural program. Being a small staff, regular communication guarantees a unified approach to teaching and the use of consistent consequences assists in maintaining an orderly classroom environment.

Twenty six staff were employed over the 2022 school year. No staff member identified as Aboriginal and/or of Torres Strait Islander background. All teaching staff are registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching. All other staff including teacher's aides have a current Working with Children Check.

Principal: Michelle Zintschenko (Bachelor of Education/Arts)

Finance Director: Kathryn Johns (CPA, AICD, Bachelor of Economics)

School Counselors:

Emma Tyler Bachelor of Social Science (Psychology)
Graduate Certificate of Counselling, specialising in Child, Youth and Family Therapy
Masters of Counselling
Registered with the Australian Counselling Association, Level 2

Krystle Westhorpe

Bachelor of Arts (Psychology) - The University of Melbourne
Master of Social Work - The University of Melbourne
Certificate in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy with Children and Adolescents
Certificate in Rational Emotive and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy with Children and Adolescents
Member of the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW)

Teaching Staff: Samantha Baker (Bachelor of Education/Early Childhood)
Marianne David (Master of Teaching, Bachelor of Arts, Grad dip of Education)
Lizzie Playford-Wall (Bachelor of Science - Psychology, Post-grad Certificate of Education)
Nicole Stylianou (Bachelor of Education, Bachelor of Applied Science)
David Matler (Master of Teaching, Bachelor of Health Sciences)
Huw Norris (Post-grad Diploma of Education, Bachelor of Theology)
Dan McHugh (Master of Teaching, Bachelor of Design)
Nikki Eykman (Masters of Primary & Secondary Teaching)
Yoki Han (Grad Diploma of Secondary Education, Bachelor of Psychological Science)

Literacy Intervention

Specialists: Sonia Dunne (Master of Education – Special Educational Needs, Bachelor of Education)

Teacher Aides: Robert Shook
Charmaine Bravo
Natasha Kotova
Janelle Stafford
Lauren Power
Luke Induni
Olivia Frim
Brandon Marsh

Maggie Smith

Jason Deeb

Ethan Saks

Tessa Yucel

Professional Development

All registered teachers at Kamaruka are required to engage in at least 20 hours of professional development (PD) activities each year in order to renew their registration. All staff participated in weekly staff meetings and briefings which often present areas related to professional development. They also have access to the PD offered by ISV and other professional development organizations.

Curriculum

Despite possessing an average or above average IQ, the boys typically referred to Kamaruka have experienced social, emotional and academic hardship in mainstream school settings. To improve the educational experience for young people referred to Kamaruka, the academic curriculum focuses on literacy and numeracy. Written language, reading comprehension and mathematics make up the foundation of all other subjects. Attaining competences in these subjects enhances self-competence and can assist in improving engagement in education.

Kamaruka provides a personalised learning approach and students are challenged according to their ability level rather than age or year of schooling. To allow students to develop their self-esteem outside of a traditional academic sphere, students also take part in Martial Arts, a physical education program called Advanced Motor Skills, Drama, Music and Visual Art.

Student Progress at Kamaruka

Kamaruka is a registered special school. Each student has an Individual Education Plan with their own personalized goals. All students are assessed at the time of enrolment and regularly thereafter.

The Kamaruka program targets students with low self-esteem and social/emotional difficulties. It is our belief that subjecting such children to national testing procedures, such as NAPLAN, would only exacerbate their condition. Consequently, with parental support, students enrolled at Kamaruka are granted exemption from such testing.

Student Attendance

Overall school attendance was 77% (Primary: 78%, Secondary 76%). Semester 1 has 80% and Semester 2 had 73% attendance.

Kamaruka families are required to notify the school of an absence. All absences are recorded daily and systematically by the school. We encourage regular attendance as it is important if appropriate levels of progress are to be made. Kamaruka will work with parents and specialists to support a student's regular school attendance.

Student non-attendance across the school during the year related predominantly to illness and/or medical concerns as well as counselling and allied health appointments.

School Operations

Income:

Fees and levies	237,160
Interest	10,867
Donations	5,062
Government Grants	1,929,098
Other	19,438
Total Income	<u>2,201,625</u>

Expenses:

Salaries and Associated Costs	1,712,463
Operating Expenses	299,013
Depreciation	295,030
Total Expenses	<u>2,306,506</u>
Deficit	<u>(104,881)</u>



Contact information

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