

The Tombolo Academy Annual Report 2022



Tombolo Academy, AGEID 87019, 453 Bluff Road, Hampton 3188,
Victoria

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Chair's Report

After an eventual inaugural year in 2021, the school experienced generally a much more settled year in 2022. We do face occasional and new challenges, as the school develops and grows, but on the whole, it has been pleasing to see all parts of our school community, parents, students, staff, and our Board becoming mostly aligned and moving forward together in the same direction.

We saw 2022 in many ways as a continuation of our “start-up” phase, but now are gradually moving towards an “early growth” phase for the school. It’s been great to see some really good foundations being developed and put in place for the three key pillars of a school, “Students, Staff and Environment”.

With our students, we saw our registration expand to cover Years 3 to 10, and we continue to see a waiting list and enquiries broadly doubling our current capacity to admit applicants. The reputation of the school appears to be largely positive in the wider community, with not only prospective families but also with our local MP reaching out for a visit. Current parent feedback shows a humbling deep level of appreciation for the difference that our school and staff are making to their children, which is really “what it’s all about”. It’s great to see our students grow and flourish, and when ready, their enthusiasm and engagement become infectious.

With staff, we now have a committed and core group of teaching and student care staff that work well together. Our principal, Helen, has brought together a really good team. Our challenge remains attracting additional teachers to cover a full range of subjects, especially in the high school years. A number of initiatives have been put in place around attracting additional teachers, but we remain grateful to our existing staff, both teaching and support, who have stayed committed despite receiving other offers, as is the current state of the employment market.

At the start of 2022, we saw the completion of around \$1.2m of building works, enhancing the look and feel of our school as a modern learning environment for our students. Many of the improvements are “hidden” in the sense of being ramps and widening door frames, etc., to allow for disability access and compliance with current building regulations. The feedback received from visiting principals is that our updated premises are impressive, and our builders have recently been back and commented on how well the improved premises are being looked after, which is a credit to the care taken by our students and school community.

The Board continues to meet regularly, with many volunteer hours committed and has remained relatively stable. As we move out of start-up phase, we are committing to greater focus on ensuring the longer-term viability of Tombolo Academy, with the operational side of the school now being managed by the Executive.

Current projects that continue include

- Ongoing development of our curriculum for our students, and for our teaching staff
- Continual development of our staff, as well as attracting new staff to provide for managed growth
- Upgrading and developing our school policies, as we continue to grow and approach our first VRQA audit, expected to be in 2025
- Master planning for school premises beyond 2033 – when our current lease expires

Our success and growth in 2022 was directly linked to the continuing dedication of our ongoing Executive, being Helen, our Principal, and Alex, our Assistant Principal, supported by teaching, student care and administration staff, and the Board. Some extraordinary progress has been made, and on behalf of the Board, we thank every team member for their energy, commitment, passion, and consistency in enhancing our school.

No doubt, we will face new and unexpected challenges as we move forward, but many exciting opportunities also will present.

Thank you to all of our school community, our families, students, Executive, staff and Board for another excellent year. We look forward to continuing to work with you to make a positive difference.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Mark Northeast". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M' and 'N'.

Mark Northeast – Chair

Tombolo Academy School Board

Chair and Director	Mark Northeast
Director	Alan Wayne Saunders
Director	Deanne Cannizzaro
Director	Emma Grey
Director	Thomas Velican
Director	Anne Warner
Director	Charlotte Rendle Short
Director	Phillip Vaughan (Resigned November 2022)

Statement of Commitment from the Principal

The Principal attests that:

- All teachers at the school are Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registered.
- The school has met the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) minimum standards for registration (except where any exemptions apply).
- All expenses and commitments of funds have been used to support educational outcomes and operational needs; and
- The school complies with the Child Safe Standards prescribed in Ministerial Order 1359 Child Safe Commitment.

Tombolo Academy is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making. Tombolo Academy has zero tolerance for child abuse. We are committed to providing a child-safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and the safety of children with a disability. Every person involved in Tombolo Academy is responsible for understanding the important and specific role he/she/they play individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

Democratic Principles

Tombolo Academy is committed to the principles of liberal democracy.

- We believe in an accountable, democratically elected government.
- We respect and observe the rule of law and believe that no person is above the law.
- We believe in equal rights for all before the law, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, gender, or other attributes.
- We believe in the freedom of religion and the need to practice tolerance and understanding of others' beliefs.
- We believe in the value of freedom of speech and freedom of association but also acknowledge that we have the responsibility not to abuse this freedom.
- We believe in the values of openness and tolerance and value and respect all school community members regardless of background.

School Overview

Tombolo Academy is an Independent Specialist School for Twice-Exceptional students, newly established in 2021, located in Hampton, Bayside. The school

was registered with the VRQA to take students operating in at least one area from Year 7 to Year 10 in February 2021. In December 2021, the VRQA granted approval for the school to take students from Year 3 to Year 10.

What is a Twice-Exceptional Student?

“The term “twice exceptional” or “2e” refers to intellectually gifted children who have one or more learning disabilities such as dyslexia, ADHD, or autism spectrum disorder. Twice-exceptional children think and process information differently. Like many other gifted children, 2e kids may be more emotionally and intellectually sensitive than children of average intelligence. At the same time, due to uneven development (asynchrony) or their learning differences, twice-exceptional kids struggle with what other kids do easily. Because of their unique abilities and characteristics, 2e students need a special combination of education programs and counselling support”. ([Davidson Institute](#))

The Tombolo Academy Mission

Every day, and for every student, we deliver a rich educational program that emphasises the strengths, gifts and talents of our students providing the building blocks necessary to be successful throughout their lives.

The Tombolo Academy Vision

We imagine a time when all our students recognise their boundless potential, embrace their differences and are accepted for their uniqueness.

The Tombolo Academy Values

At Tombolo Academy, we are committed to sustaining a positive environment in which all students and adults can flourish in an inclusive setting where all members of the community feel safe and valued. We bring these values to life through:

Respect

- Respect ourselves.
- Respect each other.
- Respect our community and the world around us.
- Value and support diversity.

Humility

- Remain humble despite our personal achievements, strengths, and differences.
- Take responsibility for our actions.
- Make informed choices and are considerate of others, and our community.
- Grow with dignity and integrity.

Resilience

- Are brave when faced with challenges.
- Positively adapt to change in a variety of contexts.
- Show commitment and apply ourselves until the end.
- Build confidence to solve problems and connect failure to learning.
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- Curiosity
- Find the joy in learning.
- Have a sense of adventure and are willing to try new things.
- Develop an awareness of our place within the global community.
- Develop a sense of interest and wonder.

Collaboration

- Work with others to achieve success.
- Foster strong partnerships between students, teachers, and others in our community.
- Acknowledge that by working together in a positive and constructive manner enables us to achieve collective outcomes.
- Take collective responsibility for the success and wellbeing of all learning in our community.

Empathy

- Treat others with care and compassion.
- Consider the feelings of others before we act or react.
- Understand and appreciate the cultural diversity of our community.
- Develop an awareness of how we might impact the feelings of others.

Every day, we align our actions with our core values.

We recognise and embrace the potential in every student.

- At Tombolo, we recognise the power of forging solid and meaningful relationships with every student. These relationships serve as the foundation on which their educational experiences are built. By truly understanding and valuing each student's background, strengths, challenges, and dreams, we create an atmosphere of trust and collaboration.

- Our high staff-to-student ratio allows us to provide personalised attention that nurtures every student's unique potential. Our educators model the learning process, scaffolding complex concepts and offering consistent support. No student is left to navigate the journey alone, ensuring each one has the tools and encouragement needed to thrive.
- Each student has an Individual Learning Plan with clear, achievable learning goals.
- We have high expectations for every student. During every learning activity, students receive positive feedback in real time and guidance for improvement.
- A Student Support Plan is designed for each student. It details tailored strategies to ensure that students can engage in their learning.

We believe every student deserves to experience a sense of curiosity and wonder throughout their educational journey.

- At the heart of our educational philosophy lies the unwavering belief that every student is entitled to not just education, but a journey filled with the sheer joy of learning. We aim to foster a profound sense of wonder and curiosity within each young mind.
- We have carefully crafted an educational experience that is both engaging and innovative, seamlessly aligned with The Victorian Curriculum.
- Our commitment to continually developing the curriculum ensures that our students meet academic milestones and develop essential life skills and a holistic understanding of the world around them.

We invest in nurturing strong partnerships.

Individualised Attention: Every student at Tombolo is more than just a name; they are unique individuals with distinct needs and aspirations. We take the time to understand each student on a personal level, allowing us to tailor our approach to their specific needs.

Open Channels of Communication: At Tombolo, we maintain an open and transparent communication line with students and parents. Regular updates, meetings, and dialogue platforms ensure everyone is on the same page, fostering trust and understanding.

Holistic Support: Our commitment to our students extends beyond academics. We prioritise their overall well-being and growth. Whether through counselling services or mentorship programmes, we provide a comprehensive support system that nurtures their emotional, social, and intellectual development.

Engaging Family Involvement: We understand that parents are integral partners in a student's journey. At Tombolo, we actively involve families in school activities, workshops, and events. This collaborative approach strengthens the home-school connection and reinforces the sense of community that underpins our institution.

Celebrating Diversity: We celebrate this diversity and create an inclusive environment where every student feels valued and understood. This inclusivity lays the groundwork for authentic relationships to flourish.

Empathy and Understanding: Our educators and staff embody empathy in their student interactions. They understand that each student's journey is unique and has its hurdles. This empathetic approach fosters a sense of belonging and reassurance within our school community.

Continuous Feedback Loop: Feedback is a two-way street. We encourage students to provide input on their experiences, ensuring their voices are heard. This feedback loop helps us refine our practices and demonstrates our commitment to continuous improvement based on their needs.

At Tombolo, building strong relationships isn't just a statement; it's a core philosophy. Through personalised attention, transparent communication, holistic support, family involvement, and an unwavering commitment to empathy, we create an environment where every student thrives, and every relationship flourishes.

Teaching Standards and Qualifications

All teachers employed at the Tombolo Academy are registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT).

Staff composition in 2022 was as follows:

<i>1.0 FTE Principal</i>	Helen Barrett Postgrad. Cert. of Education with QTS B. of Arts (Hons) Business and Finance B. of Arts (Hons) Humanities, English and Psychology First Aid and CPR
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1.0 FTE Assistant Principal	Alexander Newman Postgrad. Cert. in Education with QTS B. of Arts (Hons) Outdoor Adventure with Sports Development First Aid and CPR
1.0 FTE Assistant Principal (Resigned Term One 2022)	Jason Shulman Master of Education Post Graduate Certificate in Curriculum Leadership B. of Education First Aid and CPR
0.4 FTE Occupational Therapist	Christine Hall B. of Applied Science (Occupational Therapy) Graduate Diploma of Neurosciences, Year 1 Occupational Therapy Driver Assessment course Certificate IV in Assessment and Training
1.0 FTE Primary Teacher/Curriculum Writer (Commenced Term Four 2022)	Helen Fricker Postgrad. Cert. in Education with QTS B. of Arts (Hons) Inclusive Education First Aid and CPR
0.6 FTE Teacher Maths Teacher (Resigned in Term One 2022)	Tanya Whiteley B. of Computer Science Graduate Diploma of Teaching First Aid and CPR
1.0 FTE Teacher Maths Teacher (Commenced Term Two 2022)	Joshua Grierson Postgrad. Cert. in Education with QTS B. of Arts (Hons) International Relations and Mandarin Chinese
1.0 FTE Primary Teacher (Commenced Term Two 2022)	Fraser Kirton B. of Education Specialisation: Special Needs Education First Aid
0.6 FTE Teacher Art and Design Technology Teacher	Rick Price Graduate Diploma of Education Majoring in Art and Design Master of Fine Art Bachelor of Arts Majoring in Clay First Aid and CPR
0.6 FTE English and Drama Teacher (Commenced Term Two 2022)	Kim Anderson B. of Arts/Theatre Graduate Dip. Ed. First Aid and CPR

0.4 FTE Primary Teacher	Kim McClounan B. of Teaching B. of Creative Arts, Photography First Aid and CPR
1.0 FTE Education Support Officer	Daniel Lewis. Foundation Degree in Learning and Teaching National Diploma – Sport Development and Fitness Level 3 - Tennis Coach Qualification First Aid and CPR
0.8 FTE Education Support Officer (Term Two only)	Amelie Green B.Sc. Sports Performance, Graduate degree, M.Ed. Learning, Media and Technology in Education. First Aid
0.8 FTE Education Support Officer (Commenced Term Two 2022)	Craig Fraser B. of Arts (Hons): Sports Coaching and Physical Education FA Soccer Level 1 and First Aid
1.0 FTE Business Manager	Pravin Ramdany MA in Commerce (Professional Accounting) B. of Business Administration (Accounting Diploma in Accounting (LCCI) First Aid and CPR
0.9 FTE Administration Officer	Melissa NeSmith Dip. in Secretarial Studies Cert. III in Children's Services (Teaching Assistant) B.Sc. in Education (Special Ed K-12) M.Sc. in Education First Aid and CPR
0.4 FTE Administration Officer	Anna De Klepper B. of Design (Human Environments) B. of Architecture
0.6 FTE Finance Officer (Commenced Term Four 2022)	Jane Thien B. of Commerce (Accounting)

Student Report

The school started with 34 students; this number was maintained throughout the year. The rates of attendance for the 2022 year as per the annual student attendance data were:

Year 3	89%
Year 4	87%
Year 5	93.5%
Year 6	74.6%
Year 7	78%
Year 8	72%
Year 9	83%
Year 10	77%

The Tombolo Academy complies with the Australian Education Act (2013), which requires children of school age to be in full-time attendance at school.

- All enrolled students are required to attend school unless reasonable and valid grounds exist for them to be absent.
- Illness is reasonable grounds for absence.
- Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly and are only absent if unwell or absolutely necessary.
- Parents are responsible for providing the school a written note or telephone call explaining why an absence occurred.
- All student absences are recorded in both the morning and the afternoon by teachers.
- Government departments and enrolment auditors may seek student attendance records.
- Staff contact parents with high levels of unexplained or unapproved absences to develop and implement strategies to minimise absences.
- Staff provide strategies to support neurodiverse students who have had a pattern of school refusal at their previous school.

Curriculum

The Tombolo Academy curriculum is creative, flexible, and innovative. It involves explicit teaching of different strategies, teacher modelling and scaffolding. Students have clear learning intentions and success criteria. Class sizes are small, with a maximum of 10 students and two staff per class. Teachers are there at the point of need and offer 1:1 support when required.

As a new school, we are continuously evolving, refining and broadening our educational framework in alignment with the unique requirements of our student cohort. Our dynamic curriculum is carefully designed to foster an environment of curiosity and inquisitiveness among our students.

Tombolo Academy is committed to crafting a curriculum that genuinely connects with our students in today's ever-changing world, where technology

shapes much of our lives. At Tombolo Academy, we value each student's unique interests and potential. Our curriculum is thoughtfully designed to weave together their passions with the latest technological advancements. This means that students learn topics that matter to them and gain the essential skills to thrive in our modern world. By adapting to these changes, we ensure our students aren't just prepared for the future – they're shaping it.

The current scope and sequence of integrated topics are categorised into four-term units (two-year rolling program) of work linked to the Victorian Curriculum.

Cycle One	Cycle Two
Culture and Celebrations- Making Connections	This is Earth- Past, Present and Future
Adaptation and Survival -A Race Against Time	Beyond – The Expanding Universe. What is out There?
Influential People Who Changed the World. What was their impact?	The Great Civilizations – How Have They Impacted our World Today
Globalisation – Have we gone too far?	Our Planet, our Future – Sustainability

Professional Development

All registered teachers at Tombolo Academy are required to engage in at least 20 hours of professional development (PD) activities each year to renew their registration. All staff participated in staff meetings and daily briefings, frequently presenting areas related to professional development. Staff also have access to the PD offered by ISV and other professional development organisations.

In 2022, staff attended seminars on:

- Solo Taxonomy: Dialogic and Unstuck learning
- Micro-Credentials: Credly by Pearson
- First Aid and CPR: St John's Ambulance
- Mandatory Reporting: DET
- Child Safety: Moore
- Professional Certificate of Adolescent Counselling: Monash University
- ASCIA Anaphylaxis e-training
- NAPLAN School Readiness Training

All staff attended onsite PD days and online seminars throughout the year.

Standardised Assessments

13 students took part in NAPLAN 2022

Parent and Student Feedback

Parent survey 2022 ratings out of 5

1. My child enjoys being part of Tombolo.
85% of parents rated between “4 - 5” for this question.
2. My child is given many opportunities to explore their interests and passions.
85% of parents rated between “4 - 5” for this question.
3. My child is accepted and valued.
100% of parents rated between “4 - 5” for this question.
4. My child is nurtured and challenged to build on their strengths.
93% of parents rated between “4 - 5” for this question
5. My child's qualities are known and appreciated by Tombolo staff.
93% of parents rated between “4 - 5” for this question.
6. I feel well-informed about my child's progress at Tombolo.
54% of parents rated between “4 - 5” for this question.
7. I feel well-informed about school matters at Tombolo.
63% of parents rated between “4 - 5” for this question.
8. I can communicate easily with Tombolo staff.
69% of parents rated between “4 - 5” for this question.
9. My concerns are taken seriously by the Tombolo staff.
100% of parents rated between “4 - 5” for this question.
10. I feel welcome at Tombolo.
85% of parents rated between “4 - 5” for this question.
11. Tombolo is a calm, consistent and caring place.
93% of parents rated between “4 - 5” for this question,
12. Tombolo brings out the best in each child.
92% of parents rated between “4 - 5” for this question.

13. Incidences of bullying are noticed and dealt with at Tombolo.
69% of parents rated between “4 - 5” for this question.
14. The school environment feels safe and secure at Tombolo.
100% of parents rated between “4 - 5” for this question.
15. Teachers at Tombolo are passionate, understanding and have a positive attitude
100% of parents rated between “4 - 5” for this question.

Parent quotes

“For everyone who has supported xxx this year, your dedication and patience is truly inspirational. We need more people like you in the world. We hope you get to have a great break over the summer and looking forward to what comes next year and seeing our kids continue to grow.”

“Sending a sincere thank you and appreciation for the amazing teaching you have given xxx. It is so much more than the academic. You are inspiring educators and genuine mentors.”

“A massive heartfelt thank you to every single one of you who turn up every day and help xxx believe in himself. You’ve provided a unique space and energy where he can thrive. He doesn’t always show it but he actually loves Tombolo. It’s because of you all that he has found his tribe and believes he is worthy of his place in the world. Xx”

“Thanks to you all for your consistent support of xxx this year. It’s been great to see that she’s found her tribe and to know that she’s made progress without pressure.”

“Great school. The teachers are second to none when it comes to students with different learning styles. They provide an accepting, engaging environment, building students self esteem and supporting the wider family. Highly recommended.”

“Dedicated, compassionate, supportive and incredibly talented and experienced staff. Modern, clean and beautiful learning environments. Diverse, rich, meaningful and engaging curriculum. Wonderful cohort of lovely, welcoming and inclusive students. Our lives have been transformed beyond our dreams since starting at Tombolo, my son comes home happy and fulfilled every day - he feels valued, understood, respected, extended and supported.

My son now has the confidence to be himself, enjoys being at school and part of an amazing community.”

Student quotes

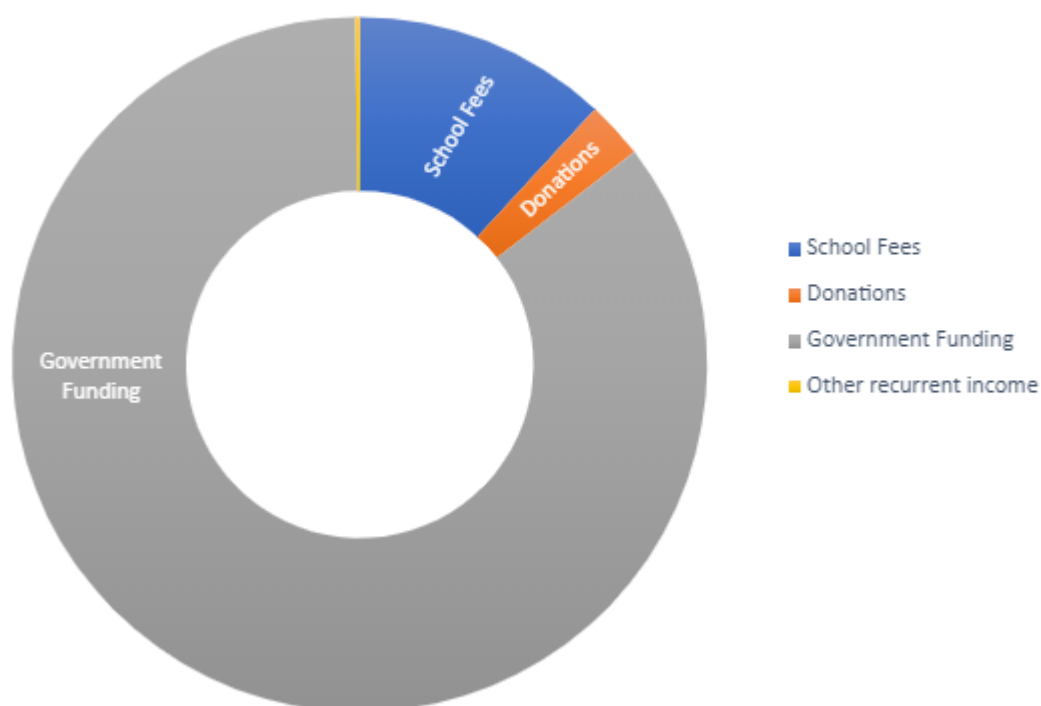
“Thank you for supporting me in my learning and being such kind, caring people.”

“I love this school. I really love this school. My other school was too big and I was bullied.”

Financial Report

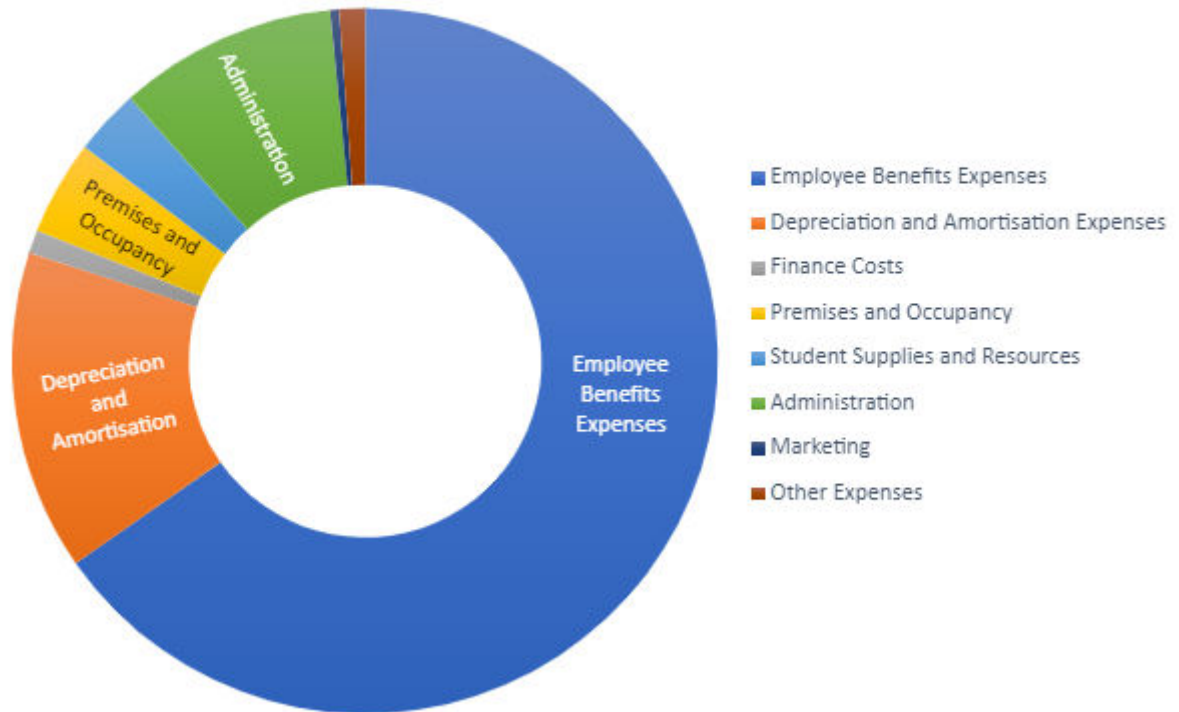
Total Income and Expenditure for the year ended 31st December 2022

Total Income 2022



School Fees	\$290,780.00
Donations	\$65,212.00
Government Funding	\$2,090,951.00 (Includes a \$760,000 building grant).
Other recurrent Income	\$5,176.93
Total Income	\$2,452,119.93

Total Expenditure 2022



Salaries and associated costs	\$1,022,771.00
Operating expenses	\$295,295.00
Depreciation	\$230,220.00
Other expenses	\$18,354.00
Total Expenditure	\$1,566,640.00

Tombolo Academy is a not-for-profit organisation that adheres to contemporary business practices to ensure that the finances are managed in an effective manner. An annual budget is prepared, reviewed, and approved by the Board. Cash flow is managed and reconciled on a continual basis, and a Financial Risk Control Register is being developed.

Contact Information

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