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Introduction
St Mary's Yoogali is one of twenty seven primary schools in the Wagga Wagga Diocese.
St Mary's is foremost a Parish School and plays its part in the overall mission of the Church at Parish level. Our Parish Priest is Father Jim McGee.
The principal is employed by the Diocesan Catholic School's Office and is responsible to it and the Parish Priest for the proper conduct of the school.
The following Annual Report reflects achievements, policies and events for the 2007 school year.

1. The School

The School
St Mary's Primary School is a positive, vibrant, caring, faith based Learning Community, providing quality Primary education to students from within the Yoogali Parish. Students also travel to St Mary's from Yenda, Bilbul, Beelbangera, Hanwood and all parts of Griffith.
St Mary's is supported by an enthusiastic, progressive School Council and an energetic Parents and Friends Association.

Our village is situated on the outskirts of the city of Griffith, an area rich in cultural diversity with a wide range of agricultural and commercial industries.
At St Mary's we strive for quality education in a safe and caring environment, across all aspects of the children's growth and development.

Our vision for St Mary's
We strive for St Mary's to be:
- A vibrant, Christ-centred parish school, based on Gospel values;
- A dynamic learning community, educating for lifelong learning: body, spirit, heart and mind;
- A positive, welcoming environment, where the skills and talents of each individual are valued and developed, so that each person reaches his/her full potential.

Religious Education
Religious Education
The school's Religious Education Syllabus is 'Sharing Our Story'. This Diocesan syllabus was introduced in 2004. The teaching of Religious Education occurs daily in classrooms, with children learning about their Catholic faith, and covering the strands of God, Jesus, Church, Sacraments, Scripture, Christian Life and Prayer.

Throughout the year our students have taken part in many moving, colourful and joyful liturgies and prayer services. The children at St Mary's enjoy taking on leadership roles in masses, both on Sundays and the first Friday of the month.

Sacraments:
Year 2 experienced Jesus in the Sacrament of Reconciliation in June in a moving and prayerful service. Mary-Jane Simms and Lisa Forwood were a wonderful support for their class. The Sacrament of First Holy Communion was celebrated in Term Three. Year 3 and their teacher, Tamie Bugno enjoyed a very happy and vibrant celebration, together with the staff and families of our school.

Liturgies and Masses:
Each class at St Mary's hosts a First Friday and a Sunday Mass. These masses bring together students, teachers, parents, grandparents and the wider church community.
Each term St Mary's hosts a Sunday mass in our parish. These liturgies are always followed by a fantastic morning tea smorgasbord provided by the St Mary's families! This continues to be a wonderful opportunity for the families of our school to come together and celebrate their children's journey in faith.

2007 Carols in the COLA
Christmas is a time to think of others. Each year in December a Giving Liturgy is held at St Mary's Yoogali. Every student brings in a wrapped Christmas gift for a child their age. This gift is presented during the liturgy. The gifts are distributed to those in need by the St Vincent De Paul Society.

The Arts
During 2007 all St Mary's classes from Kinder to Year Six took part in a variety of creative and artistic experiences. Classrooms at St Mary's are alive with a variety of music, creative arts, dance and drama experiences.
Each class hosted an assembly for the whole school and wider community to showcase the creative skills of the students. In addition all classes participated in a rich range of additional experiences including the following:

- The Sydney Sinfonia Tour
- Music, Dance and Stories of Africa
- Andrew Chinn Music Workshop
- Peter and the Wolf Performance

Students also had the opportunity to be part of the school choir whose performances enhanced various school liturgies and events.

**Sport**

School Sport provides opportunities for students to develop their skills and talents at school level and higher levels against other students from the Deanery, Diocese of Wagga Wagga and the state of New South Wales.

This year St. Mary’s had students represent and attend trials in Swimming, Rugby League, Oz-Tag Football, Touch Football, Soccer, Athletics and Cross-Country.

During 2007 we had Isabella Barbaro represent the MacKillop Region at the New South Wales PSSA Carnival for both Touch Football and Athletics. Isabella had a terrific year of sport and was also a reserve for the MacKillop Soccer Team.

Matthew Mills was another student who had great success in Athletics during 2007. In his first year of formal Athletics coaching, Matthew was able to represent St. Mary’s and the MacKillop Region at the NSW PSSA Athletics Carnival for Discuss. He had a terrific carnival at MacKillop Level where he was placed first in this event, narrowly missing out on breaking the record.

The girls Oz-Tag team was also a major success of 2007. In the first year that St. Mary’s has entered a Girls Oz-Tag team into the Mortimer Shield competition we found ourselves in the Regional Final! This team was made up of all the girls from Year 5 and 6 and their school spirit and good sportsmanship was outstanding throughout the entire competition. The Girls were able to achieve an overall placing of fourth for this competition. We are incredibly proud of this achievement, made even more special because it was our first year in the competition and involved every girl in Year 5 and 6. We look forward to future success in this competition.

Just as important as these achievements, School Sport this year provided opportunities for 44 students to represent St. Mary’s at a Deanery level, 28 students to represent at a Diocesan level and 7 students to represent at MacKillop Carnivals, some in more than one sport.

During Term 3 we ran our Jump-Rope-For-Heart Program which raised funds for the Heart Foundation and for our school. This was a terrific program to develop our skipping skills which we were able to display on our “Jump Off” Day.

Opportunities were also provided by organisations such as AFL, Cricket NSW, Touch NSW and NSW Country Rugby League who sent Regional Development Officers to St. Mary’s to develop and identify talent in their respective sports. This not only gave students skills in these sports, but also gave the teacher’s ideas and the knowledge to teach these sports. These programs will continue in 2008.

School Sport is well established in St. Mary’s and the positive support received by parents, grandparents and friends enables the smooth functioning of these events.

Thankyou.

Robyn Overs
Sports Coordinator

**School Initiatives**

**Student Representative Council Chairperson’s Report**

In 2007, St Mary’s decided to run a Student Representative Council. The purpose of this council was for a group of students to take responsibility and have a say in some of the decisions to be made at our school.

Firstly, each class chose a representative who would attend the council meetings and then report back to their class. Those representatives were in charge of running class meetings, where they would then report back to the SRC group for discussion and possible action.

Thank you to the SRC representatives who showed such leadership this year. You all contributed to the discussions and decisions.
that were made in the meetings. Our Representatives for 2007 were:

Kindergarten- Ryan Salvestro & his SRC buddy, Maree Casella
Yr 1 - Jessica Agresta for Semester 1 & Jaeden Andreazza for Semester 2
Yr 2 - Lauren Zanesco
Yr3 - Jo Montagner
Yr4 - Claudia Marin
Yr5 - Isabella Vitucci
Yr6 - Matthew Mills
Our school captains, Isabella and Wade also joined our meetings. Thank you for your help and leadership also.

A big thank you also needs to go to Mrs Speirs and Miss Bugno for supervising us during our SRC meetings.

Jeans for Genes day was our first successful project that the SRC organised. We raised over $600. It was a great week and the representatives worked very hard each day, raising money and awareness for this worthwhile cause!

We also looked at healthier food options for the school canteen. This, we hope will be a continued focus for the SRC of 2008.

As this year was our first year, we have learnt how to run SRC to the best of our ability. In 2008, we plan to have a definite agenda where the students will be totally responsible for fundraising for Abadi, our sponsor child and also some other projects that are centered around fun, enjoyment, and giving back to our school and the wider community.

I congratulate Nedene Gatto who has been elected to take on the role of SRC Chairperson for next year. I know she will do very well and I wish her all the best.

As I conclude my speech, I hope you all have a great Christmas and a safe one too.
Thank you very much!
Kiara Donadel
Chairperson

Peer Support
In term three the Year Five and Six students took part in training to prepare them for the role of peer support leader. The training was conducted by St Mary’s staff member Lisa Forwood, a fully qualified peer support trainer.

After their full day of training all Year Five and Six students became leaders for a peer support group of 5-7 students.

The peer support groups met once per week for a term and discussed issues such as how to be a good friend and how to identify and challenge bullying behaviours.

The peer support program has many advantages for the children. The year five and six students gain valuable experience in leadership whilst the children in all grades get to know students from all class groups.

Meaningful Learning
At St Mary’s we believe that children learn best when the learning is motivating and interesting. We believe it is essential that the teaching and learning has a clear purpose. An example of this was Kinder, Year One and Year Two’s excursion to Pioneer Park as part of their studies. Many thanks to the parents who were able to join us, to help make the day such a success.

Canberra Excursion
Year Five and Six trekked to Canberra for our traditional Canberra excursion. The three day excursion was linked to the students’ studies of Federal Government with a key element of the excursion being a visit. A great time was had by all.

Transition to School Program
St Mary’s School offers an innovative program to support preschool children making the transition to primary school.

Features of the program:
- An Information evening for any families interested in St Mary’s for their child
- Each prospective student and their parents meets with the principal individually
- Prue Brown, St Mary’s Kindergarten teacher visited the preschools and early childhood centres to meet each 2008 Kinder student before they arrive at school.
- Each child had the opportunity to join the current Kinder class for part of the day once a week for at least three weeks.
- Two half day whole class orientation sessions
• A barbeque held in December to welcome the Kinder families of 2008.

During the orientation sessions each new Kinder student was supported by their Year Six buddy. This partnership, which continues in 2008 greatly assists the formation of positive relationships between the Kinder and Year Six students and is another opportunity for leadership for our senior students.

St Mary’s transition model acknowledged
This year leading schools from across the state were asked for permission to share their transition model by permitting it to be published in the Department of Education and Training, Families First Transition Guidelines. St Mary’s was one of these schools.

St Mary’s presents transition model at Riverina Inservice
Along with Professor Bob Perry, from Charles Sturt University Albury, St Mary’s staff were co-presenters at a Riverina forum on facilitating successful transition to school. The forum took place at Griffith and included early childhood and primary school educators.

School Policies

Pastoral Care
Pastoral Care at St Mary’s is the proactive care of every student, staff member and parent in our community.

Discipline Policy
At St Mary’s we believe that children respond best to a discipline approach that encourages and rewards positive behaviour. Our discipline policy is based on this belief.

Student Welfare
We believe that every child has a right to be safe and feel safe. The practices in our Bullying Policy aim are focused on ensuring that this occurs for the students of our school. These policies can be found in the St Mary’s General Policies and Procedures Handbook and can be accessed any time by contacting the school.

Diocesan Policies
The school has adopted an approach to resolving complaints and grievances that is based on procedural fairness. It recognises that parents/caregivers and students must have access to processes that allow them to resolve concerns in a supportive and conciliatory way.

Parents/students with a complaint are encouraged in the first instance to contact their class teacher. If the need then arises contact with the Principal and the Catholic Schools Office may be appropriate. Further information about diocesan policies can be obtained from the Catholic Schools Office website at www.cso.wagga.catholic.edu.au

School Council

Chairperson’s Report
We have had yet another extremely busy and productive year for St Mary’s, Yoogali, commencing with the construction of the COLA area which has been used to its full potential, both in accommodating children in extreme weather conditions and also to conduct school functions.

This was followed by the completion of the School’s redevelopments, new administration block, library and canteen facilities.

This year also saw the completion of reverse cycle air conditioning in every classroom including the staff room. We are one of a very limited number of schools to have such luxury in the classrooms!

We have also been privileged to receive numerous grants this year. With these grants, we are in the process of constructing shade sails over the playground equipment; refurbish the toilet blocks, both upstairs and downstairs; and install automatic watering system to the school grounds. What huge assets these grants will prove to be.

This year has been a difficult year for many due to the economic downturn. But despite this, I would like to acknowledge the hard work and commitment by the parents involved in our fundraising events. We once again reached our target that was required for the year with some surplus. This is a huge effort on everyone’s part but I would like to especially acknowledge our fundraising
committee; Louise Vardanega, Leonie Marin and Daniella Fattore for their tireless work in overseeing the fundraising for the year.

St Mary's continues to live up to the high standards set in the past, both in its education and also in its spirituality. Our school continues to prosper each year and this in turn benefits the children.

A special thank you to all the dedicated teachers and staff of our school, especially Mary-Jane Simms and Trish Marin. You are very much appreciated and are the backbone to St Mary's success.

Michael Zalunardo
St Mary's School Council Chairperson

2. Information on Key School Programs

Curriculum Focus

Staff Training in Technology
We believe that skills in technology are essential for our students. We strive to provide them with an array of skills in technology to give them an advantage now and in the years ahead. To this end this year the staff took part in professional development to further their skills in the diocesan tool Myinternet. This training directly impacted on the children's opportunities to use and explore technology for learning.

Programs to Support Learning

Catering for all students
To assist all students to reach their potential additional assistance is provided to those requiring additional support. This takes the form of intensive one to one or small group work predominately in the areas of literacy and numeracy.

The Catholic Schools Office supports all schools in the diocese to identify students requiring extra support. The diocese also provides staffing to support identified students.

Extending Gifted Students
Technology is a key tool for extending students identified as gifted and talented in particular areas.

Children requiring extension are provided with challenges to extend their thinking and utilise their creativity. Collaborative assignments are one of the ways these students can enrich their learning by working with other more capable students.

Italian Language Program Offered at St Mary's

In 2007 all classes at St Mary's participated in the Italian language program. All classes took part in weekly 45 minute lessons each week. Mrs Eleonora Taranto, a specialist Italian teacher visited St Mary's one day per week to implement this engaging and productive program. The Italian language program is partially funded by Co.As.It, the Italian Association of assistance and will continue in 2008.

Equity Programs

St Mary's is a multi-cultural school. Students from Australian, Italian, Sikh and Samoan backgrounds make up our student population. Respect for all cultures is a central aspect of our beliefs at St Mary's.

At St Mary's we strive for all students to become thinking, caring global citizens. As well as supporting Abadi Gebresilassie, our involvement in community programs such as Clean Up Australia and our city's Anzac ceremonies encourage our students to be active and positive members of the wider community.

Programs to Support Students

Counselling Service
Each student at St Mary's is a valued and respected member of our school community. A counsellor is available to support children as needed. This includes areas such as self esteem, family difficulties or building positive and effective relationships.

Respect and Responsibility

Our vision for St Mary's students reflects the Values for Australian Schools of:
• Care and Compassion
• Doing Your Best
• A Fair Go
• Honesty and Integrity
• Respect and Responsibility
• Inclusion
How these values come to life in our school is explained at class information evenings at the commencement of the year.
Student Achievement

Statewide Tests and Examinations

The table below indicates the percentage of students who have achieved national literacy and numeracy benchmarks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Numeracy</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 5</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Numeracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>89.4%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Basic Skills 1998 to 2007

Our school has participated in Basic Skills testing in Literacy and Numeracy since 1998 and in Basic Skills testing in Writing since 2001. The school monitors the Basic Skills test Trend Data each year and uses that information to inform its learning and teaching practices for the upcoming year.

Staff Achievement

In 2007 the staff undertook the following training:
- First Aid training, including CPR
- Duty of Care
- Child Protection legislation
- Jolly Phonics training
- Early Literacy Inservice Days
- Effective use of technology in the classroom
- Early Literacy Inservices

3. School Renewal

Progress of the School Renewal Framework

Literacy Focus

2007 Reading Project

In 2007 St Mary's staff identified higher order comprehension as an area of need in student literacy. A whole school approach was decided upon. Data was gathered at the commencement of the project, followed by staff inservicing including modelled lessons throughout the school by Rhonda Hoare from the Catholic Schools Office. Targeted teaching then took place in all classes. End point assessment data showed quite significant student gains across the school in all areas of reading comprehension.

English Policy Curriculum Review

With literacy as the major whole school focus for 2007, all literacy policies and practices were reviewed.

The purpose of this was to facilitate whole school dialogue about effective teaching and learning in literacy. All St Mary's policies were reviewed and a Curriculum Audit undertaken by the Catholic Schools Office. The school was commended for its thorough and comprehensive documentation.

Technology Plan

Technology Facilities

Students at St Mary's are now learners of the future thanks to the generous donation recently of 16 brand new laptops in a mobile trolley at a cost of $22 000.

The laptop lab is part of St Mary's ongoing technology focus. It has been donated by a school family to support the technology plan of the school.

The mobile laptop lab can be used by all classes from Kinder to Year 6. It means that St Mary's can now provide one computer per child in most classes. When used in conjunction with our data projectors the laptops are tool.

Every child can learn and practice computer skills at the same time. It also means that all students in a class can have a computer each to work on assignments or undertake internet research.

Redevelopments at St Mary's

A major focus of the School Renewal Framework in 2007 has been the building project.

St Mary's school received $253,097.00 from the Catholic Block Grant Authority for these developments. This building grant was for the construction of a new administration wing, new library, new canteen and refurbished staff facilities. These developments commenced in June of 2006 and were completed mid 2007, greatly enhancing the learning facilities at our school.

Official Opening of Redevelopments

The new and refurbished facilities at St Mary's School Yoogali were blessed by Bishop Gerard Hanna and officially opened by Mrs
Kay Hull, Federal Member for Riverina, on Wednesday June 6 at 12.00pm.

Attending the opening were former staff, members of St Mary’s, School Council members, present parents, representatives from the Catholic Schools Office in Wagga including Director Mr Alan Bowyer. Representatives from other Catholic primary and secondary schools in the diocese were also in attendance. Architects, builders and tradesmen involved in the construction of the new facilities were among the guests.

St Mary’s students entertained the assembled guests with a polished performance of “The Rainbow song” which included colour and movement through cascading metres of material flowing down from the second storey of the building at various times throughout the item. In addition, the junior classes recited two Verse Speaking items.

**Investing in our Schools Grants**

**Investing in our Schools Grant 1**
In 2007 a two storey covered outdoor learning area was constructed over the school quadrangle and reverse cycle heating/air-conditioning installed in the staffroom with funds from a $46 000 grant from the Federal Government.

**Investing in Our Schools Grant X**
St Mary’s also received an additional Investing in our Schools grant of $29 000. These funds facilitated the installation of shade sails over the playground equipment, refurbishment of both upstairs and downstairs toilets and reverse cycle heating/cooling in the staffroom.

**Community Water Grant**
Thanks to the efforts of Ralph Twaddell, School Council Grants Officer a $43,419 community water grant was awarded to St Mary’s in 2007. This will provide:
- a computerised watering system to the grounds
- dual flush cisterns to all toilets
- rainwater tanks
- time limited taps for both upstairs and downstairs student toilets
and will greatly reduce water consumption at the school.

**4. School Overview**

**School Enrolment**

**Enrolment Policy**
The Diocese of Wagga Wagga has established an Enrolment Policy which is implemented by all schools in the Diocese. The full text of this policy can be found at [www.cso.wagga.catholic.edu.au](http://www.cso.wagga.catholic.edu.au)

Closing dates for enrolments in classes for the following year are advertised through The Area News, feeder preschools and early childhood centres.

NSW legislation allows for the enrolment of children into Kindergarten who turn 5 before August 1. At St Mary’s School parents seeking to enrol children who turn 5 after May 30 are advised of possible implications.

**Student Enrolment Profile:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Indig*</th>
<th>LOTE*</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>142</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Language background Other Than English

**Structure of Classes**
In 2007 St Mary’s provided 7 home classes. These small class groups provide excellent student teacher ratios.
- Kinder - 19 students
- Year 1 - 20 students
- Year 2 - 19 students
- Year 3 - 17 students
- Year 4 - 30 students
- Year 5 - 19 students
- Year 6 - 18 students

In addition classes move into “afternoon groups” after lunch each day in primary and three days per week in infants. This different grouping allows the students to engage interact with children outside their class group as they learn.

**Teacher Standards**
The NSW government requires that this report detail the number of teachers in each of the following categories:
- A) have teaching qualifications from a recognised higher education institution
- B) have qualifications from a recognised higher education institution but no formal teacher education qualifications
C) have relevant successful teaching experience and appropriate knowledge but no formal teacher qualifications.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
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</table>

**Professional Learning**

**Literacy Learning and Teaching in the Classroom**

In semester 2, 2007 three St Mary's teachers took part in an extensive literacy program called literacy learning and teaching in the classroom. A key element of the program is visiting the classrooms of colleagues in other schools to learn from them by observing them teach. Participants have found the course to be extremely beneficial, deepening their understanding of how best to facilitate learning. This project will continue in the new year.

**Teacher Attendance and Retention**

The federal Schools Assistance Act 2005 requires that each school report on the average attendance rate of staff members in a given school. The end figure is determined by calculations including certain periods of absence due to sickness, personal carers leave, leave without pay, special leave and accident/workers compensation leave. An attendance rate of 95.4% was achieved in 2007 by staff at St Mary’s Primary School, Yoogali.

**Parent Involvement and Participation**

**2007 FUNDRAISING REPORT**

As we come to the end of our twelve month amalgamation trial period, we would firstly like to thank the School Council and our Principal Mary Jane for taking a gamble and allowing us the opportunity of working together as one unit. We feel that the gamble has paid off so to speak, as the year seems to have gone by fairly smoothly.

We are very pleased to advise that St Mary’s has once again reached its expected fundraising target of $18,000.00 this year, with a surplus of $7,000.00.

We are always in awe of the fact that such a small school can raise such a large sum of money and this is only ever achieved because of the dedication of our parents. Our gratitude must go to each and every parent who has contributed in helping us to reach our target again this year, we couldn’t do it without you, you are the heart and soul of fundraising at this school.

Following a review of the wish lists provided by our families, part of the surplus funds for 2007 will be utilised by the School Council to purchase 4 new powder coated tables and chairs. The School Council will review the wish list again in the near future and determine what other needs have been expressed and will make a decision on where to spend the balance. As you can see, your hard earned fundraising dollars are being injected straight back into the school for the benefit of our children.

We wish you all a very merry Christmas, we pray for love, joy and good health and look forward to a prosperous 2008.

Louise Vardanega
Fundraising Committee

**Community Satisfaction**

The following information has been provided to the school. It has been a valuable gauge for determining the level of satisfaction our community has with St Mary’s School Yoogali.

**Parents**

My child is usually happy at St Mary’s Yoogali.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>43.5%</td>
<td>56.5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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**Students**

I am usually happy at St Mary’s Yoogali.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
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<td>48.2%</td>
<td>44.2%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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**Staff**

I am usually happy at St Mary’s Yoogali.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>63.6%</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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Financial Statement Summary
This data shown below is a summary of Diocese of Wagga School System income and expense and includes income and expense of all system schools.

The total income and expense of the school, that is included in the above, is shown below.

About This Report
This report was the result of the combined efforts of members in the St Mary's community, including Principal, Mrs Mary-Jane Simms, Assistant Principal Mrs Tricia Marin, Sports Co-ordinator Miss Robyn Overs, Louise Vardanega, Fundraising Committee, School Council Chairperson, Mr Michael Zalunardo and others.