Annual Report 2016

(based on 2015 data)

Maridahdi

"Thought... creating itself as it goes."
Deleuze & Guatterri

School sector:

Independent

School's address:

3-7 Bowtell Street, Toowoomba QLD 4350

Kindy-School combined enrolments:

69

Year levels offered:

Kindy – Year 6

Co-educational or single sex:

Co-educational

Characteristics of the student body:

Kindy	9 Male and 6 Female
Prep	5 Male and 6 Female
Year 1	1 Male and 4 Female
Year 2	6 Male and 2 Female
Year 3	3 Male and 5 Female
Year 4	1 Male and 9 Female
Year 5	3 Male and 3 Female
Year 6	2 Male and 4 Female

> *"Foucault's view is that we will probably never reach that utopian point, promised by so many nineteenth century Enlightenment thinkers, where all our social ills have been eradicated. **Each solution brings an attendant set of new problems, which in turn need sustained work and reflection.**"*
>
> **Clare O'Farrell, 2013**

In 2015 Maridahdi celebrated its 10th anniversary of becoming a school! There was so much to celebrate, including the opportunity to touch base and revisit the stories of our first 12 students and their families.

Unfortunately, the start of the school year didn't start the way we had hoped! There was some disappointment and sadness that a new student experienced a 'bullying' incident during orientation week. Maridahdi was quick to turn this unfortunate event into an opportunity to review policies and procedures around 'bullying'. It is important to acknowledge how upsetting this matter was for the child and his family. Maridahdi was disheartened with what had happened and moved immediately to offer as much support as possible to both families involved. It presented our community with an opportunity to revisit, review, and revise policies and procedures around 'bullying' and 'behaviour management', to ensure that everything possible was being done to reduce the possibility of this type of experience happening again.

Maridahdi in previous years has done a lot of work ensuring the space used terminology that reflected our focus on creating an inclusive environment. Maridahdi is a space that has always celebrated difference and diversity, supported with a clear message that everyone has the right to feel physically and emotionally safe. This incident reminded us that there was still work to be done.

The Maridahdi Community Governing Council ('Governing Council'), in conjunction with teaching teams, reviewed policies and procedures, with a focus on designing a policy that was not only more aligned with the Maridahdi philosophy, but also included a greater focus on increasing support for new children and their families as they enrolled at Maridahdi. As the introductory quote indicates, Maridahdi uses problems of this natures as a protagonist to invite change, and make sure we do what we do, better!

Conversations were invited with both children and the adults involved, everyone was asked to share what it felt like for them. This was done separately and then with families meeting to share these feelings to invite greater awareness and understanding of how such an event impacts on everyone involved. The

language of feelings and needs was central to the process of restoring and healing. Maridahdi was focused on ensuring that those involved were heard.

The opportunity to share their stories proved to be very powerful for both children and families involved. It contributed to restoring for the adults involved and was a positive start to the healing process for the child at the centre. The next step was to unpack the process and translate that to policy that would effect change.

The Governing Council began to reflect on how future orientation procedures could offer greater support for new families entering the space. The new policy needed to combine both elements of the incident. The first element was the 'bullying', the second related to 'behaviour', for situations when someone's behaviour didn't align with Maridahdi's focus on mutual respect.

This was a really useful process that created many opportunities for conversations about Maridahdi's choice to consciously move away from traditional forms of punishment, including shaming and consequences. The challenge was then to put policy in place that sent a clear message that using 'power over' with an intention to physically harm or intimidate, was definitely not ok. By the end of the school year a draft policy had been created that would be trialled in 2016, with a review prior to the commencement of 2017.

Improvement Processes included:

*Orientation Week

Changes to *Orientation Week* to ensure there was a greater focus on supporting new children and their families entering the space.

Day 1 'Parents Day'

Orientation Day in 2016 was to introduce the idea of the new policy to parents. The invitation was to invite increased awareness of our focus in 2016 and support our request for families to work towards the creation of an inclusive environment for all.

Day 2 'Old' Students Only!

The first day would be for 'old' students only!

Students would be invited to reflect on how they might support someone new to Maridahdi?

Children will have conversations to build awareness on how a new child might be feeling on their first day?

How could they offer support?

Each space would begin to design agreements that reflected our belief that everyone had the right to feel physically and emotionally safe.

Day 3 'New' Students Only!

The second day was only for 'new' students and their families. It was to include new kindergarten families, the prep group and other new families entering the space for the first time.
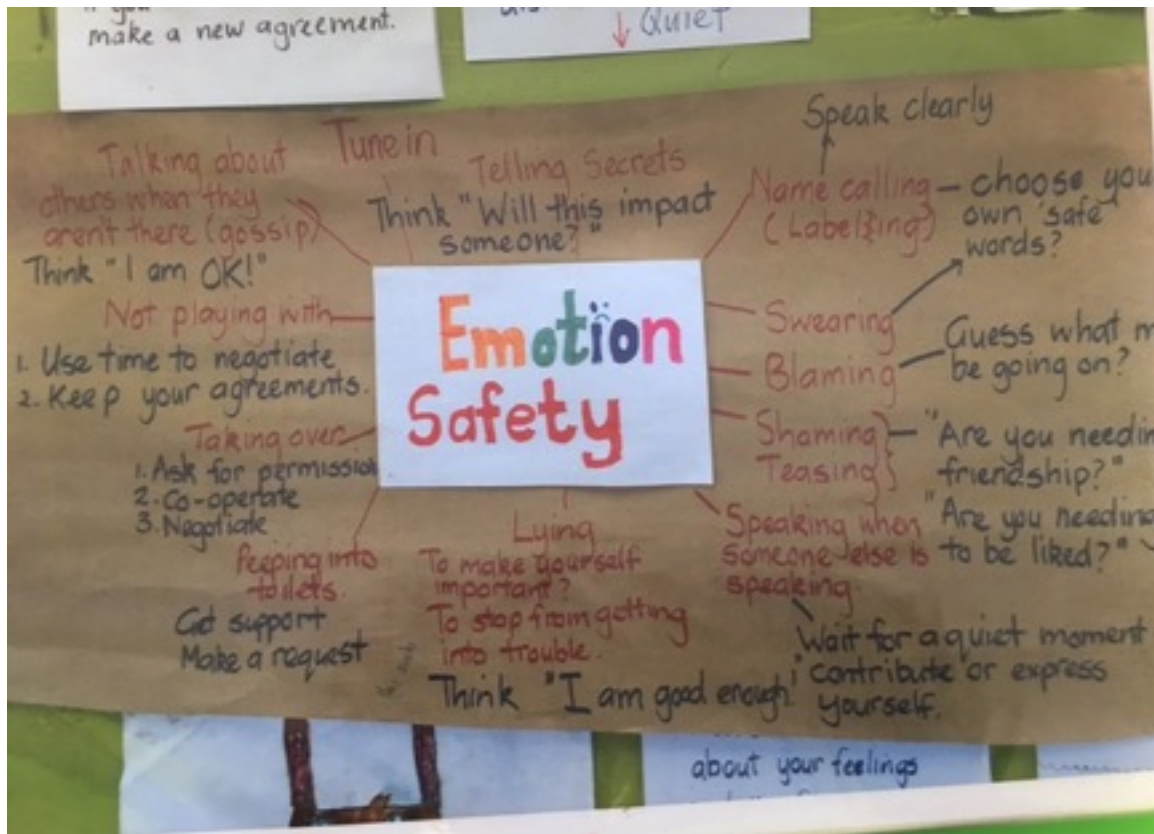
*Agreements

Each of the teams would design agreements for their learning space. The key element was for children to be actively involved if we wanted them to accept greater ownership and responsibility for their actions.

The request will be for the groups to continually revisit the agreement to ensure ongoing awareness about the need for physical and emotional safety.
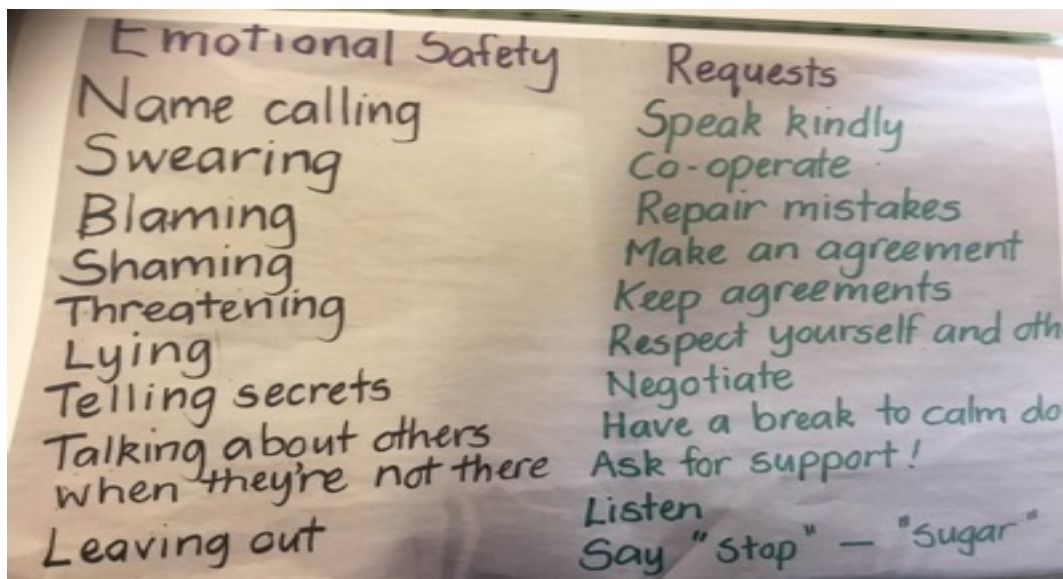
*Communication

Non-Violent Communication supported a focus on feelings and needs. This is work that Maridahdi has been doing for some time. In 2016 it was decided that workshops were needed to support parents to understand how this looked.

A continued focus on communication was necessary to bring about change. This needed to be at all levels, including children and adults, both parents and members of the teaching teams. Teachers were asked for increased awareness and encouraged to look for early signs that were indicators that a student may require support. Responsiveness was identified as key, along with the need for families to walk closely when incidents occurred to encourage support and bring about change.

*Focus on Well-Being

Our annual staff escape was to focus on well-being. The protagonist was Foucault's thinking on care of self. Maridahdi has a strong belief in modelling and shifting the thinking of its team members in order to bring about change.

Each year this event is proving to be an ideal time to focus on key areas of the school improvement plan, as well as an opportunity to celebrate the significant contribution team members make to the Maridahdi space.

Thinking by Foucault on 'Care of Self' proved useful in inviting discussion on power given our experience early in the year and our 2015 focus to design a new policy that reflected the ethos of the space.

Foucault was questioned about the role of philosophy being to warn of the dangers of power.

Foucault agreed it was an important function of philosophy.

"...philosophy is that which calls into question domination at every level and every form in which it exists, whether political, economic, sexual, institutional, or what have you. To a certain extent, this critical function of philosophy derives from the Socratic injunction "Take care of yourself," in other words, "Make freedom your foundation, through the mastery of yourself." (pp. 300-1)

Foucault, M. (1997) 'The ethics of the concern for self as a practice of freedom'. In P. Rabinow, (ED), Ethics: subjectivity and truth (pp. 281-301). New York: New Press.

The Maridahdi philosophy has chosen to move away from the word 'bullying' because it appears that children are just playing out what adults do in everyday life anyway. The team explored the increase in 'power over' techniques used to dominate others in many areas of society.

The request of the team was to continue to explore new ways of supporting children's communication, ability to negotiate and work collaboratively, while not reducing a child's ability to challenge, to resist, to question.

There was agreement that modelling was our best chance of bringing about a shift in power relationships in the space.

Culture of Learning

*Philosophy

Student Free Days

Student Free Days were focused on supporting increased understanding of the philosophy in the space. While there has been an increase in community interest of the thinking in the space, there continues to be a lack of understanding about the key philosophical elements in the space.

A power point was developed to track the history of the thinking in the space, with an intention to use the power point throughout 2015 with parents in philosophical discussions.

*Skill Sets

THRASS

Student Free Days were also used to focus on identifying skill sets that were key to supporting children accessing possibilities.

The invitation was for team members to build an increased knowledge of the curriculum through this process.

Teams were encouraged to display these skill sets on the walls to build understanding of how Maridahdi uses these skills to support a child driven curriculum.

By the end of 2015 it was decided that in 2016 THRASS training would be a key focus of staff training to improve the skill sets of PHONICS, READING AND WRITING.

*Technology

In 2014 Maridahdi had entered into a lease agreement with Apple to upgrade technology in the space. In 2015 we allocated more resources, as we believed the additional resources were not being used to their capacity. Research supports this finding, stating that despite the introduction of technology, without continued support the use of technology is rarely maximised.

Maridahdi requested the teaching teams worked with their students to ensure that technology was used to support connection.

A survey to parents was used to bring increased awareness of how children were using technology at home, and how that might transfer to Maridahdi.

*Music

In 2015, we were excited to add Kylie Parker to our teaching team. In the previous year Kylie had been working within the space offering '1 on 1' classes with students on a range of musical instruments. It proved to be a really exciting and worthwhile addition to the space, with Kylie's approach to the teaching of music very much alignment to Maridahdi's philosophy.

Kylie was contracted to work with the Maridahdi teaching teams to explore ways of supporting children's interests and fascinations with music. The request was to move away from traditional approaches of teaching music and explore how musical skill and appreciation could be introduced into the Maridahdi space to support thinking and learning.

*Grants

Gymnastics

Thanks to a grant Maridahdi students were given the opportunity to experience gymnastics. After exploring possibilities students travelled by bus to a local gymnastic school to experience gymnastics in all its forms.

The Tower

In 2015, we were able to finally complete several projects that would see The Tower finally completed.

Throughout the holidays, the top level of the tower was finally lined and as a result of a successful Gaming Grant Application, Maridahdi received $26 000 to install a new kitchen in the bottom level of the tower. To finish the project off, the floor was tiled.

Given the history of challenges the community has faced, there was much to celebrate!

To all those who supported this process, Maridahdi wishes to acknowledge your contribution. Students are excited about the installation of the new kitchen and the possibilities that it immediately invites.

Community

*Maridahdi Twilight Market

The Maridahdi Twilight Market proved to be another successful fundraising event. It was also to be the final Maridahdi Market as the local community moved away from this more traditional style of market.

For many years, the Maridahdi Market Days have proved to be really successful, not only in terms of the income generated for our community, but how it also supported building a positive profile with the local community!

Thanks to Donna Shine for her long-term commitment to these markets!

Contact person for further information:

Louis Bradfield (Principal)

FINANCIAL POSITION

This income comes from tuition, government grants, market day fundraising and other income, which includes Interest received on bank accounts.

Total *Income: $811,703*

Maridahdi expenditure includes salaries, operating costs such as administration costs, photocopying/printing, power, rates, IT, resources, insurances, phones and maintenance costs.

Total *Expenditure: $787,514*

For further financial information please refer to My School website at http://www.myschool.edu.au/.

Staffing Information - Qualifications of all Teachers

Qualification	Number of staff
Bachelor Degree	3
Diploma	5
Certificate	4

2 Full Time Teachers

5 Part Time Teachers

2 Full Time Assistants

4 Part Time Assistants

: Expenditure on and Teacher Participation in Professional Development:

a) Teacher Participation in Professional Development

'Student Free' days are utilised for Professional 'in-house' learning. Staff attended a weekend of Professional Development at Stradbroke Island.   The Principal also attended the Future Schools Congress in March, 2015.

Non-Violent Communication courses were also held throughout the year.

100% of staff were involved in Professional Learning activities.

b) Expenditure on Professional Development

Total Number of Teachers	Total expenditure on teacher PD	Average expenditure on PD per teacher
9	$20715	$1593
The proportion of the teaching staff involved in professional development activities during 2015	100%	

Average staff attendance for the school, based on unplanned absences of sick and emergency leave periods of up to 5 days:

| Number of Staff | Number of School Days

190 | Total Days Staff Absences

22 | Average Staff Attendance Rate |
|---|---|---|---|
| 13 | 190 | 22 | 99% |

Proportion of teaching staff retained from the previous year:

Number of permanent teaching staff at end of previous year	Number of these staff retained in the following year (the program year)	% retention rate
10	9	90%
From the end of 2014 - 90% of staff were retained for the entire 2015 school year		

Average Student attendance % rate for each year level:

Number of possible attendance days for year level	Total number of students in year level	Total Attendance %
190
190
190
190
190
190	Prep – 11 students
Yr. 1 – 5 students
Yr. 2 – 8 students
Yr. 3 – 8 students
Yr. 4 – 10 students
Yr. 5 – 6 students
Yr. 6 – 6 students	90.7%
92.07%
91%
91.2%
78.8%
91.1%

A description of how non-attendance is managed by the school:

All children are signed in every morning and signed out every afternoon by their parent/ carer. Parents are encouraged to phone in absences and the teacher in charge of that class records this on the sign in sheet.

NAPLAN results for Years 3, 5 and 7 in 2014

Please refer to My School website at http://www.myschool.edu.au/