



 **Silkwood** great environment. amazing learning.



# the silkwood experience.

## small school. smart choice.

Silkwood is a small independent, secular school catering for girls and boys from Prep to Year 12. Our education focus, underpinned by educational research, is developmental and student-centred. The school uses innovative contemporary systems of management and has a professional, talented team dedicated to our vision of being the 'best school we can be'.

### Discovering possibilities... Realising potential

Silkwood's groundbreaking approach to education centres on demanding academic content, taught through an integrated approach which aims to inspire and enhance learners. Our goal is to foster a spirit of inquiry and a love of learning that prepares children to thrive as adults in the challenging, complex 21st-century world.

Underpinning our education focus is the motto 'learners learn best from learners'. This motto transforms our practice, building a development ethos: 'Silkwood aims to improve every day'. The students' learning is enhanced by the teachers, through their desire to become the best educators they can be . . . learning is who we are - learning is what we do! Systems and resources, which keep all areas of the school on a path of improvement, support Silkwood's learning program.

Silkwood is proud of its student-centred curriculum, which meets all the governmental educational requirements. We value and acknowledge the influence of the following developmental educators to the Silkwood program: Rudolf Steiner, Friedrich Froebel, Jean Piaget, Erik Erikson, Jean Gebser, Urie Bronfenbrenner, and Lawrence Kohlberg.

These elements – and many more - contribute to making the 'Silkwood Educational Experience' like no other. We thank you for your interest and invite you to come on a journey to discover more about our school.

**Silkwood is a reason for students to smile!**

The principle goal of education in schools should be creating men and women who are capable of doing new things, not simply repeating what other generations have done. Jean Piaget 1896 – 1980.

## your silkwood journey.

We aim to inspire a generation of global citizens who are knowledgeable about and inspired to take responsibility for the sustainability of our world.

Our uniqueness begins with the school site. Situated far enough away from the bustle of town life, but close enough for access, the Silkwood campus is an adventure in itself. Babbling creeks, native bushland and abundant birdlife surround the school. The site has been carefully planned to blend our natural surroundings with specially designed learning centres, creating smaller individualised clusters within the larger school.

We connect the students learning as much as possible to our natural environment. 'Green' principles are evident with solar power, water tanks, on-site waste treatment, compost, habitat protection and special water collection facilities to irrigate the gardens and play areas. All of these are incorporated wherever possible into our learning programs.

Our site is an organic learning centre committed to green technologies, student exploration and provision of a peaceful backdrop for the students' education to unfold.

# Organic



# affirming every student

Silkwood's educational program is uniquely student-centred and developmental. 'Student-centred' means we judge successful teaching by the students' engagement; 'developmental' means the child's journey from the magic of early childhood to the argumentative world of adolescence is supported by carefully prepared learning experiences, tailored to respond to specific age groups. Silkwood's pedagogy combines spiritual, intellectual, emotional and physical dimensions of learning, offering a truly integrative approach.

The heart of our point of difference: The Silkwood Education Experience replaces 'subject-centredness' with 'student-centredness' – and uses affirmed, engaged students as the hallmark of success.

At Silkwood, learning continuums are used to ensure each student's individual academic needs are targeted, creating an inclusive and affirming experience for all. A watchful eye by the teacher on student responses and engagement means a constantly evolving, responsive learning program can be maintained. The broad opportunities within the educational program ensure that each child's individual talents also have opportunity to shine.

We sum up this entire position in the phrase: 'Silkwood is student-focused'.



Every student can  
learn - just not on the  
same day, or in the  
same way.

George Evans 1876 – 1937

Student

# the developmental teaching scaffold

We value Silkwood students as 'active seekers, users and creators of knowledge', each having their own particular talents and strengths waiting to be discovered, explored and engaged in the adventure of learning.

At Silkwood School, teachers work creatively to generate enthusiasm for learning and to cultivate respectful and caring relationships. They use the basic principles of child development to affirm the students at all stages of their educational journey - from the early years to adolescence.

Each developmental stage is broken into two year teaching cycles and, where possible, the same teacher works with the class through one entire teaching cycle - unless of course it is high school, where specialist teachers are employed to provide expertise on subject matter.



# centred

# preparatory program

## The Physical Development Phase

The pre-school child requires a dynamic, multi-sensory active environment for learning and growing. Physical challenges for the developing body are essential. Special efforts are made by the Prep teachers to improve the children's co-ordination by emphasising movement games, kinaesthetic activities, active music and singing, cooking, art and craft.

Since play is the simplest and most powerful way for this developmental need to be met, the Silkwood Prep environment places a premium on play. Play is encouraged as an open-ended experience, initiated by children, involving make-believe and spontaneous creative activity.

In short, we encourage the children to run, jump, dig, act, draw and paint, and in this way develop the emergent learning and social skills necessary for a successful education.

# primary school

## Cultivating the Creative Faculties (Class 1-5)

“What we do, if we are successful, is to stir interest in the matter at hand, awaken enthusiasm for it, arouse a curiosity, kindle a feeling, fire up the imagination.” Professor Julius Sumner Miller, 1992.

In this phase, the magical world of early childhood gradually transitions into the critical thinking of pre-adolescence. This is a stage of emerging reality, of active participation, when the young persons' picture thinking and imagination changes into a hunger to know what the world is all about. It is a time of questioning: How? What? Why? When? and What for?

This quest for knowing underpins our primary school program, which is focused on comprehending and constructing learning from the students' world, dispositions, and interests. Silkwood uses a wide range of strategies to enliven teaching and learning. Traditional stories, widespread use of the arts, music, physical activity and strong student/teacher relationships are central. These strategies help to cultivate social intelligence and the students' developing intellect.

Music, foreign language and the arts live alongside the key learning areas of English, Maths, Science, Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE), Language other than English (LOTE), Enterprise Education and Health & Physical Education, offering a well-rounded program for the developing primary school student.













# the middle school

Social, Emotional and Meta-cognitive Phase (Class 6-8)

Young teens have their accelerator pressed all the way down to the floor while their brakes have yet to be installed.

Young adolescents need a special touch . . . they are not simply older primary or younger high school students. The emerging biologic events of puberty end their relatively smooth primary years, producing a profound impact on their cognitive, social and emotional lives.

Silkwood responds by offering an intriguing, challenging and creative educational program. Studies are carefully selected to relate to the emotional changes and issues the students are growing through. We offer choice, raise the academic expectations, include specially tailored camps, link them to the wider community and bring in new learning styles. Students engage in focused learning adventures that support them to develop their identities, sharpen their meta-cognitive minds and channel their burgeoning energies.

Here leadership holds a significant place. Students run assemblies, peer support programs, playground support and provide feedback to teachers. Values, volunteering and team work are integrated into all the key learning areas.

The Silkwood teachers embrace the passion and energy of the young adolescent, using it to revitalise their classrooms. This ensures all students develop their personal talents to make a full contribution to their class, the school and the wider society.





## high school

### The Argumentative Phase (Class 9-12)

Preparing students to live independently in the real world.

Young adults at this stage of development have passed through the initial 'shock waves' of puberty and are beginning to settle down. Their brains work more effectively, they are able to develop coherent plans and to focus on long term goals. They have the ability to ask questions about moral, ethical and religious issues, to develop new talents and skills, and through this process, they develop a more stable sense of self.

The Silkwood High School program responds to this phase by engaging students in a learning program that seeks genuine dialogue, challenging the student to create their own questions, ideas and solutions to life's problems. Lessons are organised so the students enter into lively debate with the learning material, thereby stimulating their engagement and determination. Choice of subject is given a high priority as we seek to channel their talents and interests into engaging learning programs and supporting every student to have success with learning.

Our developmentally situated program is set up for the senior students to develop a strong sense of self – before they have to decide on the kind of post-secondary education or workplace training they will commit to.

A democratic education means that we educate people in a way that ensures they can think independently, that they can use information, knowledge, and technology, among other things, to draw their own conclusions. Linda Darling-Hammond





# unique

The greatest sign of success for a teacher is to be able to say, “The children are now working as if I did not exist.”  
Maria Montessori

## our unique school day

Silkwood students have good reason to say:

- Everyday , I was deeply engaged and satisfied
- Every day, I learned useful core academic skills
- Every day, I had real world experiences

Because we have structured the school to make it so!

Each day of the Silkwood Education Experience is organised into a structured, student-focused framework. We clearly delineate the day into three distinct frames called: 'integral', 'instructional', and 'experiential', thus creating a meaningful whole to the students' daily experience.

### The Integral Frame

The integral learning frame is offered daily for 1 hour 45 minutes in thematic units, each about four weeks long. The integral subject themes support the students' ever-widening interests and stages of awareness and are set up to generate enjoyment of schooling and a life-long enthusiasm for learning. New core academic content is firstly introduced to students in this frame.

The four-week themes:

- are based on the dispositions, inclinations, interests and needs of the students,
- are cross-curricular,
- are linked to education outside the classroom,
- are values enriched,
- include co-operative learning strategies,
- operate for multiple levels of ability.

In carefully structured ways, these lessons provide opportunities on a daily basis, for:

- movement,
- artistic work,
- intellectual work, and
- idealistic (spiritual) work.

In this way, thematic teaching challenges the students in four ways: idealistically, intellectually, emotionally, and practically - in every lesson. Thus, every day, students have a deeply satisfying learning experience. Like engines firing on all four cylinders - rather than on one – the students develop as whole people and remain deeply engaged with the learning process as a result.



## The Instructional Frame

The instructional frame is delivered in 15 traditional 45 minute periods each week, usually called “proficiency lessons”. These lessons target core-academic skills introduced in the thematic lessons that need repetitive practise. Careful curriculum scrutiny identifies what these core skills are. Proficiency Lessons are delivered via traditional subject syllabuses, including: Mathematics, English, Music and Languages other than English (LOTE). Each of these subjects is allocated three lessons per week. The remaining three lessons are used for routine maintenance of core skills.

Co-operative learning, multi-level teaching, multiple intelligence theory and a three-day rhythm are employed in these lessons - strategies proven in promoting deep learning. Very careful tracking of these proficiencies and targeted learning support minimises the risk of students developing core-competency gaps.

## The Experiential Frame

This frame occupies an extended time-slot (about 75 minutes) in the afternoons each day. These lessons are used for activities and studies that require a bigger timeframe. Experiential sessions link students to real world enterprises and take advantage of learning opportunities that arise on or off campus, for example, the arrival of a culture group, the installation of a power generator, the birth of wildlife.

These lessons have three main purposes:

- to facilitate entrepreneurial, technological education,
- to promote diverse sport, health and physical education opportunities, and
- to provide for arts and crafts education.



# our teaching community

Silkwood carefully selects and develops its teachers, enabling them to deliver the Silkwood Education Experience. All our teachers are qualified educators who also have many other strings to their bows; psychologists, environmentalists, artists, dancers, musicians, sportspeople, writers, film and media people. They choose Silkwood because they are passionate about their profession and about supporting children to develop the skills needed to face the challenges of the future.

Regardless of years of teaching experience, all Silkwood teachers undertake a two year mentoring and development program when they arrive. Our learning philosophy of “learners learn best from learners” means teacher development is ongoing. This is established within the framework for the teachers’ learning community which is arranged into weekly syndicate meetings, regular peer appraisals, teaching strategy observations and workshops. Each teacher takes responsibility for their learning adventure and tracks their progress in their personal learning journal.

All of this ensures that a high quality of teaching at Silkwood is maintained and always improving. It makes for a dynamic, energised learning atmosphere!

Instruction begins when you, the teacher, learn from the learner; put yourself in his place so that you may understand . . . what he learns and the way he understands it. Soren Kierkegaard







A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

	M	Tu	W	Th
Sh	1	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	
F	16	14	5	
P	38	98	26	
C	4	2	5	
W	41	14	11	











## our community

The Silkwood school community is ever changing and ever growing. Partnerships are an important part of school life, whether between teacher and student, parent and teacher, or associations with our local community; working together to achieve the Silkwood vision is essential.

Celebration and traditions are a big part of our service to the community. Every term the school invites families and friends to gather together to celebrate the close of term with a special festival. The festival themes have a seasonal flavour and the teachers put much thought into preparing these to engender a different experience each term. These special times create happy traditions and memories and a sense of belonging for all.

The school community comes together for more than just celebrations. Each member contributes to the development and upkeep of the school by helping in their own individual way. Contributions include making goods to sell for fundraising, helping with routine tasks around the school, attending working bees, selling raffle tickets, donating raffle prizes, running workshops, donating professional services and in many more ways. This contribution is very important for the school and families are encouraged to find a way to share their unique talents and participate in some voluntary way.

Throughout the year each class holds special nights to showcase their talents and work and to bring the families of Silkwood together for happy and fun times. Parents, teachers, children and friends sing, dance, tell stories, share poems and produce plays. This gives the students an example of sharing and developing gifts and talents with pride and ease.

There are many interest groups and services operating within the school community including playgroups, library, craft, before and after school care, class carers, and working bees. These play an important part in the Silkwood community life.

We welcome the diversity of our school community as it weaves a rich tapestry of experience that is ever growing, changing and deeply valued.

For a community to be whole and healthy, it must be based on people's love and concern for each other. Millard Fuller







## specialist subjects

### Music

Music plays an integral part in our program and is interwoven amongst many subject areas giving colour and zest to the Silkwood learning program. It is also taught as a specialist subject with a curriculum of its own. The curriculum is rich in offering children a wide range of musical experience from the simple notes of a recorder to hand-making an African drum in the upper grades. Experiences are fun, informative and relevant to their lives. Guest musicians, performances and excursions are used to bring to life concepts and experiences.

In class three every child participates in a

school strings program that runs throughout the year. This introduction to an instrument allows the student a wonderful opportunity to experience playing at a more serious level. Those students who find a connection to playing are offered an opportunity in the following years to build on this within orchestra and ensemble groups.

The wonderful sounds of children singing and playing instruments are heard daily at Silkwood.

### Enterprise Education

Enterprise Education is a school subject in its own right, timetabled in the afternoon session.

In essence, Enterprise Education is an education in 'entrepreneurship', providing a link between school-based learning and 'life'.

We characterise all Enterprise Education with an open-ended response and design phase. Thus, in a craft lesson the teacher might tell the students what to make; in an Enterprise Education project, the teacher provides the opportunity, and asks the students to suggest what is going to be made and whether it could be an artefact or system.

The link between school and the wider community is also important in Enterprise Education projects. Expert people can

provide a stimulus for school-based Enterprise Education activity.

### Language

Every primary school child is taught a language other than English (LOTE) through a specialist program. Learning the language is an outcome of this program, however we also focus on the student gaining a deep understanding of the cultural difference of another country in comparison to Australian life. This provides the young person an opportunity to appreciate a world full of cultural diversity.







## Art and Craft

At Silkwood, the ability to create something artistic is regarded as a perfectly natural endowment, not the exceptional fate of a chosen few. The teacher is convinced that every child, given the confidence, skills and tools, can draw, paint, sculpt, knit, sing and dance, in the same sense that most schools expect children to be able to read, write and work with numbers.

At Silkwood we have a specifically written art and craft syllabus, which is delivered by expert teachers. The highest quality materials are sourced for the children to work with and a structured timetable allows the individual student to develop skills in this area.

## Health & Physical Education (HPE)

The Health and Physical Education program allows the students to develop a sense of pride in their physical achievements, involvement in their own health management, and a love for physical activities.

We respond to the growing physical needs of the student by providing a comprehensive HPE curriculum that teaches

the children individual specific physical abilities, as well as games. These games begin with simple group activity and build in complexity throughout the years to more demanding team sports. Swimming and athletic carnivals and competition team sport with other schools begin in middle school.

As well as an emphasis on the physical skills our health program promotes learning opportunities for the children to develop knowledge, processes, skills and attitudes necessary for making informed decisions about themselves and others. Students are encouraged to act, individually or collectively, in culturally appropriate ways, to enhance health and wellbeing and to promote structures in society which support their own and others health and wellbeing.

## Movement

At Silkwood we view movement as an integral part of a young person's development. As well as the physical movement of playing games, sport and abilities, we appreciate the value of children moving in artistic ways - through, for example, dance.

Folk dancing is placed within each primary class program.



These dances are specific to the cultural theme for each year and the children embrace them with gusto.

## Drama

The entire Silkwood program is rich in dramatic opportunities ranging from the simple free play in the Prep to full-scale productions in the upper grades. Every year, each class has a series of block timetabled sessions for the specialist subject of drama. Here the children not only learn drama techniques to improve performance, they design and build prop and set items, organise costuming and with the older grades, plan a play-night as a fundraiser.

## Information & Communication Technologies (ICT)

In our modern technological world filled with tools that allow us to communicate and gather information at our finger tips, we need to ensure our young people have both the integrity and skills to manage this information age. Our ICT program builds with simple presentation strategies in the early primary classes, to an integrated ICT program through the middle years and specialisation in high school. MAC laptops are used as our main electronic teaching tool.



## caring and sharing

Our small school campus allows the Silkwood team the opportunity to get to know the students and their families well. The teachers are friendly and approachable and welcome family involvement in their child's education. Parents are offered a regular line of communication with their classroom teacher through email and through a fortnightly, whole school newsletter. Primary class teachers work with each class within a set teaching cycle so as to form a strong understanding of their students and families. The close relationship between teaching colleagues allows for smooth transitions from one teacher to the next so that the children are always well supported.

Silkwood support features are underpinned by well-developed policies on behaviour management, bullying and child protection - written with the aim of fostering a school environment that is safe and productive for all children.

Silkwood also recognises the importance that values, social skills and leadership play in the development of a young person. In accepting this importance, and undertaking the responsibility to educate the student holistically, we have incorporated a values, leadership and social skills program into our school culture. We actively encourage community and home involvement in these programs.

## our results

Our aim for Graduates of Silkwood Education is to say something like this:

'At school, I felt deeply satisfied and engaged, I learned useful, core academic skills and I gathered practical and entrepreneurial aptitudes - every day . . . Whatever life throws at me - I'm up for it!'

Our students participate in the national testing requirements and although these are not a school focus (since we have our own more detailed assessment processes) Silkwood students compare well. Assessment information can be found on the school website, in the annual report or on the government website: [www.myschool.edu.au](http://www.myschool.edu.au)

What is most important to us, is that Silkwood students love to come to school, they experience learning as a fun, enjoyable process while gaining competency over the core academic skills. Students who come to Silkwood usually say: 'schools are boring compared to Silkwood' . . . that is the best testament to the student-centred learning environment we offer!

# we care



## enrolling at silkwood

Included in this pack is an "Application for Enrolment". Returning this to the school is your first step in joining the Silkwood Education Experience. This form places you on a waitlist for the next available spot in the class or on future waitlists for Prep.

Part of Silkwood's uniqueness is that we are a small school. This also means we have limited spaces available in each class level. Places are highly sought after and to avoid disappointment we recommend families enrol their children when they are born. Attending our Playgroup program or our affiliated preschool program at Fingerprints Childcare Centre gives families a stronger opportunity for placement into Prep.

Families wishing to know more about Silkwood are invited to attend our monthly school tours, Open Evenings or book into our next Parent Information course. The school office can help you with dates and times – phone 5655 0300 or email [reception@silkwood.qld.edu.au](mailto:reception@silkwood.qld.edu.au).

We hope you have enjoyed learning about the Silkwood Educational Experience and we look forward to seeing you soon.

## spend a day

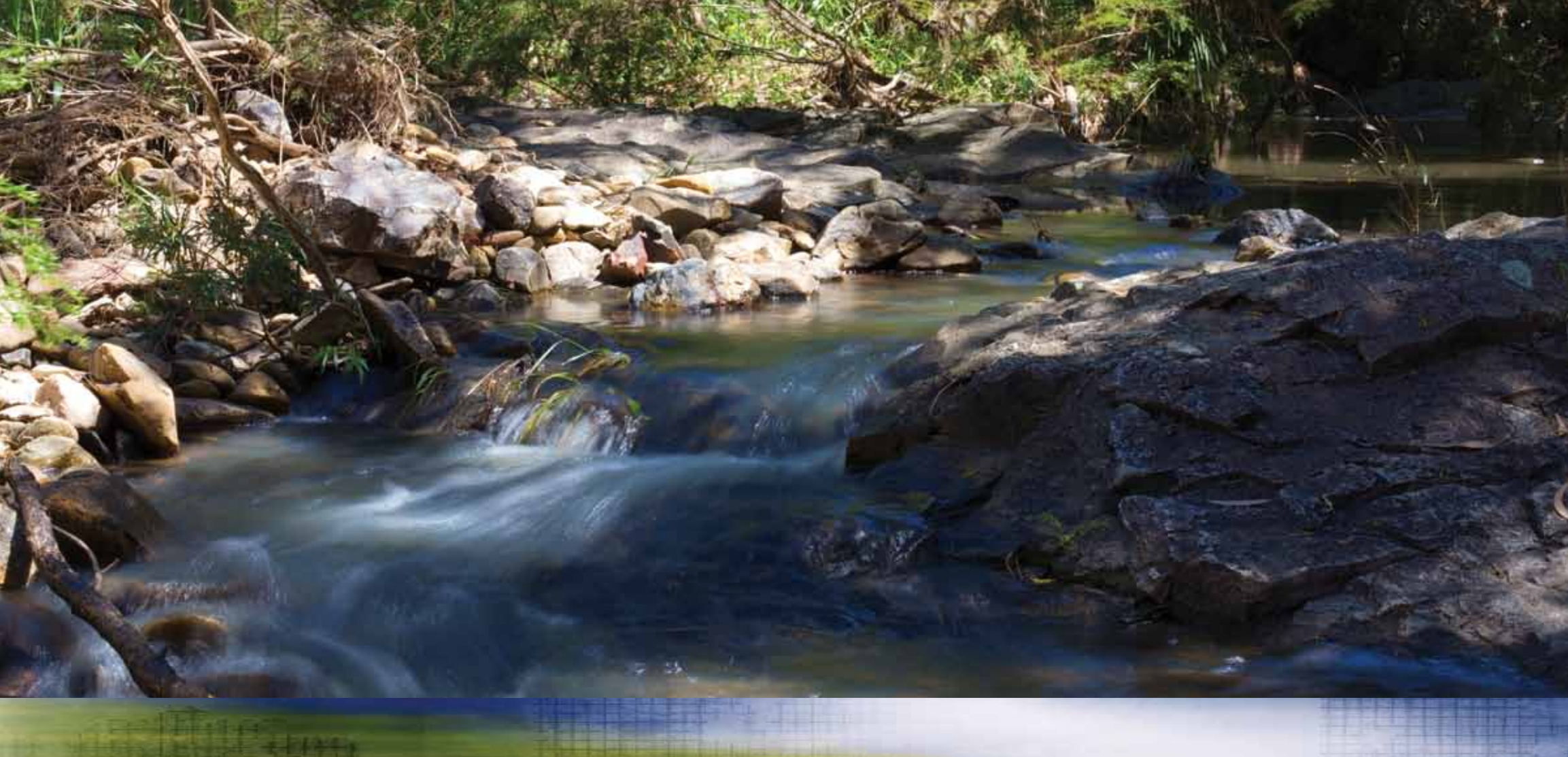
What better way to get a feel for Silkwood than to spend a day here? Just a regular day . . .

Our 'Spend a Day' program is open to primary school students who are considering entering the school where Silkwood has available spaces. Prospective students are immersed in the Silkwood experience, attending classes, excursions, going to assemblies or events, as if they were enrolled. We encourage prospective students to participate in activities and classes rather than just observe. This is a great way for them to get a feel for our school, to make friends and get to know the teachers.

At least one student from Silkwood will be assigned to look after a prospective student and assist them throughout the day. Our current students and teachers will do their very best to ensure prospective students feel welcome and a part of Silkwood School on this day.

If you would like your child to 'Spend a Day' at Silkwood School, please contact the enrolment officer on 5655 0300.





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