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**Cheder**  
חינוך על טהרת הקודש



# Annual Report

For the Year Ended 31 December 2024

Cheder Levi Yitzchok Inc.

ABN 63 423 263 810

## INTRODUCTION

### *From The Principal*

*The purpose of Cheder Levi Yitzchok's annual report is to provide our parent body, the broader community, and the state and federal governments with an overview of our school performance in accordance with the Australian Education Act 2013 as well as the Australian Education Regulations 2013. The annual report informs of updates, achievements, statistics and other relevant information.*

In the 2024 school year, the school continued to strengthen its operations under the leadership of the Heads of School: Rabbi Menachem Cohen for the boys' stream at Cheder Levi Yitzchok, and Rebbetzin Chaya Winner for the girls' stream at Bnos Chana.

Throughout 2024, the school remained heavily engaged in compliance related matters, including concluding reviews by the VRQA and CCYP. These processes stemmed from child safety concerns initially raised in 2022.

Significant administrative time was dedicated over the past year to refining both the curriculum and the school's safety compliance documentation and practices. This included, among other initiatives, delivering child abuse prevention training to students, staff, parents, and school leadership—an exercise which is now conducted annually. The Child Safety Working Group considers safety-related concerns, and staff use an app to report any concerns or incidents or can report directly to their supervisor or Heads of School.

The education sector continues to face significant challenges due to an ongoing shortage of qualified teachers. As a small religious school, Cheder experiences these pressures acutely, particularly when seeking staff who align with our values and educational mission. Like many schools, we have at times relied on casual staff to maintain continuity. Despite this, our permanent teaching staff, aides, and administrative team have shown exceptional commitment and adaptability. We extend our sincere thanks to them for their unwavering dedication, flexibility, and care in the face of these ongoing staffing challenges.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the Cheder boys' learning stream, Rabbi Mendel Cohen and Rabbi Yehoshua (Shua)Laufer have continued in their vital leadership roles as **Head of School** and **Head of Learning**, respectively. Their thoughtful leadership, engaging programs, and creative approaches to curriculum delivery have greatly enriched the

classroom experience. Through their dedication and innovation, they have inspired both students and staff and helped foster a vibrant and effective learning environment.

In the Bnos Chana girls' stream, **Head of School** Mrs Chaya Winner has continued to foster a strong and positive team dynamic, guiding the school through a year of growth and change. This included the successful addition of a new Year 5 class and the management of a challenging renovation of the building's upper level. Throughout, Mrs Winner has maintained a stable and nurturing environment for students and staff, while actively planning for the school's continued development.

In 2024, the **Student Services Coordinator**, continued supporting teachers with student wellbeing, learning adjustments, and educational support resources to promote student learning.

Cheder Levi Yitzchok continued to strengthen and enrich its curriculum through several key initiatives:

- The launch of a dedicated Gemara stream for upper primary, introducing students to structured learning in a traditional format for the first time in the school's history.
- The rollout of a new Chumash curriculum, providing a clearer, more scaffolded approach to skills and comprehension from early primary onwards.
- Continued implementation of the UFLI literacy program in Prep to Grade 2, with notable progress in decoding and early reading fluency.
- A revised Maths scope and sequence for Years 3–6, improving continuity and alignment across year levels.
- Further development of our Integrated Studies curriculum, with expanded units that bring together Geography, History, Civics and Citizenship under one thematic learning program.
- Ongoing use of annualised standardised testing to support data-informed instruction and student growth tracking.
- Expansion of Yiddish cultural learning in the upper primary, giving students broader exposure to language, history, and Jewish identity.

And, in Bnos Chana:

- Developing the social, emotional learning and middos program – this year focusing on understanding emotions and developing empathy, team building and taking responsibility for one's actions.
- Continued implementation of the UFLI literacy program in Prep to Grade 4.
- Building curriculum for the new Year 5 class commencing in 2025.
- Strengthening resources in the learning and enhancement program with support for assistants, liaising with teachers for differentiated learning
- Creative skills were a focus through drama, music and performances within the school and for parents.

Beyond formal academic learning, our curriculum continues to be enriched by:

- A vibrant calendar of Chabad chagim and events, fostering joyous learning and meaningful connection to tradition.
- A wide range of excursions, incursions, and hands-on learning experiences, contributing to student engagement and holistic development.

Improvements in facilities were focused on the Bnos Chana building, where extensive renovations occurred to transform the upper floor into modern, light filled classrooms and office and learning breakout spaces.

We remain committed to ongoing growth across all areas of the school, with a focus on fostering enthusiastic, engaged learners and a supportive environment where staff feel valued and fulfilled to be part of the Cheder community.

Sincerely,

**Eliezer Kornhauser**

## VISION

Cheder Levi Yitzchok is an independent, private Jewish school, inspired and guided by the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. The school forms part of a worldwide network of institutions affiliated with the Chabad Lubavitch movement. We are dedicated to providing '**Chinuch Al Taharas HaKodesh**' for every child. Through their learning, prayer and social interactions, the students are imbued with Jewish and Chassidic values and guided to a faithful lifestyle of Torah and Mitzvos, illuminated by the teachings of Chabad Chassidus, and to selfless community service.

*'Chinuch Al Taharas HaKodesh' means education which promotes G-D consciousness, faith and a spirit of holiness in all aspects of the school's curriculum and pedagogy, including general or secular studies.*

## MISSION

In a child-safe environment, Cheder Levi Yitzchok aims to offer education which:

- provides uncompromised holistic instruction (Chinuch) with a particular emphasis on Talmud, Halacha (Jewish law) and the teachings of Chabad;
- facilitates character development, Yiras Shomayim (reverence of G-d) and a passion for lifelong learning;
- addresses the spiritual, moral, cognitive, vocational, physical, social and communal dimensions of students;
- fosters a lifestyle of selfless devotion to others;
- assists each student to discover and develop his own unique strengths;
- supports a happy, safe, inclusive and personally validating learning environment;
- operates in partnership with the parents and members of the CLY community;
- emphasises the role of teachers, who through role modelling reflect the values and ethos of Chabad philosophy;
- provides a wholesome environment shielded from the potentially harmful influences of some aspects of current society;
- upholds important Australian values and adheres to Australian curriculum requirements; and
- prepares our students to continue the cherished tradition of Jews as valuable and law-abiding contributors to Australian society.

Underpinning this, we aspire to contribute to, and accelerate, Moshiach (the coming of the Messianic Age), described by Maimonides as an era in which the sole occupation of mankind will be to know G-d, and a time when “we will grasp the knowledge of the Creator according to the full extent of human potential.”

## **OBJECTIVES**

Cheder Levi Yitzchok's goals are to be:

- focused on a clear identity associated with the Rebbe's wishes;
- a provider of excellent education: academic and life skills;
- a safe environment within a warm and dynamic community;
- a place which nurtures communal contributors;
- professional and systematic; and
- an employer of choice to attract and retain suitably qualified and skilled staff.

## **VALUES**

- Ahavas Yisroel (love of our fellow and compassionate treatment of him, such as we would wish ourselves treated).
- Yiras Shamayim (reverence of the Almighty in all that we do).
- Selfless community service.
- Lifelong learning.





## Cheder Levi Yitzchok Staff

### TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS, REGISTRATIONS

All teaching staff at the Cheder Levi Yitzchok registered school hold teaching qualifications recognised by the Victorian Institute of Teaching. Many of our teaching team hold additional qualifications in related areas such as psychology, learning disorders and Jewish Studies.

### COMPOSITION OF STAFF EMPLOYED AT THE SCHOOL

	Full-Time		Part-Time			
	Male Head Count	Female Head Count	Male Head Count	FTE	Female Head Count	FTE
<b>Teaching Staff</b>						
Principal	1	0	0	0	0	0
Teaching Staff	3	2	0	0	6	3.5
<b>Non-Teaching Staff</b>						
Specialist Support	0	0	0	0	5	2.7
Administrative and Clerical	0	3	0	0	2	1.5
Building Operations, Maintenance and Other Staff	1	0	1	0.6	0	0
<b>TOTAL STAFFING</b>	5	5	1	0.6	13	7.7

Casual Staff are excluded from the above table.

*Note: Cheder does not currently employ any staff who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.*

### PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENT

The Cheder staff group comprises a remarkable team of educators, support staff and administrative staff committed to creating meaningful learning opportunities for our students.

The school has an induction program for staff who are unfamiliar with the Cheder community culture, its protocols, and practices.

Regardless of individual background or previous knowledge of the culture which underlies the school's mission, all staff play a part in bringing the Cheder mission and values to life for the students.

In 2024 focus continued to develop our integrated studies program, which fuses government curriculum requirements with the school's mission for awareness of the Divine in all learning, collectively created and delivered by Rabbis and registered teachers.

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

At Cheder, we believe in creating an environment that fosters continuous growth and development for our staff members. Our philosophy for identifying opportunities and supporting staff in their professional development is rooted in a commitment to individualised and holistic growth. We understand that each staff member has unique strengths, interests, and areas for improvement, so we strive to provide a range of opportunities that cater to diverse needs.

To support this individualised approach, we use regular assessments, feedback sessions, and open communication to understand each staff member's aspirations and identify areas for further skill development. We then offer a variety of professional development opportunities, including in-house workshops, conferences, mentoring programs, and online courses, tailored to their specific needs. Additionally, we encourage collaboration and peer learning, providing platforms for sharing best practices and encouraging staff members to learn from one another. Our goal is to create a supportive and empowering environment that enables our staff to reach their full potential and positively impact the educational experiences of our students.

Cheder values empowerment of our staff through professional development, which included the following during 2024:

- Child Protection Training 2024
- Creating and Maintaining the Connection
- First Aid & Anaphylaxis Training – Hatzola
- ADHD and Aspergers – impact in the classroom
- Foundation Certificate in Specific Learning Disorders - Learning Difficulties Australia
- Literacy Impact – Introduction to the Science of Reading
- Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations – Dept of Education
- UFLI Literacy Instruction
- Various ISV Professional Development Sessions



- New Business Managers Program
- New Child Safe Standards including Ministerial Order 1359
- Privacy Law – Implications for schools
- VRQA Minimum Standards

## **Student Outcomes**

At Cheder we strive for each student to grow and thrive spiritually, emotionally, and academically. Through their learning, prayer and social interactions, the students are imbued with Jewish and Chassidic values and guided to a faithful lifestyle of Torah and Mitzvos.

The school continues its focus on an integrated program of learning, which fuses Torah learning with the Victorian curriculum requirements.

### **STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS**

Total student enrolments across the school in 2024 were 155 students in years Foundation to Year 9.

In 2024 Cheder consisted of a girls' program operating from Foundation to Year 4 totalling 64 students, and a boys' program that operated across Foundation to Year 9 with 91 students.

### **NATIONAL ASSESSMENT PERFORMANCE**

The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is administered by the Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority (VCAA) for students in all states of Australia in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 to provide a measure of student numeracy and literacy on an annual basis. It is imperative all Cheder children sit the NAPLAN test as it is part of our reporting practices.

The NAPLAN assessment is a snapshot of each child's results in one given test per curriculum area. Whilst NAPLAN results are informative, we prefer to assess our children on a whole range of activities. We have a diverse range of learning styles and we cater to all needs by using multiple intelligences to guide our teaching.

The percentage of Cheder's students who achieved at or above the National Minimum Standards, i.e., performing at or higher than expected standards for

that year level, in the NAPLAN testing in 2024 is represented below. Note there was no Year 5 class in 2024. The 2024 test was performed on paper.

The 2023 data is represented with the same parameters. Note there was no Year 9 class in 2023.

The 2022 data set is represented with developing, strong and exceeding characteristics and as such is a different basis for reporting. From 2023, a change was made to the students included for reporting and comparative data is not available for 2022. There was not Year 7 or Year 9 class in 2022.

	Reading	Persuasive Writing	Spelling	Grammar / Punctuation	Numeracy
<b>2024</b>					
Year 3	95	72	60	48	72
Year 7	70	50	40	70	90
Year 9	66	60	71	71	85
<b>2023</b>					
Year 3	79	80	63	63	72
Year 5	69	38	67	50	71
Year 7	66	67	90	80	80
<b>2022</b>					
Year 3	100	100	100	88	100
Year 5	93	100	93	100	94

## STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Our school takes a comprehensive approach to managing student absence, leveraging technology to streamline the process. All attendance is diligently tracked in our school management system, ensuring accurate records. Absences predominantly arise due to illness, injury and family commitments. In the case of extended absences, we proactively query parents to gain insight into the reason for the absence and as necessary, to provide support. Additionally, we emphasise the importance of proactive communication from parents by reminding them to notify us in advance via email for any planned trips or absences.

By maintaining open lines of communication, we aim to maintain accurate attendance records, address prolonged absences, and ensure that parents are actively engaged in their child's attendance management. This approach fosters

a collaborative partnership between the school and parents, promoting a positive and consistent learning environment for all students.

Grade	Attendance	Attendance including explained variances
Foundation	86%	92%
Year 1	91%	94%
Year 2	85%	90%
Year 3	86%	90%
Year 4	88%	93%
Year 6	80%	87%
Year 7	81%	90%
Year 9	81%	86%
Average	85%	90%

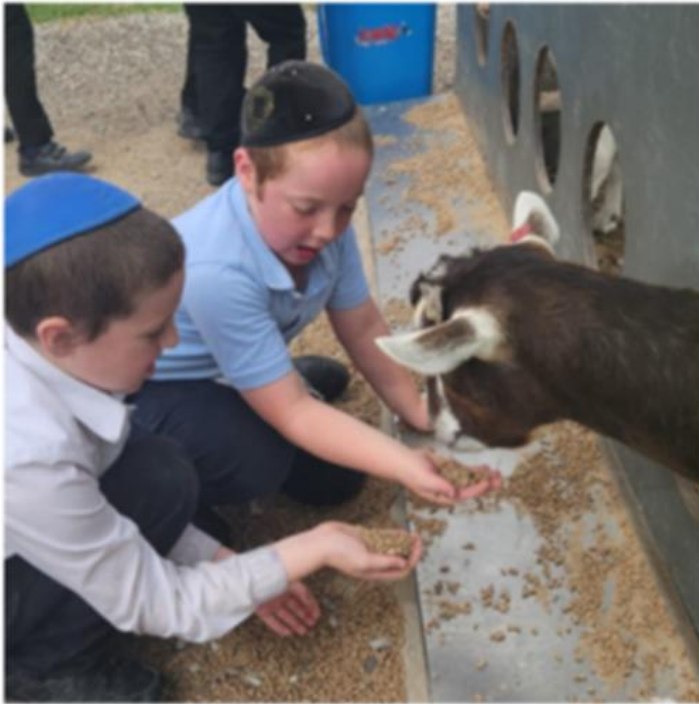
## EXTRA-CURRICULAR OFFERINGS

Cheder Levi Yitzchok believes in providing a well-rounded education that extends beyond the traditional classroom setting. Our philosophy for identifying opportunities for culturally aligned extracurricular activities, including events, programs, incursions, and excursions, is centred around fostering exploration, creativity, and personal growth. We actively seek out a diverse range of opportunities that cater to the varied interests and talents of our students. Our dedicated team collaborates with teachers, students, and parents to identify and evaluate potential activities, ensuring they align with our educational objectives and promote character development, social interaction, and experiential learning.

These opportunities are carefully selected to inspire curiosity, expand horizons, and provide students with valuable life experiences outside the classroom. By embracing an holistic approach to education, we strive to empower our students to discover their passions, build resilience, and develop a well-rounded skill set that will serve them throughout their lives.

Program offerings during 2024 included the following:

- Emerald overnight camps
- Chesterfield Farm
- Rayners Orchard
- Bee Incursion
- Melbourne Sports Centre
- Alma Park mapping excursion
- Museums Victoria Scienceworks
- Melbourne Airport
- Emerald Shabbaton
- State Library of Victoria
- Fire Department Visit
- Science Excursion
- Moorabbin Air Museum
- Cardinia Reserve Excursion
- Shofar Factory



## Health And Wellbeing

### COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

Cheder has a commitment to Child Safety that disseminates from the School Advisory Board and throughout the organisation. This is supported by Cheder's Statement of Commitment to Child Safety:

*Cheder Levi Yitzchok is committed to the **safety and wellbeing** of all children. The primary focus of our care and decision-making will be to protect every child from harm including all forms of abuse. Cheder Levi Yitzchok has a zero tolerance for child abuse. Cheder Levi Yitzchok is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard.*

### STUDENT HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Cheder Levi Yitzchok prioritises the health and well-being of students and staff. We provide comprehensive support to students, addressing their social, emotional, and academic needs. Regular communication is maintained to keep staff, parents and students updated on policies and important information. We organize student wellbeing sessions, creating a safe space for students to express their concerns and seek guidance. Additionally, we actively encourage and value feedback from both students and staff, providing opportunities to recommend enhancements to our programs. By fostering a caring and inclusive environment, we aim to ensure the holistic wellbeing of our school community.





## **STAFF**

Cheder Levi Yitzchok places great importance on the health and wellbeing of our staff. We understand that staff wellbeing directly impacts their ability to support our students effectively. To support our staff, we have an induction process, followed by scheduled regular team meetings and a planning day at the start of term, providing a platform for collaboration, sharing ideas, and addressing any concerns. We also hold appreciation events to recognize and celebrate their hard work and dedication. Moreover, we prioritise their wellbeing by providing avenues for seeking support, such as open conversations with a manager or colleague. Additionally, we offer professional development opportunities that focus on balancing the role of an educator, promoting work-life balance, and self-care strategies. By investing in the wellbeing and professional growth of our staff, we ensure a supportive and thriving learning environment for both our educators and students.

## **Feedback From Key Stakeholders**

Cheder is committed to continuous improvement and understands and appreciates the importance of feedback from our key stakeholders in our development. The feedback and views of our stakeholder groups are regularly sought through a range of mechanisms.



## **PARENT/STUDENT FEEDBACK**

Feedback from parents is obtained through regular email communication between teachers and parents, Bi-annual Parent-Teacher interviews, information nights, and many extracurricular programs and events that allow parents to interact with school staff on a regular basis.

Our permission forms for events and excursions offer opportunity for comment, and our families often include mention of the warmth and care of our staff and our approach to caring for the individual needs of every student.



As a small school, the principal and his team are accessible to families, providing opportunities for ad-hoc communication and feedback.

Students have opportunities to provide feedback during their school sessions, in individual student and teacher meetings, and when engaging with our leadership team.

*"There's a sense that Cheder is raising our boys with us - not instead of us. Its's a true partnership, grounded in values and care."*

### TEACHER FEEDBACK

Regular whole school and departmental meetings are held, providing avenues for staff to provide feedback on curriculum, student management and processes across the school. The Cheder has an open, warm, and cooperative culture which supports staff in providing constructive feedback to help achieve improvement.

*".. **support for each** other is wonderful. Nothing is too much to help each other out. Feedback is given kindly with clear expectations for improvement."*



Throughout the year staff are invited to meetings with their direct manager and are provided with opportunity to discuss issues relating to their role and experiences. This includes what is important to them, how supported they feel in their roles, their job satisfaction and whether they would recommend Cheder to their friends as an employer of choice. Staff have identified self-fulfilment and a healthy atmosphere to be essential characteristics for job satisfaction, with

recognition and acknowledgement being good to have, but less important. The vast majority of staff feel very satisfied working for Cheder.

Exit interviews provide staff who are leaving the school with the opportunity to provide feedback on the reasons for their departure and to share observations about their time on staff. Feedback is shared as appropriate with the Principal and the Executive Committee for consideration as to how potential improvements could be made.

*“It’s a place where you’re backed, not just professionally, but personally. Leadership genuinely cares about your growth and your wellbeing.”*

## **Facilities Upgrade**

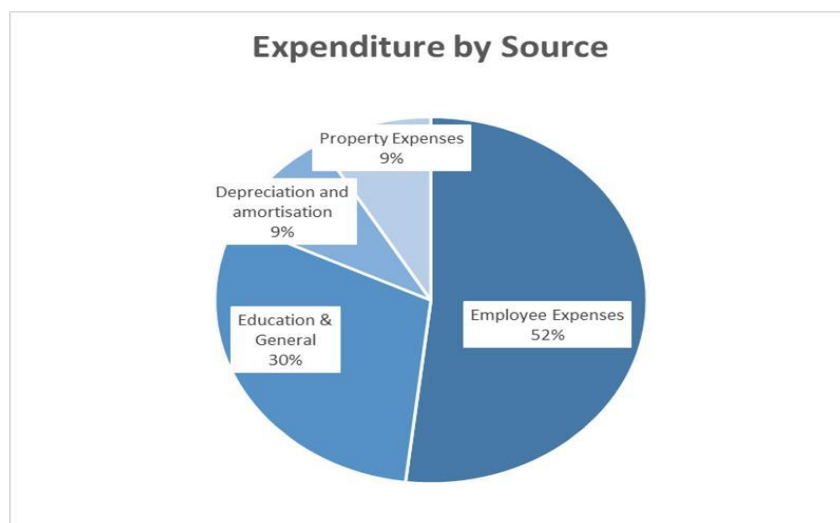
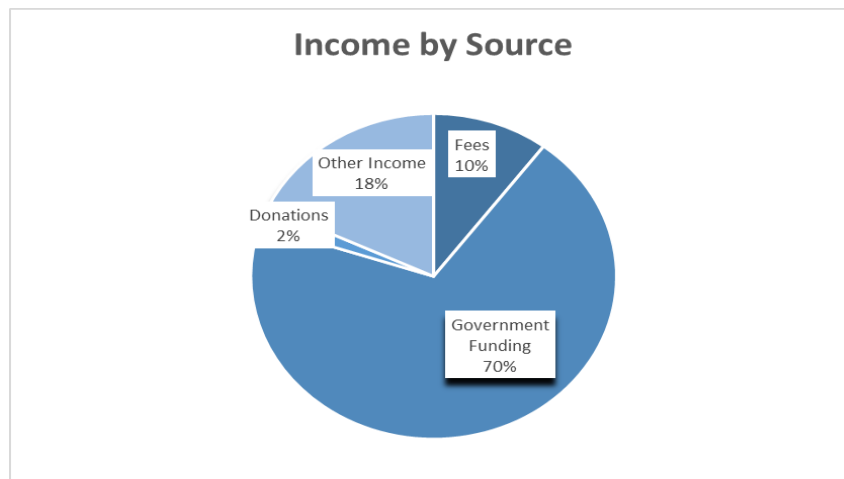
An extensive renovation was performed during 2024 to transform the first floor of Bnos Chana into 4 classrooms, with additional offices and meeting spaces. The renovation captured the historic elements of the building, adding modern classroom amenities such as electronic whiteboards and energy efficient LED lighting, with calming views across Alma Park from the eastern facing classrooms.



## Finance

Cheder Levi Yitzchok Inc is a not-for profit organisation and is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-For-Profits Commission (ACNC). The School Advisory Board and Leadership team adhere to relevant commercial business practices to manage the finances of the organisation in an effective and compliant manner. The school undergoes an independent annual audit to ensure the financial management and governance of the school are maintained in accordance with the ACNC requirements. Any end of year surplus is applied to facility development and improvements to the educational offering.

These charts indicate sources of income and expenditure for the 2024 calendar year.



## **Cheder Charitable Funding**

The Cheder seeks philanthropic funds from the community to enable the provision to the Chabad community of the best possible learning environment and facilities. The Cheder oversees the operation of the following Deductible Gift Recipient Funds and is grateful for any and all donations received.



## **Cheder Scholarship Fund**

Established to award scholarships to students (or future students) of Cheder for the purpose of promoting the education of the recipients, on the basis of merit and equity. Donations can be made to:

Account Name:	<b>Cheder Scholarship Fund</b>
Bank:	ANZ Banking Group
BSB:	013-606
Account No.:	2344-50987

### **Cheder School Building Fund**

Established and maintained to provide financial support for the acquisition, construction, and maintenance of Cheder's school buildings. Donations can be made to:

Account Name:	<b>Cheder School Building Fund</b>
Bank:	ANZ Banking Group
BSB:	013-606
Account No.:	2252-41446

### **Cheder Public Library Fund**

Established to operate the Cheder Public Library. Donations can be made to:

Account Name:	<b>Cheder Public Library Fund</b>
Bank:	ANZ Banking Group
BSB:	013-606
Account No.:	3071-15814