

Holy Rosary School – Annual Community Meeting

16 November 2016

It is an honour to give the Chairman's report for this evening.

This time last year it was my first ACM as Chair, it was also Mark de Kluyver's first with our school as principal, and at last AGM we welcomed 3 new board members. Subsequently, we also had a new Treasurer, a new Board Secretary, a new Parish Representative and have welcomed Assistant Principal Geordie Thuijs to the board. To say the Board has undergone significant change over the past 18 months is an understatement.

To that end, that amongst this change, we have actually had a stable and fruitful 12 months, and have significantly grown as a board to where we are right now.

Whilst the Board's responsibilities are varied, given the current context of the board and the school, our focus has been primarily on the following three areas:

- Governance and finance - this includes an understanding our role and responsibilities as board members, and being frank and fearless in how we undertake those responsibilities - our children deserve nothing less;
- Supporting the school leadership team in a strong strategy in building teaching and learning;
- Setting the school up for the long term, financially and in regards to appropriate facilities.

Firstly, in regards to governance, we have had several initiatives designed to help build a sound base for board decision making. The clear majority of the board have been part of the Catholic Education Office's board inductions and other specialised training, and we have spent time reviewing our constitution.

Secondly, in regards to teaching and learning, the Board has been keen to work with the school leadership on a School Improvement plan, with a focus on teaching and learning. Whilst the expertise in this area lies within the teaching fraternity, the Board has taken a strong role in this, symbolised by the addition of an Assistant Principal, Geordie Thuijs, to the Board this year to help strength the connection between the Board's role in supporting teaching and learning.

And finally, we have been strongly focussed on the school finances and resources, and to this end a lot of work has been done.

As a board, we believe that our children deserve the most appropriate facilities to learn. The first component of this has been in regards to improving the school's budget position without passing that burden on to others. Following on from last year, a lot of effort has been made to ensure the money the school has available to it is directed to places that have the most significant impact on student learning.

Changes in the way schools are funded have seen some challenges for the school and a lot of hard work has been done, led by our Finance subcommittee and Treasurer Ross Tolley, who have collectively worked diligently on all aspects of finance throughout the year. My sincere thanks to this committee for all the time and effort committed this year, particularly to Ross whose efforts have been over and above, and give the board a great sense of comfort in the direction. Ross will take you through more in regards to the budgetary detail shortly.

The other aspect in regards to appropriate resourcing is the school's facilities. A lot of work has gone into laying the foundations for a long overdue Capital Development Plan, one which frames a bold vision for how Holy Rosary will look and feel for generations to come. This obviously comes with its challenges, the biggest of which being finances. The Board has spent a lot of time exploring options in this regard, which has included visits to other schools and their facilities, as well as numerous meetings with external parties to help bring this to fruition.

Whilst this will be a long-term plan and process, we are hopeful of being able to engage the school community in the plans and ideation next year so that we, together as a community, can create a physical environment along the lines of what children of our Catholic community. We also strongly believe that looking after our students with disability is of paramount importance, and will be ensuring this will be at the forefront of discussions.

We are strongly of the view and belief that our facilities need to, and will, keep up with the strategic changes to our teaching and learning environment.

In addition to the strategic priorities for the School Board, we have continued to participate in areas of the school, including in the recruitment of new school staff. I believe it is great for parents to participate so directly in the school, and share their professional acumen.

It has truly been a busy school year.

Finally, I would like to finish with some words of appreciation for those who make the school and its community such a vibrant environment.

Thank you to my fellow board members for their over-and-above commitments this year. I would particularly like to thank Deborah Noblett for taking on the role of Board Secretary. I would also like to re-iterate my appreciation for our Treasurer, Ross Tolley. And I would also like to thank Father Peter for being part of our Board this year, and am delighted that the relationship between the school and the parish continues to thrive.

I would also like to thank the Parents and Friends Association, through President Simon Devlin and the committee, for the work they do to keep the school spirit vibrant, and to keep providing those extras the school so appreciates. And to our Board P&F representative, Mel Gardiner, who for her troubles, attends at least 2 meetings a month in addition to raising 4 boys.

And finally, I'd like to thank all the staff at the school - teaching staff, teacher assistants and administrative staff, and the leadership team led by Mark, who without exception, are what makes the school what it is. Your commitment, dedication and love for our children is very much appreciated and never underestimated.

I look forward to a wonderful 2017 at Holy Rosary School and wish you all the best for the short remainder of the school year, and the Holy season ahead of us.

Jonathon Woolfrey
Chair
Holy Rosary School Board

