



SAINT HELENA'S
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Something Beautiful for God

2020 AGM
Board Chair's Report

On behalf of the St Helena's Catholic Primary School Board I would like to welcome you to the Annual General Meeting for 2020. My name is Melinda Webb, and I am the current Board Chair.

As I began to reflect on the year so far for the school and the work of the Board, I could not help but reflect on the impact that the pandemic has had, not only on the school community, but also on communities across Australia and across the world. The loss of lives, the loss of jobs and income for families, the loss of learning for students, the loss of connection, the loss of certainty and predictability and for some, the loss of feeling safe. Loss represents what has gone and what has changed in our personal world and in the world in general. Expert opinion suggests that one of the most effective supports for dealing with loss is human connection and a sense of community. Here in the St Helena's School Community we are truly fortunate that the strong sense of belonging developed and fostered by the leadership team and staff at the school offers mutual care and is open to everyone in the community.

Led by Lina Bertolini, the principal, the leadership team of Assistant Principals Sascha Saulsman, Vicky Rowland and Peter Merry has provided extensive and ongoing support to the Board. They are always willing to answer our questions and share their knowledge of what is happening in the school so that the work of the Board continues to align with the work of the school. For this valuable partnership I would like to say thank you.

At this time, I would share my appreciation for the members of the St Helena's Board - Denise O'Connor, who is also the Treasurer, Christine Newhill, Kylie Wilford, Atem Diing, Eva Gomes-Sebastiao and Tara Palm. I would also like to thank Mitch Lohrentz who represents the P&F and Hannah Wager, the Parish representative. Thank you all for your energy, dedication and focus this year as we worked with the Principal and the school leadership team to benefit the students, staff and families of the St Helena's community. Thanks also to Father Bona, our parish priest and Tracy Papenfus, our Finance Officer for her invaluable support and her willingness to share her knowledge of finance and the new AoS system with the Board so that we can continue to learn.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2020

STUDENTS AND THEIR LEARNING:

St Helena's strategic development of digital technologies over the last three years meant that students and teachers were well positioned to handle the disruptions to learning experienced during COVID.

The 1:1 iPad program which commenced with Year 4 this year has been successful and will continue in 2021. The initiative ensures students will exit St Helena's with important technological skills to enable them to be successful at high school and in life. Due to the success of the role of the full time Learning Support Teacher in 2020, the Board has made the decision to continue to fund the role through 2021. The services of the Digital Technology Lead Teacher appointed for two days per week in 2020 will be discontinued for 2021 since the skills are now embedded in the practices of the teachers. During second semester the Board also approved the appointment of a new EA for Students with Disability. The role of the School Chaplain will continue to 2022. This will enable the social worker, Jemma Trimboli to continue the terrific work she does with students and families in the school around social and emotional wellbeing.

As Chair of the Board, I was a panel member for the recruitment process for the appointment of Bec Delauney to the permanent Administrative Assistant position in the front office and for the twelve month appointment of Albert Borrello as Acting Assistant Principal for 2021. The Board wishes Pete Merry and Vicky Rowlands all the best for the life changes they will be experiencing in 2021.

The Board would like to express their appreciation and thanks to all of the Staff for their handling of the changes to the learning environment due to the pandemic. The school response managed the difficult situation well and ensured that students not only felt safe and supported but continued to learn. I think parents may also have had quite a bit of learning to do during this time also.

Feedback from parents, students, and teachers around the remote learning strategy, via survey and comment, was overwhelmingly positive and indicated that the pastoral care phone calls were very well received.

SCHOOL FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS:

Safety

During 2020 the Board approved several projects around the school that ensure the safety of the staff and students, school equipment and the grounds. These included:

- Softfall replacement in the nature play area
- Tree safety audit conducted to assist with maintenance planning
- Outside sirens were installed
- Outside lights upgraded from fluorescent to LEDs
- Speed bumps were installed in the main carpark
- A health and safety audit was conducted at the school by an external volunteer to support the work of the trained OH&S representatives at the school
- Mulching of gardens
- New permanent pedestrian gate was installed to replace the temporary gate that was used during the COVID restrictions.

Outside school hours care

In 2020, Discovery Kids was appointed to provide outside school hours care for children for twelve months. This business is owned and run by qualified and experienced Catholic primary school teachers and provides a program that is based on quality Catholic care. Due to the increasing numbers for the service and the great feedback the school has received about the services provided Lina will liaise with CEWA to extend the lease for 2021.

Strategic Plan for 2020-2022

The Strategic Plan for 2020-2022 was finalised, sent out to parents and is available on website. Work has been progressing on the actions within the plan across the whole year. Lina has been reporting to Board each semester about how the school has been travelling and letting us know any changes to timelines that have occurred as a result of the pandemic. As part of the actions in the plan, in 2020 an award, based around the school values of:

- Respect
- Equality
- Community
- Care for the Earth

will be presented on behalf of the Board to a graduating Year 6 student at the Graduation Mass and Awards Ceremony on 8 December.

Community Partnership

Throughout 2020, the school and the Board have worked to strengthen the partnership with Holy Cross College. One outcome of this process has been an agreement to apply a fee discount at St Helena's for those students who have siblings at Holy Cross College. The other positive outcome was the first joint St Helena's and Holy Cross College Board Dinner and liturgy held in June. A decision has been made to continue with this function for 2021. As part of the work of the Board we reviewed and approved the St Helena's Catholic Primary School's Student Enrolment Policy and School Fees Policy. This policy review work will continue in 2021.

FAMILIES:

Fee Relief

In September, Catholic Education Western Australia recognised that we are living through an unprecedented time in our history and that the social and economic impact of the Covid-19 virus has been significant. An announcement was made to provide families with students attending Catholic Schools with some fee relief for 2021 and that there would be no increase to tuition fees. The St Helena's Board Finance Committee reviewed the school's full fee schedule and has been able to make some reductions for parents and families for 2021. These will be shared a little later in the Finance Report.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE:

Capital Development Plan (CDP)

Last year in my report I was able to share that St Helena's Capital Development Plan (CDP) which was begun in 2017, had passed stages 1 and 2 of the approval processes to obtain a low interest loan for building work. The next stage of the process was to be a Panel visit which would be scheduled during 2020.

The story however continues, and the timeline goes like this:

Timeline	Process
2017	Process begins and continues...
February 2020	CDP was finalised and submitted.
May 2020	Discussion at the Board considered the possibility of withdrawing because the COVID situation unclear and we wanted to preserve school cash accounts.
May/June 2020	CEWA accepted a decrease in the \$ input by the school.
June 2020	Resubmitted adjusted CDP
August 2020	Application considered by Catholic Education Commission
August 2020	Application was recommended
September 2020	Board Meeting with architects
September 2020	Building committee established – Tracey Pappenfus, Lina Bertolini, Christine Newhill, Melinda Webb, Mitch Lohrentz and Wayne Webb (co-opted community member)
October 2020	Meeting with architects and CEWA representative to establish timelines
April 2021 (approx.)	Building will commence
February 2022 (approx.)	Completed

Work on site will begin in 2021 and if all goes well should be ready for 2022. There will be some disruptions to access during this time, however, Lina will ensure that the community is informed. Included in this CDP is:

- Extension and refurbishment of the Administration Block
- Construction of Reflection spaces
- Relocation of the garden shed and construction of additional toilet block, and
- Construction of a School Entry Statement and installation of intercom for security.

Catholic Education Western Australia Limited (CEWA Ltd)

Catholic Education Western Australia Limited (CEWA Ltd) came into effect on 1 January 2020. As a result of this decision all aspects of governance are being reviewed and updated. On 18 November Lina forwarded to all parents a letter about the change of name for the Board to a School Advisory Council (SAC). The primary purpose of the St Helena's Advisory Council is to provide advice and support to the Principal in order that the Principal may lead the school effectively as a Catholic school community.

In 2021, the School Advisory Council (SAC) will continue to operate under existing constitution of the Board. The existing CECWA Catholic School Board Constitution is currently under review by CECWA to ensure appropriateness and consistency with CEWA Ltd's new governance structure. It is due to be implemented in 2022.

However, there will be a key change for the financial operation of the school. The Principal will, from 2021, be responsible for all financial aspects of the school and will keep the SAC informed. The SAC will endorse the budget prepared by the school, but it will now be approved by CECWA. For 2021 the new St Helena's School Advisory Council will continue to meet monthly and will share information as to the changes in operation as they become clear.

There is still important work to continue throughout 2021 to build on the strengths of the school and the community so that students and their learning thrive. I look forward to working collaboratively with School Advisory Council members, the leadership team, and the community to meet the challenges that we will face in the coming year.