

## **BOARD CHAIR REPORT**

### **AGM 25<sup>TH</sup> November 2020**

On behalf of the School Board it is with pleasure that I present the 2020 Our Lady of Lourdes Board Chair's report.

I firstly want to acknowledge that 2020 has been a year like no other. I would like to thank Father Stan, the Parish, our teachers and Mark for your dedication and unwavering focus on protecting our children physically, emotionally and psychologically through this unprecedented year. COVID-19 has presented many challenges for us all individually and as a school community. The transition to remote learning was a difficult one with many teachers having to provide two modes of learning; online as well as physical booklets to ensure all children had opportunities to continue learning. Cleaning around the school has significantly increased with Mark and our Education Assistants spending time cleaning the toilets and playground equipment. Increased cleaning continues, however, we now have our school cleaners coming in more frequently. Father Stan and our Teachers have been proactive in providing support and ensuring we all continued to feel a part of a caring catholic community during remote learning and the closure of our school and Church by reaching out with telephone calls.

Although COVID-19 temporarily stopped things progressing within the school, I am pleased to say many of the projects that were planned have now gone ahead. This year we have been able continue refreshing and modernizing our school with painting and the replacement of the softfall in the early years playground. We have also been able to continue progressing Stage 7 of our Capital Development Plan. This year the focus has been on finalizing engineering plans, obtaining funding and planning for such significant redevelopment.

Stage 7 will comprise of:

1. A new contemporary learning space in the undercover area,
2. Refurbishment of the IT classroom and library,
3. A new sick bay and bursar's office,
4. An extension of the staff room.

Work is due to commence in March/April 2021 and all Stage 7 works are hoped to be completed by August 2021. Although this will cause some disruption to the school during the development, the benefits of these spaces for our children for years to come is very exciting.

We are very lucky this year to have continued to work closely with Father Stan and Our Lady of Lourdes Parish. Although Family Masses have had to temporarily cease due to COVID-19 it is hoped these will resume in 2021. We have been lucky this year to have been able to have the Sacraments of Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation for our children. This has taken considerable extra planning to ensure we were able to comply with COVID-19 restrictions to keep our community safe.

The School Executive with the assistance of the School Board has developed the new Strategic Plan 2021 to 2025. Our new Strategic Plan outlines our priorities and key success measures for Education, Community, Stewardship and Catholic Identity in line with CEWA's strategic directions. I would like to invite you all to read the new Strategic Plan on the school's website.

At the beginning of 2020, the School Board welcomed a new member. I would like to thank William Edison for his first year as a Board member. I am sad that we will be saying goodbye to Ruza Foster as a Board member. For the past two years, Ruza has fulfilled the role as Treasurer and has done an amazing job, particularly over this difficult year. Thank you Ruza.

As a Board, marketing continues to be an ongoing focus. This year we have continued with our marketing approach and as a result our enrolment numbers have continued to grow. Given the financial difficulties and economic downturn in 2020 due to the pandemic, I can confidently say this is one area in which the school has excelled.

As Board Chair, 2020 has been a busy year. At the end of semester one we have seen Gayle Connell go on long service leave and she has now decided to retire at the end of this year. We wish Gayle all the best and hope she enjoys some well deserved downtime. We have been very lucky for Alison Casey to step into the Assistant Principal role in an acting capacity in Gayle's absence. In Term 3, I was involved in the interviewing and appointment of our two Assistant Principals. I look forward to Matthew Gray's continuation in this role and I would also like to welcome Josephine Vivante into the role. As a Board we look forward to working with you both in 2021.

This year we also say goodbye to Kate Burns who will be leaving Our Lady of Lourdes for the 2021 school year. Although we will miss her enthusiasm, energy and wealth of skills teaching our children, I am very pleased to know she will be back in 2022. I am very excited to welcome Elena Fraser into the role as Year 3 teacher for 2021.

Finally, it is with sadness that we will be saying farewell to our Principal, Mark Ryan at the end of this year. Throughout the past four years, I have gotten to know Mark very well and his energy, dedication and focus on the wellbeing of our children, staff and whole school community is second to none. During our most challenging year to date, you have held us all together as a community to keep us all safe, feel cared for and have still been able to progress many of the visions we as a Board had set for our school in 2020. I will miss our regular meetings, your openness, honesty, open door policy and continual invitation for feedback. I will never forget your enthusiasm to get into dunking machine for our 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary, to volunteer for the 'greatest shave', to be bombarded with water balloons by our year ones and covered in paint at our recent colour run. We will all miss you and wish you the very best at your new school and for the future.

As a result of Mark successfully gaining a Principalship at a school closer to his home, I have been honoured to be on the Interview panel for the appointment of a new principal for Our Lady of Lourdes. Interviews were held last week, however the process is still ongoing and it is hoped we will be in a position to announce our new principal at the end of this week.

Overall, 2020 has been a year of unprecedented events, challenges and has provided many opportunities to grow closer as a school and catholic community. It is with hope and enthusiasm that I look forward to the start of 2021 and all the opportunities it will bring.

Thank you.

Nadine White  
Board Chair 2020