

2020 Holy Rosary AGM Board Chair's Report

Ryan Denham

17/11/20

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you on behalf of the Board of Holy Rosary School.

In thinking about speaking to this meeting tonight, I recall having a conversation with the immediate past Chair, Jonathan Woolfrey, about 13 months ago about my interest in becoming the Chair.

I said “yes, sounds like a great opportunity” – I’d been on the board for the prior two years, and thought I had a fair idea of what was required.

When I took on the role at this meeting year the main focus of the board for 2020 was implementation of the school’s capital development project – monitoring progress and ensuring the finances were managed prudently.

There was also the usual board activities – liaising with the P&F, Father Peter and the parish, general financial management and ensuring that the school was operating in accordance with the strategic plan and other requirements.

The year was all set up – a new, enthusiastic principal, a keen board (with a new board chair) and a capital project to deliver.

However, the year didn’t quite go according to plan.

Capital Development Project (Stage 11, Stage 1)

As you would have all seen, the building project has finally commenced! Demolition (what was probably the easy bit) occurred some time ago, with site buildings and works commencing in the past week or so.

I do want to make special mention of Geordie’s tireless determination to progress the build – little did any of us know that approval of the funding was only the first step in a journey. Here are a few highlights:

- Demountable classroom - sourcing a new demountable classroom at very short notice , with the next challenge of where to put it;
- A wayward digger falling off a trailer cracking the kindy wall;

- CEWA procedures - understanding CEWA's building contractor procurement procedures;
- Halt of new projects - in April 2020 all new projects that hadn't started were put on hold by CEWA (COVID response)– luckily we had done some forward works that were justified as building commenced and therefore could continue.
- Development Approval – in October 2020 the City of Stirling asked some interesting questions about the development. With another delay looming, Geordie became directly involved and is now well acquainted with the local councillor, City of Stirling Planning Manager and a couple of planning staff. And so the project was approved.

With hopefully all the challenges out of the way, we are now looking forward to construction getting into full swing and successful delivery of the project.

COVID19 Disruption

The other big issue for the year was COVID19 and associated implications.

Implementation of remote learning at short notice was a significant disruption to the whole school community – substantially changing the way the school operated. From a board and general community point of view, I would like to thank the school staff – they were fantastic in the way they stepped up to plan and implement it.

In addition to remote learning, the COVID19 disruption has affected many other aspects of school life throughout the year, including school events (assemblies, sports carnivals, excursions and the Christmas concert) and the activities of the Parish (use of the Church - mass, sacraments etc).

The approach of the school community in rising to the challenges posed by COVID19 has been particularly heartening, and goes to the core of what our school is about, which is set out in our Strategic Plan:

Vision for the School

Holy Rosary School is a Christ-centred Dominican community excelling in primary-focussed education, embracing the dignity of each and every person in creating opportunities for our children.

Vision for the Child

Every child is valued, known and heard, empowering them to use their talents in doing good for their world, and forming enduring friendships in their joy-filled childhood.

On behalf of the Board I would like to extend thanks to our current principal, Geordie Thuijs, who has done a tremendous job this year. His enthusiasm, passion and energy have been evident throughout the ups and downs of the year, and we have really enjoyed working with him.

Next year we look forward to welcoming back Mark DeKluyver, following his year off.

Our School is lucky to have such a dedicated Board, thank you all for your efforts across the year. I know from working alongside them that the best interests of the School are at the forefront of all our involvement and decisions. And thank you to Father Peter, who continues to make a valuable contribution to our community and School Board, including maintaining a strong link to the Parish.

I would particularly like to thank Peta Berry for performing the role of Board Treasurer for the last 3 years. Understanding the finances of the school is an important part of the Board's role, with Peta patiently providing explanations of the numbers and financial position at each board meeting. She has made a significant contribution, and leaves the Board as of tonight's meeting.

Most importantly, I would like to finish by thanking all the staff at our school. The staff are fundamental to the success of the school and associated community, and of course make the real difference to our children's schooling. The extra mile that the staff of this school go to is recognised and very much appreciated, thank you all for your contributions this year.