

School Advisory Council- 2021 Chairperson's Report

What a joy it has been to have a relatively normal year in 2021 after enduring drought, fires and pandemics last year!

Whilst we loved the Gammons and were sorry to see them leave last year – what an absolute pleasure it's been to meet the Wilkie family. Mr Wilkie is the fifth Principal I've worked with since being at St Pats. It's always a nervous time when a new Principal starts as you're never sure how they'll fit into the school community. Well clearly there was no need to worry – Mr Wilkie and his family fit in like they've always been here! It was a very smooth transition, our staff appear settled and our children happy.

Speaking of staff – how lucky were we to secure Mrs Bowen and Ms Montgomery? I hear nothing but praise about the skillsets of both these teachers who fast became fantastic additions to our amazing teaching staff. I would like to acknowledge and thank all the staff for their ongoing commitment and dedication to the school community and our children.

I would also like to acknowledge our volunteer parent and grandparent body. We have a number of parents and grandparents who consistently give up their time to benefit our school community – whether it's to make smoothies, run canteen, organise uniforms, P&F events, help coach our kids and much, much more. Thank you to everyone that has donated and contributed towards our school community in any way – it's truly appreciated and doesn't go unnoticed.

As for the School Board we had a name change this year and are now known as the School Advisory Council, although still affectionately referred to as “the Board”. We're primarily responsible for the financial administration of the school, so things like maintenance contracts, building repairs and budgets. We're also entrusted with planning to meet the present and future needs of our students as well as assisting in the Principal appointment process. A topic at most of our meetings this year is how do we attract more students to our school, because let's face it – the more students we have, the more funding we receive and the more secure our future is. We have fantastic staff. I can't praise them enough and believe their reputations speak for themselves. Our parent community is exceptional – examples of this is the fundraising efforts of the P&F, plus we're one of very few, volunteer run school canteens. We offer a well presented, secure building – a police officer parent told me they chose our school because looked good on google and was the most secure site in town, which was an important factor for them when deciding what school to join. For me personally it's the morals and values that our school prides itself on – things like the Making Jesus Real program that teaches our students to say hello; be welcoming and encouraging of others; learning how to say sorry when we make mistakes and saying thank you when you're grateful for something. If you read Mr Wilkie's newsletters or look at the Religion displays in the classrooms you will know this is a big focus for the school. The learnings are very evident, particularly when our students are in public. The Board identified that fees may be a deciding factor

as to why parents may choose another school. We continue to endorse the Mini Stars and fee free Kindy programs. We've also reduced our school uniform requirements and subsequent costs. This year we're pleased to announce the Board has approved the implementation of the Low Fee initiative offered by CEWA. This initiative will not only benefit new incoming families but also our existing families. Our next focus needs to be the promotion of our school and this is where we call on our parent body. I ask parents to think about why you chose to send your children to St Pat's. What do you love about the school? Please shout this from the roof tops! We need your help to positively promote our school in the Community. You can do this by liking and sharing our social media posts; promote our school events and achievements where you can; publicly acknowledge the wonderful job our volunteers and staff do. Every little bit helps!

In finishing I would like to thank my fellow Board Members Andrew Bushell, Linda Hewson, Natalie Nicholson, Patrick Kennedy, Penny Shackley, Sheldon Kowald, Father Gerome and Mr Wilkie for devoting their time to the Board. I'd particularly like to acknowledge Sheldon for his 6 years service - the presentation of your in depth, insightful and entertaining annual Treasurer reports will be sorely missed. I would also like to acknowledge the families leaving St Pats and wish them all the best for the future. I'd especially like to acknowledge Mike Allen, who represented the Clegg family and served on the Board for a number of years.

I wish all the St Pats community a safe and happy Christmas. Enjoy the last few weeks of term and see you back in 2022.

Tania Edwards

Chairperson