

## Chairman's address to The Launceston Preparatory School 2017 AGM

Good evening everyone and thank you for attending The Launceston Preparatory School AGM for 2017.

As a Board, The Launceston Preparatory School Board of Management strives to work in a collaborative, respectful and inclusive manner to achieve inquisitive and supportive oversight and set strategic direction for our school. Put simply we pool our thoughts and endeavor to tease out all manner of considerations that affect our strategic road ahead. We might each approach these situations from different angles but, together we listen and discuss, each keen to contribute ideas, suggestions and questions in order to achieve our mission. Most often this is undertaken during our monthly meetings when the Board, the Co-Principals and Business Manager meet. For so many heads to meet at once is a very efficient and thorough approach...one that speaks to the collegial and respectful commitment that I mentioned earlier.

This year that regular circle of faces has experienced a notable change. Mrs Susan Wright, a Co-Principal of the school for 13 years and a teacher many years longer, last year resigned from her role and finished her time at the LPS at the end of 2016. As is the case with the Co-Principals of The Launceston Preparatory School, Susan had many teaching duties that were undertaken alongside her leadership role. Susan primarily worked with the senior students developing their maths mastery and encouraging pride in that developing maths prowess, Susan's leadership responsibilities, undertaken alongside fellow Co-Principal Leonie McNair, always ensured the varied duties and compliances required by a contemporary school were met with the utmost professionalism and attention to detail. No consideration was ever left hanging; Susan was completely thorough in all that she was involved in. This was particularly appreciated at a Board level in her involvement in the school's Work Health and Safety requirements and the early development of the school Risk Register.

A flash of red often is a warning of danger, but it was not so when Susan was around. The presence of her wearing her favourite colour, red, was always a comfort to the staff, students and the Board of The LPS.

In order to find Susan's replacement, last year a Succession Committee was formed to steer the search. The position was advertised mid-year using print media within Tasmania and also digital media nationally. We received applications reflecting this broad web including from even Asia and the Middle East. After an initial round of shortlisting and interviews it was decided by the committee that we had not yet found the individual to best meet the needs of the role of Co-Principal at The Launceston Preparatory School. A second round of advertising was launched; shortlisting and some excellent interviews were conducted.

At the conclusion of that second round we were very pleased to announce that Mrs Harriet Thyne, an outstanding teacher of the LPS, was to be appointed as Co-Principal commencing at the beginning of 2017. It was extremely pleasing to the Board to have received such an overwhelmingly positive response from the entire the school community in relation to this. This was particularly so when we consider that difficult and challenging decision that was made to head into a second round of advertising for the position. I must say recruitment of a Co-Principal is not for the faint hearted and I'd like to thank those members of the Succession Committee for their commitment to the task last year.

Interestingly, in a nice sense of continuity, I note that comforting flash of red is still to be seen around the school...with a certain pair of red specs high on the head of Mrs Thyne. So, Mrs Thyne, welcome to your first AGM in the role of Co-Principal.

On behalf of the Board I would very much like to recognise the professionalism of Mrs Leonie McNair, fellow Co-Principal, in providing so much knowledge, experience and mentorship to our new Co-Principal. In doing this Mrs McNair has not only minimized transitional hurdles for Mrs Thyne but has also, yet again, acted with the student's interests at the forefront and ensured the smoothest of entries to the 2017 school year for all. Mrs McNair, the Board thanks you.

Aside from the task of finding a new Co-Principal 2016 saw progress in other key areas identified on our most recent Strategic Plan. Our Risk Committee, led by David Mullenger, has toiled away throughout 2016 to fully develop a comprehensive Risk Register that serves the interests of the school by frame-working a very thorough approach to dealing with the broad range of risks that even a small school must manage, remembering of course that this document never really goes away. It serves the perpetual purpose of enabling the Co-Principals and Board to scrutinise identified risks and also evaluate new situations affecting the school as they arise. I would really like to recognise that committee for their continued commitment and persistence with this task. Thank you.

Another item on our Strategic Plan 2016-2020 is the development of an ICT strategy. During 2016 Kate Alcorso and Craig Stenton consulted with the Co-Principals so as to begin the process of developing a comprehensive and integrated approach to ICT within the school. We look forward to the continued development of this important work in 2017.

In the ongoing pursuit of pedestrian and transport safety for our school community there was a key change in the primary drop-off and pick-up area of the school earlier in 2016. A small segment of the garden located between the Multi-purpose Hall and Olive Street was reclaimed through the moving of some fences. This increased the safe pedestrian zone available to students and their carers particularly in the afternoon when the departure of students can cause congestion for a short time.

GHD, a consultancy specializing in urban and transport planning was also engaged to analyse the traffic movement around our school environment to be then considered alongside the safety and infrastructure needs of the LPS. In 2017 this work also continues.

Of course, one of the primary roles of the Board is to provide sound governance and financial oversight so as to ensure that our school operates with confidence and is able to continue that primary key focus of its students. Our governance and finance committee headed by Eamonn Tiernan has again worked tirelessly throughout 2016 and I would like to thank them for their continued attention and commitment to this critical aspect of the school. Of course, we will hear more from Eamonn on this shortly.

Returning to that circle of faces at our Board meetings, sadly tonight we farewell a member of our Board, Kate Alcorso. Kate arrived on our Board some five years ago and we will be very sorry to see her depart. I'll take the opportunity to thank Kate further later. In terms of the vacancy that Kate's departure creates we were fortunate to receive a nomination and that nomination was from Hannah Phillips, an ex-student of the school and a member of the legal fraternity here in Launceston. In addition to this change I would also like to inform you that I also will be stepping down, just from the Chairman's role, at this AGM. We are extremely fortunate that a dedicated member of the Board, indeed our Secretary of the past seven or so years – Simon Ward – has indicated his interest in stepping into the Chair's role. This has in turn created a small number of changes within the Board and Simon will speak further to that later. Of course these changes are something we should welcome. They are an important part of a renewal process and something that continues to ensure the Board remains fresh in its approach to both its work and mission.

I am very excited by these changes and have every confidence in the Board as it heads firmly into 2017. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have made such important contributions in assisting me during my time serving as Chairman. I am incredibly grateful to my co-members of the Board who have provided balanced opinion, questioning and expertise. The commitment they have shown to their important roles at this school cannot be questioned. To our Co-Principals, Leonie McNair and Harriet Thyne (particularly Leonie who has shouldered most of my time in the role), and our Business Manager, Jody Onn-Wilkinson, please accept my sincere thanks for the tremendous amount of support you have provided to me. My respect for the work you undertake in your roles only continues to grow.

Of course a special thank you must be extended to those generous individuals who serve as that special glue bonding so many aspects of our school community together. These people include those committed servants of the school who work with students and their literacy, assist at carnivals or support the social cohesion of our community through their work with the Parent's Club.

Importantly, I have one final thank you and I preface it with this comment; It is really important to remember that people come to the work of being a Board member for many different reasons. I would like it noted that in my case it is truly and solely motivated by an extremely deep respect for the work of the staff of The Launceston Preparatory School and the very real, and positive, and transformative difference you make to the wellbeing of every student who moves through this school. On behalf of the Board I would like to thank you, our staff, for your outstanding and continued service in 2016. Personally I thank you for your work not only in 2016 but for every minute you have devoted and continue to devote to this cause. Thank you.

Jacquie Adkins

Chairperson

The Launceston Preparatory School Board