



The Launceston Preparatory School

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Chairman's Address – Annual General Meeting, March 2024

Good evening everyone,

It is my pleasure to welcome you all again to our annual general meeting and present my address tonight as Chairman of the Board of the Launceston Preparatory School, where we reflect on the achievements of 2023.

Firstly, I would like to sincerely thank everyone who plays a part in the success of our school – from the dedicated and talented teachers and staff to our wonderful supportive families and, of course, our delightful children.

As a Board we understand that we are here to do everything in our power to provide and serve the needs of the children of our school by supporting the staff and encouraging and assisting the school's leadership in their endeavour to always provide excellent learning opportunities in what we all recognise as a very special school.

The Launceston Preparatory School's aim in providing for children's total education, where they are equipped with all the social skills and knowledge needed to become caring and active citizens, is highly regarded in the Launceston community and beyond. An amazing achievement and testament to the devotion of all the school's staff and the community that supports the work they perform.

School leadership was certainly a theme which occupied a good deal of the Board's energy during 2023. This commenced with a meeting of the school staff in late January where I shared that 2023 was to be the final year in which Leonie McNair and Harriet Thyne would be Co-Principals of the school, with Leonie and Harriet having commenced discussions with the Board about this some months earlier.

It was certainly a challenging message to deliver and commenced what was to be a year where many different emotions were felt by everyone in the school community as they reflected on how far the school had come, the incredible contribution of Leonie as a Co-Principal over three decades, and the enthusiastic way in which Harriet had also positively impacted the school's leadership during her time as Co-Principal. The overall mood of the school community appeared to be one of positivity with an optimistic expectation for the future.

The fact that both Co-Principal's have not only a love of teaching but a love of this school meant that they were going to stay on in teaching roles at the school – this concept was

supported by the Board and, I believe, provided a sense of stability for the school as we reached out to find a new Principal.

I thank Leonie and Harriet most sincerely for their resolve in ensuring that the Board understood that they would do everything they could to assist the new Principal to transition into the role smoothly and with their full support. This again reflected their desire to continue to see the school flourish into the next chapter of its evolution. As they reached the end of their Co-Principalships, it was very evident that Leonie and Harriet had indeed guided the school to a very strong position: respected in the community as a place of high standards in education.

As 2023 drew to a close, special public recognition was given in an assembly at school – honouring Leonie and Harriet for their contributions as Co-Principals, and a special dinner was held with the Board to continue that sentiment from all of us.

Much work was undertaken by the Board's Succession subcommittee as we worked diligently to ensure we did our utmost to find a Principal who would understand the philosophy and values of our unique school and be equipped to help us build on its many strengths. To this end I extend a special thank you to Board members Judy Terry and Hannah Phillips with whom I worked very closely on the Succession subcommittee: preparing documents, selecting and engaging the professional recruitment partner of choice, and working closely with that agency over several months-culminating with candidate shortlisting and interviewing and the appointment of Mr Timothy Bristow. A process that when summarised in this way, does not truly reflect the enormity of the task and the weight felt by the subcommittee and the entire Board of the need to get this right. Conversations with various members of the school community during this period further emphasised the significance of this task and the trust that they had in us to find the perfect person to lead the school.

As a Board I feel that the work undertaken this year has not only enabled sound school governance but also brought us as Board members closer together as a very effective group of talented volunteers who harness our skills and experience to achieve the mantra of inquisitive and supportive oversight of the strategic direction of the school.

We continue to work on master planning to improve the school's teaching and learning spaces which will soon see new areas created and some other buildings modified to better provide for our students into the future. I thank Peter Elliott, a long serving Board member for his leadership of this Subcommittee in navigating the various challenges in planning matters so far. He is well supported by Michael Howard and Andrew Peck in this work as they consult with Jody and the Principals in planning what is poised to be an exciting improvement in the physical environment of the school.

I thank all Board members for their contributions this year in reviewing risk matters, updating policies, overseeing finance and expenditure, championing the promotion of the school (including via a new Facebook page), and supporting all the important work of the school. Michael Howard, with the assistance of Simon Ward has overseen financial matters and I thank them both for their work in this subcommittee. Judy Terry, Maeve McKenna

and Simon Ward have been active in the Governance and Risk subcommittee too. I thank Claire Broadhurst too, for all she contributed to the Board prior to stepping down during 2023. Thank you all for your efforts in supporting the school and me in my role as Chair – 2023 has been a year of collaborative success.

In conclusion, I have very much enjoyed my second year as your Board Chair – a role which I aim to undertake with humility, recognising that it is indeed a privilege to be able to continue my strong association with, and service of, The Launceston Preparatory School.

I thank again Leonie and Harriet for all the encouragement they have given to me and for their unwavering and absolute dedication to the children, staff and the entire school community. Thanks also to Jody Onn-Wilkinson who continues to manage the school's business matters with the utmost diligence, energy, efficiency, care and attention to detail.

With the commencement of the school's new Principal, Timothy Bristow, the Launceston Preparatory School begins an exciting new era in its story – guided by a strong and real sense of all that has come in the four decades before that is to be cherished and appreciated for everything it has given us.

To borrow a line from our school song, as we look forward to another successful year, I wish you all the very best in *Truth and Happiness forever more*.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Craig". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping 'C' and a long, sweeping tail that extends downwards and to the right.

Craig Stenton

Board Chair