

Coordinators Report AGM 2009

May 26, 2010

Firstly I would like to express my sheer amazement that we have got to this point. As I stated last year there have been any number of circumstances over the preceding few years when it appeared that plans would not succeed, but they did! This was despite the fact that we arrived on day 1 at our new site with 20 odd children less than we needed to be viable. At that point, yet again, we faced another abyss, would we enrol these extra students? How were we going to find the funds to continue? All this in the middle of the Global Financial Crisis!

Remarkably, and I do not take it for granted, we ended up resolving both these questions. We eventually increased our enrolments, (to around 230 today), and through a *compelling* application to the Commonwealth Government received some extra 'emergency' financial assistance.

It is apparent that our story, or the way we tell, it is compelling. I have often heard it stated “who cares about a small private school” or “why would anyone want to help a privileged middle class school?” These questions have been rhetorical (I hope). A lot of people care very deeply that the school not only exists, but flourishes.

There are parents who are enrolling their children who know little or nothing of our history. There are no battle scars to suggest any past challenges or difficulties.

Instead people observe a functioning school, with things as they would expect to find, in place. This didn't happen by chance. It happened because a lot of people fought really hard to make it happen. In turn their actions drew support to the cause. We have had people from all parts of our larger community act in favour of the school, from ex-parents, students and teachers to all levels of politicians, our Association of Independent Schools, State and Federal public servants, local trades and business people, the people of Hazelbrook, as well as current parents, staff and students.

We have only just begun to lay the foundations for our future. Our survival has in fact reinforced the idea the the school serves a greater need than just meeting the educational requirements of its students and families. Korowal represents an ideal in education, a place where imagination can be realised, a school that has a voice that is not otherwise heard within the education community.

In the changing and dynamic landscape that passes for educational reform and evolution in this country there is hardly a school that stands up for an ethical consideration of what constitutes a 'school education'. How do our political leaders really understand the purpose of education and the role of schooling beyond the needs of the economy? We are becoming more vocal

Next phase of our growth and development

The school is responding to this realisation through a complete review of its business operations and educational program, including review of job positions and responsibilities, governance policies and financial management processes.

As owners of the property we must also have a developed and coherent plan to manage our financial obligations and maintenance responsibilities.

This is no less a demanding and process than our relocation. For those of us intimately involved with the daily operations of the school there is the acceptance that all these extra tasks must be accomplished concurrently with the business of meeting our obligations to our families and students.

The Korowal Council has asked for a comprehensive business plan that looks to chart the next 3 to 5 year period. I will work with Bev Milner, our Bursar, who possesses a wealth of business experience.

Irrespective of any grander considerations, our school would not exist if it did not do what it promises to do, that is provide an education that is valued by both its students and parents.

My colleagues, in both teaching and general staff do a remarkable job. The goodwill expressed through their conduct and dedication is the sustaining force of the school. I find their endeavours sustaining and encouraging.

There are some people who need specific acknowledgement.

Firstly, Annie Carment. Annie continues as a full-time volunteer. She maintains a central role in all our capital works programs, dealing with the myriad people, professions and organisations involved in building and financing new facilities. She is our sole marketing and promotions coordinator. This is now the third year we have worked together on this ongoing project and her energy and determination have never flagged. She is a remarkable driving force of our achievements to date.

Secondly the Executive team of Nancy Oosterhoff, Barbara Fitzgerald and Steve Garthwin who have taken on an increasing range of tasks and responsibilities to enable me to take on new roles. Particularly their role in supporting and sustaining the teachers through not only the ongoing relocation process, but providing guidance and hand holding through the successful NSW Board of Studies registration process.

I particularly acknowledge the contribution of Trish Fitzgerald, our canteen manager. It is delightful how often visitors and parents new to the school compliment Trish's food and role in providing not only a nutritious menu, but in preparing and presenting food in such a way as to reinforce their positive perceptions of the school.

I would also like to acknowledge Leanne Kent who continues in the role of transport liaison officer with the local bus company. She has also represented the school in our application to the Solar Schools Program, and I hope to see some reward for her endeavours in the near future.

We are planning a Fair for next weekend and I express my gratitude to Tracy Barrett for her role in managing this important event.

Thank you also to Pieter Oosterhoff for his role in designing and coordinating a replacement heating and cooling system for our main school building. The installation will commence this week!!

Next to last my thanks to Hilary Wale, Susan Pearce, Cath Walker who have held fort in the office.

Finally as is also customary I welcome new members of staff this year; Kim Poole, who moved from the Primary School to teaching Music across the whole school, Vanessa Avery who returned from Maternity leave to teach 345, Cairo Gawne teaching Drama and HSIE in the High School, and Talulah Vane teaching Year 6. Both Cairo and Talulah are ex-students of the school and embody the personal

(and professional) qualities that affirm the worth of our endeavours.

To all our parents, students, ex-parents and ex-students, thankyou for your support and contribution either of labour, donations or goodwill. The success of this project and the ongoing story of Korowal belongs to all of us.

Thankyou