

School Coordinator's Report

Mark Thomas

"Firstly I would like to extend on behalf of the school staff my appreciation and gratitude to Vittorio Cintio our retiring chairman.

He has throughout the past 10 years steered the school to its current position where its future is entirely in our own hands.

The experience of ownership is only just beginning to reveal its potential, and from my first conversation with Vittorio he has always made it clear that his intention was to secure the future of the school, including its tenure, its governance, its finances and its educational direction. As he has pointed out the future may well remain as dynamic as it has been but we are in a position today for which he can take enormous credit and which, for me, reflects the self evident success of his intentions.

There have been any number of circumstances over the past few years when it appeared that our plans would come to nought. At each point however, the particular hurdle was overcome, and this has often struck me as miraculous. A more humanist description might be serendipitous. I cannot logically explain how we have achieved our goals except to suggest that the process has been driven by a fierce will and tenacious determination from all those people who wished to see Korowal continue to thrive.

One of our parents spoke to me very soon after we announced that the school need to relocate. He predicted, based on his own experience, that as the project got underway it would draw the energy it needed to be successful. Projects such as a school relocation are not unknown and some in fact fail. Ours hasn't because fundamentally we refused to accept any other alternative.

This is to me a credit to the whole community.

There are some people who need specific acknowledgement.

Firstly Annie Carment. Annie has effectively become a fulltime employee of the school – for no pay. She has been our project manager. Whilst I have been focused on the building and education activities Annie has been our human representative with the myriad agencies that are involved in a project such as ours. We have worked together for over two years sharing all the highs and lows of the experience and I have come to know her as an extraordinary person.

Secondly the Executive team of Nancy Oosterhoff, Barbara Fitzgerald and Steve Garthwin who have taken on many of my tasks and responsibilities to enable me to take on new roles .

Particularly their role in supporting and sustaining the teachers through not only the relocation process but providing guidance and hand holding through the ongoing NSW Board of Studies registration process.

The Executive who meet weekly on a Monday afternoon, and more frequently (sometimes daily) through last year, have accepted total responsibility for ensuring everything that needed to be done to ensure a smooth transition to our new site was done in the most professional and selfless manner. My thanks also to their families for their patience, understanding and support. I would also like to thank Joachim Herrmann and Kath Veel for their contribution as executive teachers last year and the year before respectively.

I would also like to acknowledge Leanne Kent who took on the role of transport coordinator. This task in itself was equivalent of putting a man on the moon.

Next to last my thanks to Hilary Wale, Susan Pearce, Cath Walker and last year Narelle Chambers

who have held fort in the office.

Finally my teacher colleagues who have remained focused on their roles educating our students throughout what has been the most difficult and challenging of circumstances. As I observe the children

I see them settled in to the rhythms of school life as if very little has changed . They are in the main focused on their studies, content and joyful, full of life, exhibiting the qualities that reflect the reason Korowal exists. I acknowledge their teachers for providing the security and environment that enable this to occur.

Finally I thank my wife Margit who in many respects is now married to the school. She has been a wonderful support to me.

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

As is also customary I welcome new members of staff this year; Kim Poole, teaching in the Primary School, Margaret McGillion replacing Vanessa on maternity leave, teaching K12; Helen Curry who joined us last year as a teacher's aide in the Primary School; Pam Staples our new librarian; Vaughan Johnston, transport supervisor; Louise Dungate, learning support and Melissa Jovanovic replacing Kirsty Bishop also on maternity leave; also Jacqueline Wagner working in the garden, Trish Fitzgerald in the canteen and lastly Bev our new bursar/business Manager."