

Korowal 35th AGM 15 May 2013

Report from the Chair – Greg Lucas

I would like to acknowledge that we are here tonight on the traditional lands of the Darug and Gundungurra peoples. Korowal acknowledges this and recognises the strength, capacity and resilience of past and present Aboriginal people in this region.

It is with immense pride that I present the Chair's report for this, our 35th Annual General Meeting. This is my first report as Chair, and it is only appropriate that I commence with a much-deserved thank you to our previous Chair, Rosemary Dillon. It is with sadness, but also understanding, that I note that this is Rosemary's last meeting as a Director of Korowal School Limited. Rosemary became Chair in 2009, and during her service to Korowal has consistently devoted a great deal of energy, enthusiasm and insight in to the management and governance of our School. Her legacy is not only a stronger and more focussed Board, but in the true Korowal way, she leaves each of us with the experience of having witnessed her echo the values of our School – *compassion, tolerance, equity, respect, empathy, commitment, resilience and critical thinking* – in the manner in which she performed her duties as a Board member and as Chair. Thank you.

On behalf of the entire Korowal School Board, I would like to express our thanks to:

- the entire Korowal School Community (teachers, support staff, parents, carers and students). It is always heartening to see our community rallying to support those members in need;
- Annie Carment for her dedication to managing (as well as doing the work 'at the coal-face') of the marketing of our school. Her energy and passion is an inspiration to us all;
- Tracy Barrett for her tireless work with our Korowal Fair which saw a much-needed \$7,500 raised in 2012;
- Our superbly dedicated Executive team which throughout the year included Nancy Oosterhoff our Primary School Coordinator, Barbara Fitzgerald and Steve Garthwin our High School Coordinators and Mark Thomas our School Co-ordinator; &
- Bev Milner for her stewardship of the finances of Korowal. Her passion and professionalism do not pass unnoticed.

The past year has seen many new initiatives for our School. No doubt, our Co-ordinators Report will give each their due and proper embellishment. However, from a Board perspective a few of the salient achievements are summarised below:

- The adoption of the Carver model for governance of Korowal;
- An emerging understanding of the separation of governance and management – I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge that this is, in effect, organisational cultural change and, as such, can feel uncomfortable especially for the executive. Thank you for your devotion to the end goal, and

I am certain that as this gains even more traction over the coming year, you will become even stronger advocates of this change;

- The successful renegotiation of our mortgage facility with our primary funders, Maurice Cooper and Kerry Mackenzie who have continued to display a supportive stance towards their association with our School during a period of financial difficulty;
- The development of a Strategic framework for the determination - and monitoring of the achievement - of our goals. This is our 'Five Pillars of Korowal Model'. This, and our forward budget process will be finalised by October 2013;
- The securing of funding under the Empowering Local Schools Program for the engagement of external consultants and the Association of Independent Schools to critique and enhance the operational structure of our school. I would like to thank Mark Thomas for his proactiveness in sourcing these funds and Barb Fitzgerald for her carriage of these during her time as Acting Co-ordinator;
- The development of a Professional Development Program to foster continual improvement in our staff;
- The refinement of our proposed constitutional changes. A special thank you to Vittorio Cintio and Nancy Oosterhoff for their tireless work in this regard; &
- The Establishment of the Korowal School Scholarship Fund. Whilst the creation of this entity is the first step in a very long journey, I would like to thank Bruce Corlett from The Trust Company for his generous support and guidance in 'getting us off the ground';
- On a more direct student-focussed level, I would like to express the Board's gratitude to the pioneers of new educational initiatives over the past year. These are:

- ✓ Nancy, Kizz and Amanda for the adoption of the health initiatives in primary being 'Sip and Crunch' and 'Huff and Puff';
- ✓ Kon Kalos for his commitment to establishing a desire for the teaching of philosophy to our students and Cairo Gawne and the HS staff for integrating a similar program titled MTP- Mindfulness, Thinking skills and Philosophy for the high school, as well as Amanda Bartels and the primary staff for our primary philosophy program.
- ✓ Barb and David Harris for driving and implementing the Brain Compatible Learning program with our high school students; &
- ✓ Barb Fitzgerald for the development of the 'Parent Education Program'.

In preparing a report such as this, it is an opportunity to reflect on what has been – as opposed to the focus of our Board which is, quite correctly, where we are going. In so doing, it is appropriate to make special mention of those members of the Board and the Executive that have resigned from their leadership roles.

Yvonne Edgren has not renominated for her Board position. In late 2012, Steve Garthwin stepped down from his High School Coordinator role. Korowal is a richer place because of the contributions of Yvonne and Steve. I have admired their ability to separate their Director roles from their Staff roles. In their execution of their roles, they have shown clarity of judgement; passion for excellence and equity and always been able to be relied on to provide much-needed good humour. Thank you both. I

am pleased to confirm that Steve's decision to step out of his Coordinator role has enabled him to continue as a member of the Board, a contribution which is highly valued.

The Korowal Board is extremely aware of the challenging times that the Independent Schools Sector is currently facing. The adoption of the Gonski report may provide some, relatively minor, short term funding increase to Korowal. However, when viewed with the increasing cost base confronting all Schools as well as a decline in enrolments across the sector, we are driven to lead our school with a strong focus on sustainability. To this extent, our reliance on the support of the school community in promoting the school to new families to grow our enrolments cannot be understated. I encourage every member of our community to become advocates of the advantages of a Korowal Education.

The Korowal School Board is, in my opinion, a unique collection of people with very diverse backgrounds. If you are not familiar with the background of each member, I strongly urge you to review this on our website. The breadth **and** depth of experience that is reflected in the Directors is exactly how a Board should be structured. The devotion of time and energy of each Director is outstanding. A very heartfelt thank you to the parent Directors – Mick Barrett, Vittorio Cintio and Rosemary Dillon – and the teacher Directors – Lousie Dungate, Yvonne Edgren, Barbara Fitzgerald (when Acting as Coordinator), Steve Garthwin, Nancy Oosterhoff and Mark Thomas – for their leadership and clarity as well as, on a more personal level, the support that they have given me as Chair.

Finally, let us not forget that Korowal is a recognised leader in providing inspiring educational experiences within a school that is small, enabling authentic relationships. Our students, parents and teachers know, understand and care for and about one another.