

REPORT FROM KOROWAL SCHOOL AGM 2007

This is a report of the general discussion that took place at the AGM on Thursday 31 May, for the benefit of those who were not able to attend the meeting.

Please also find attached:

- speeches and presentations from the AGM
- an information and fundraising kit, which was distributed at the meeting. Please read the contents and return the applicable forms to the school.

A formal version of the AGM minutes will be distributed soon.

The AGM was extremely well attended by 129 people. Despite a clear understanding of the challenge posed by the relocation, the overwhelming feeling of the meeting was that our community is with us in this enterprise and will rise to the challenge. It became very clear during the discussion that we are an intelligent, articulate, diverse, passionate community. Most importantly, it was very obvious that we ARE a community and that relocation will be an experience that unites us. Much of the feeling at the meeting was summed up by one parent's comment, "Korowal is people, not buildings".

QUESTIONS THAT AROSE AT THE MEETING:

(These were questions from the floor following the speeches and presentations. It may be useful to read the attached speeches and presentations first).

Q) Why was I not made aware when I enrolled my children last year that Korowal might move?

A) During 2005, due to our frustration over being unable to obtain a long-term lease, we investigated the possibility of buying our own school elsewhere. We informed our community of that intention. As a result of those investigations, we decided in 2006 that relocation was not financially prudent at that time. We informed our community of that decision at our 2006 AGM.

Since that time, Korowal School Council has invited discussion with the Gavemer Foundation about lease arrangements. Lease negotiations began in February this year. We were asked by the Foundation to keep details of those discussions confidential. We have agreed to that request, for the time being.

At the end of term 1 this year, we were informed that our lease would not be renewed beyond the end of 2008. At that time, we believed that we were still involved in ongoing negotiations with the Foundation. We did not expect that our lease would not be renewed.

Q) Would you agree to professional mediation between Korowal and the Foundation?
A) Yes. We remain open to any negotiation or mediation process. We did not break off negotiations with the Foundation.

Q) Is it true that the difference between Korowal and Gavemer is solely over a couple of matters of educational practice?

A) The significant differences are about fundamental issues of school governance. Korowal has a democratic constitution, which determines how decisions are made. Our educational practice is always under review, but must be reviewed in accordance with our agreed processes.

Q) Why can't you discuss the lease negotiation history openly with the community when you have stated that your communication policy is to be as honest and informative as possible?

A) Because we agreed to the Foundation's request that we keep these details confidential and have been advised by our lawyer to respect that request, for the time being. We also believe that it is more productive to focus on our future plans.

Q) Will the fees rise very much if we buy our own school?

A) We do not expect the fees to rise by any more than the normal 5%. Raising fees is not the most effective way of raising funds. Government grants and fundraising are far more effective. Korowal's enrolments and waiting lists are currently very healthy.

Q) Do we have a "plan B" in place, in case our negotiations to buy "Oaklands" are not successful?

A) We are continuing to explore all other options for purchase or lease.

If at any stage it appears necessary, we will seek support and assistance from the relevant politicians, whom we have already briefed (for example, to organise temporary accommodation, or to support a re-zoning application for a particular parcel of land.) We are not yet at that stage.

Some interesting suggestions have come in since the meeting for a "Plan C" and "Plan D", if we were to require temporary accommodation.

Korowal Annual General Meeting 2007

Chair's Report 31 May 2007

It is pleasing to see such a good attendance in this pivotal year of our history. The AGM is the principal instrument of our accountability when the council reports back to the membership on our stewardship of the school.

Maintaining our integrity as a school has been a key theme of the past 12 months.

We have been through a major exercise in examining and affirming our values. We have responded ethically to the challenges of state-mandated mandatory reporting. You will recall that the Australian Government now requires that for each class from K to 10, we provide written reports to parents, twice a year, grading each child's performance and giving him/her a quartile ranking. In the face of this, the council reaffirmed our own grading policy, and Mark Thomas will tell you more about how the school executive ensured that we could remain true to our principles.

We are evolving into a school where both environmental and social sustainability will be the core of our future identity. Rebecca Gilling from our sustainability committee will share with you these developments.

The initiative that has naturally occupied much of both the council and executive activity is our relocation. You will hear more about this from Annie Carment on our relocation committee.

Many of you will want to help with this, and we will discuss with you how. Some of this will involve fundraising, but also, just as importantly, contributions in kind. Barbara from our fundraising committee will tell you more about this.

Although it is something to which most of us pay no attention, the absolute bedrock of our integrity is the school constitution. Some of you may know or remember that the school went through some very difficult times just a few years ago. A key factor in helping us survive was the change in our constitution. The school was governed by two separate councils: a teacher and a parent council that did not communicate well with each other. The councils were merged to form one democratic body and the rules changed so that neither group could dominate with a simple majority. A culture of consensus has grown—a culture that is also open, inclusive and enquiring—and it is a delight to work with this community and this group of people.

Since the time of the restructure, we have seen an unprecedented harmony in the school governance, a highly improved financial position, high morale and the healthiest waiting lists in the school's history.

The school community has been fortunate in having a very able and talented leadership group. The senior teachers (both those on council and not) have an enormous depth of experience in human-centred education. The parent members of council bring a great wealth of experience from their working lives. We all have senior management roles in the human-service industries, managing both substantial budgets and staff in challenging environments.

Let me introduce the current council:

Vittorio Cintio

- school parent since 1988
- 3 of my children, Talulah, Carl and Rosie completed HSC at Korowal
- currently Luciano in Year 9 and Johnson in Class 2
- Director of Social Work, Western Cluster, Sydney West Area Health

Scott Turner

- school parent since 2000
- currently Ruby in Class 7 and Violet in Class 2
- Service Manager, Richmond Fellowship of NSW: a not-for-profit, non-religious, non-government organisation providing rehabilitation and supported-accommodation services to people with serious mental illness.

Nick Mansfield

- school parent since 1992
- currently Oskar in Year 9 and Mathilde in Class 2

- Associate Professor, Head, Department of Critical and Cultural Studies, Division of Society, Culture, Media and Philosophy, Macquarie University

Rosemary Dillon

- school parent since 1997
- currently David in Year 10 and Joshua in Class 5
- Manager, Corporate Planning, Community & Corporate Group, Blue Mountains City Council

Mark Thomas

- school parent since 1991
- Korowal graduates, Janis and Maija
- currently Imants in Pathways
- Korowal School Co-ordinator for the past 6 years
- 23 years teaching experience
- Currently studying for a Masters of Educational Leadership, Macquarie University

Nancy Oosterhoff

- school parent from 1990 to 2005
- Korowal graduates Ian and Guy
- Primary School Co-ordinator for the past 5 years
- 34 years teaching experience
- Korowal teacher since 1993
- pivotal in primary-school multiple-age initiative

Barbara Fitzgerald

- school parent since 1999
- currently Olivia in Year 8 and Eamon in Class 4
- current Senior-Studies Co-ordinator
- Drama Teacher 16 years teaching experience
- Producer, scriptwriter, director extraordinaire!

Kath Veel

- school parent since 1994
- currently Kit in Pathways
- Korowal High-School Co-ordinator for the past 5 years
- 30 years teaching experience

I would like to thank the directors who have retired during the past year: Mick Fell, Catherine Dignam and Caroline Summerfield.

There has, however, been one shadow hanging over us. We have never, in the school's history, been able to gain our long-term physical security. In regard to this, I am limited in what I can say about our lease negotiations. We have been requested by the Gavemer Foundation not to refer to it or its directors without their consent. In accordance with our lawyer's advice, we will respect this request at this time and advise that participants at this meeting similarly refrain from mentioning the foundation or its directors.

We have lived on annual leases since 2005. You will appreciate that it is not tenable for a school to really plan properly without long-term tenure. Every time a child enrolls in our

Kindergarten, we are anticipating a relationship that will last 13 years and carry forward in the memories of a lifetime.

Without security, we have not been able to build or make any substantial improvements, or be eligible for government building funds. We clearly have little prospect of enjoying the long-term benefits of maintenance and improvement investments. (In the past 10 years, we have spent \$644,000 on maintenance and improvements.)

Because of this, we first began exploring relocation in 2004. We now know, however, that our tenure will not be renewed after 2008. And so we have an urgent imperative to relocate by 2009. This is a very short time frame. As soon as we learnt of this, Mark our School Co-ordinator and Cindy our Bursar moved into high gear. We now have financial consultants and architects working with us on the relocation effort. You will later this evening hear more about these plans.

Relocating physically has prompted the School Council to give more thought about where we locate ourselves in our educational practice. A quick glance at the World Wide Web tells us that human-centred education is a term used in many countries to describe practices similar in spirit, but also with a rich diversity in keeping with their local cultures. Our own practice is evolving to reflect the following:

Human-Centred Education

- has at its heart the quality of relationships between students, teachers and parents
- promotes multiple-aged learning
- provides a holistic interdisciplinary curriculum
- values compassion, equity and respect
- is democratic and participatory
- enables meaningful community
- allows students and teachers to be known and valued as individuals

Sustainable Education

- is socially and environmentally sustainable
- is life-centred
- requires a school community of a human scale
- promotes a lifelong love of learning.

It really is about time we connected with like-minded practitioners. It really is about time to start sharing the secrets of our educational practice with the broader community. To this end, the council will be exploring ways and means of promoting the principles and practice of sustainable, human-centred education beyond the boundaries of Korowal School, by:

- defining and supporting its practice
- connecting with theorists and practitioners in Australia and internationally
- assisting in the practice and development of democratic school- governance and management
- promoting and supporting the establishment of other sustainable schools
- documenting and developing curriculum resources for practitioners
- facilitating forums and dialogue
- sustaining an evolutionary, human-scale model for schooling.

One of my children once described Korowal as “tiny, wooden and homely”. There is no good reason why every school on the planet could not be tiny wooden and homely.

I will end on the same note that I did in my report 12 months ago:
If Korowal has created a haven in a heartless world, that is good. But it is not good enough. It can only be the start of giving the world back some heart.

Vittorio Cintio

Korowal Annual General Meeting 2006 Coordinator’s Report Thursday 31 May 2007

In my annual report, I have chosen in part to reflect on the year past and to comment on our near future. Having just read through my report from last year I smiled ruefully at a report that brought together the achievements of the previous five years.

Last year I commented on the successful response of the school community in creating the stability and the certainty necessary to continue with our purpose; that is, the education of children true to our principles and values.

As I said last year, schools like ours either meet the challenges or they don't. The comment I made reflected my belief that we had indeed met our challenges and had created a school of which we are very proud.

After 5 years of, at times, very hard work, I had anticipated a period of consolidation in preparation for future endeavours. Amongst my plans were the development of a formative appraisal process for teaching staff, creating greater opportunity for teachers to reflect upon and refine their practice, the further refinement of a parental engagement process, both of which are aimed at taking the Korowal message well beyond the existing community. Korowal is, and has always been, far too quiet about its way of operation, and I am strongly opposed to the external forces that seek to control the education agenda in this country.

On that point, I applaud the community response in unanimously rejecting the Federal Government’s imposition of the mandatory grading of students.

This year, with support from the Korowal School Council, I commenced a Masters degree in Educational Leadership. I enrolled in this course partly to expand my capacity to do my existing job but also as a mechanism to support my desire to communicate Korowal to the world.

Last year, I invited parents to a values forum, which was well supported. The outcome of that forum was the sharing and gathering of information in anticipation of the development of a Korowal values charter.

I am not abandoning my intentions, but my energies—for the moment—have been distracted by the event of having to move our School.

At the beginning of the year, we increased our enrolments to 250 students. Last year I thought we were nearly full; this year we are full. We have a current waiting list of about 140 students, most of whom are wanting to commence either in future Kindergartens or Year 7s—our traditional entry points—and now for Pathways (which is a very new

experience). Many are simply waiting for any opportunity to join the school. Some families have been waiting 2 or 3 years to be offered a place.

This is evidence to me that what we have to offer is valued, and increasingly so in an educational environment where choice is becoming more restricted. We offer a sound academic education with the added emphasis on the development of personal or human qualities. I believe our students are supported to be kind, caring, creative, compassionate, inclusive and tolerant, despite what I perceive as the diminishing of these qualities in the current political and economic landscape. I also believe that our graduating students have the strength of character to defend these values as they live their lives, wherever and in whatever circumstances they find themselves.

As I commented last year, when I take visitors around the School, at any time of the day, I am confident they observe a strong sense of purpose in their experience of the classroom environment. There is an evident quality of experience. It is something not quite definable but supported by teachers and students. What is observed is always delightful, whether it be a K12 morning circle or the dynamic interactions between students and teachers in an HSC class.

I know, and have always known, that the strength of the school and its capacity to achieve its objectives is a collective one. In the current circumstance, we are faced with another challenge and as painful and distressing as many of us find things, we have met these challenges before and I have to trust myself and the community to respond as they have in the past: to create something positive from the challenge.

I would personally like to acknowledge my gratitude to every parent who chooses Korowal for their child.

Korowal depends on employing teachers who have the capacity to work within our values framework. There is a lot to learn about being a Korowal teacher.

This year we welcomed Irini Savvides to our High School staff, replacing Pamela Tucker who retired at the end of last year. Sadly, Irini was unable to continue beyond Term 1, and we were very fortunate to find a replacement in Kon Kalos. Also joining us this year is Denise Melocco, who replaced Lorena Nesa as our Primary Italian teacher. Kirsty Bishop joined us during the last year as our student support teacher. We also welcomed Freya Manning and most recently Monica Morris to the support staff.

I would also like to thank those parents who are able to support the School through their assistance in the classroom, volunteering in the canteen and participation in many other school events.

Thank you also to Robyn Mehl and Linda Brisbane for running the Canteen and Cathy Gorman for her role on the Canteen Committee.

As the first point of contact in the School, the office staff, Hilary Wale, Cath Walker and Susan Pearce do a wonderful job. The increased enrolments in the School have created a lot of extra administrative work, and they have responded admirably. Cindy Babbage in her role as school Bursar has been invaluable.

The Korowal School Council continues to provide wonderful support and, in the current circumstance, leadership and authority. I would particularly like to thank Caroline Summerfield (a parent who has resigned from the Council) for her involvement and

energies, and Catherine Dignam (a teacher) who has also resigned for her time, effort and wisdom.

We plan to celebrate our existence this year through many events that reflect the strength of our community. In particular, the Primary School will be producing a play in September in which nearly everyone will be involved, and the High School will be presenting a variety Cabaret in June. To which you are all invited.

Finally, thank you to all the teaching staff, especially the Executive team: Nancy Oosterhoff, Kath Veel and Joachim Herrmann.

In the meantime, I thank the whole community, both past and present for its support.

Mark Thomas

Korowal Annual General Meeting 2007-06-05

Rebecca Gilling: Sustainability Report

31 May 2007

The three aspects of sustainability are generally understood to be economic, social and environmental.

While Korowal has achieved an unprecedented degree of economic sustainability, and sustaining social relationships is at the core of our enterprise, our record on environmental sustainability has been less dazzling. This is surprising given the predisposition of many in our community towards environmentally responsible attitudes and practices.

With this in mind, Korowal School Council last year called for the formation of a sustainability sub-committee. The sub-committee currently has nine members, comprising both parents and teachers. We meet every second Wednesday from 5-6.00pm, and new members and visitors are always welcome.

We chose as our model a program developed by governments, state and federal, in conjunction with the Australian Research Institute into Education for Sustainability (ARIES), run out of Macquarie University. The Sustainable Schools Initiative has 12 elements which should be addressed, in no particular order:

introduce sustainability	develop a policy
make a whole school commitment	develop action plans
collect baseline data	develop curriculum plans
form a committee	implement actions and curriculum plans
conduct an assessment/audit	monitor and evaluate the program
set goals and targets	build community links

The model also identified the following environmental outcomes:

- waste and litter
- energy
- water
- biodiversity

So far, we've achieved:

- dual-flush cisterns in all toilets
- hot water disabled in children's wash basins
- timed-flow taps in children's wash basins
- recycled paper products where possible
- paper recycling in all rooms
- more email communication to save paper
- energy use data being collected
- canteen improvements – more organic food, wooden utensils from sustainable forestry

We've also decided to change our country fair into a sustainability fair, which will showcase sustainable technologies and activities, particularly those operating locally. The familiar stalls like second-hand clothing, books and white elephant will remain, and the plant stall will return to its original form, sharing plants grown by our school community. To this end, we encourage all enthusiastic gardeners to divide and pot up their favourite perennials, and to strike cuttings etc, as soon as possible so we have plenty to offer. The fair is scheduled for Saturday 22 September 2007.

On 23 February, the whole school took part in a sustainability day. The primary school built worm farms with great enthusiasm, while the high school watched *An Inconvenient Truth*. They followed this with a one-hour discussion of solutions for the school community as well as for individuals to adopt, which would make a difference to the problems addressed in the film. The students also chose one of two other activities: either measuring their ecological footprint or participating in an open-air workshop exploring a sense of place and indigenous perspectives of sustainability. Wyn Jones and Wayne Brennan were the facilitators of this activity. The teachers and parents who worked with the students were all extremely impressed at how cooperatively the students worked and how seriously they took the various tasks.

The sub-committee surveyed all participating high school students to gauge their reactions to the day, and to ascertain their priorities for further action. We also sought expressions of interest in forming a student sustainability committee. Twenty-two students nominated, across all class groups and fairly evenly divided by gender. We will now seek their involvement and ideas for the fair. As to the students' priorities for further action, the majority suggested installing a solar hot-water system and photovoltaic cells for electricity generation, and rainwater tanks.

This pointed up the central problem we have encountered since our committee formed: the fact that we don't own our own buildings or at least have the certainty of a long-term lease has stymied these sorts of initiatives and made long-term planning impossible.

My sons Hamish and Bill started in kindergarten at Korowal. Hamish graduated in 2005 and is now studying at UWS; Bill is in Year 10. We moved to the mountains for Korowal and we later moved two streets away to be close enough to walk to school. When I heard that our lease would not be renewed after 2008 I was grief-stricken, not just because we'd lose that convenience of proximity, but because the boys and I feel a deep attachment to the place on the other side of our valley. I've been through the classic stages of grief: first rage, then denial. I got to acceptance because I could see that in terms of sustainability the move would be the best possible outcome. I'm now brimming over with confidence and excitement, having seen at the AGM Annie Carment's wonderful photos of our possible

new home, and, wherever we end up, feeling privileged to be part of such an intelligent and brave group of people as make up our school.

Rebecca Gilling
Sustainability Sub-Committee

KOROWAL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2007

REPORT FROM THE RELOCATION WORKING GROUP

Annie Carment 31 May 2007

There is a group of people who have worked extremely hard on the relocation project over the past month or so. The School Council has met at least one night a week and often on weekends. Cindy Babbage has done a huge amount of work on the financial aspects of the relocation. Barb Fitzgerald has worked on putting our fundraising campaign into place. Wendy Monaghan has worked, almost full time, on fundraising and on publications. (Fundraising has been, and will be, a major part of this project.) Barb will detail the fundraising project. Jen Horrocks is compiling a database of ex-students. Tracey Barratt has organised this meeting tonight and has researched the demographics of the Korowal population. Trish Fitzgerald has organised food for tonight. Stephen Hodge has just been brought on board this week. His brief is to spend a few weeks coming up with a management plan for this project.

I have had two jobs: one is communications and marketing, which I have worked on for the past few years; the other is finding a site for us to move to.

Communication

Communications is not really a separate job. It connects with everyone and everything and every aspect of the relocation. Our approach to communications is that we should be as open and honest as we possibly can, and that people in our community are interested and intelligent and can understand that this moving business is exciting and necessary, but also complex. (Due to legal advice, we have had to make an exception to this principle in relation to information about our unsuccessful lease negotiations.)

The other important principle is that every decision and plan that we make in this process will need to be made ethically and consistently with Korowal's overall philosophy, so that at the end of this process we still feel like ourselves.

More specifically, we are laying the political groundwork. We have met with the Mayor and the heads of the relevant sections of BMCC and with Phil Koperberg, our state member of parliament, who have all indicated that they are prepared to support us if, and when, we need them to. We will soon meet with Kerry Bartlett and Bob Debus.

Our website will be a crucial means of communication over this next year. The website has been developed and maintained by a Korowal parent Mark Carey and is hosted by his company, Multibase. During the next month, Mark plans to move the website to a new content management system, which will be more user friendly and interactive. During that time, we will update the content and reinvigorate the look and feel of the site. In the meantime, you can access information about the relocation by clicking the "Korowal on the move" bar on the front page.

If at any stage you want more detail about **any** aspect of the relocation process, or wish to discuss your anxieties or just to chat, please contact me 47573239 or acarment@bigpond.net.au or talk to me in the playground when I'm picking up my kids.

Site Finding

Some background:

It is difficult to get a development application approved for a school. Under the 2005 LEP, educational establishments are restricted to the village and industrial areas, where it is difficult to find the kind of land we need. Re-zoning is a very lengthy and political process. We don't have a lot of time.

I'm aware that many of you will have imagined that if, and when, Korowal had to move, we would build a new school on a greenfields site in the bush. There are several problems with this concept:

- a) zoning. Most bushland acreages are zoned "bushland conservation", which means that a school is not allowed
- b) bushfire. There is great sensitivity to bushfire risk these days. A school on a single access road (eg. Mt Hay Rd, Tablelands Rd, would not be allowed)
- c) cost. Building from scratch would cost us approximately \$5 million, not including the purchase of the land
- d) sustainability. Building a new building is arguably less sustainable than recycling an existing building,

which leads me to telling you about THE PLACE THAT LOOKS MOST LIKELY for us to move to, with two very important provisos:

- 1) our negotiations to buy this property may not succeed
- 2) something else might turn up. We are still looking for other alternatives.

Negotiations

We have begun negotiations to buy the "Oaklands" property at Lawson/Hazelbrook. We are being expertly advised in our negotiation strategy by Paul Campey and by a Korowal parent who has extensive knowledge of real estate transactions of this magnitude.

Transport

We understand that transport is a crucial issue for our community. Currently, half of our school population lives Leura and westwards; the other half lives Wentworth Falls and eastwards, with a concentration (unsurprisingly) around the school, in Leura, Katoomba and Wentworth Falls.

For many years, we have provided supervised train transport to and from the lower Mountains to the station, and a bus to and from the station to school.

If we move to Lawson/ Hazelbrook, we will provide supervised train transport from the top and bottom of the mountain. We have talked to Pearce's bus company, which is prepared to service our school in Lawson/ Hazelbrook.

Oalkands

Oaklands is on a 16-acre site between Queens Road, Lawson, and Hall Parade (at the bottom of Oaklands Rd), Hazelbrook. If you turn left into Queens Rd from the highway and drive along about 500 m, then look down over the hill to your right, you will see a bunch of red rooves in the bush. That is Oaklands. Please don't drive around in the

property – the owners don't like it. If our negotiations succeed, we will take interested people there to look around.

Oaklands has a northerly aspect and looks out towards the National Park to the north and towards the city to the east. The bush to the west means that it doesn't get the winter westerlies. The buildings are 2.1 km from Lawson station and 1.9 km from Hazelbrook station. (Korowal is currently 2.1 km from Leura station.) There are two lots, which we would buy. One is called "Kolonga", on the Queens' Rd side, and contains about 8 acres of bush and a separate house. The other, on the Hall Parade side, contains all the other buildings.

History

Oaklands was built in 1908 and was originally the R T Hall Sanitorium, a philanthropic hospital which provided free care for TB patients. The buildings are heritage listed and on the National Trust register. In the 1980s, it operated as the Hall for Children, a disabled children's home, and some extra wings were added, as well as a separate hall/gymnasium. Generally the buildings seem to be very well preserved.

Infrastructure

There are roads, natural-gas central heating, disabled access ramps, and a bushfire sprinkler system. The walls are three bricks thick!

D.A. Application

Because the buildings are heritage listed, we can apply for a DA under the provisions relating to adaptive re-use of a heritage building. This potentially allows us to obtain a DA for a school in an area that would otherwise not allow for a school.

We have employed an architect who specialises in schools and has considerable experience in the political processes involved with obtaining a DA for a school.

His brief at this stage is to fit us into the Oaklands buildings with minimum cost.

We have a (very tentative) plan, which involves removing some internal walls in the newer parts of the building, internal refitting for (eg.) science labs, and upgrading of internal roads and parking.

The overall space at Oaklands (about 1950 sq.m.) is almost exactly the same as the space at Scott Avenue, but the space is very differently arranged. This week a heritage consultant, traffic consultant and bushfire consultant will visit the property.

Slides

The above was followed by a presentation of slides showing the property and grounds. For those of you who were not there – there are balconies, courtyards, two towers, several buildings, acres of grounds, gardens, and stunning views. I will download the power-point document onto a CD so that interested people who missed the presentation can see it.

I think I can speak for everyone who has seen the place so far when I say that I find it charismatic and inspiring, and I can just see our kids there, and I can't wait to get in there with a paintbrush.

Korowal Annual General Meeting 2007
Report: Barbara Fitzgerald 31 May 2007

FUNDRAISING FOR KOROWAL ON THE MOVE

In 2005, Paula Martin and I delivered a presentation at the National Drama in Education Conference. The context for this was to demonstrate how drama can galvanise a community. The subject for us was *To Granny's and Beyond*. For those of you who weren't part of our community at that time, here's a taste of the whole school production, which celebrated our 25th anniversary. [Film sequence]

At the end of our presentation, in the open discussion, there was overwhelming awe expressed by teachers from all over Australia. They couldn't envisage a production with the level of co-operation from students, staff, and parents happening at their school. They couldn't imagine teachers of all classes coming together to collaborate at such a deep level of commitment. They couldn't imagine their students—in particular, high school males—being comfortable to openly play in fairytales and being physically comfortable supporting each other. And they couldn't imagine the level of professionalism coming from within their communities.

But we could, and we can.

We had a vision of a whole-school production and a reason to celebrate our uniqueness, and we were proud to give this to the world. We started from scratch and created every aspect of the show: the script, the design, the music, the choreography. It was our story, and we are proud to be a part of it.

And now, on the eve of our 30th anniversary, we have a new vision—another even greater challenge. We have proved that we can pull together to create remarkable events. We have a highly skilled and creative community. We have parents who are passionate about their children's right to see their education through from k-12 in a nurturing, loving environment. We have teachers who keep the interests of the child as a first priority. We need to be here for the grandchildren. This new project, our relocation, will require our energy and focus, our skills and time, our united belief that Korowal is needed.

To this end, we have begun a fundraising campaign to raise a lot of money. So far we have:

- made contact with philanthropists
- sought marketing and fundraising advice from professionals
- begun developing a database of alumni, with thanks to Jennifer Horrocks
- begun preliminary plans for a 'highlights of our school Kabaret' fundraising event, to be held at the Clarendon late July
- started planning a fundraising partnership dinner
- the sustainability fair underway, as Rebecca stated earlier
- secured a film-maker to make a promotional film about Korowal
- and an art sale for later this year.

With our community's contributions and energy, we can now flourish. We're inviting pro-bono offerings and cash donations from within and outside of our community. It's worth noting that all donations to the building fund are tax deductible and

we're rapidly approaching the end of this financial year. Paula and Greg have also started making props so we can track our progress through our first prop: our thermometer. There are two indicators, which are adjusted to display our progress, and over the past six weeks we have collected \$10,130 in pro-bono offers. We have also received \$10,500 in cash donations. As the temperature rises and we reach \$50,000, we will place a gold leaf on the tree. By the end of the year, it would be marvellous if the tree displayed 20 gold leaves.

As you arrived you may have received a fundraising kit. This has been developed with great skill and care by Wendy Monaghan and Annie Carment, and contains invitations for your participation. Please take time to read through it. It includes:

- an invitation for you to consider what you may wish to offer the school in the way of pro-bono or in-kind donations
- an invitation for a testimonial so that we may use extracts for promotional material, and calls for suggestions of ideas
- a copy of 'our purpose and vision' statements
- a tri-fold brochure explaining who we are and asking if you can help, with details of the building fund and on-line donations set-up; thanks Cindy and Mark Carey, I believe this will be up and running within two weeks. There's a spare copy for a friend.

Wendy is responsible for co-ordinating the offers of help. We have another prop, which will be placed in the office into which you can post any letters of help, or anything regarding our relocation. If you want any further kits, please ask Wendy at the end of this session. We are immediately in need of a data-entry person to collate the offers of help and donations register.

So, back to *Granny's and Beyond*. The main character, Freda, was on a journey to find “the strong one”. Through developing friendships and exploring the unknown, she developed resilience and courage, and eventually found her own inner strength. [Film sequence shows Freda understanding the meaning of Korowal.]

Korowal means “to stand alone” or “the strong one”. There’s no doubt in my mind or heart that we can do this. *WE* are KOROWAL.

Barbara Fitzgerald
