

2019 School Council Election Parent Statements

Ben Ball

I nominated for School Council because I'd like to deepen my involvement in the life of this terrific school, and hope I have something to offer. I've been in book publishing for twenty years in Australia and the UK, most recently as Publishing Director of Penguin, so my main expertise is in literacy and helping realize the ideas of creative people, as well in as senior management (boards, governance, contracts, staffing and so on). And I've spent a fair amount of time in education myself: to go with my BA, I have a little-used law degree from Sydney University and well-thumbed Masters in English Literature from Oxford. My job has been with books and writers, but I'm interested in engaging young people with all the industries of ideas. My elder daughter, Ella, is in Year 8 this year, so we've just started our engagement with MGC.

David Garner

My daughter Claire is in year 9 and this is my third year as an MGC parent. I also have a son at Kew High School. I wish to join the MGC School Council because I would like to contribute to MGC's outstanding education for girls. I have some experience working on school councils - I was a member of Clifton Hill Primary School Council for 5 years, and was Treasurer and President of that group. The school council worked cooperatively with the whole school community - across many areas such as finances, buildings and maintenance and planning for the future, including helping the school to grow to meet the increasing demand for primary school education in the area. I work with the Australian Government as a research manager at the Productivity Commission and I also volunteer for Yarra City Girl Guides. If elected I will work hard to support the school community.

Russell Johnstone

Hello, My name is Russell Johnstone. My daughter Chloe is in 7C2 and my first child to enter secondary school. Previous roles in which I have volunteered include Bowen Street Community Centre (Treasurer/Vice President) and Auburn South Pre-School (IT Officer/Vice President). I have 3 degrees in Business ('93), Honours - Marketing ('94) and Masters Teaching ('14). My work includes 15 years in primate industry, 10 years as a stay at home dad (including volunteering roles) and 4 years Primary teaching. After school, I coach AFL football (Under 13 Girls – Gladiators), Cricket (Under 12 Boys – Camberwell).

Some ideas I want to follow through with the school council include:

- New Theatre project
- Public Transport efficiency and safety
- Platforms for student voice
- Sufficient school facilities

I am looking forward to being part of my daughter's learning experience at MGC.



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Vicki Sharp

I am the mother of Grace who finished school last year and Maddy and Lizzy who are in Year 8. Whilst a parent at the school I have been involved, with my girls, in the rowing and aerobics programs. I am also been involved in supporting the REACH Foundation.

I am a partner of a law firm and a member of the Diversity Committee of the Property Council of Australia. In that role I was instrumental in launching a program in 2018 called "Girls in Property" showcasing careers in property to 50 girls from 4 public girls schools including MGC.

I have nothing but praise for MGC and Karen Money's leadership of the school and am passionate about supporting young women to achieve their goals. I believe that I have significant skills to offer school council both professionally and personally and I would welcome the opportunity to assist in shaping the future of MGC.



Arthur Sorenson

I feel privileged to be able to nominate for the school council. I have two daughters, one of which has started year 7 this year at MGC and the other is in year 5 at Auburn South. I view being part of the school council as a great opportunity to learn about the school and to be able to take an active role in its growth and development which will ultimately benefit my children and all those whose children attend now or in the future.

I am currently employed as an executive at a multi-national company and focus primarily on employee compensation, benefit and contractual related Human Resource matters across Europe, Asia and the Americas. Prior to this role, I had spent many years working and living in the UK and Europe in similar roles, in addition to several years in the banking sector. I have a business degree (accounting) and pursued post-graduate studies in marketing, management and human resources. I look forward to utilising this experience to make a valuable contribution to the school council.



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Ajai Kurian Thomas

My name is Ajai Kurian Thomas. My daughter Sia started Year 7 at MGC this year. Sia, my wife Simi and I are very honoured to be part of the MGC community. Our family migrated to Australia from India in 2010. I work as Service Delivery Supervisor at the Dyson Group of Bus Companies, ensuring that services run to the highest standards. Prior to migrating to Australia I was a Dentist. I completed the Bachelor of Dental Surgery at Bangalore University and practiced in my own surgery for 9 years before migrating. Unfortunately our Qualifications are not directly recognised in Australia. This has given me the opportunity to explore other avenues in my career and be successful in them. Looking back I consider this as a blessing and appreciate the opportunity to prove myself in areas I would not have otherwise worked in.

I have worked in different capacities in different work environments. I believe that all the experiences I have gained working closely with people from different backgrounds and cultures would enable me to contribute effectively in the school council. I am looking forward to being an active member of the MGC community and help in whatever way I can.



Amanda Thompson

Amanda is a Financial Planner with extensive experience advising business and individuals on strategy and structure. She is the Director of Endurance Financial and currently caretaking the role of General Manager - Eco Timber Group (local to Richmond). She delivers financial planning seminars, coaching and mentoring specifically for women. She has previously held the position of Director/Secretary on the Board of a Community Bank.

If elected to School Council, she will bring with her a wealth of experience in strategy and finance. She has many diverse networks through her own business as well as through her sporting affiliations. Amanda lives with two daughters (Olivia is in Yr 7 at MGC) and is passionate about empowering women both in the workplace and in sport.



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Alison Young

I've been connected to MGC since my Year 11 daughter Charlie joined in Year 7. In 2015-16 I was a Parent member on School Council. I valued the opportunity to contribute to the school. I'd like to be able to do so again.

I've always been really impressed with the school and teachers, especially the thoughtfulness with which everyone approaches sometimes challenging issues or problems. Charlie has always been made to feel welcome, a huge achievement is in making students feel comfortable and at home, as well as inspired to do the best they can for themselves, their friends, the school, and the wider community.

I'm involved with education through my job, as a professor in the University of Melbourne Arts Faculty. My challenging and rewarding work is connected to the Melbourne art scene and to policymaking initiatives around homelessness. Being a lecturer means I have a good sense of the skills students going on to uni require. It doesn't matter what career path lies ahead: young people need resilience and emotional intelligence as well. As a Council member, I'll do my best to think about the ways the school can foster these strengths in its students while continuing to be welcoming and inspiring for all.

