

School Council President's Report Annual Report, 2019

In reflecting on the contribution of School Council in 2019 to Brunswick North West Primary my thoughts centre on a few themes; it was a year of consolidation, a year of starting some big journeys and a year that concluded with some significant change and an issue of some magnitude. Equally it was a year in which a committed group of parents and BNW team members contributed their skills, wisdom, energy and time trying to make our school an even better experience for our children.

In our first couple of meetings for 2019 we endorsed the Annual Implementation Plan for the school, which focused on areas such as numeracy, building resilience and integrated learning experiences for our children. At the same time, we kicked off a recurring theme throughout the year which focused on safety in the school setting and outside of the school grounds. As a Council we were so fortunate to have Nirvana Adey and Tanya Pittard join our ranks.

It took several of the 8 meetings we had in 2019 to finalise a review of the BNW Standing Orders by which School Council and all Sub Committees operate through. It was a significant exercise that required consultation with each Committee before being finally ratified by Council.

While the Strategic Infrastructure Committee took a hiatus from the massive and highly successful fund raising program in 2018, others in School Council, Committees, Junior School Council and school leadership consolidated the expression of funding by the State Government by working actively on capital works plans. We were thrilled by mid-2019 to receive the first 10% of the funding to enable architectural and design works to commence. So much energy was devoted by all BNW stakeholders from this point to realise a design, aesthetic and learning solution that would fit with the overall BNW ideals. We are all excited to see if we can realise these plans in 2020.

By Term 3 School Council was also involved in looking at NAPLAN results and how they reflected the expressions of the Annual Implementation Plan and what they showed we need to focus on in future years. It's always such an interesting time in School Council to look at these results and see how we are tracking.

We had some great discussions throughout the year that really tested the thoughts and beliefs of members, including; to stop signing the Australian national anthem, what and how many camps should be run over the year, allowing the MPR to be used by Moreland Council for a holiday program and many others.

We were excited in Term 4 to sign off on the design concept for the capital works program at BNW. This represents the single biggest spend at the school in decades and seeks to address as many elements of infrastructure committee's strategic pillars; some maintenance of existing buildings, updating of health and wellbeing amenities and delivery of a new building – STELLA. We were able to share the vision of these plans with Tim Read (Greens Member of Parliament for Brunswick) at our near final meeting of the year. An important aspect of School Council is stakeholder engagement outside of the school, and this was but one of several interactions we had over the year with politicians and the public service.

As exciting as Term 4 was in relation to the building program, School Council also had to process some very confronting news in relation to a sizable amount of funds being owed to the Department of Education. As previously explained this situation was brought on over an extended period of time due to incorrect accounting treatments which were not visible to School Council or the Finance

Committee at the time. School Council will monitor this situation very carefully over 2020 and continue to communicate with the school community.

And to close out the year (and early in 2020) we said farewell to some of the School Council team. Debbie Wood decided to focus her energy and time on creative aspects of the school and not renominate for School Council in 2020. We are so fortunate she continues to provide so much creative and passion to the school. Lou Collodetti also stepped down from School Council as his daughter starts her final year at BNW in 2020. Lou continues to work around the school and has been an amazing contributor to the buildings and grounds at BNW for so many years.

After many years on School Council, being a pivotal player in the massive capital fund raising in 2018, designing the entire school's master plan and being involved in more building, design and architectural considerations around the school than anyone can name, Belinda Kerry decided not to renominate in 2020. It's hard to imagine just where BNW would be today without her creativity, passion, energy and good spirit. BNW would look very different today if we were not so fortunate to have Belinda giving so much of herself.

Our biggest farewell from School Council and from BNW was without doubt the departure of Fiona Heathcote. Fiona has been School Council President for six years and involved with BNW for 14 years by the time her last child finished primary school at the end of 2019. Fiona epitomised all the elements of an amazing School Council President; she was always available when the school or community needed her, she was incredibly diplomatic through some very difficult situations, had a broad and strategic view of the school and its relationship with internal and external stakeholders, exercised patience and measure like few others and supported students, parents, teachers and the leadership teams in more ways than any of us will know. While her achievements are too many to call out, a few things are very worth mentioning; the development of a whole-of-school strategic plan, the recruitment and appointment of our new principal, the campaign for funding, and subsequent state government pledge of \$6.24m. We have been blessed as a school community to have had Fiona Heathcote give so much of herself.

Thank you all for being part of the 2019 Annual Review. All of us on School Council are thrilled to be part of this amazing school and we look forward to the year ahead.

Sam Cohen
School Council President.