



ST. MARY'S SCHOOL

McLennan Street, Mooroopna. 3629. Phone: (03) 5825 2858. Fax: (03) 5825 4026
P.O. Box 259, Mooroopna 3629

“Let your light shine”

To the St Mary's Community,

St Mary's Mooroopna is a very special place and I will be forever grateful for the 16 years of joy and enrichment I have received as principal here. When I reflect on the many achievements and successes the school has had over this time, I feel very proud to have had the privilege to play a part.

Some achievements have been noteworthy and well publicised, but the most significant successes are the ones we share as a school community.

I am always very proud when our school win sporting events, arts awards and community awards, but I am more proud of the way our students represent St Mary's at such a high standard. To hear that our students displayed excellent sportsmanship, showed respect to those they interact with and were humble in victory or defeat is more important than any win.

I feel extremely proud when St Mary's students go on to achieve great things when they graduate in Gr 6. It gives me great joy seeing ex St Mary's students become a school captain for their high school, playing sport at an elite level or embarking on an important career (like teaching!). But what I am more proud of is the wonderful reputation St Mary's has in our local community and the glowing reports I receive from outsiders who say that St Mary's students are such quality young people.

I feel greatly satisfied when I walk around our school and see the beautiful facilities, grounds and buildings that we have. But what is more important is the people inside the buildings, children and staff who let their light shine in so many ways each day at school.

Over the years I have witnessed students who have overcome adversity in their lives while at St Mary's and after graduating. I am both overwhelmingly proud and have a deep level of respect for these young people. To witness first hand the challenges these children and their families have faced and to see them overcome these challenges has been truly inspirational.

Something that I am most proud of is that visitors have always felt that St Mary's is a welcoming school. That is so important to me because it reflects numerous things on many levels. Our inclusiveness of all abilities, cultures and diversities is something we are all very proud of.

These examples of what happens each and every day at St Mary's do not happen by chance. To maintain such high standards over a long period of time is a combination of talented, hard working staff whose endeavours are centred around our students.

To our current and past teachers, I have deep appreciation for the commitment you have shown to the students of St Mary's. Most people wouldn't know the extra hours you work outside of school and the deep care you have for the children. Your dedication has resulted in high quality learning and teaching for all children, year in year out, in all grades.

To our learning support staff, you are some of most caring and kind hearted people I have known. Not only have you assisted children with their learning, you have ensured their dignity and supported them to flourish in many ways. The students and their families are especially lucky to have you in their corner each day.

I am very grateful to our office staff, non teaching staff and volunteers. These people not only do their respective roles at a high standard, they often volunteer to take on extra responsibilities such as attending sports days, camps and excursions. They also play a pivotal role in St Mary's maintaining such a welcoming and supportive environment.

I have been very lucky to have had quality Deputy Principals who have been ever reliable and supportive of myself and the school. Thank you to Sheila Griffin, Pauline Hindson and Ann Margaret Carroll for their collegiality and friendship. Your honesty and trust has given me the confidence to know the decisions we have made are informed and in the best interest of students, staff and families.

I would also like to thank the School Council Chairs I have worked closely with during my time as principal. Rocky Varapodio, Paul Brown, Glenn James and Kylie Glover have ensured our School Council meetings were always positive and productive. They have all provided me with advice I could trust and support when challenges arose.

I've always believed that a Principal's role is to work together with families to assist with the education and development of their children. It has been a privilege to be part of the primary school journey with so many of you. Thank you for trusting myself and St Mary's with the most precious thing in your lives - your beautiful children. Thank you for the contribution you have all made to our wonderful school.

To the most important members of the St Mary's community - the students. The highlight of my working day has been my 8:30am yard duty where I get to have a chat and a laugh with the kids. Thanks for laughing at my jokes (most of the time!) and making me proud of you all. Dream big and let your light shine in all that you do.

We have been extremely lucky to have had such a strong connection with our parish and the Church. Thank you to the parish pastoral council and the finance committee for working alongside the school to develop the children's spirituality and complete joint projects that compliment both the school and parish. I'm sure you will all agree, the McLennan St view of the school, church and parish house looks fantastic. I would also like to thank the parishioners that I have grown very fond of over the years. It has been lovely sitting with you all at Sunday masses and getting to know so many of you.

Finally I'd like to thank Monsignor Peter for his guidance and friendship. I have gained more insight about leadership from Mons Peter than any other person I have worked with. He is a model of Christianity and it is no wonder he is such a highly respected and loved figure in the Goulburn Valley and beyond.

I leave with many fond memories, but it's the people who make these memories so special. I sincerely thank you all for the part you have all played in my 16 years here at St Mary's.

When I first became a principal, a colleague told me of the importance of staying in one school long enough so you have somewhere to call home. And how lucky and very proud I am to call St Mary's home.

Thank you and farewell,
Anthony Butts