



St Joseph's Primary School Northcote

2024 Annual Review Meeting

Chair's Report

Welcome everyone

- I joined the St. Joseph's School Advisory Council (SAC) in 2023 as a parent member and 2024, this past year, has been my first year as Chair. It has been a rewarding first year for me taking on this role and working closely with Mary, Kate and the SAC members to deliver on important matters and initiatives for our school community.
- We welcomed two new SAC members this year, Joseph Sturrock and Christina Rodighiero who, in their first year proved to be excellent additions to the skill set of the SAC membership.
- The St. Joseph SAC met 8 times throughout 2024 including tonight and with one of these meetings being an extraordinary meeting in March specifically to continue progress on the roof restoration project.
- We welcomed many new families to the St. Joseph's community, not only new Prep families but also families moving over from St. John's in Clifton Hill which closed in 2024. Moving schools mid-way through a year for any family is challenging. It's a testament to Mary and her amazing team who supported these families during this period that enabled them to settle in well. Not to mention the St. Joey's kids themselves creating new friendships.
- 2024 also saw a huge uplift in enrolment enquiries and prep enrolments. Word is getting out on how great our school is! Mary had a 2025 Prep wait-list for the first time!
- The Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic School (MACS), the governing body for approximately 300 Catholic schools across Melbourne, ran two new events in 2024 bringing SAC Chairs together to create opportunities to get to know each other, share experiences and continue to grow our schools with education in faith. I attended one of the two events and it was a great experience to meet and learn from others in the same role, particularly as a first-time SAC Chair, share stories and bring back insights and learnings to the St. Joseph's SAC.
- 2024 at St. Joseph's was destined to be a huge year with key a building project and large scale events re-introduced such as the school concert and school fete. And this is exactly what happened!

In 2024 the SAC delivered many things but I want to highlight 2 major activities:

School Building Roof Restoration

This was a mammoth project that began well before 2024 in its planning phase, and culminated this year in securing funding, appointing a contractor and delivery of the works. Logistics of how the 100+ years old roof tiles were to be removed and replaced coupled with minimising disturbance as much as possible to an operational school was the main focus for the SAC. The SAC were concerned about many impacts of disturbance from these works; from the physical relocation of student classes, to noise disturbance, heavy vehicle movements before and after school hours and impacts to the provision of aftercare itself. It was important to inform parents of these changes and an online information session was held before works began to highlight these key points and listen to any concerns from our community. Having families aware of these impacts was paramount to the project's success; as the school outdoor footprint was significantly reduced during the construction to ensure staff and students could safely move around throughout the school day. The Middles, students in years 3 and 4, were relocated to portable rooms over on Westbourne Grove for almost all of Term 3 with some students excited by the new change in scenery and others not enjoying it as much and wanting to be back in the main school building. The SAC sincerely appreciates the cooperation from staff, students and families during this time. It enabled these significant works to be started and completed in Term 3, finishing ahead of schedule and under budget. Well done to Mary for getting this done!



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School Fete

St. Joseph's hasn't hosted a school fete since the pandemic and early in the year the SAC decided 2024 was the year to host one again. The Social Club, led by Olivia took on this huge task to plan, coordinate and organise this wonderful community event. Engagement with Darebin Council to close part of James St to extend the fete's footprint to locate fun rides and experiences.

The subcommittee spent a good portion of 2024 engaging with the SAC, our school community, many local sponsors and suppliers to create the many offerings and activities everyone enjoyed on the day. From a fire truck visit, to cupcakes and clothing for sale; a photo booth, books, toys, there was something for everyone, including a great selection of food and drink offerings. A highlight was the Choir that performed and entertained the crowds as they moved through the fete.

This is a major fundraising activity for St. Joseph's and a beautiful sunny day helped to bring many people to the event. For the first one held in a few years, a big thanks goes to Olivia and her team for a very fun and successful event.

A special mention on the School Concert. Whilst this was not a SAC activity/event, I think it is fair to say that the school concert was an utter joy to watch!

It was incredible to hear that Jaclyn, St. Joseph's Performing Arts teacher wrote and produced the concert and rehearsed with the children in their respective roles over many months. She was responsible for everything we enjoyed over the 2 nights. It was so wonderful to see the children participating in performing arts, so many working with their peers or others across different year levels and thoroughly enjoying themselves.

Aside from the production we enjoyed, significant logistics and organisation went into this whole of school event from organizing our children, music, staging and securing a venue. A big thank-you to Mary, Kate and their amazing team for this production.

Subcommittees

There were 5 subcommittees in 2024 each with a dedicated area of responsibility sharing the big to-do list of the SAC.

The **Fundraising Subcommittee** has the role of setting the fundraising strategy and reviewing annually planned commitments and fundraising streams against this strategy for various priorities. This subcommittee works closely with the Social Club subcommittee.

Identified late 2023, the projects below were the two that the SAC determined would be the focus for fundraising in 2024. As such, these two projects are intended to be delivered in 2025.

- Resurfacing the basketball court
- Resurfacing the undercroft area

The **Social Club Subcommittee**, has an integral role in raising funds for all initiatives, big and small in line the school's fundraising strategy. The Social Club brings together all of the St. Joseph's community across different events and the subcommittee is further supported by nominated parents within each year level reaching out to parents and carers encouraging participation and interaction. The big events for 2024 included:

- Mother's Day Lunch
- Mother's Day & Father's Day Stalls



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- Colour Run
- Fete

Collectively, these events raise a lot of money and are key financial contributors toward delivering important improvements to the school.

The **Sustainability Subcommittee** is focused on taking action towards becoming a more sustainable and resource smart school and ensuring our children are receiving education on sustainability, what it means and what we can do.

- Some of the key activities this year have included:
 - Commenced data collection on paper waste with a view of reducing the amount of paper used in classrooms – part of the Waste Module
 - School reports have moved from paper copies and issued as online reports
 - Looking at all school events through a sustainability lens and its principles to reduce, reuse, recycle. The fete this year was a fantastic example of applying this lens: no disposable cutlery and crockery was used for food and drinks served, crockery was washed and reused, recyclable and food waste were separated to remove them from the general waste stream that would otherwise have gone to landfill.

The **Masterplan and Maintenance Subcommittee** plans for the future of our school and what infrastructure is needed to support our growing school community. With increased enrolments, master-planning and maintenance is becoming increasingly important for the future of our school. The subcommittee sets out what funding is required to update and/or future-proof learning facilities in alignment with the school's masterplan and to provide safe and effective learning spaces that in turn support St. Joseph's pedagogy.

For 2024 the focus was the roof restoration project, as discussed earlier, this was a big project and now being completed the SAC intends for the Masterplan to be reviewed in 2025 for priorities and opportunities.

The **Traffic Management subcommittee** continued the strategic work started in 2023 in increasing the awareness to our school community of how important traffic management and safety is for our children when they arrive or leave the school grounds. There has been difficulty with the Kiss'n'Go area on James St in recent years with cars parked for much longer than the allocated time at afternoon pick-up. Information and requests were sent to parents in 2024 to remind everyone of the short-term parking and the impact of stationary cars and double-parked cars to the safety of our children.

During the roof restoration works this year, a different method for entering and exiting the school grounds was introduced due to the closure of the main entrance gate. Children were entering and exiting through the large double gates at the eastern end of James St making the Kiss'n'Go short-term parking area highly visible and actively monitored by staff during this time. During this period, the Kiss'n'Go parking markedly improved with regular movement of cars. The SAC will continue to monitor vehicle movements in this area at afternoon pick-up to highlight the importance of safety to our community.

Darebin Council has also shared with the Subcommittee that they have committed to constructing traffic calming measures near the school by way of raised pedestrian crossings in James St. A fantastic effort from Joseph and Christina in raising the importance of our children's safety with Council. The school community should see the benefit of these works early in the 2025 school year.



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Closing words

I would like to thank all members of the SAC for their commitment and contribution this past year. Everyone has felt comfortable to share openly and honestly their thoughts on issues that matter to our school. This level of commitment and collaboration is so important to improve the school and learning environment for our children. And our children are the 'why' we do what we do.

Mary, our Principal. A big thank-you for helping me navigate the role of Chair each month, giving me your insights with a big smile and a bit of hand holding! I look forward to more great conversations and leading the SAC to achieve our goals for St. Joseph's in 2025.

Thank-you to Jodie, our Secretary who has stepped down this year from the SAC. I am very thankful for her answering the many many questions I've asked behind the scenes along the way and getting me organised each month!

Our outgoing members – Madeleine and Fatima, thank-you both for your time, commitment and dedication to the SAC during your tenure. You both brought great energy and ideas to our meetings.

As Chair on behalf of the SAC, I would like to thank Mary, Kate, Kathryn and all of the teaching team at St Joseph's. Aside from the clear dedication you all have in educating our children, it is the kindness and thoughtfulness that you all show to our children that makes a real difference.

Look forward to working with you all in 2025.

Thank you.