School Board Annual Report 2008

It has been my absolute pleasure to serve on the Saint Andrew’s School Board this year as Chair. We come together as a cross section of our school community in order to put forward different and diverse points of views, opinions and suggestions. It is imperative that these opinions are represented by as all — as working parents, at home parents, carers, blue collar workers, white collar workers — the wide ranging skills and experience that we contribute is essential to the development and growth of our school. So firstly I would like to thank our members, for not only giving up their time, but also for being ‘proactive’ in caring about what happens; Ray Mackie, Sean Higgins — our treasurer and Judith Birchall and Michelle Russell — our secretaries. Special thanks to our Parish Priest – Father Phillip Perreau and Parish Reps – Kerry Richardson and Reti Wisnesky, for their involvement highlights the link....the ‘bond’ that the school has with its ‘parent’ - the Church.

This year we have been greatly challenged by illness and loss within our families and staff. But throughout the great sadness, the visual evidence of support and love has emanated throughout the school and for that we should be proud. Our prayers continue to offer strength to those who are still in pain.

I believe that the extent of a child’s education does not depend only on what a teacher teaches – but how they teach it. Do they impart knowledge in such a way that the child not only comprehends what is being taught, but then is inspired to act upon their newly acquired knowledge? Well, in answer, when you enter your shower to discover that an empty green bucket from Bunnings has appeared, and only last weekend, every suitable container in the house was used to catch the overflow from our bore water tank as my ‘man on a mission’ 8yr old, ran around the place proclaiming “We’ve got to save the water – we care about our environment!” — then you know that this style of teaching has been put into practise!! It is for this reason that I graciously thank our superb band of teachers and for the life changing role that they play in sculpting our children’s lives.

So Mrs. Eileen Climo took over the reins this year as our new School Principal. Well I have one word to say........Buzz. That is the word that I would use to describe the atmosphere in and around our school community since she arrived. It is said that ‘Rome cannot be built in a day’ — but when I look around and see what has been implemented and achieved already since the beginning of 2008 — it is not surprising that this enthusiasm has become infectious. Board
meetings can quite often be a platform for debate, but the unanimous responses of “yes, yes and yes can undoubtedly be attributed to Mrs. Climo’s exciting suggestions. Areas of discussion, approval and implementation this year have included:

- Instrumental music programme
- School camp
- Expansion of the school website
- Installation of a new shed for storage
- New cricket nets
- Sports carnival faction vests, tents and winner’s medals and podium
- Anti-vandal car park lights
- Staff car park gates to improve safety
- Path connecting Under Cover Area with end of Year 5/6
- Buddy linked masses
- Friendly Schools & families Programme
- More interactive whiteboards
- Improvement of the newsletter as a means of communication and celebration of children’s achievements
- Programme for an ‘Environmentally Sustainable School’ – with native tree planting, rain water tanks, worm farms, vegetable patches, solar power, frog ponds and reflection gardens.
- Introduction of paper and cardboard recycling

Another group within the school that I would like to commend on behalf of The Board this year, is the P & F Committee. The ambience that you have created around the school is exciting, fun and truly welcoming. Your
inexhaustible hard work, boundless energy and positive attitude is regularly praised and appreciated by us and we thank you for everything you have done. You are an absolute bonus to our school and a credit to yourselves.

When asking a group of students recently if they knew about The School Board, one boy excitedly suggested “The new one as you come in on the left?” “Not quite,” I replied, but it did reiterate that children notice change – they grow in experience from different opportunities presented to them. And for that reason we must strive to continually change, develop and grow. I invite all parents and carers to be part of that change (in whatever way possible) by becoming actively involved in the growth of our school.

Finally, I would just like to share with you a ‘moment’ spent with my daughter (pre-primary) which summed up to me the type of person she was being encouraged to become through the education she was receiving at St. Andrew’s Primary School.

It was a cold day. She sat looking down at her hands which were gently cupped over her chest.

“Darling – what are you doing?” I said slightly worried.

“I’m keeping my heart warm” she replied.

“Why?” I said intrigued.

“Because that’s where Jesus lives.......in my heart”.

On behalf of all The Board, have a wonderful Christmas and remember........ignore the ‘hullabaloo’........remember the ‘reason’............and enjoy the smiles.

Kind Regards

Michelle Varley
Board Chair
St. Andrew’s Catholic Primary School