

Report from the President

Welcome to the 2017 Annual General Meeting of the East Launceston Primary School Parents and Friends Association.

It has been another full year of discussion about the capital works build and what the P&F contribution might look like. This has continued to create uncertainty within our Association, with an extraordinary amount of effort going towards negotiations with the Department of Education. To a degree this has distracted the P&F from our usual activities, however there is much to be positive about.

- We have a strong and supportive member body, which has remained engaged despite the time this process has taken
- We have improved governance processes that will stand us in good stead moving forward as an Association
- We have built a strong and mutually respectful relationship with the DoE
- We continue to focus on our primary objective – the betterment of our school

Following a majority vote (86%) in favour of the P&F negotiating with the DoE, the P&F responded to the DoE request for a co-contribution of land with a proposal for a ‘land swap’ rather than an outright gift or contribution. This proposal set out an arrangement that would see the current ownership proportions maintained, but the balance of the ‘flat land’ that makes up the ‘oval’ returned to the P&F in exchange for an equal sized portion of bank (including the pavilion) along Oxford Street. The DoE received this proposal positively and undertook active engagement with the local community. As we approach the AGM, the DoE has advised the P&F and school community that, having considered all options, the preferred location for the capital works build is on DoE owned land adjacent to the basketball courts rather than utilising the land swap proposal. This will allow the build to commence immediately and planning is well underway. So where does that leave the land swap? The DoE is still supportive of the land swap proposal and negotiations are ongoing. In brief, it is the position of the P&F Executive that the exchange of land will future-proof the school and remove the financial pressure of the Pavilion from the P&F. Any agreement will be subject to a further vote put to the P&F membership, with a 75% majority required to proceed.

Changes to the Education Act came into effect this year that may impact the ELPS P&F. Specifically, these changes relate to School Associations (SA) and incorporation – keeping in mind that the usual model for a P&F is as a sub-committee of the SA. The ELPS P&F is an incorporated Association that owns land, so we are somewhat unusual and not specifically accounted for in the new legislation. TASSO has been very supportive in finding a path forward, and the ELPS P&F has also sought independent legal advice on the matter. At this stage, the advice we have received is that these changes will not impact our functioning as an independent incorporated Association, but it might be prudent to request a formal exemption from the Minister for Education. Discussions have been put on hold pending the outcome of the Capital Works and land swap proposal and will be considered once these issues have been resolved.

Despite feeling like this hasn't been a 'big' year for fundraising, the ELPS P&F has conducted several successful smaller fundraising events that have served primarily to unite the school community. We continued with the tradition of 'Carols on Oxford', Christmas cakes, Easter Buns and the Entertainment Book and held successful stalls for both Mother's Day and Father's Day. Although small, these events have each raised over \$1000 profit that, added together, is not at all insignificant!! We also have a Trivia Night planned for October and look forward to an opportunity to get together for 2017. I would like to thank Claire and Libby on the Executive team for really driving those fundraising events. Hiring of the Pavilion and management of the clothing shop also contribute to our income and thanks go to Megs for taking on the Pavilion Co-ordinator role and Sarah for managing the clothing shop – you both do such a great job. Thank you to all those members who have actively worked on fundraising activities, we couldn't provide the ongoing support to our children without you. Our income goes directly back to support the school in numerous ways and each volunteer contributes to that.

I would like to thank the hardworking Executive for remaining resilient, resourceful, united and optimistic despite the many challenges we have experienced this year. I know we ask a lot of you in volunteer roles and I hope that the broader membership understand and appreciate how difficult it can be. Thanks also to Emmy and the school team for your contribution to the P&F over the past year.

This year is my 8th year of involvement with the P&F, of which I spent one year as Vice-President and three years as President. It is also my last. I wish to thank everyone who has contributed and supported the P&F and I have every confidence that the incoming Executive team will look forward to a future of being the best we can be.

Jess Downie
President ELPS P&F