

Parents and Friends Inc.

EAST LAUNCESTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Minutes of meeting held on June 1, 2016.

Meeting opened at 7.03pm.

Attendance: P&F president Jess Downie, P&F treasurer Ross Smith, P&F secretary Michael Lowe, P&F executive committee members Angela Phyland and Leigh Anthony; ELPS principal Emmy Brient, ELPS assistant principals Rachel Brown, Brett Hay, Julie Briggs; ELPS business manager Lucy Robbins, Hugh Christie, Greg Bradfield, Virginia Bower, Kim Barber, Magie Caldwell, Claudine Ball, Sara Redman, Dwayne Kirkby, Lea Watson, Clare Robertson, Sarah Stagg, Caroline Davies, Cheryl Stratton, Fiona Duggan, Maria Mischis, Amanda Gutwein-Burke, Julia Hoffner, Lil Calvert, Jacinta Ellis, Hayley Luttrell, Natalie Clark, Donal McIntee, Jim and Fiona Cuming, Pam Arthur, Rebecca Viney, Jane Gaetani-Black.

Apologies: Todd Henderson, Sarah Foster, Clare Mawdesley, Tim Whiteley, Vanessa Ross, Liz Mankin, Elizabeth Stevenson, Mark Jefferies, Meg Anderson, Baden Brown, Penny Allen, Paula Huett, Naomi O'Shea, Shane Robertson, Rob Watson.

With the permission of the meeting, chair Jess Downie went to item 7 on the agenda, pavilion/oval. Secretary Michael Lowe presented a summary (attached) of the oval history. Jess said there was a clear issue with overcrowding at the school. The School Association had raised with the P&F the suggestion of a land co-contribution (a land donation) to help fix this problem. Principal Emmy Brient said the school had run out of space and the school wanted to come up with creative solutions. For the first time in five years, the state government had opened a capital works portal. Overcrowding had been an problem for seven years. The school had applied for funding for six extra classrooms, gym-multipurpose area and levelling of some of the sloping land on the Abbott St site. Emmy said the school "had crossed fingers" for \$6million. But the \$4.5 million announced in the state budget in May was "not a bad comprise". She said this was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for ELPS. Although the capital works was fairly challenging, it was a good problem to have. The budget allocated \$1 million in 2016-17 and the balance in the following year.

Emmy then listed problems caused by overcrowding, including the library being in a covered courtyard, the book collection being reduced by two thirds to fit the space, being unable to run additional art classes in the art studio and compromised music, other performing arts and gifted and talented teaching. But one of the biggest impacts is on the early years – there are three kindergartens in two classrooms. Launching into Learning does not have enough room, and Tiny Talkers cannot be offered at all.

Emmy said the School Association had asked the P&F for a land co-contribution of P&F-owned land fronting Oxford Street. This would allow relocation of some students, which would relieve pressure on the Abbott Street site. She said the two groups were working together to solve the problem.

Jess said the P&F was on the same page as others, and trying to maximise opportunities for children and the school. She said it was the job of the P&F to provide as much information as possible, and provide a good process. She outlined what the meeting should achieve: giving information and develop a process going forward on how to get a decision.

Jess read out the P&F objectives from the incorporated association's constitution. She said the P&F contributed items to the school. The association leases its oval to the school and that revenue was a major part of the P&F income. She could not remember when a school funding request had been refused.

A question was asked from the floor if the school was just asking for a small part of the P&F land. Jess said the P&F membership would first decide whether or not to make a co-contribution, and then talk about concepts.

Treasurer Ross Smith gave an extensive overview of the profit earned by the P&F during the past five years from hiring the oval and pavilion, and other sources. That total was more than \$80,000 across all five years. The association had in the same time spent \$25,000 on a new pavilion floor and \$45,000 on new steps, rails and landscaping. There was \$93,000 available for more improvements. Other fundraising sources include the school fair, clothing pool and Christmas cake sales. The association has granted many school funding requests, including for books, Lego, playground upgrades, chaplaincy services and televisions. In 2014, the association gave more than \$40,000 in funding.

In response to a question from the floor about how the school could make the most of the capital funding, Jess said the money was not contingent on a P&F land contribution. But a co-contribution could enhance the result.

There was an extensive discussion about merit, process and quantum of a co-contribution, with many questions from the floor. Comments included: Before looking at what may be built, the P&F should decide if it will co-contribute; who can vote, how to become a P&F member, a vote timetable and the need for wide community consultation.

Jess summarised a meeting on May 23 (between Department of Education and ELPS staff, master planning group members, School Association members and P&F executive members) that addressed many of these issues. She said the meeting was open and supportive. DoE officials said the DoE only built on land it owned; that there could be legal safeguards restricting use of any gifted land; DoE could help to achieve P&F oval enhancement plans; the DoE has no preferred development option; there are only guidelines (no rules) about green space and teaching space to student ratios; schools in the area are full so moving school boundaries would not help the overcrowding; student enrolment projections are based on trends and not set in stone.

There were questions from the floor about projected student numbers, including an apparent mismatch between DoE projections and Australian Bureau of Statistics data. Emmy said the school was closed to out-of-area enrolments, but the intake of 72 refugees, large classes in the early years and other factors were not reflected in ABS data. Plus children will be required to start school at a younger age from 2020. There are now 630 plus students. Jess she asked at the May 23 if the DoE could buy the land, to be told that the department did not have an additional pot of money for land purchase. If there was no co-contribution, the DoE could build on its own land, but Emmy said this was not the preferred option.

In response to a request from the floor for a timeframe, Jess said the P&F had not been given a deadline for a decision, and there had to be thorough consultation. She said the P&F needed to balance responsibility with outcome.

Other points raised included: the DoE wants a start on work in the 2016-17 financial year; the school needs to move things forward to get the use of DoE consultant architects; the possibility of building

classrooms on DoE land as a first stage, then look at a second stage; the school enrolment has grown over the years, while space has been taken away for development.

An early learning teacher told the meeting that teachers and parents had many concerns, and a dedicated early learning centre would help. Emmy said there was a significant amount of P&F land that was under-utilised.

There were more calls for a timeframe and concern about how long the matter had already been discussed. Jess said any co-contribution needed at P&F vote - meaning a process was needed to become a P&F member, compile a membership list and have a vote. The initial question is: Contribute land or not? Then: If contribute, then what? Emmy said the P&F could work towards a July 1 vote. School business manager Lucy Robbins said this was the sixth meeting on the matter and it was "going around in circles". She said the School Association-P&F statement (that she emailed to parents on May 27) had the needed information.

There was discussion about the need for quality, balanced information; allowing the many parents who had worked on the oval to have a say; developing a P&F membership application form; that the current teaching environment involved unacceptable compromises due to limited space; increasing costs of maintaining the pavilion and that the pavilion may do better as a DoE asset; and that voting could happen on July 11-14.

Motion: Hugh Christie (seconded by Leigh Anthony) moved that a timeframe and decision structure sketched by Hugh on the meeting whiteboard be accepted. **CARRIED.** The sketch showed a four-part process - membership form development, membership applications be accepted, information communication and finally, a vote. Each stage would take up to two weeks. There could be a vote in July.

The meeting then moved back to the original agenda order.

Minutes of the previous meeting: The chair (Jess Downie) called for a motion that the minutes of the previous meeting, dated May 4, 2016 be accepted as a true and correct record. Jess Downie, Rachel Brown. **CARRIED**

Business arising from previous minutes: Treasurer Ross Smith tabled the oval master plan.

Financial report: Treasurer Ross Smith presented the latest financial report and proposed a motion (seconded by secretary Michael Lowe) that the report be accepted. **CARRIED** Report attached.

Correspondence: Secretary Michael Lowe tabled an oval history summary; two school fair debriefing documents from fair coordinator Lucy Hyde; information from oval-pavilion coordinator Meg Culhane about the cleaning of the pavilion; an email from solicitor Ross Hart acknowledging suspension of the Tasma Street oval entrance land investigation process; a school funding request form from school business manager Lucy Robbins; two School Association motions from a May 19 meeting that support development on the Oxford Street site and requests the P&F to support and facilitate the development process; and a document from parent George Hyde, proposing a decision-making process for the P&F in relation to the school redevelopment. Assistant principal Julie Briggs spoke on the fair documents. She said the fair committee had developed a fair manual that would guide the next committee. She also outlined a range of fair recommendations, including having more parents on the committee and holding the fair every second year in the week before Easter. The meeting was told that there was left-over frozen sausages. **Motion:** Michael Lowe (seconded by Rachel Brown) moved that a polling day sausage sizzle be held at the pavilion on July 2 **CARRIED.** Michael said he would do the organising. Jess told the meeting she had submitted a submission on

the Education Act review, in conjunction with the Tasmanian Association of State School Organisations.

The meeting briefly returned to item seven, pavilion-oval. Michael told the meeting that a cleaner who does work at the school has been hired on a casual basis to clean the pavilion, replacing the former cleaner. This will initially be a trial, but hopefully become permanent.

Clothing pool: Motion: Jess Downie (seconded by Leigh Anthony) moved that a request by the clothing pool coordinator be accepted. **CARRIED** Some old style fleece jackets will be discounted in a sale.

Fundraising: Jess will liaise with the school about holding a cocktail party early next term. Ross Smith suggested the profits could go to the proposed grade six Canberra trip on 19-22 September. There was discussion about the cost of trip, the funding breakdown, if the request would become an annual request, and the importance as a learning experience. The P&F at an earlier meeting had been asked to contribute about \$25,000 and the donation could be an annual event. But Emmy said at this meeting that the donation would be a one-off. If the initial trip was a success, the funding for future years would be found from other sources. **Motion:** Ross Smith (seconded by Jess Downie) moved that the cocktail party profits be donated to the Canberra trip and that the P&F look at bridging any funding gap. **CARRIED**

There was no school report and Ross asked if money had been spent on previously granted funding requests: kinder air conditioning and books.

General business: There was discussion about the need for legal advice on the co-contribution request. **Motion:** Jess Downie (seconded by George Hyde) proposed that the P&F obtain independent legal advice on the land co-contribution, and associated matters. **CARRIED**

Meeting closed 9.54pm. Next meeting August 3.