

ASPS School Council AGM 23rd March 2021 - School Council President's Report

Welcome to Auburn South Primary Schools AGM and I am pleased to present the Annual President's Report for the 2020 year and delighted to see everyone in the same space.

Sometimes it seems like yesterday and other times a generation ago, but it was a year ago tomorrow that the first lockdown commenced with an additional week or two of school holidays and other than a brief spell back in the classroom in Term 2 it was not until the 12th October that the classrooms were full again.

What an extraordinary year it was and one that won't be forgotten.

However, it is all too easy to dwell on the negatives, which were apparent every minute of every day. But I'm choosing to reflect on the positives so here goes!

I have been the School Council President for the last 24 months and every aspect of it has been a real privilege. During the year I witnessed Marcus and every one of his staff adjust to the new ways of learning. It wasn't easy, it wasn't straight forward but without failure they were constantly looking for ways to improve, looking out for families that may have required more help than others and continued to teach our children. So, on behalf of School Council - thank you Marcus and every single one of your staff.

School Council agreed on the Standing Orders at the beginning of last year which highlights the following responsibilities:

1. Contributing to the development of the school strategic plan (2018 – 2022)
2. Approving the annual budget
3. Developing, monitoring, reviewing and updating policies

In addition to the above the other key functions include:

4. Informing itself and taking into account the views of the school community when making decisions
5. Arranging for the supply of the things needed for the conduct of the school
6. Ensuring various trading operations run in accordance with relevant external guidelines and school policies
7. Supporting the school's fund-raising efforts
8. Making sure the school's ground and building are maintained
9. Entering into contracts
10. Creating interest in the school within the community

As a council we continued to function remotely throughout the year but despite the extraordinary year we have had some real success and, in my view, managed to undertake our responsibilities and key functions.

The **Finance subcommittee** has been diligent in tracking the budget against a changing financial landscape and reforecasting as required during the year and finishing the school year in a sound financial position. Thank you to Simon as Treasurer for all your work in this space and to the broader committee.

I am not going to steal Eva's thunder but would like to stress all the work the **Policy review subcommittee** have achieved. They have done an extraordinary amount of work and it is always behind the scenes, detailed and endless. With a system in place to track what is required and what has been done should hopefully make life easier and, in my view having relevant policies in place should only help the entire ASPS community. So a huge thank you to the policy team, particularly Eva and Colette who have shouldered most of the work that has been undertaken recently.

Despite being closed for chunks of the year both the Uniform Shop and Canteen, have continued to operate when possible and often under trying circumstances – so well done and thank you to the managers and all the volunteers, without them it would not be possible to provide these services, so on behalf of school council thank you very much. And thank you to **Trading Operations subcommittee** in supporting both the Uniform Shop and Canteen.

Despite not being at school for significant periods during the year the GaGa pit was constructed, the bike and scooter shed was expanded, new carpets were installed in the Prep/Grade 1 rooms and Performing Arts room and edging around the commemorative path in the Sensory Garden was completed. A great accomplishment during a pandemic.

A number of projects have been identified, some requiring insignificant financial investment others more. It would be wonderful to see some of these come to fruition over the next 12 months either through hard work and determination or applying for grants as and when opportunities arise. So good luck to **the School Improvement subcommittee** – it could be a busy year!

And as you all know ASPS has been successful obtaining DET funds to refurbish the Main Building and installing solar panels both of which will have an impact for generations to come. Well done to Marcus and his team for the years of behind-the-scenes lobbying. It will be a busy year logistically and I look forward to coming to visit once it is open.

I would also like to highlight the outstanding results the school obtained from the **PYP evaluation**. Due to COVID-19 it was delayed and eventually took place virtually in November. The results are a real testament to the hard work undertaken by the entire school community over the last 4 years or so and led so ably by Shaz and Ben.

The other highlight for me was the bequest received from Ms Elizabeth Fraser and the donation from a previous parent. With this ASPS should be able to construct the COLA. And I look forward to hearing about the first recipient of the **Ms Elizabeth Fraser award**, with one of the criteria being “having a positive attitude to meeting challenges” it is a great year to instigate this award.

Despite the **Parents Association** having to cancel many events last year they still managed to hold the School Picnic, prior to lockdown (just), sold SAKG Cookbooks, sold Christmas Trees, held a disco and a zoom prep welcome night. So thank you to the PA team and to Jane's energy and determination to do what was possible in the circumstances presented to us all.

It is great to see the **Green Team** ideas feeding into policies, school improvements and refurbishment of the Main Building. I have no doubt this will continue and many ideas that once seemed “new” will become part of the school's DNA.

From my perspective, despite an extraordinary 2020, ASPS has excelled – it is always easy to see what was not done but when you stop for five minute to see what was done it really was a remarkable year all things considered.

I made the comment this time last year that *“no one really knows what this pandemic will look like in the coming weeks and months but we do know ASPS will continue to make decisions based on the best available information and communicate it to the school community”*. I think this still stands and in addition, from what I have observed, I think I should add that I have full confidence ASPS will overcome any further hurdles presented with the continued cooperation of the entire ASPS community.

So, in closing thank you to all Council members for supporting myself, Marcus and the school in this trying year. And a particular thank you to Kate, who in her role as vice President has been a great sounding board and support to me and just sorry you couldn't be with us tonight. John who is stepping down after 4 years on council and Alicia also stepping down. And a big welcome to the new parent members - Jasmine, Lisa and Dan and Simon as a returning member and welcome to Stuart as a new DET member.

I have had four years of fun on the ASPS School Council and really feel as a Council we have achieved a significant amount which is thanks to the commitment and ability of past, current and I am sure future members – so thanks for everything. And don't tell anyone but I am quietly looking forward to handing over to others and getting on with a few different projects 😊

Nell Carswell
ASPS School Council President - March 2021