Welcome everyone to Auburn South’s AGM for 2016. My name is Mark Emney and I’ve had the privilege of being the President of your School Council for the last 12 months.

2015 was a big year for Auburn South Primary School, celebrating it’s 90th Birthday. I’d like to share with you some of the key areas where Council has been involved over the last 12 months, as well as acknowledge the many people across our community who contribute to the running and success of our school.

Your School Council has an important role to play in helping set the long-term future for the school, and maintaining oversight of the school's operation. It is not about running the school though – that is the job of Marcus, our principal, and his team.

Participation on Council is a big time investment for everyone involved and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all Members - parents and school staff alike - for their enthusiasm and commitment.

I do believe over 2015 we have harnessed the diverse talents and energies of Members to create a Council that is cohesive, effective, and action-oriented. This is an area of continual improvement for Council and I am confident we can do this even better in 2016.

As a team we have, and will continue to be, focussed on creating the best possible school for all of our children, and supporting Marcus and his team to achieve this, with the appropriate positive challenge and guidance.

Over the last 12 months, Council has monitored the implementation of the school’s three-year strategic plan and engaged in the development of the Annual Implementation Plan for 2016. These are important documents that reflect what the school wants to achieve in the future and how it plans to get there, particularly around improving student outcomes in the areas of achievement, well-being and engagement. We will hear more on progress on these from Marcus in his 2015 Annual Report.
• Council’s Education Sub-committee has also worked diligently to develop a comprehensive series of high quality policies for the school and we will hear from Glen Hayres on this shortly.

• One of Council’s most important roles is to approve and maintain oversight of the school’s annual financial budget. A Finance sub-Committee performs the heavy lifting on this task. In the absence of Peter Wilmshurst, its Treasurer, I’ll also invite Marcus to say a few words on the state of the school’s finances which I am pleased to report are healthy and well managed.

• On the subject of finances, I’d like to take this opportunity to recognise our proactive student, parent, staff and broader community for their magnificent fundraising efforts over 2015. We deeply appreciate the hard work from everyone involved, and as a Council we place the utmost important on ensuring these monies are deployed effectively.

• It is an unfortunate reality of being located in a safe Liberal seat under a State Labour Government that we will never be at the top of the list for government funding. We do have an ongoing challenge with inadequate government funding resulting in too much of the school community’s proactive fundraising efforts being directed to maintenance and propping up our school - which as we all know is 90 years old - instead of genuine improvement projects.

• Last year for example, the school spent $20,000 on tree maintenance and removal, including a safety audit. We also spent $30,000 to relocate the Junior Playground and shade sails, with the arrival of our 4 new classrooms. These are significant sums that we might expect government funding to cover but this is not the case. Other public schools who are not as fortunate as ours, see their playgrounds dismantled in similar circumstances and left lying in a corner because they are not in a position to fund their re-installation.

• To improve our chances of securing funds in the future, 2015 saw the approval, for the first time, of a Masterplan for the school which sets out our long term vision for how the school’s physical environment, including its buildings and spaces, will continue to evolve to cater for the school’s changing needs.

• One such need is the increasing number of students at ASPS, consistent with the long-term population forecasts for our zone, and driven by the school’s strong reputation. For the avoidance of doubt, it
was confirmed to School Council that no new families from outside the school zone have been given a place at our school this year.

• Stage 1 of the School’s Master Plan has been delivered in 2015. This saw the procurement and installation of 2 portable buildings - 4 classrooms - which are an essential asset as they will allow the school to cater for our growing student population. This work also included the dismantling and reinstatement of the Junior Playground as I flagged earlier.

• I am pleased to confirm a further School Improvement Project which will see shade sails placed over the front playground, later this year, and in time for summer.

• 2016 is obviously a School Fair year and I look forward to the school community coming together, as it always does, to put on a fantastic event. We have discussed on Council the opportunity to be more proactive this year in identifying areas of investment for funds raised from the Fair, and communicating these goals to the community in advance of the Fair taking place. We look forward to being able to share more on this throughout the year.

• Improved communication with our community has been a key theme of Council in 2015 and during the year the school worked with local company, Geddup, to develop a school based App to improve communication channels between the school and parents; within the many ASPS groups; and to enable more effective communication in the event of an emergency. Continuing to improve communication, and streamlining paperwork and payment methods, will be an ongoing priority in 2016.

• Alignment opportunities with our neighbour, Auburn High School, has been another focus area during 2015 and Council were fortunate to be invited to tour Auburn High School late last year. We were impressed with the principal, Maria Karvouni’s, vision for the school and her efforts to date to bring about significant change. Together, we discussed ways our two schools could further collaborate and share facilities to enhance the opportunities and experiences of our student populations, and I am sure this will be an ongoing area of opportunity.

• In closing, I’d like to acknowledge a number of people who contribute so much to our school.
• Firstly, parents and carers. I truly believe Auburn South is blessed to have such a passionate, supportive and engaged parent community. I'd like to recognise and thank the many parents and careers who have contributed their time and energy across every facet of the school.

• The school would not be where it is today without its army of volunteers and I urge any one who has the time, to put your hand up and help out. Every little bit helps. It is appreciated - and you will find it rewarding.

• Marcus, on behalf of the broader parent and teaching community I'd like to thank you for your leadership of the school over the last 12 months. You lead visibly from the front while also putting in a huge amount of work behind the scenes, and you should personally feel very proud of everything that the school, the teachers and support staff, and most importantly the students, have achieved over the last 12 months. Particularly while you juggle a young and growing family of your own.

• In closing I'd like to reflect on a personal highlight, as School Council President, from 2015. I was fortunate to attend the Year 6 Graduation, and it was truly humbling to listen to the very inspiring group of young people that made up our Year 6 Graduates. If that is the calibre of the boys and girls that Auburn South produces then our children are in incredibly good hands. So, by way of final recognition, teachers and support staff at every level of ASPS, thank you. Your dedication, kindness and caring for our children, as people and not as numbers in tests, is the reason we see our kids grow and thrive through their journeys at the school.

• That concludes my School Council President’s Report for 2016. Thank you.