

St Columba's School

Bayswater

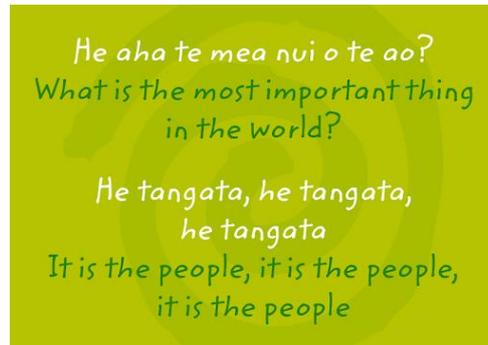
Annual General Meeting

Principal Report

25 November 2020

Welcome to the St Columba's School, Bayswater, Annual General Report for 2020.

Throughout 2020, there have been many learnings, not only about education, but about life. At St Columba's School, we know what is important. It is all about the people, and while we stay true to this, we know we will always find support in each other. It is like family. Family is family, and this is what we create together. There is a Maori saying that I live by since I visited back in 2016. The New Zealanders hold this at the heart of their existence, and it is something that was tangible and alive in every interaction I experienced. This is true of how we all respond.



During the year of 2020, and all the experiences that have come with COVID-19, we felt a sense of calm with the way we have been able to work through this. Moments of crisis provide opportunities for growth. We have seen how our children have responded with increased responsibilities and with an underlying resilience. This resilience has developed one small step at a time, one small action at a time. The support of staff, parents and grandparents has seen our St Columba's children thrive.



Way back at the start of the year, we had our word for the year set, Ubuntu. This set the scene for the year and allowed us to remain focused on the importance of people. Ubuntu brought us together and has allowed us to connect more deeply with our families and each other. The word could not have been more appropriate. There is something unique about 2020 that has enabled us to see the world a little differently to how we may have previously. I know, for me, I see things much more simply than I may have a year ago.

I wish to thank Fr Andrew, our parish, our School Board and Parents and Friends for their continued support throughout 2020. Fr Andrew continues to bring a gentleness and kindness to our parish/school connection. With the support of Jennifer Debono, our Board Chair, and all members of the School Board, we have once again worked together for the wellbeing of all in our school community. The team is outstanding in their commitment to the operations of our school and the people who walk through our gates. It is with gratitude that we thank Nyssa Bull and Simonne Moretta for their commitment to the School Board. Both Nyssa and Simonne leave the Board at the end of 2020 and we thank them for

having brought much to our school during their time. A special mention to Paul Shanahan who has worked closely with the Bursary sub-committee throughout the year. This will continue in 2021.

A close relationship with the Parents and Friends, led by Rachel Lange, has ensured a focus remain on what was most important for our students. Special thanks to all members of the Executive and all members of the P and F for their support for what we do at St Columba's School. It is with gratitude we thank Rachel Lange, Pippa Harris and Rebecca Scott for their contributions to the Executive of the P and F over the last three years. The high attendance at P and F meetings, along with the high mutual respect across the meetings, is something very unique and a special part of how the focus has always remained on what is best for our St Col's kids. We wish Rachel, Pippa and Rebecca all the very best into the future.



Our St Columba's School staff continue to focus on the wellbeing of our students and their families. High connection and a willingness to provide the best for their students is what drives our staff each day in their work within the teaching and learning programs. I thank all our staff for their dedication to their students and very much look forward to 2021. During the summer holiday break we will set a new focus for 2021, however it will be important to remember we continue to have a focus in life on the concept of Ikigai [2019] and Ubuntu [2020]. It makes us accountable as a human engaging with others in our world.

At the end of the 2020 school year, Megan Dwyer, will be concluding her position as Assistant Principal, and will be returning to part-time teaching in 2021. We thank Megan sincerely for her contributions as Assistant Principal over her tenure. Megan is committed to our St Columba's families and the education and wellbeing of our students. We look forward to seeing Megan back after her well-earned Long Service leave in Term 1. Mitchell McGivern will be leaving us as he moves into a new phase of his teaching in Wyndham. We thank Mitch for all he has brought to St Columba's School during his two years. Ehood Abdurreda, leaves our OSHC at the end of the year to continue to pursue her studies in teaching. Ehood will move from being our Assistant Supervisor to a casual position in 2021. We also farewell Anne Monisse, one of our Italian teachers, who has made a massive impact in such a short amount of time at our school. Anne has been offered full time at her current school. Eugene Potito, who has been on secondment for two years, has been appointed as Assistant Principal at St Denis' School, Joondanna, ongoing. We wish Megan, Ehood, Anne, Eugene and Mitch the very best for the future and know they will be blessed abundantly.

Inspiring Christ-centred Leaders

Religious Education and Faith formation are the primary purpose of Catholic schools. In partnership with all parents, the school and parish work together to assist the children to develop knowledge of their Catholic faith. The explicit teaching of Church doctrine and traditions, through the Religious Education Units of Work, which are mandated by the Bishops of Western Australia and the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, are the resources from which all lessons are planned.

Throughout the year our St Columba's students have supported a variety of charities including the LikeLink program, Caritas, Project Compassion, Catholic Mission, Wheelchairs for Kids and St Vincent de Paul.

It has been a challenging year with Covid-19 and endeavouring to coordinate all the sacraments with the restrictions in place. As you are all aware, the sacraments are parish based events, however it is our responsibility to support St Columba's parish with these events. Thank you to the staff who spend countless hours coordinating the events, attending the extra Mass celebrations and for supporting Fr Andrew and the parish.

At St Columba's School we were involved in the following during the 2020:

- Ash Wednesday Celebration
- Sacramental Programs & Celebrations
- Liturgies/Masses
- Staff Prayer
- Catholic Agency support throughout the year

Bishops' Religious Literacy Assessment (BRLA)

- No assessments were undertaken in 2020 due to Covid-19.

Priorities 2021

- Continue to prioritise the link between the school and parish;
- Develop a greater knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the Life of Catherine McAuley, at a staff, student and parent level. [Mercy is our 2021 School Value]

Catholic Schools of Excellence

We have very experienced and passionate staff members at St Columba's School, who go about ensuring high standards of teaching and learning for our students. Throughout 2020, we have successfully managed our way through the COVID-19 experiences and maintained positive experiences for our students. The on-going focus on literacy across our writing, grammar and punctuation will continue further into 2021. Further analysis of data, and the use of this data to inform teaching and learning, will be a focus.

Our foci in 2020 were:

- Brightpath – Moderation of students writing;
- Promoting Literacy Development (PLD) - Evidence-based program focusing on teaching Structured Synthetic Phonics (SSP) from Kindergarten to Year 1. This will be extended throughout the school as a whole school approach from Kindergarten to Year 6.
- Developing a whole school Scope and Sequence for Mathematics Kindergarten to Year 6.
- LOTE – Italian across Year 2 to Year 5. Anne Monisse and Simone DeMaio.

The 2021 Curriculum Plan is currently being formulated, with emphasis being on sustaining and consolidating what we have implemented with a focus on PLD and on Numeracy across the school.

2020 NAPLAN Results

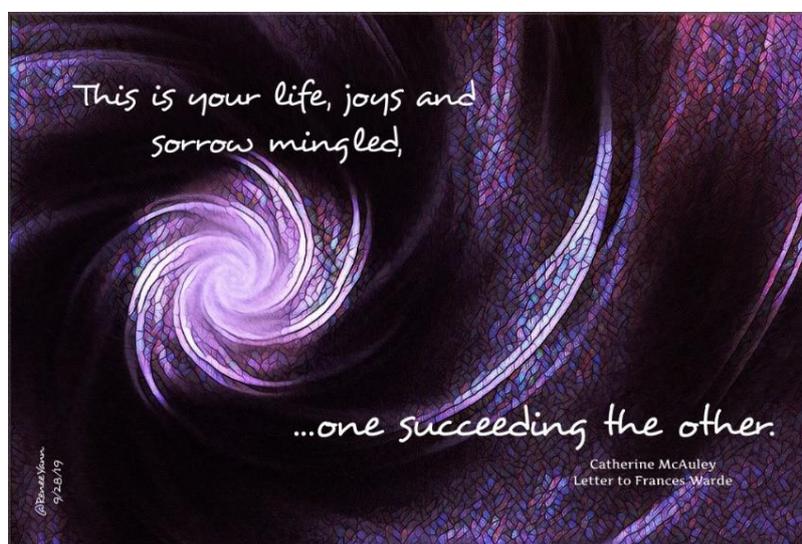
Due to Covid-19, the students did not undertake the assessments in 2020. The school continued to reflect on our internal data and have used these results to ensure our Curriculum Plan for 2021 is current and continues to focus on the requirements of the students.

Priorities 2021

- Develop Whole School Vision 4 Learning, based on the CEWA V4L.
- Focus on the Five Teaching Practices to enhance student learning.
- Develop whole school approach to the explicit teaching of concepts in Mathematics.
- Regularly using and analysing data, to differentiate the curriculum, to cater for the needs of the children.
- Continue to further develop and review our curriculum programs within our school through our Professional Learning Communities.

Catholic Pastoral Communities

St Columba's School is built on community. It always has been and always will be, it is what St Columba people are about. The heart of the community is in the way people care for each other and see every member as a part of them. True Ubuntu. It is what we are called to do. It is about serving others where we find our greatest joy and greatest peace. Just need to think of our motto and what we stand for, 'Growing in Faith, Seeking Wisdom and Living in Peace'.



This quote by Catherine McAuley encompasses all of this. Our pastoral care is about being there when we need to be there. In the joys and in the sorrow. It is how life is mingled. This is our calling, each of us have this responsibility. The Harmony Tree, created through the work of Misha Cooper and our parent Pastoral Care Committee, will bring great joy and connection as we prepare to display the mural at the end of the year.

Enrolment applications have continued to increase through the year. Strong enrolment trends are associated with the reputation that St Columba's School has held for many decades in Bayswater. This connection to community is ever present and is a result of the work of our staff and our families. This positive feel in the community is driven by the stories from our families and the quality of learning that has been embedded in our school. To ensure these trends of enrolment growth continue, we must ensure we provide the very best for our students and remain open to opportunities for growth. As the Bishops' Mandate articulates, 'A Catholic school is a good school'.

Welcoming our School Counsellor, Nicole Leach, in the second half of 2020 has offered a supportive and encouraging environment in which our children feel safe to be who they are as young people. Our Wellness Dog, Donnelly, was welcomed to our community at the start of Term 2, right in the middle of

COVID-19. From Day 1, Donnelly has brought a gentleness and calm to our children, staff and families. We are very blessed here at St Columba's School to be focused on the wellbeing of all.

Our Year 6 students were also involved in a Digii Social Project through Claire Orange during the second half of the year. The trial focused on upskilling students in the use of social media and its impact on self and others. Results of the trial are being collated and reviewed before relaunching in schools in 2021. We will look at the full implementation of the project for our Year 6s in 2021. I wish to thank our teachers and parents in Year 6 for their support of the trial this year.

We continue to be centred on what is in the best interests of our children. I know all our community members understand this commitment, and as such we continue to see our children grow into resilient young people. Our OSHC is a place where staff and children, along with their parents create a sense of home and belonging. Under the leadership of Jess Scott, our staff and children flourish in making all feel welcome.

As part of our Transforming Lives Strategy for 2020, we have welcomed Candy McKay to our school community. Candy has brought to life our experiences through a connection to community. I wish to acknowledge her work, along with Caroline Brewer, as part of this opportunity to connect with our land and community here in Bayswater. We thank Kamsani Bin Salleh [Kam] for his contribution of story with his artistic talents and sense of connection.

Priorities 2021

- Continue to support the endeavours of our Pastoral Care Committee and Parents and Friends' Association in their work in caring for our school community members.
- Student Wellbeing. Develop understanding of students' mental health and wellbeing with a view to deepening students' resilience and sense of personal responsibility and belonging.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Spirituality and Education. Continued commitment to the Transforming Lives Strategy 2025 collaboration with CEWA.

Accessible, Affordable and Sustainable System of Schools

There are many elements within a Catholic school and administration processes that are undertaken to ensure the school runs effectively. At St Columba's School, we have a very dedicated team that work together in the administration. I would like to thank Peta Santella, Lisa Slocum and Janine Witherow for their continued support and willingness to put in the extra hours for the school and community. During 2020, they have worked tirelessly to continue the implementation of the new administration system, AoS (Administration of Schools) and this will continue in 2021.

Again, I wish to acknowledge the professionalism of all staff at St Columba's School. We are very fortunate to have such committed staff, that enjoys working together, and ensure student educational needs are met. I especially would like to thank my Leadership Team, Megan Dwyer and Deb Klatt, for their support and leadership within our community. Both leaders have undertaken many responsibilities and duties, during this ever changing year.

We welcome Niall Kehoe to St Columba's School, as our Assistant Principal Early Childhood. As part of our sustaining our system of schools, Niall has been seconded from St Anthony's School, Wanneroo to take on a senior leadership role here with us. Niall has been an integral member of the middle leadership system of St Anthony's. We look forward to Niall joining our team in 2021.

As part of CEWA Ltd and school governance, the School Board will be renamed as the School Advisory Council from 2021.

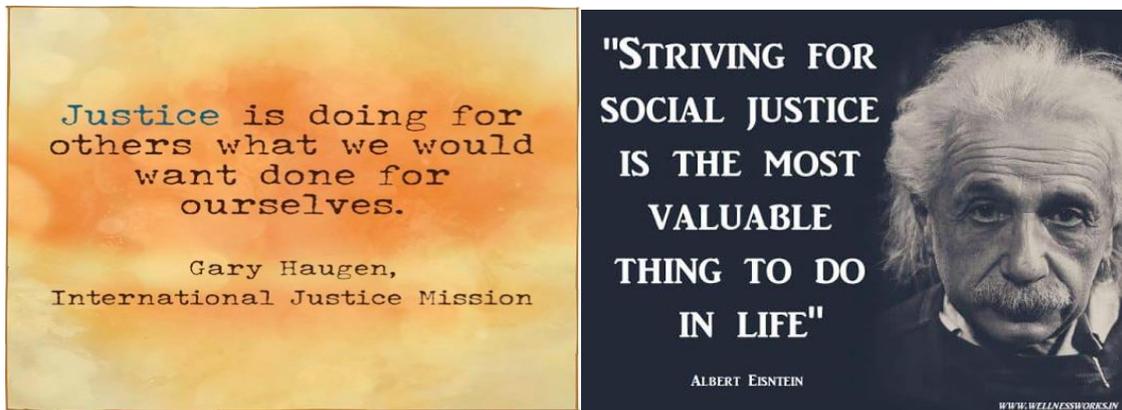
Priorities 2021

- Continue to implement the Administration of Schools [AoS]
- Ratify and implement the new Strategic Plan and School Improvement Plan (SIP) for 2021-2023
Capital Development Plan - Develop a three year, responsible and sustainable plan, including maintenance and technology.

Conclusion

As with every year, we will have families and staff leave our school. I take this opportunity to wish all our departing staff members and St Columba families all the very best at their new schools. You will always be St Columba's people and are welcome back for a visit whenever you are in the area. As the Mercy Sisters have as a tradition, the kettle will be on and a cup of tea at the ready. Maybe even some Tim Tams.

To conclude my report, I came across the following quotes while reflecting on our school value of Justice:



This is why we are so blessed. We get to look at so many aspects of our school, and why we exist, our charm, our soul, and here we find it. We just need to take a moment to ask ourselves, what is it we can do over the next few weeks in the lead up to the end of the year, to bring justice to the forefront of our thinking. Bring it alive in those moments where we are called to be St Col's people. We allow ourselves to bring the humanness with all of its imperfections, but all of its spirit.

It is with gratitude I thank everyone for your part in creating what we have at St Columba's, knowing that we embrace imperfection, and we bring gentleness and kindness to every situation. It is a time to celebrate our children's gifts and talents as we end the 2020 school year.

On behalf of all in our community, I wish you an abundance of joy this Christmas and a year ahead that is filled with goodness and hope. May you be blessed.

In appreciation for what you all bring

Art Lombardi
Principal
25 November 2020