

Annual report to Board Mt Lawley Senior High School 2018

I am pleased to provide a report to the Board of this school for 2017.

The Board has been stable under the auspices of two acting Principals. Firstly, Mr Michael Camilleri who held the role for 7 months until the appointment by due process of Ms Lesley Street. I wish to thank them both for being prepared and very able in changing roles. Michael stepped in at short notice and steered a steady course through the first part of 2017. I feel fortunate that we have such a competent Deputy Principal with the necessary skill set to enable this large school to proceed unimpeded by administrative changes. Lesley, has proven to be an excellent selection, having arrived full of energy and enthusiasm and with an expertise in managing large schools. We are fortunate that this transition has been smooth and thank both Mike and Lesley for this fact.

Despite our good fortunes, it is of concern that the Education Department does not see fit to accept the resignation of the substantive Principal and does not recognise that this is a less than ideal situation for Mt Lawley SHS. The Board felt that it leads to change, loss of momentum and a lack of strategic longterm planning. The Board took time to communicate this matter to both our local member and to the Director General of Education.

The Board has worked well together, with at least two members taking part in selection panels for high level appointments at the School. Three community members resigned during this term due to either illness or business commitments. These members were useful contributing members and I would like to thank Keith Bales, Rob Bryant and Bernard Rumens.

I would also like to thank retiring members from this Board – Anne Tumak (staff), Jason Kim (student, now Head Boy), and Nigel Becroft (parent). All have been very engaged in the Board despite many difficult documents, have given their thoughts willingly at meetings, as well as being a communication conduit to their representative groups.

And so what has the Board overseen?

In the staff arena, we have been pleased to support and hear reports on the Visible Learning program, Team Teach program, and other professional development. We acknowledge their fine work in reaching out to parents by email, by written reports, letters of concern or commendation, and by parent teacher interviews.

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Particular note is made of the work done by Suzi Barnes and Andrew Paul – especially as Andrew celebrates over 25 years working for this school. Both bring programs such as Bush Cadets, antibullying programs, positive self image, Ride to School - along with visits with other staff members to local intake primary schools. Both are important folk in the pastoral care of our students.

One staff change that the school needs to accommodate going forward, is the need to consider redeployees. Previously, IPS schools were exempt from this and could solely select our own staff. An Education department directive has now changed this and we await to see if this will have any impact in our staff selections going forward.

Students have surveyed Year 7s again and once more overwhelmingly positive responses on the transition to high school were found. All students benefit from the many great programs being run, with more than ever engaging in the Colours program, Homework Club and the Elevate Education program. Student reps to the Board have reported positively on both the Visible Learning and Elevate programs, finding them immensely useful in learning. As well, students had access to Changing Minds (a program designed to assist with anxiety), career expos, and arts festivals. The Board has an ongoing concern for students taking subjects that are of the greatest interest to them in Year 11 and 12, but that are also practically within their academic range. My thanks for the many staff who do subject counselling – we continue to try and get the balance right. It is fortunate that our large school can offer a very wide range of subjects, with hopefully enough to interest everyone.

The Board has had effective contacts with parent groups and community groups around the school. We applaud the fine efforts of the Sea Explorers, Lawley Legends, SVAAPA/Music and Language parent support committees and of course the P &C. Initiative has been taken to launch an interest group to look at the viability options for a new performing arts venue. This is a massive undertaking and we hope a positive outcome may come from this. Parents also had access to a worthwhile Teen Triple P seminar, a program designed to help parents parent effectively!

The Board was concerned to see a change in funding levels to students this last year. It is proving difficult to plan with surety with the anticipated funding cut being \$650, 000 for this School. Again, the Board wrote to the Minister of Education expressing concerns about this. We also acknowledge the change to intake to this school that will occur with the planned opening of the new inner-city college. Our demographic will have a subtle shift and we hope this will not be to the detriment of the school overall.

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Outcomes for the school are maintained at a high level with Year 7 Naplan levels rising. Year 9 levels are stable but we strive to towards improvement in this year group. Those who achieve well in Year 9 avoid the OLNA requirements. We would all like to see less students having to face repeated OLNA attempts. It appears there may be a feeling of change around NAPLAN and so we wait to see if any changes will occur.

The Board recognises good Year 12 data, but feel the reporting of school standings does not take account of the wide demographic group we enrol, nor the school's willingness to accommodate student subject choices. Attendance is at very good levels and graduation rates are very high. I congratulate all students, parents and staff on these outcomes. Our 90s club continues to grow ever larger. We are keen as a Board to support students at all academic levels.

The Board welcomed changes to the Finance reporting, allowing members better understanding of the financial papers – thank you Anne Gilchrist, Board member and Business manager. The school is reliably and consistently in a very safe fiscal position. I remain disappointed at the low levels of payment of both voluntary and compulsory school fees. The Board has proven keen to investigate ways to try and improve this, including writing to parents directly from the Board. This has been marginally effective.

As a Board, we continue to report to key performance indicators of the School Business Plan and note with pleasure that all targets were met in the last iteration of the plan. A new plan is to be ratified by the Board tonight and then presented to the school on the School website.

The Board has taken initiatives in undertaking voluntary Police checks and undertaking learning modules for Board members. I encourage incoming members to also undertake these.

This year we anticipate a review of this Independent Public School and I have no hesitation in thanking the Board for their contributions to all matters in the last twelve months. I remain proud of the Board in its professional approach and questioning manner in the support of Mt Lawley Senior High School and thank all those who have contributed.

Dr Jenny Fay

Chair Mt Lawley Senior High School Board

19th March 2018.