

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2017**

The President delivered his annual report to the AGM. It is transcribed below:

It is indeed a pleasure to welcome all of you to the annual general meeting of Anglican Schools Australia. I am not sure if there is ever joy in an AGM....but we will see what we can do today.

We begin our AGM by acknowledging that the land we meet on today is the traditional land for the Turrbal and Yaggera people and that we respect their spiritual relationship with their Country. We also acknowledge the founders of Anglican Schools Australia, all past members of ASA and the current members who are the present custodians of the mission and vision that we share as we work together to serve Anglican Schools in fulfilling their Christian Mission.

May we continue to follow the traditional custodians and our ASA forebears in the passing on of knowledge as well as the wise stewardship of the resources in our care.

As we begin this morning let me confirm the importance of the conference as an annual event. This is the only forum for all of us, Principals, Chaplains, Board members and staff, to come together and to share and affirm ourselves as leaders of Anglican schools.

Although I will have an opportunity to thank the Conference Organising Committee more formally this evening, I would like to acknowledge the Committee's dedication and passion in providing this joyful couple of days for us.

### **The President's Report**

And now it is my pleasure to present the President's Report on behalf of the Management Committee to you this afternoon.

The Management Committee meets once a term, with one day of our two day June meeting being devoted entirely to strategic planning.

The Strategic Plan 2020 was launched at last year's conference and has provided the focus for much of the work of the management committee since that time.

A new refined purpose set the focus of this plan; that being: Inspired by Christ, our core purpose is to support and serve Anglican Schools in fulfilling their Christian Mission.

In particular, arising from the strategic plan we have worked on:

- developing a welcome pack for first time attendees at conferences
- developing an induction pack for Chaplains
- investigating the stories of our past students who have become chaplains or taken up similar ministries so that we might publish these stories and celebrate the positive traits of attending an Anglican school
- continuing the discussion about what it means to be an Anglican School, and
- building leadership capacity in Anglican schools.

Additionally, the new Chaplains Committee has met on two occasions, the first of these alongside the Management Committee meeting so that we might all share a meal together. It is pleasing to note the value that this Committee has added already and its ability to enhance communication and networking amongst chaplains across the country.

In the 2018 budget, we have set aside money for:

- The Anglican identity research project to explore what is unique about being an Anglican School
- Service learning projects
- Student leadership projects.

In addition to work arising from the Strategic Plan, the Management Committee has developed a mechanism for acknowledging members who have made a significant contribution to Anglican Schools Australia. I will formally launch this at this evening's dinner.

Our constitution allows for the awarding of life membership too. Although we have not enacted this part of our constitution in the past, we will be doing so later in our conference by bestowing life membership on one of our members for the first time.

We all know that much of the past three years has been dominated by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. As I did last year, I would like to acknowledge Sherril Molloy for the work that she has done supporting her own schools here in Queensland as well as the sensitive, considered and wise advice she continued to provide to our committee.

In March of this year, I was asked to attend one of the Royal Commission's panel sessions that focussed on issues in Anglican education in my role as your President. In particular, the Commissioners were interested in the policies and procedures governing child safety in our schools as well as our Governance practices. Given the nature of ASA and our constitution, it was not possible for me to talk on behalf of all Anglican Schools. I did explain that we had no constituted right to ensure best practice in respect of child protection within our schools and that there was an extraordinary diversity of Governance models in the 160 Anglican Schools in Australia. I must confess that it was a far more nerve wracking experience than I expected and I was grateful to be sitting between Barbara Godwin representing the WA Anglican Schools Commission and Sherrill Molloy, the Diocese of Brisbane ASC. Arising from the Commission, most recently, is work being undertaken around a National Redress Scheme. I am not in a position to share the details of that work at the moment but I can assure you that, with the bipartisan support the scheme has in Federal Parliament, it will not be long before the Redress Scheme details are announced and, possibly, enforced.

At the end of each conference, we ask delegates to complete a feedback survey so that we might continue to strengthen the learning, collegiality and experiences for those who attend. I would like to assure you that all of the suggestions that come in the surveys are considered most seriously by the Management Committee. However, given that the planning, programming and keynote speakers for this conference were already well set prior to the Adelaide conference last year, you may not see your suggestions put into action until the 2018 conference.

When accepting my role as President at the Canberra conference in 2015 I spoke about my firm belief that there is a special relationship that does and must exist between Principal and Chaplain.

Currently, I have two fabulous Chaplains, both of whom I have employed as Chaplains/Priests not as teachers, and I have enjoyed the ability to have frank, sincere and faithful conversations with them, as I can with no other staff. The work they do in the spiritual lives of the children, staff and families at our school only confirms how important the role of the Chaplain is.

It is because of the relationship between Principals and Chaplains that I believe these conferences are so crucial in strengthening our identity as Anglican schools not only as an association but for each of us as we return to our schools.

Prior to the conference I asked Peter to provide me with the statistics of the number of Principals that attended the ASA conference over the past five years. I was not surprised, but still most certainly

concerned and disappointed, that, on average, only 34 per cent of Principals attend the conference each year. Many have never attended one of our conferences even though they send their Chaplains.

Yesterday, Patrick Wallas, reminded us that the Principal is the spiritual head of our schools.

I know that I am talking to a room full of the converted so to speak because most of you are regular attendees. I know too that there are many conferences that come across a Principal's desk in the course of a year, all of which take us out of our schools. Nevertheless, if we can go to conferences for the Alliance of girls' schools, boys' schools, boarding schools, co-ed schools, AHISA schools and so on, why would we not come to the very conference that helps each of us confirm and build our identity as Anglican Schools?

There has not been a time when I have left one of these conferences where I did not feel that my soul had been fed and where I have been able to reflect on the special nature of my Anglican school. This, I believe, is because of the special nature that comes from a conference that combines the spiritual leaders of our schools together in the one space.

Clearly, there is a challenge to be met by conference organisers, perhaps even Chairs of Boards to encourage attendance by Principals at our conferences.....and clearly it is not something that I have managed to change terribly well in my time as President either.....but it is a challenge I will continue to mount.

I would like to acknowledge the work of the Management Committee over the past 12 months and I would invite them to stand so that you can see who they are:

Rebecca Clarke  
Debbie Dunwoody  
Fiona Godfrey  
The Reverend Peter Laurence as our CEO  
Sherril Molloy  
The Reverend Matt Shorten  
Mark Sly  
Lynne Thomson  
Judith Tudball  
Heather Walsh

And our newest member:  
The Reverend Sarah Hobba

I would like to acknowledge the work of The Reverend Natasha Darke, The Reverend Nick Foord, The Reverend Andrew Mintern and Mr Chris Prance, all of whom have resigned from the Committee since the last conference, as well as the work of Fiona Godfrey who retires from the Management Committee at the conclusion of the conference in line with the length of service she has been able to provide according to our constitution. You will know that Fiona served as President of ASA between 2013 and 2015 and that she led us with distinction and a passionate commitment to serve our schools.

Whilst the core purpose of ASA is to serve Anglican Schools in fulfilling their Christian mission, I can assure you that the core purpose of the Management Committee is to serve our members.

Additionally, I would like to acknowledge the work of:

The WA ASC led by Rev Peter Laurence OAM.....we would not exist without their support.

In particular:

Wendy Hillman and more recently Aila Dann appointed as the Communications and Community Relations Manager in March of this year. Their work in raising the profile and value of ASA News and the ASA web and Facebook pages has been exceptional.

Hazel Cole – Executive Assistant.....we all know that she is the one that actually keeps ASA going!

In conclusion, I would like to thank all of you for the honour and privilege that you afforded me in appointing me as your President over the past two years; a role I have loved doing and that has only served to strengthen my passion for the work we all do in Anglican Schools.

The very first question asked of the panel at the hearing of the Royal Commission in March was directed at me and it was to ask me what I do in my role as President. An obvious starting question but one for which I had not properly prepared.....my stumbling response still fills me with embarrassment.

Nevertheless, whilst I was not able to provide the representative voice required at the Royal Commission in relation to matters of governance in our schools, always it has been a joy for me to provide that voice on any occasion possible with regards to the core values of ASA; those being: service, inclusivity, integrity, courage, justice and generosity of spirit. For these are the common values that all of us as schools of faith can share and foster in the lives of the children who we serve each day.....and these values we can defend and promote both proudly and continuously.

I look forward to supporting our new President, Dr Mark Sly, in my new role as Immediate Past President and look forward also to continuing the friendships and building the new ones that come from being a member of this terrific association. Thank you.