



# SCHOOL BOARD CHAIR'S REPORT 2020

2020 has been another year of growth for St. Columba's, despite setbacks from the effects of COVID-19. Our school community was fortunate to be in a low risk area, and as a result the global pandemic had some effect, but little impact, on the continued delivery of a quality education to our children. Nonetheless, many School events planned to happen in the second half of the year were initially cancelled in March and April, perhaps prematurely, however we have still had a busy year with plenty of important School activities packed in.

Those 2020 growth projects, were varied, and included some construction works. We saw the maintenance to our Nature Playground and a new storeroom and Sensory Room. More significant projects were the addition of a classroom to the Library, and extensive Kindy modifications to meet council requirements, including sound proofing walls and car parking. \$100,000 of new funding was secured from Catholic Education Western Australia (CEWA) to aid in our building projects, with the initial drawdown on the new loan to occur before the end of this year.

The School's financial commitments were similar this year, but are ramping up in the final quarter in line with the above mentioned building works to be completed in advance of the new school year. The School is making debt repayments to CEWA for those capital works conducted in prior years too, but is still modestly funded to maintain a high standard of services going forward. The maintenance of the School's accounts had been made more complicated by CEWA-wide new accounting systems and procedures, but our staff handled the implementation very well, as was again confirmed by the feedback I received directly from CEWA's group auditor. Some other schools had not fared as well with the transition. From a compliance standpoint, the Board has continued to work collaboratively with CEWA and its external independent auditor, and made decisions for the benefit of the school community, completing its duties in accordance with its mandate.

Some progress was made on the implementation the new Three Year Strategic Plan which was distributed in November 2019. The plan is not affected by COVID-19 restrictions in WA, and the next year's Board must continue to ensure the strategy is maintained and performance reviews are ongoing.

I would like to thank all Board members for the time and dedication they give to their role on the School Board. However, the Board expresses particular thanks to all of the School staff. This year, because of COVID-19 rules, our staff had to make significant changes to deliver the curriculum to the students. This was handled well in a frequently changing environment. Our staff keep on working tirelessly for our kids.

Thank you Monsignor O'Loughlin for your ongoing support and cooperation with our School. We're proud that our Catholic faith is our differentiating factor, and it instills the core values we wish our children to learn. To the P&F and parents, thank you for again delivering your ongoing contributions.

We also thank our staff members who have left us this year, and wish Mr. Allen McMahon well on his 2021 secondment to the Geraldton Catholic Education Office in the position of School Improvement Advisor / Regional Officer. However, we are very pleased to have selected Mrs. Rebecca Clarke as our interim Principal. Rebecca comes to our School from her current position as Head of Primary at St. Joseph's School, Northam, a position she has held since 2016. We congratulate Rebecca on her appointment and we look forward to working with her.

I wish everyone at St Columba's a happy, safe and healthy 2021.

Anthony Rechichi  
School Board Chair