



PRESBYTERIAN LADIES' COLLEGE

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Jonathan Smeulders



I Mission & Strategy

The PLC Mission Statement, Strategic Objective and Strategic Plan each align with the Mission of the Uniting Church by supporting a culture of service, community engagement, strategic leadership and transparent communication.

At the beginning of 2020, as the World faced the imposing threat of the COVID-19 Pandemic, Council identified the need for proactive community engagement to identify areas of need and react swiftly to support our community members. A Pandemic Response Working Group was formed and charged with ensuring no family needed to withdraw their student from the School in 2020 due to financial circumstances caused by the Pandemic.

The Principal maintained regular communication with families, students and staff on the rapidly evolving situation with significant positive feedback from our community on the strength of leadership, early offers of support and transparency of communication. Those facing financial hardship have been offered opportunities to apply for assistance made possible through incredibly generous donations to The PLC Foundation.

Boarding families faced extraordinarily challenging circumstances when Boarding Houses were advised by the Government to close. Boarders returned home at very short notice, many to remote locations and moved to online learning. Extra support was provided to ensure these students were not unfairly disadvantaged and when it was safe to once again return to Perth, generous community members willingly offered support.

The small number of students who were not able to return to Perth were given extra academic and wellbeing support. Students requiring quarantine or self-isolation on return have been supported with regular calls and personalised care packs to assist in their transition back into Western Australia. Our catering contractors worked with their suppliers to assist our staff and community with difficult to obtain supplies and prepared ready-made meals to help families working long hours.

Council wishes to acknowledge the leadership of the Principal and her management team as well as the dedication of every member of staff who worked so hard to ensure the continuous delivery of quality teaching and learning programs and wellbeing support to our students in the safest possible environment.



In particular, we are proud that PLC's long history of advanced technology in the classroom and holistic and personalised approach to each student's educational experience meant that the move to providing online lessons proceeded almost seamlessly. Feedback on areas where improvement might be made were acted upon swiftly with students embracing the experience wholeheartedly. However, students and teachers were all thrilled to return to campus once the Health Authorities deemed it safe to do so in Term 2.

Whilst the Pandemic may have disrupted everyone's idea of normal, it did little to slow our service and wellbeing programs. Student Leaders found innovative ways to support their fellow students with positive messages, newsletters and videos. They took the time to write personal notes to thank teachers for their dedication and commitment during such a tumultuous time. They found new and interesting ways to raise funds for worthwhile causes including participating in the annual World's Greatest Shave via online video, raising over \$27,000 that will help fund research and support for those affected by Leukaemia.

Realising many of our "older" Collegians may be feeling more isolated than usual, our Year 12 Leaders embarked on a program of personally calling them regularly. Many have formed lasting and meaningful bonds. Staff and students continue to be supported by our Chaplain and in-house Counsellors in addition to being able to access confidential counselling through our external Employee Assistance Program.

2 Financial & Risk Management

PLC Council has a long history of prudent and strategic financial planning with historically low or nil debt ensuring the longer-term viability of the School for future generations. Planning had been well under way for a new Music Centre that was temporarily deferred in late 2019 as Tender results came in significantly higher than the pre-Tender estimates. Development of a new Music Centre remains a high priority for Council with a Project Manager and Committee working collaboratively with the Project Team on revised plans that will provide an outstanding new Music teaching and performance facility that is affordable for the School and its community.

Council was pleased to receive the Audit Report with no significant issues to consider. The Risk & Compliance Committee continues to regularly review all risks with particularly focus on risks specific to the Pandemic and crisis response planning. During the height of the Pandemic in WA, Council members met via teleconference regularly to support the Principal and make decisions to ensure the safest possible environment for the entire School Community. As with all Uniting Church agencies, these dedicated Council members are all volunteers and management was very grateful for their willingness to be available and offer many extra hours of their expertise and wise counsel during this tumultuous time.

3 Constitutional, including Governance and Board appointments

Council was very pleased to welcome **Mr Jon Smeulders** as a member in January 2020. Mr Smeulders had already made significant contributions as an Independent member of the Master Plan & Infrastructure Committee. He is an experienced Board member and has contributed to numerous volunteer organisations including having previously Chaired an independent Government Primary School. He brings a wealth of experience in senior management, governance, strategic planning and in planning and managing large-scale capital projects. He is also a strong support of the School having had two sisters and two daughters attend the School.

Since the last report, Council has bid farewell to three long serving and outstanding members of Council. **Mr Andrew McKenzie** served on Council for six years, the Finance Committee for one year and as a member of the PLC Foundation Board for eight years. Council is extremely grateful for Mr McKenzie's strategic vision and most particularly for his tireless leadership on several fundraising campaigns for capital projects and Scholarships for deserving girls who would not otherwise be able to afford an education at PLC. Andrew and his wife Cate are also generous supporters of many charitable

organisations in Perth and PLC Council wishes to express our gratitude for their contributions and acknowledge their generosity.

Mr Morgan Ball retired after serving eight years on the Finance Committee, the last six as Chair of Finance and as a member of Council. He also worked on two major working groups of Council leading and guiding the review of Council and its Committees and the Review of Business Conditions. Council is extremely grateful for Mr Ball's dedication, the many hours of voluntarily offering his financial expertise, his diligence and strength of leadership with the Finance Committee and for his insightful succession planning ensuring the Finance Committee continues to flourish.

Mrs Kathy Bonus retired from Council in April 2020 having served the maximum period of nine years. Mrs Bonus is an Old Collegian, past Parent and past member of the Old Collegian' Committee. As a previous Boarder and member of the Pipe Band, Mrs Bonus was a strong advocate for our boarders and pipe band. As an experienced Senior Executive and Urban Planner, and as Chair of the Master Planning & Infrastructure Committee, Mrs Bonus was integral in guiding the review of the School Master Plan and on several major capital developments.

Motion of Appreciation

Council wishes to express its sincere gratitude for the dedication and outstanding service of these long serving Council members and respectfully requests a formal motion of appreciation be moved for the individual and collective contributions to PLC Council and the PLC Community of Mr Andrew McKenzie, Mr Morgan Ball and Mrs Kathy Bonus.

We would be pleased to provide any further information to support this proposal. Should that be required, please inform our Director of Governance & Strategic Projects, Ms Karen Taylor, on 9424 6402 or by email karen.taylor@plc.wa.edu.au.

With thanks

Mrs Claire Poll
Chair of Council

Ms Cate Begbie
Principal