



**Carnarvon Christian School
Annual General Meeting Agenda
At: Anchor Hall, Carnarvon Christian School
Wednesday 27th May 2020
1830hrs**

2020 Annual General Meeting James' Report

First of all, I would like to thank our Lord for his faithfulness and His hand being on the tiller of this school throughout the year. Our enrolment numbers have again dropped since the last AGM – a big factor was the graduation and departure of 17 Year 6 students at the conclusion of 2019 who were replaced by only 7 four-year-old Kindergarten children in 2020. Amazingly, and we praise God, that we still managed to get a budget surplus. Funding increases because of the Gonski agreement and changes to needs based funding introduced by the Turnbull Government more than compensated financially for loss of student numbers.

Philippians 4:19 And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Jesus Christ.

What a difference a year makes! This time last year, Judy and I were on Long Service Leave enjoying the delights of Eastern Europe. One year later and here we are with Australia on the long road to recovery after the world has been rampaged by COVID19. As I speak, many other countries in the world are still being confronted by an extremely contagious virus which has tested Health Systems and shut down whole economies.

Fortunately, the virus did not enter Carnarvon, and we can justifiably thank the State Government for dividing the state into zones preventing people transferring the corona virus state-wide. However, necessary social distancing laws and the effects of restrictions on social gatherings continues to have a devastating effect on some of our local businesses.

Term one 2020 commenced like every other first term, and initially we were reading in our newspapers about a new virus which was causing flu like symptoms in the far away city of Wuhan China. However, it wasn't very long before alarm bells started ringing as it became obvious that this wasn't just any ordinary flu virus. The COVID19 virus as it was now named, was extremely

virulent and deadly - particularly for the elderly and those with certain medical conditions or compromised immune systems.

In Italy, we were hearing that hospitals were being overwhelmed and had insufficient supplies of life saving equipment. Doctors were making the terrible decision as to who should be put on ventilators and who should be left to the ravages of the disease. By this time the virus had reached Australian soil. Newspapers were publishing forecasts of incremental increases of vast numbers of our citizens catching the virus and our hospitals were also ill-equipped like Italy. Our government was facing a one in a hundred-year scenario forcing them to make decisions - seemingly on the hop.

Here in Carnarvon, our residents were becoming increasingly worried – in particular of the possibility of tourists and backpackers bringing the disease to our town. As a Principal, I was continually reacting – at one stage almost daily- to news which was pouring in from many directions. Sometimes the instructions, I was receiving were even contradictory. I was constantly picking up the phone to AISWA, CEN and other Principals to try and make sense of what was happening and how we as a school should be responding.

The decision as when to move to Remote Learning was becoming more and more likely as term 1 progressed but “when”, was the big question. Finally, however, it became a very easy decision as over time more and more of our CCS parents decided to keep their children at home for their own safety. As class numbers reduced, we commenced combining classes to give teachers time to prepare for online learning. When a tipping point was reached and numbers of children attending school became so low, it was obvious that face to face teaching wasn't a good management of resources, it then became a straight forward decision to move to remote learning. This commenced in week 9 of Term 1.

Preparing for Remote Learning was not an easy task for our teachers. It was something they had never trained for, not to mention the technology demands being a challenge in itself. I am proud to say that our teachers responded magnificently to the challenge. A crash course in ZOOM, a video conferencing App, enabled staff to communicate with students on a daily basis. The basic version of ZOOM was available free and it offered all the inbuilt software the school and families would need. It also had the added benefit that it could be downloaded onto multiple devices including smart phones. We realized that installing and using the APP would be challenging not only to our staff but our

parents and caregivers. We are very fortunate to have a number of staff members who are very 'techno' savvy. I would like to thank Rachael Smith and Petrus Ng for their efforts in teaching us how to use the APP. We also made staff available to assist families who needed help in downloading and using ZOOM.

Teachers at CCS used one of two other APPs to communicate with students and families before the Lockdown took place – Seesaw or Class Dojo. As students had them loaded on their iPads and teachers were already using them to communicate with parents/caregivers, they were the perfect option.

Lots of information – sometimes contradictory - from a myriad of sources was being made available on how teachers could best teach students remotely. Some educationalists were advocating open-ended inquiry or investigative, problem-based approaches. Students were to be assigned tasks which they would investigate and come up with answers and solutions. At the other end of the scale was a traditional approach, with students to work from their textbooks and work packs.

Good advice coming from those who were experienced in remote learning was “to keep it simple.” The difficulty of teaching early childhood children online was quickly apparent and our teachers decided to send home work packs. Parents came to the school every fortnight and dropped off finished work and collected new work which was labelled and left on an outside trolley for them. Other teachers used a combination of work packs and online programs which the children were already familiar with. The school purchased Spelling City for all classes. This is an excellent program which enables teachers to upload differentiated spelling lists so that all the children in the class could be catered for. We applied and received a grant from FOCUS for \$1700 and used this to purchase take home maths kits and put the remainder towards buying MYON. MYON is a reading program which allows children to access 1000s of books online. After finishing reading a book, children can take a multi-choice test enabling teachers to track their progress. It also has an audio function so weaker readers can read along with the narrator. Other online programs we used included: IXL Maths, IXL English, Oxford Maths, Oxford Atlas Skills, Reading Eggs and Writing Legends.

A roster was created and each day our teachers would connect with their classes online with ZOOM. After welcoming students and taking the roll, teachers would do devotions and then brief children about activities for the day. Teachers would then make themselves available for students to contact them at any time during the school day. Teachers also took the time to regularly contact individual students by phone and check on their well-being.

The vast majority of our students were contactable, however, it was unfortunate that there were a few families who seemingly made little effort to assist their children to work at home. Despite our best efforts to contact them, there was no co-operation. I was very aware that some parents would find it very challenging supervising their children at home, particularly those with larger families. A survey, I sent to families revealed that 60% of our parents acknowledged that their stress levels were either higher than normal or very high. Although 77% of our parents had sufficient knowledge to help their children, the remainder felt inadequate or unsure of what to do. Combine this fact with ambiguity of work materials (despite teacher's best efforts) and children refusing to accept parents as their legitimate teachers, it was no wonder parents were stressed.

As we approached the April school holidays, government departments were indicating that online learning would probably continue for the entire 2nd term or even to the end of the school year. By this time our teachers had spent two weeks refining their teaching and were fully prepared to continue the following term. However, in the very first few days of the holidays, Scott Morrison announced that children should return to school at the commencement of term 2. Then in the second week our Premier announced that all state schools be open for students to attend school although the decision would be left up to their parents. As an Independent school, we were able to make our own decision as to what form of learning we would provide. After consulting other Principals, including Steve O'Halloran from St Marys, we decided that we would continue online learning at least for the first few weeks until the government reviewed matters. There had been so much chopping and changing and we didn't want to change tack should the government then decide to move to online learning again. We indicated to our parents that we would not only be open for children from front line workers, but all children could attend if they desired and carry on doing online learning at school, supervised by our teaching staff.

As week one term two progressed, more and more of our children returned to school. Our teachers indicated that they had prepared for both face to face and online learning and were happy to return to normal schooling. The Chief Health Officer had released data indicating that it was safe for children and teachers to gather at school and that it was extremely rare for the virus to transmit between children or children to adults. This made the decision easy. Subsequently, our parents were informed that we would be returning to face to face teaching in week two. As I speak, there are only two families who have not returned. One is stranded on the other side of the world and member of the other family has a medical condition.

Throughout this process, our leadership team has been very conscious of looking after the health of our staff. All teaching staff were given the option of working from home, if they or other people in their families had health concerns. Two of our teachers and 2 of our assistant teachers took up this offer and worked from home. We maintained contact with staff through a scheduled ZOOM meeting twice a week as well as making phone calls when it felt appropriate.

Most schools had decided to stand down staff in a series of stand downs commencing with those who were not required when no students attended school; such as with drivers etc. Carnarvon Christian School has 6 Education Assistants who work on a part-time or full time basis. I was aware that we would not need them all whilst teaching online. I was also aware that as our school income wasn't going to decline by 30%, CCS was not eligible to access 'Jobkeeper' to pay them. Outside advice, including that from our legal advisors was to stand them down. I was reluctant to do this - knowing despite their jobs being secure, there was the psychological aspect to being stood down. Nearly all our Education Assistants had accumulated lots of sick leave and when offered, they were happy to continue being paid using this benefit rather than being stood down. One of our Assistant teachers, Belinda O'Connor-Byrne was willing to use her long service leave during this time and I was very grateful for her agreeing to this arrangement. Finally, none of this was necessary thankfully as we all returned to face to face teaching early in term 2 and full staffing was required.

Looking after our families was another priority during the pandemic. As non-essential businesses were forced to close their doors, we knew that members of our school community would lose jobs. A newsletter was sent out asking families in need of assistance with school fees to contact us and we would do our utmost to help. The CCS Board also decided to offer a 50% fee reduction for second term school fees to all our members. Praise God, because the Federal Government decided to give schools taxation relief and we ended up no worse off financially.

Leadership during Long Service Leave

As I mentioned at the commencement of this report, Judy and I took our long service leave this time last year. I would like to thank Vanessa Schaefer who did a terrific job taking over the Principal role whilst I was absent. I would also like to thank Natasha Roche who stepped up to the Deputy Principal role.

School Board

I would like to thank our School Board. Working on a Board is a voluntary role and requires sacrifice and commitment of the members. Schools can't operate without them as they work to implement the school vision and steer the ship, so to speak.

John Tomkins has continued his faithful work as Chairperson of the CCS Board. The past year has not been easy for him as we lost a few key Board members and it was not easy to replace them. A chat with Gavin, Principal of Strathalbyn Christian School, directed us to Geoff Edwards, their school business manager. Geoff agreed to come onto our Board, initially for a period of 6 months, however he has now decided to continue until the end of the school year, when he gets married. Natalie Smith left the Board after faithfully serving whilst here in Carnarvon and then continuing for a further year after moving to Geraldton. Near the end of 2019 Deon Lenstra joined our board and stayed with us into early 2020 when work commitments forced him to step down. Both Chantal Vanderwal and Theona Smith have recently joined our Board and we are extremely grateful to both of them. And I mustn't forget Tochi Eze who has remained on the Board, despite moving to Geraldton to complete a busy rotation as a doctor in the regional hospital. To each of our Board members, I would like to give my heartfelt thanks.

Staff Teachers.

Firstly, I would like to thank our school leadership team of Vanessa Schaefer and Judy Shaw. As I mentioned in last year's report, Vanessa and Judy provide the link which enables the school to run smoothly and efficiently. A tonne of work is done behind the scenes and it is only in those rare moments when something goes wrong or something is needed that their work is noticed. Thankyou Vanessa and Judy. You are both very special indeed.

Natasha Roche and Annette Binks departed at the conclusion of 2019. Annette had been at CCS for 2 years and had decided that she would like to undertake further studies. Natasha Roche had worked at CCS for 18 months when she tragically lost her husband very suddenly. Initially, Natasha was going to move on from Carnarvon but ended up staying for a further 18 months. One of the reasons was the support we were able to give her as a school community. Natasha was an excellent teacher and made a big impact on CCS.

After teaching Year 2 in 2019, Petrus Ng took on a specialist role teaching Health and Sport, Technology as well as teaching the Pre-primary class one day a week in 2020. Petrus has adapted well, committed himself to the new role and has done a great job.

At the beginning of the year, Emily Miller, who had been working part time in the Year 5/6 class and also doing relief teaching took over Natasha's kindergarten class. We are delighted to have someone with Emily's experience take over a class with a majority of 3-year-old kindergarten children.

Megan Thomas joined us as a graduate teacher at the commencement of 2020. Megan has commenced her teaching career in the Year 4 class. As a local from a nearby cattle station, we are very happy to have her join us at CCS.

At the commencement of 2019, Marie Francoise took over the Year 1 class. This year, we have combined the Year 1 and Year 2 classes with Marie as the teacher. This is Marie's 3rd Year living in Carnarvon and her dedication and commitment to teaching is first class.

In 2020, Donna Bywaters entered her 2nd year at CCS teaching the year 3 class. Like Marie, Donna is extremely dedicated and her classroom is something to behold.

Education Assistants

Education Assistants, as their title indicates, are more than teaching aides. In the classroom, they are a vital member of the teaching/learning team. A tight knit group of Education Assistants (EA's) has continued working at CCS into 2020.

Belinda O'Connor Byrne has commenced taking long service leave this year after joining Carnarvon Christian School way back in 2010. Belinda helps out with a variety of tasks at the school, including the Multilit program. Great work Belinda.

Andrea Anderson divides her time between running the school library, working in the Year 4 and Year 5/6 class as well as helping out with the Multilit program. Andrea has commenced taking long service leave after 10 years of dedicated service. Well done Andrea.

Sharon West has continued partnering with Marie Françoise in the Year 1/2 class and Trish Thompson has continued working with the kindergarten children.

Jenna York continues to work in all Primary classes and Janet Rudge has moved to the Pre-primary class, working alongside Vanessa Schaefer.

Office Staff.

Nadine Collins, Rachael Smith assisted by Toni Radcliffe 2 days a week, continued working in the office these past 12 months.

The Office staff are the face of the school and we couldn't have a better team carrying out what is not always an easy role. Professional but always approachable with a smile on their faces, they work tirelessly in the best interests of everyone. Thank you sincerely guys.

School Chaplain.

At the conclusion of 2019, our school chaplain, Brian Fyffe took his long service leave. Unfortunately for us, Brian will be only returning to Carnarvon briefly before he retires. Brian did a great job and will be sorely missed. We wish him all the best and God's richest blessings during his retirement.

We were successful in getting a new grant to continue to employ a chaplain for the next 2 years. Unfortunately, we have been unable to recruit someone to take over Brian's role as yet. Please keep this in your prayers.

Gardening and Maintenance Staff.

Sean Ford and Brian (Pompy) Moore have continued working at CCS these past 12 months. Sean does a great job looking after a myriad of maintenance jobs as well as the school gardens, whilst Pompy maintains the school reticulation.

One of the goals in the CCS Strategic Plan is to make the school “an oasis in the desert.” In 2019, the Water Authority spent hundreds of thousands upgrading the treatment facilities for recycled water. Negotiations with the Carnarvon Shire has allowed CCS to continue to use recycled water for its ovals and gardens.

In 2019, we completed works clearing, levelling and installing reticulation for the new school oval on the west side of the school. Shredded lawn was purchased from Geraldton which was planted in April of that year. In the initial stages of the growth cycle weeds were a problem but here we are 12 months later and the oval is almost completely covered with green grass. We were successful in applying to the federal government for funding to purchase both AFL and Soccer goal posts for the new oval. These will be installed in the next few months.

After clearing the land on the north side of the school, we have also installed reticulation and planted lawn in that part of the school. By next year the lawn should have fully covered, not only beautifying the school but giving the children yet another place to do sport and play.

After many years working on a small stipend and as a volunteer, Kurt Schaefer has ceased work in the school gardens due to health concerns. I would personally like to thank Kurt for his vision and drive and the practical outcomes in what he has done around the school, particularly in the Eco Park. I note that a number of the trees he planted are now bearing fruit. Taking over Kurt’s role is Theona Smith and we are delighted to have her return to the school as a gardener. Theona handed over the reins from working in the CCS library in 2019.

Friends and Volunteers

Volunteers are invaluable to any organization and schools are no exception. I would like to thank all those parents who went on rosters and helped in the classrooms this past year. Your help is of enormous value to the children's learning and ensures that essential things like reading rosters- all children are being listened to on a regular basis.

I would also like to thank the parents who help out at our Busy Bees which are held at the beginning of each term. Two regular helpers who I would particularly like to mention are Noriko and Ai who never fail to turn up to our Busy Bees. Thank you.

Sports and Carnivals.

Natasha Roche's role of organizing sports carnivals has been taken over by Petrus Ng in 2020.

In 2019, our students also participated in the Interschool Swimming and Athletics Carnivals, the Lightning Carnival and the Interschool Cross Country Race.

CCS offers early morning running training during terms 2 and 3 to assist in children's fitness and is of great benefit for the athletics and cross country events.

Unfortunately, due to COVID19, the interschool cross country race will not be held this year. However, we are still training and will have our own race at the conclusion of the term. I would like to thank all our early morning helpers who I won't name for fear of leaving someone out. I would also like to thank Gail Law-Davis who is providing training for those who can't attend morning training on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons.

Clinics conducted by outside professionals at CCS over the past 12 months included: Soccer, AFL, Cricket, Netball and Gymnastics.

Canberra Trip.

Mrs Judith Shaw and Mrs Janet Rudge accompanied myself and the children on the trip to Canberra in 2019. Included in the itinerary were visits to Parliament House, the War Memorial, Art Gallery and SciTech, and the Australian Institute of Sport. A highlight of the trip was a visit to the Snowfields where the children had a “ball” playing in the snow and tobogganing. Unfortunately, we are not able to visit Canberra in 2020 due to the virus.

W.A Christian Education National (CEN) Symposium

The 2019 Symposium was held at Rehoboth Christian School. Staff made their own way to Perth after the mid semester break and found their own accommodation. As in the previous year, the Symposium was very professionally run and a great success. The Symposium is not only two days of information filled workshops but a chance for our teachers to interact with teachers from sister Christian Schools.

Unfortunately, due to COVID19, the planned Symposium to be held at Strathalbyn Christian College in Geraldton is unlikely to go ahead this year. I know a great deal of work had gone into planning the event and great speakers had been engaged so it is a shame for Gavin and his crew.

Local Development Plan

In late 2019, our Local Development Plan was finally endorsed by the Carnarvon Shire Council. Lots of discussion and work had gone into planning and designing future development and infrastructure for the school.

I would like to thank our planning consultant, Doug Smith, who assisted us with the preparations.

Child Safety and Wellbeing

In December 2017, the Royal Commission presented a final report to the Governor General, detailing the culmination of a five year inquiry into institutional responses to child sexual abuse and related matters. One of the responses to the findings was the construction of Child Safe Standards for institutions to help keep children safe. It’s objectives were:

- increase awareness and knowledge about child sexual abuse, both inside and outside of institutional contexts

- counter problematic attitudes and practices that increase risks to children
- strengthen the community's capacity to respond effectively, and remove social barriers to seeking help and disclosing abuse.

The 10 Child Safe Standards that articulate the essential standards of a child safe institution are:

- Standard 1: Child safety is embedded in institutional leadership, governance and culture
- Standard 2: Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
- Standard 3: Families and communities are informed and involved
- Standard 4: Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account
- Standard 5: People working with children are suitable and supported
- Standard 6: Processes to respond to complaints of child sexual abuse are child focused
- Standard 7: Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training
- Standard 8: Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur
- Standard 9: Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved
- Standard 10: Policies and procedures document how the institution is child safe.

Over the past 12 -18 months, we at CCS have worked hard to further improve our knowledge of the conditions leading to child abuse and ways to make our school even safer. We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of our children and have zero tolerance towards child-abuse. All children are precious in the sight of God. The Bible indicates that the nature of children is a high priority in the community with specific responsibilities given to parents. Everyone working at Carnarvon Christian School is responsible for the care and protection of children and reporting information about child abuse.

We have created a number of new policies to assist us in implementing the Child safe standards including:

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Child Safe Code of Conduct Policy
- Bring your own device policy
- Equity policy

Furthermore, we have upgraded existing CCS policies to reflect the standards including:

- Recruitment Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Discrimination Policies
- Visitors Policies
- Staff Induction Policy
- School, internet, email and iPad policy

Please refer to the CCS Child Safety and Wellbeing policy, which is available on our website if you wish to know more details about initiatives we have implemented around the school.

Special Needs and Additional Support

As a school we are committed to assisting struggling children in middle and upper school through remediation and to implement early intervention support for those children in the younger years. Remediation takes many forms but regardless of the strategies used [1-1, small group work, scaffolded classwork etc] it nearly always is accompanied by a specific 'extra' help program with the child's current target goals set based on diagnostic assessments.

Whenever we feel a child may benefit further from specific outside help [eg Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Counselling etc] we discuss firstly with parents before referrals are made. The local Allied Health Team are a really valuable support to all schools in Carnarvon and we regularly call on their expert specialised advice to help children overcome a range of learning difficulties.

For middle and upper primary students, we have as of term 4 2019, begun implementing an excellent Reading Intervention program called *Macqlit*. Various key staff have been trained to run the comprehensive program. This is

specifically for children not achieving reading and comprehension at a similar level to their peers. We have also implemented a program known as *Reinforced Reading* which seeks to build children's fluency levels to result in a pace that enables proper comprehension levels. We have been very pleased with the results we are seeing from both these remediation programs in particular.

The Arts

The Arts is one of the 8 learning areas that we are mandated to teach at schools in Australia. There are 5 strands including: Dance, Drama, Media Arts, Music, and Visual Arts. It is compulsory to do one performing arts and one visual arts each year.

For the past number of years CCS has been holding an Arts Exhibition of the children's work in 3rd term. Last year, Marie Françoise and Petrus Ng teamed up to organize the show which had the theme of building models out of recycled plastic. Teachers set up the children's work in Anchor Hall and guest Artists were invited along as judges. The show was a fabulous success with the majority of our parent body coming along to enjoy the show. I would like to thank Marie and Petrus and all the staff for their contributions.

In closing, I would like to thank everyone, (students, staff, board members, parents, carers and volunteers). In fact everyone who has made such a positive contribution in making CCS such a great school to be part of. We have our challenges ahead of us, but knowing the Lord works everything out for the good for those who love him, the future is bright.

Thank you for coming.

James Shaw

Principal