Chairman’s report 2015

It gives me great pleasure to present the Chairman’s report on behalf of the Mater Christi School Board for the 2015 year. The past twelve months can be described as a very exciting but challenging time for many us who have been involved with the Board. Mater Christi has undergone a year of unprecedented change whether it be at the Parish level, School Executive, Catholic Education Office or within our own teaching staff. During this period the Board, as the school community’s elected representatives, have been there to support the school and teaching staff in whatever way possible.

The School Board is blessed with many different talents. We have members with commercial backgrounds, finance and accountancy skills, educational expertise, health, engineering and small business exposure. The mix of these people make for a very effective group who donate their valuable time, are there to challenge the norm and drive the school to excel at its highest level possible.

Many of you may not be aware of the role the school board plays in assisting in the management of the school. Our role is primarily to act as a sounding mechanism for the Principal and Executive on matters of a financial and commercial nature. This can include such functions as:

• Planning for the present and future operations of the School;
• Assisting in the recruitment of staff;
• Liaising in all matters relating to the financial management of the School;
• Ensuring information about the School and Catholic education is communicated to persons and organisations in the School Community; and
• Acting as an avenue of consultation for the Principal to gauge opinions on particular initiatives or matters of interest.
Whilst this is not an exhaustive list of functions the School Board can perform, hopefully it provides with you some idea of the role we play in this vibrant Parish Community.

It is important to note some of the major achievements the Board and School Executive have been involved with throughout this year. Some of these include:

- Assisted in the recruitment of the new School Principal – I will come back to this point shortly;
- Continued negotiations of the Oval lease with the City of Cockburn;
- Making funds available for a number of capital projects and new equipment across the school. As always our Treasurer, Brad Pymont, will outline some of these for you shortly in his Treasurer’s report;
- Approval of the annual budget submission to the Catholic Education Office; and
- Further progression of the school’s strategic plan.

The Board and School Executive has continued this year to study the Bishops Mandate of the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia. A number of Board members took the opportunity to participate in presenting to the Board on a particular topic from within the mandate. As in previous years, the presentations were diverse, engaging and overall have assisted the Board to understand the Bishop’s expectations and reason for the existence of Catholic schools.

This year a new issue emerged for the Board and the School Executive to consider and manage. There has been a change in the federal government funding allocation model for all Catholic Schools across WA. Many of the Board members have attended training
sessions to understand the impact on our school’s revenue streams and as a consequence of this, any potential fee increases that may occur for our families. Many scenarios have been modelled by our Treasurer Brad Pymont and Finance Officer Robin Giles which we are very appreciative. Brad will report on the impact of this new funding model in his Treasurer’s report. What I can say, as I have in previous years, is that with Brad as our Treasurer and Robin Giles as our Finance Officer I can assure you that the school’s finances are in very safe hands.

One of the more substantial changes the School and the Board has had to contend with this year was the resignation of our previous Principal, Mr Mark de Kuyver. Mark made a substantial contribution to our School and Parish Community over a seven-year period which we are all very grateful for. A number of strategies that he introduced will continue to bear fruit for the school for years to come. We know that Mark has settled in well at his new school Holy Rosary Doubleview but we have noticed that he seems to be a bit lonely and has recently called on some old friends to join him – again we thank Mark for his contribution but hope he can find some teaching staff from somewhere else in the future!

As a consequence of Mark’s change of role, Father Bryan and I had the opportunity to participate with other School principals and Mr Hamish Valentine from the Catholic Education Office in a recruitment process for a new Principal. The Board assisted in this process by developing a set of values and criteria that we could use during the interview and selection process. The field of candidates applying to work as Mater Christi’s Principal was very strong, all extremely experienced, all with very different skills and knowledge that they would bring to the role. As we all know now the successful candidate was Miss Toni Kalat who joined us in third term of this
year. I’m very reliably informed that it was the first time in many years that a selection panel had made a unanimous decision on one candidate and indicates how highly the panel thought of Toni’s credentials as a school leader.

The Board would like to take this opportunity to thank Toni for the way she has transitioned into her new role. Her ability to manage all facets of a three stream school, participate in the Parish Community and manage every issue and task with ease has been simply amazing. The Board is very proud of the contribution you have made to the school in a very short time and know that this is only the beginning of what you can and will achieve for our school community.

The Board would like to acknowledge two events that occurred during the year within the parish community. Firstly, the 25th Anniversary of Mater Christi Catholic Primary School. The Board appreciates and thanks all who were involved in this celebration. It is testament to how committed and hardworking the staff are at this School as they only commenced planning for this day in the third term of this year. We thank you all for your contribution to what was a wonderful occasion.

Secondly the Board would like to thank Father Bryan and the Parish for an amazing night when the work of Dr Alan Pascuzzi was unveiled in the two new chapels in the church. As our 25th anniversary gift to the Parish, the Board approved on behalf of the school community, a cash gift towards these exquisite works of art which will greatly enhance the children of Mater Christi’s lives for many years to come. We know that our church is the envy of many and the School is very proud to be part of this Parish Community.

Next year will see a number of changes occurring in the leadership team and the teaching arrangements for Mater Christi. Mr Mark
Ryan will join St Columba’s as acting Principal for six months. Mark has been the rock of the school executive for many years. His professionalism and contribution to the school is always of a high standard and we know that he is greatly respected by his peers, the students and parents within this school community. Mark had the very difficult job of acting as Principal for Mater Christi during term two of this year whilst we recruited for Toni’s position. As always he acquitted this task with the grace and skill of a Carlton premiership team. Mark whilst you are only going for six months, we know that you will do an exceptional job at St Columba’s and you will be greatly missed at Mater Christi during this period.

We should also take this opportunity to thank our other Assistant Principal, Mrs Courtney Dunsire. Your support and hard work throughout the year has also been greatly appreciated. We thank you for your ongoing contribution to the Board meetings especially your insightful prayers which remind us all of why we are all really here. To Miss Nicole Clout who will be Acting Assistant Principal next year we wish you every success in your new role. The School Board and Community looks forward to supporting you in whatever way possible.

Last year I noted that the teachers, teaching assistants and admin staff at Mater Christi are an outstanding group of people who are highly motivated and focused solely on the education of our children. In the Boards view this position has not changed in anyway. We acknowledge and thank you all for your commitment, continued passion and energy this year.

A number of staff will be leaving Mater Christi to continue developing their professional careers in 2016. We start by farewelling David Edwards and Emily Roach. We thank you both for
your work and support at Mater Christi and hope that your new roles will be as equally fulfilling. A special good bye also goes to Geordie Thuijs. Geordie has made a significant contribution to the school not only as a teacher but as an Acting Assistant Principal on several occasions and as being the resident IT guru. We are certain that you will enjoy your new role as Assistant Principal at Holy Rosary but hope you can still make it home in time each night to play with George & Audrey. Always keep in the back of mind that Mater Christi is closer to home for you!

A number of new teachers and teaching assistants will join the school next year. The Board welcomes Nicholas Magry, Adele Paino, Rebecca McMahon, Diane Michaelas and Carmen Ford. We hope you will enjoy your time at our and soon what will be your school.

The Board would also like to acknowledge the P&F for their contribution. We are extremely fortunate to have such a committed group of parent volunteers who strive to provide the best environment possible for our students. Unfortunately though, this will be another area of change for our school community next year with Joh Perez (President), Heidi Mann (Vice President) and Beverly Sweetman (Treasurer) completing their terms in office. We thank you greatly and wish you well for the future.

It also my sad duty tonight to farewell one of our Board Members – Nicoletta Nici. Nicoletta has been involved with Mater Christi over the last eight years in many different ways. This has been as a contributor to the P&F, class representative for several years, organiser of the annual P&F fun day and long term Board member. Nicoletta is the prime example of someone who is first to put her hand up when a job needs doing. It is people like Nicoletta that make our community what it is today and we sincerely thank you for
your contribution to the Board, the school and our whole Parish community.

At this point I also need to make a special mention of our Board secretary Mr Julian Symons. Like Bridget Chamberlain and Ange Radanovic before him he has done a superb job in this role. I can tell you that his touch typing skills and spelling accuracy over the last twelve months have improved remarkably.

To our other returning Board Members I thank you for your contribution this year. I really look forward to working with you again in 2016, in what will be my final year on the Board.

In closing, I’d like to note for the Annual General Meeting that Mater Christi Catholic Primary School continues to be in a very strong spiritual, educational and financial position. We continue to have strong enrolments for 2016 and with the ever present support of Father Bryan, Father Rainier and Sr Em, our Catholic Community will continue to flourish and grow.

Thank you.