

The Alice Springs Steiner Association (TASSA)

Chairman's Report – 2015 (April16)

Our purpose

To develop and maintain a successful school based on the
philosophy of Rudolf Steiner

Our vision

A world class Steiner School in the heart of Australia

Our values

The Alice Springs Steiner School

celebrates and cares for

our community

our children

and

our place;

we do so with

integrity

and we do so

sustainably.

2015 was a year of consolidation and achievement! A new Classroom block was completed thanks to a Grant from the NT Government Block Grant Authority plus our own contribution; Early Childhood gained accreditation & a restructure of classes; our Governance reached new level of professionalism including in-house training; we undertook an external review of our annual Fair and implemented recommendations; Parent connections were strengthened to Parents & we conducted a survey of our future needs & general satisfaction; our Principal Brian Dodd worked tirelessly across all these projects supported by a wonderful dedicated team of staff & engaged Board.

Building projects - the opening of our Year 5/6 Classroom block by traditional owner Doris Stuart was a poignant celebratory morning. Doris reminded us of the spirit and speciality of our land and the 'place' chosen for our School; that 'things happen for a reason' and that reason can often be out of our control.

New Governors, elected in May 2015, were Mark Woods and Kellie Vermolen. They joined myself, Kate Lloyd, Harshini Bartlett, Jane Hartwig and James Spiers. Kellie, Jane and James resigned midterm and the Board appointed Michael Tuckwell. Kate Lloyd was acting Chairman for the ten weeks I was on leave. In October members of the Board did a day of Governance training to develop their skills and set professional bench marks. Acknowledgement to Harshini whom completed our Governance Manual and Michael who led our Fair task group – both with success.

Finances: The school is a parent funded enterprise exposed to many external factors and at times unpredictable environment. Our current Cash Reserves reflect the hard work and wisdom of those who have preceded us at any point in time and their forethought to guarantee future stability. Cash Reserves can be likened to having a good education – which will give a person the power of choice throughout their life; healthy Cash reserves in our School give future Boards the power of choice. Future Boards with strong cash reserves will be empowered to survive downturns, invest in infrastructure, consider extension into middle or senior classes and the ability to ride out political instability for funding of independent schools - the list is endless. Current and future Boards have an obligation to respect and preserve Cash Reserves, they must always do their homework and invest wisely.

The Audit reflects the strength of the student numbers and close management of our expenses. Member's funds, were represented by Land & Buildings and Cash Reserves. Our Cash Reserves at December 2015 were \$553,000 –\$80,000 less than the previous year after investing into the new 5/6 Classroom.

Thank you: My six year era as Chairman of this wonderful school has come to an end, I believe an end is actually a new opportunity. It is not possible to be an effective Chairman without a team and there are people who have supported me over and beyond that I would like to acknowledge. The Deputy Chair is often unheralded, but they are a confident and sounding board for the Chair – Annie Farthing & Kate Lloyd – thank you. The Secretary's role is a cornerstone ensuring the effectiveness of meaningful minutes, agenda's and papers to the Board. Jane Hartwig and Harshini Bartlett have contributed significantly, Janes work on Policies & Procedures; Harshini's production of a Governance Manual. Both have been days of work which have been quietly and diligently undertaken resulting in world class productions.

I am excited about the beginning the next era of Governance – the 2016 Board members are a qualified, dedicated team; they have a very good understanding of what lies ahead and the skills and experience to meet the challenges ahead.

Brian Dodd, in his fourth year as Principal, continued to offer strong leadership to our whole community. As outgoing Chairman it has been a privilege to work with Brian. His dedication and leadership of the Alice Springs Steiner School and passion for education are cornerstones for our School. We all benefit from his leadership and the wonderful team of staff he cares for who care for our children, our community and our future.

Our Vision of being 'A world class Steiner School in Central Australia' is apt and measurable!

I am deeply indebted for the opportunity to serve as Chairman. I commend this Annual Report to you.

LIBBY PRELL Chair – Governing Body