

## PRINCIPAL REPORT – ACM 2021

Good evening, everyone.

In welcoming you here, I wish to acknowledge that this meeting is being held on Wadjuk boodjar and pay my respects to the Noongar peoples and their Elders, past, present and emerging.

I was recently at a meeting with a group of Catholic School Principals who were lamenting just how busy things become at this time of the year. The Annual Community Meeting came in for particular note as “just another thing that we need to do”. It really saddened me to hear their thoughts about this as, maybe I’m in need of a bit of counselling, but I don’t see it like this at all. Whilst, yes, it is a task to be completed, it’s much more than that, and I see it as an opportunity to reflect upon the year and all of the wonderful ways in which our school has impacted, and contributed towards, the lives of so many.

Just as it is said that it takes a village to raise a child, one of the most rewarding aspects of working at Notre Dame is that we have many parts of this village covered through the work of the Parish, the Staff, the Advisory Council, the P&F, and as of this year, the OSHC. Each of these components has its own special element to bring to the big picture of achieving the best for the children.

So, I wish to thank each group for their contribution:

- Father Quynh and the Notre Dame Parish for providing Spiritual guidance and support of school initiatives.
- The P&F is constantly searching for ways in which to engage with our community. They tackle everything with such enthusiasm, and this provides a warm, welcoming environment for all. The balance that the members are constantly searching to achieve across community, education and wellbeing is inspirational and ensures the best outcomes for all. Recently they have embarked on a project to provide greater upper body challenges for the children in the Nature Playground and I look forward to seeing this come to fruition during 2022.
- The work of the School Advisory Council is not always easy to see but the results are enjoyed by all. The trust they place in the work of the Leadership Team and their foresight to see the possibilities of our proposals provides us with the direction and the confidence to continually be both informed by our past and focused on the future. A significant event during 2021 has been the establishment of the Charism Journeys for both the Presentation and Mercy Orders of Sisters. There was definitely an element of faith needed to embrace the vision of this project but, under the meticulous direction of Stefanie Bradshaw, it has come to fruition and should be an excellent asset to be used by all for many, many years to come.
- The Notre Dame staff are second to none. We constantly “punch above our weight” in curriculum-based assessments but a significant component of this is not just the day to day work in the classes but, I believe, much more importantly, the joy and element of fun that the staff bring to their work each day. Each morning when I am at the school gate it is so rewarding to see just how happy the children are to come to school to learn. This is completely foreign to my own time at school when my two favourite subjects were Recess and Lunch, so thank you to all staff from the classrooms to the library, the office, the uniform shop, the canteen and the grounds for your amazing efforts. Please be aware that you make such a difference to so many lives.

- This year, in response to perceived need within our community, we introduced our Outside School Hours Care facility. This had been a long time in the making and has continued to flourish as the year has progressed under the guidance of Sharene Hall and her team. Sharene has embraced all aspects of the OSHC and tied them seamlessly to the ethos and Charism of our school.

It would be very remiss for me to speak of the OSHC without acknowledging the outstanding efforts of Sharmane Dowse in getting the facility up and running. I have no doubt that we would not have commenced when we did without the dogged determination shown by Sharmane to hold all parties, that constantly created barriers, to account.

The long-awaited OSHC has surpassed all expectations and our biggest problem now is how to accommodate all who are looking for places.

- My final thank you is to my Leadership Team. I am truly blessed to have Daniela, Stefanie and Stephen doing their best to make me look good, a difficult task at the best of times. With David Shumack along for the ride on most occasions, what more could a Principal ask for? Their dedication to our school and the desire to help everyone to be the best that they can be, is exceptional. The role of school leadership is complex and becoming even more so each year but, with the wonderful support of such talented and dedicated leaders such as Daniela, Stefanie, Stephen and David, our school is well placed to remain an exemplar for others to aspire to.

Our future at Notre Dame certainly looks bright but there will be some challenges.

- The Covid-19 situation will continue to be with us for some time and, I suspect, what will occur as our borders open will present new challenges for us all to deal with. As we have shown in the past, our school will be ready at short notice to support our community whatever the challenges that may be presented.
- Another significant challenge may be the future Catholicity of our school. For some time, we have seen a reduction in the way in which people interact with the church and the relevance they attach to this. Our school has operated counter to this trend, maintaining a Catholic enrolment at around 70%, when many others of our schools are operating at closer to 60% or below. Our 4YO Kindergarten enrolment for 2022, however, has a Catholic enrolment of 50% and, while this may only be for this particular year, it is important that we remain vigilant of any trend that may form and respond appropriately to this should the need arise. We are very proudly Catholic and will continue to be so, and any families who wish to access our wonderful school will need to be fully supportive of our Catholic programmes and rituals.

In closing I wish to thank you all for your continued efforts to make Notre Dame Catholic Primary School a beacon of high-quality education and exceptional standards. Having worked in five Catholic Primary Schools and been Principal of four of these, I believe I am well-placed to say that this is an amazing school, and we are all so privileged to be associated with it.

But wait, there's more! Whilst I won't be revealing the staffing for 2022 at this stage, I am able to tell you that two members of our staff will be retiring at the end of this year. Both have been very long serving members of our school and I'm sure you all join with me in

wishing both Carol Smith and Denise McGregor much happiness and relaxation for the years ahead.

I have been looking for a song to play as a tribute to these ladies and considered “These Boots Are Made For Walking” or “Take This Job and Shove It” before settling on Josh Groban’s “You Raise Me Up” which is a reflection of the wonderful contribution that both ladies have made to our school. In true “Carol”oke style join if you’d like.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oni0tO\\_HN30](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oni0tO_HN30)

Darryl Winsor  
Principal  
23 November 2021