



ST BERNADETTE'S SCHOOL

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
2025

Principal's Report

The 2024 school year saw significant learning and growth for the St Bernadette's community. Key highlights and achievements are detailed below.

Catholic Identity

Our Catholic identity remains the heart of all that we do. In 2024, we continued to nurture a school culture firmly rooted in the values of respect, truth, love, justice, and hope, while embracing our four Dominican pillars—Prayer, Study, Community, and Ministry. We are grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with Fr. Joseph, deepening our connection with St. Ann's Parish, and we appreciate his unwavering support in our shared mission.

Religious Celebrations and Community Events: Throughout the year, our school embraced numerous opportunities to live out our Catholic faith. Harmony Day, Carols Night, Sports Day, and Book Week were all infused with a spirit of Catholic values, bringing our school community together in celebration. A particularly memorable highlight was our participation in the Catholic Schools Music Festival, marking our first performance at the event. It was a joyous occasion, with our senior students shining on stage in front of a large audience.

Student Wellbeing: One of the key aspects of our Catholic identity is ensuring that every student feels cared for, valued, and connected to our community. Our wellbeing (pulse check) data collected in week 5 each term demonstrated high levels of students feeling belonging and care, which speaks to the nurturing environment we strive to maintain.

Catholic ethos: Under the guidance of our leadership team and Matthew Min (APRIM), we remained committed to providing opportunities for spiritual growth, including regular liturgies, whole school Masses, prayer, our daily Veritas moment, the celebration of special feast days and liturgical seasons all of which are vital components of our school's Catholic ethos.

Social Justice: Our school has continued to support a range of Catholic Charities through a number of fundraising endeavours held over the course of the year. Donations were collected through the Project Compassion during Lent, helping to support Caritas Australia. As well as this, we supported the St Vincent de Paul society and Catholic Charities through fundraising days and our Winter and Christmas appeals.

Teaching and Learning

The academic achievements of our students in 2024 were a testament to the hard work and dedication of both students and staff. Our teaching and learning initiatives provided every student with the opportunity to grow.

NAPLAN Results: Across all domains, our NAPLAN results were strong, with our average scores exceeding or meeting the region average. Students who scored in "requiring additional support" bands were all involved in intervention programs in 2024.

Phonic Screening Check: Our Phonic Screening Check results for our year 1 students were some of the strongest in the system, with an impressive average score of 37/40. These results demonstrate the strength of our early literacy programs and the skill of our teachers in laying a strong foundation for our students' learning.

Literacy Intervention Programs: We have continued to prioritise individual student support, with 25 students from Reception to Year 6 accessing Language Lift, MiniLit or MacqLit intervention programs. Results continue to show progress for all learners.

Numeracy Intervention Program: The introduction of our Numeracy Intervention Program has also yielded positive results. 20 Students participated in the program, receiving small group support and all demonstrated growth in their computation, fluency and automaticity in their numerical skills.

Financial Stewardship and Development

2024 was marked by significant progress in the progressing our Master plan. A key focus was securing funding to support continued enrolment growth with the planned expansion of our facilities, ensuring that we remain well-equipped to support our school's growth in the future.

Capital Development: One of the standout achievements in 2024 was the submission and approval of a capital grant application, that resulted in St Bernadette's receiving \$3.5 million in grant money. This was aimed at fulfilling our Stage 2 Master Plan, which is essential to further developing our school's infrastructure to support continued and projected enrolment growth. Brown Falconer Architects worked (and continue to work) with leadership to bring these plans to life. Plans include a two-story building with classrooms, common spaces and new toilet facilities to be constructed in the northeast car park. Mossop Construction were appointed as builders for the project, which is due to start in Term 2 2025, beginning with a new playground. The project value is 5.7 million, serviced by our capital grant of 3.5million and significant loans for the remainder of the construction and land purchase cost. This is an exciting milestone, and we are hopeful that these developments will not only meet the needs of our growing school community but also provide our students with outstanding learning environments.

Land Acquisition: The school has made an application to purchase the parish land at the northeast corner, currently used as a car park. We believe the application will be in favour of the school purchasing the land.

Acknowledgements

As we reflect on the many successes and achievements of the past year, it is important to take a moment to acknowledge the people that have made a lasting impact on our school community.

Farewell to Ray Higgins: It is with both gratitude and sadness that we acknowledge the resignation of Ray Higgins, our principal of 6.5 years. Ray has been an exceptional leader, guiding the school with vision, passion, and a deep commitment to our students, staff, and families. His leadership has been instrumental in shaping the direction of the school, particularly in terms of strengthening our teaching and learning practices, fostering a sense of belonging and community, and driving enrolment growth to ensure our school's viability. The refurbishments of the Veritas building completed in 2022 and his vision for further capital development remains his legacy. We thank him for his incredible service and wish him all the very best in the future.

Staff and Students: I would also like to express my gratitude to our outstanding staff, whose dedication and hard work have been key. Our teachers, support staff, and leadership team work hard to provide the best possible learning experience for our students, and their commitment does not go unnoticed. To our students, thank you for your enthusiasm, resilience, and passion for learning. Your energy and joyful dispositions are what make St Bernadette's such a special place.

Parents and the School Community: Finally, to our wonderful school community, including our parents, caregivers, and volunteers, thank you for your unwavering support and involvement. The success of our school is a collective effort, and we are incredibly fortunate to have such a strong partnership between home and school.

We look ahead to a bright 2025 filled with continued growth, success, and the shared values that unite us all. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to making 2024 such a memorable one.

Michelle Starr

Chairperson's Report

As we welcome 2025, my heart is full of gratitude reflecting on our incredible journey together in 2024. What a remarkable year of growth, change, and strengthening community bonds!

Reflecting on last year, and what an eventful and successful 2024 we have had. Being Chair on the school board 2024 was a very rewarding experience. I have been invited to be on the interview panel for a new Reception teacher, Chelsea Foord and our new school principal, Michelle Starr. It's been an honour and a privilege to be an advocate for St Bernadette's students, parents and teachers.

Our school has flourished, growing to 198 students, and adapting our school with new classrooms and exciting new development plans to support our expanding family. The school board were given the opportunity to consult on the stage 2 master plan with the architect team -Brown Falconer, giving input to what our community viewed as most important as we move forward. Board input included upgraded playground facilities, refreshed toilets, indoor and outdoor learning opportunities and embedding care and support into the building design. Hand in hand with school growth there is also the Torrens to Darlington project. The T2D project team, consulted with the school board, giving us the opportunity to provide input, with the safety of our children as a top priority.

We sadly said goodbye to Ray Higgins, a bittersweet farewell celebration that showed just how special our community is. Covid-19 had a significant impact on the "community feel" but now the community spirit is back and blossoming. This is evident with our fantastic school events such as Sports Day and Harmony day. The Board also arranged a morning tea to celebrate all our new families that joined us - this is something we would like to continue as an annual event.

I would like to thank all the families again for their support throughout the year through many ways such as volunteering and sports coaching, and to the School Board, I would also like to thank them for volunteering their time to help ensure our school continues to grow. I want to thank the remarkable teachers, staff and principal for all their hard work and efforts in running the school and providing our children with the utmost support and education. Your commitment to our children's education and wellbeing makes St Bernadette's truly special.

If you're considering joining the School Board, I warmly encourage you to step forward. It's an incredibly rewarding way to help shape our children's educational journey and be part of our thriving community.

Crystal Naidoo

Finance Report

As our financial audit has not been finalised for the 2024 year, we are unable to provide a finance report. However, St Bernadette's school is in a strong financial position with a surplus above Catholic Education requirements. In 2025, our loans for the stage 2 building project will have an impact on our budget. Financial reports will be tabled at the next board meeting and will be able for the community to view as requested.

Karen Thomas