



Northmead High School P&C Association Annual Report – April 2008

The last year has been busy and productive for the P&C Association as we have supported the work of the school in a variety of ways. Our meetings continue to be combined with the School Council and so we have been involved in policy issues, discussion on the vision and directions of the school and in dealing with the various day to day issues where parental input is beneficial.

At each meeting we received a comprehensive report from our Principal, Mrs Narelle Vazquez, and there was good interaction between parents, staff and student representatives. At the beginning of 2008 we initiated a series of reports from the various faculty head teachers. Four have reported so far, giving us an idea of the challenges, successes and directions of their faculty, along with any pressing needs. We have received reports from English, Industrial Arts, Home Economics and Science. A tour of the school to look at the various facilities was also undertaken at our March 2008 meeting. There are various needs within these faculties, including kitchen upgrades and also upgrades of our science labs. These and various other large expense, property and maintenance school needs are being identified and prioritised, as we hope to receive some funds for such projects from surplus land the Department is selling. This money will only provide for property needs and cannot support other requirements, such as staff support etc. The P&C is represented on the committee dealing with the allocation of these potential resources.

We receive a small amount of funds from the P&C levy and this is dispersed for various small projects through the school – predominantly providing small equipment for various faculties. These purchases included a Digital Camera for visual arts (\$1,400), display screens for art exhibitions (\$1,080) and large tables for the graphics room (\$1,908).

The P&C applied for, and received, a Small Volunteer Equipment Grant of \$3000. It was used to help the PD/H/PE Faculty set up a gym. They purchased 4 Cross Trainers (\$400 each) and 4 Rowing Machines (\$350 each). The school, with P&C support applied for, and received, a Federal Government water grant. This will enable us to install large water tanks and use the water for toilets, gardens and sporting fields.

Through this year we established a committee to oversee the 50th Anniversary celebrations of Northmead High School in 2009. The committee has parents, staff and student representatives and will raise funds and organise an exciting event. We hope to attract some previous students who have excelled in their chosen field in order to inspire our current generation of students to achieve their best, through school and beyond.

Some highlights of the school's year have been:

- Excellent improvement in the SNAP (state Mathematics testing for years 7 and 8), above the state average.
- Another excellent result in the State (4th) and National (4th) Rock Eisteddfod Challenge. We were again in the Premier Division and the performance was outstanding! Congratulations to the students, staff and the parents who make this happen! The P&C will be looking to build an even stronger relationship with the 'Rocka' team through 2008 in order to support this very valuable program.
- Overseas cultural program – trips for students to both Japan and France. Both trips were very well organised and wonderful experiences for those involved. The understanding of other cultures received on these trips, is invaluable. Organisation for the 2008 trip to Japan is well under way.
- Northmead High School has been successful in becoming part of the 'Connected Classrooms' program being run in the Parramatta district. This program is related to the closedown of Macquarie Boys High (Dundas) and the establishment of a new college connected to UWS Parramatta Campus. The new college will be named Lachlan Macquarie College and will focus on advanced education programs in Maths and Science.
- Drama – 5 students out of 6 were selected in state drama ensembles – an outstanding effort and wonderful achievement for our Creative and Performing Arts Faculty!

- Several parent representatives have been trained to serve on Merit Selection Panels. Several panels are scheduled for 2008.
- The retirement of David Drury, who has served the school as Deputy Principal for 18 years. David has given a great deal of himself over this time for the school and the students. He is greatly admired and respected by staff, students and parents. The P&C were represented at his farewell dinner, which was a wonderful evening.

Other issues raised through the P&C/School Council meetings:

- The P&C provided continued feedback and suggestions to the school on its website. This has led to the involvement of student expertise in the development of the website as part of their practical engagement in computer studies. It is looking very good.
- There has been continued discussion on issues surrounding the buses – especially in the afternoon. Even though the bus stop moved from Campbell Street to Fletcher Street, there is still crowding on the roads as parents park to pick up children. The footpath is crowded as students wait for buses at the gate and other students try to get through to walk home. This is an ongoing issue. We have written letters to local government, RTA and the bus company but no answers have been forthcoming.
- Two faculties (Maths and English) will undergo review in 2008. Parental involvement and feedback will be required as part of the process.
- Issues relating to the enforcement of the School Uniform Policy were raised by student and parent representatives. Discussions lead to a decision to reconvene the School Uniform Committee to review any changes to policy.
- School Policy – Looking at ways to improve delivery of content and student outcomes. There are self evaluations of faculties and are currently in the middle of the English faculty which includes surveys and interviews with students and parents
- Study Skills – The school Leadership Team is working on an initiative to improve student's study skills using different techniques. The learning support team is working on embedding study skills in the early stages. This initiative is called the “Bonza Day Out Club” and Year 7 will begin with a mini session (mind mapping, importance of homework, study cards and fun activity in the afternoon). This initiative will involve parents who will encourage their children to do ½ hr of study per day. They will sign a form over an 8 week period. Students who achieve homework goals will be invited to Bonza Day Out. Yr 8 will begin after week 4 because of exams. The P&C agreed to consider other funding possibilities to develop and expand this plan to include some additional input for those students who particularly struggle with study, self esteem and confidence in learning.
- The School Hall – we received Federal Funding to upgrade the sound and lighting. This has been done. The hall still requires new fireproof stage curtains and curtains around the walls to help absorb sound and improve sound quality.
- The drama room needs repainting – the P&C will encourage parents to be involved in a working bee.

The P&C values the work of all parents in supporting the school and its curricular and extra-curricular programs. We thank the staff, especially the Executive staff, of the school for their concern and support of the students. We will continue to support them in helping all students to achieve their best in their study and extra-curricular involvement. We encourage all initiatives that improve self confidence, self esteem, citizenship, friendship, inclusion, tolerance and excellence in academic pursuits, sport and the arts.

Tony Walker
President