

Dear North-Eastern Community

We hope you have been able to enjoy your family life in a relaxed and happy way during the holidays.

New Directors

- In August, the Board welcomed two new Directors, Ellen McOmish and Hasnain Razwi. Both Ellen and Has are members of the School. Their profiles are on the Board's webpage.
- Boards are only as good as their ability to attract and appoint directors who have the range of skills needed to govern well in the interests of the whole organisation. In Has and Ellen, we have added high value project and change management expertise to the financial, educational and governance capabilities of the Board.
- Elected Director, Rebecca Norris, resigned recently. Rebecca served as Minute Secretary as well as Membership Committee Chair. Her contributions were always pertinent and valued.

Effect of lockdowns

- The School has taken the lockdowns in its stride; however, the unexpected virulence of the new COVID variants has meant significant adjustments for everyone. The reduction in government support this time around has not helped.
- The School has taken great care for students and families; and the staff have helped to keep each other's positive morale bubbling along. In this, Janis has led from the front, ably supported by her leadership team and the team approach she has initiated throughout the School.
- Despite all the interruptions, Janis continues to lead the staff effectively in focusing on high quality remote learning, literacy and numeracy (NAPLAN results are generally pleasing), professional development around child-safe compliance, and Montessori education and mentorship.

Planning for an Adolescent Program (Strategic Plan 1.3)

- Earlier this year, the Board approved a rigorous, three-stage plan for the development of "Big Programs". With the new Board now fully in place, Phase 1 of this process has been activated in order to consider the feasibility of introducing an Adolescent Program (Secondary School).
- Discussions have occurred at several Board meetings and a Planning Day is scheduled for 9th October 2021.

Financials

- The new fee structure was approved at the August Board meeting. A modest increase was set as low as practicable and the notice period for withdrawal was set at two terms. These changes are intended to ensure the School continues to meet its current and future operating costs and can plan accordingly. The School did not increase fees last year, but cannot do so again responsibly.
- The Board is aware that some families may be experiencing financial stress at the moment. For this reason, a specific contingency fund will be built into the 2022 Budget for cases of hardship, the intention being to make sure that all our current and future families get the support they need. Janis is very approachable if you need assistance.
- The Board carefully monitors all financial information provided by our excellent Business Manager, Manoli Galanakis. Performance against budget is reviewed monthly and appropriate adjustments made. Even with the losses associated with lockdown, the Board expects a modest projected December outcome to be achieved.

Infrastructure, Buildings and Grounds

- We can continue to make some excellent improvements, such as the current upgrade to the administration block and the new signage.
- We await news about a grant for grounds upgrades.
- We have also approved the development of a Masterplan for the School.

North-Eastern Montessori School Association

Neil Champion (Chair), Justin Garrett (Deputy Chair), Amod Joshi (Treasurer), Maggie Abernethy, Jade McEwan, Ellen McOmish, Has Razwi, Mun Rosewarne

