

# SCHOOL BOARD CHAIR



The performance of Churchlands Senior High School in 2020 is commendable on many counts. The extraordinary demands of the year were met with acumen and diligence by the executive team, and with dedication and flexibility by all staff. Students adapted and stayed focused and in particular the Class of 2020 are to be congratulated on achieving highly satisfactory results despite interruptions to classes, curtailment of activities and deep uncertainty.

The 2020 School Review delivered a very positive assessment, which is due to the excellence of the teachers, the strong and capable leadership team, the receptive and keen students and the support from the community. The school is in a position to look ahead with confidence.

Schools are a microcosm - a mini real world - inextricably connected to wider society, and must often face difficulties and disappointments. I would like to acknowledge the integrity and grace of staff and students in facing a year that began and continued with very difficult events and situations. In particular, I pay tribute to the Head Boy, Thomas, and Head Girl, Zara, who led their student community with strength and articulated the values of our school bravely and clearly.

2020 was a year of significant change in governance for Churchlands with the resignation of the board chair, John Gillon, and the secondment of the principal, Neil Hunt. The contribution of both John and Neil over many years cannot be understated.

John has turned a vision for the ongoing enhancement of education at Churchlands into reality, with the development of the Alumni Association and the establishment of the unique and visionary Churchlands Foundation. The effects are already apparent in a richer school culture through Alumni connections and the completion of the amazing solar panel project. The financial flexibility this creates will support ongoing opportunities for students and staff. As board chair, John supported the strong and effective leadership of our longest serving Principal, Neil Hunt.

Neil had an ambitious vision for the school, which was matched with the drive and ability to achieve outcomes. His shrewd foresight ensured that the school was prepared for the challenges of massive growth. He procured sufficient purpose-designed capacity in facilities and amenities, of which some examples are the concert hall, the sports hall, the science block, the D&T wing, ICT capability and facilities management. All the while, he remained focused on the core business of a school and was an explicit proponent of good pedagogy, recruiting competent and passionate staff and building an executive team that he trusted to lead and innovate. He sought to build and strengthen community networks through his unflinching support of the P&C, his attendance at school and community events and his acknowledgement of the integral role of parent volunteers. He sought to harness the expertise of parents and Alumni to enhance school systems and programs.

Neil has left an impressive legacy at Churchlands and he will be long-remembered as an outstanding Principal.

I would like to pay tribute to Paul Housley, whose steady hand, deep knowledge of the school and concern for its best interests characterised his time as Churchlands principal in 2020. During a tumultuous year, his leadership was constructive and much appreciated by the board.

We congratulate and welcome Dr James Kent to Churchlands as its tenth Principal. He brings experience and enthusiasm to the role and is already furthering some long-standing school goals and initiating new and exciting developments. As a board, we are committed to supporting James as he leads the continued development of the school.

In 2020, the board carried out its functions of monitoring and endorsing the progress of the school business plan, and approving the budget and school contributions and charges as well as participating in the Principal selection process. With the election of Katherine Sturley as board chair for 2021, the focus is now on future visions for Churchlands as a leading public school.

My term on the board has now concluded and I would like to thank members for their enthusiasm, collegiality and commitment. 2020 was very challenging and I believe we did our best to ensure that Churchlands would prosper.

It has been an honour to serve on the board of this fine school, to which I owe my own excellent secondary education.

*Tracey Gralton*