



**Randwick Boys' High School
P&C Meeting Minutes
Tuesday 19 September 2017**

Chair: Birgit Schickinger

1. Attendance:

Lance Raskall	Lyn Swinbourne	Kate Bice	
Nick Frougas	Nasser Attia		
Birgit Schickinger	James Burns		
Alexandra Luxford	Ngairie Smith		
Antonella Attia	Kris Kotopoulos		
Jane Knowles	Roger Whalebone		
Laura Tamir	Helena Whalebone		

2. **Welcome** to new financial members, observers and guests. President Birgit S welcomed two special guests: Matt Thistlethwaite, member of the House of Representatives for Kingsford Smith; and Paul Bunn, RBHS computing teacher
3. **Apologies:** Glen Kotopoulos, Adriana Skleparis, Sarah Brill, Elizabeth Royston, Renate Kernecker, Michelle Bradley, Peter Wong Wing Kee

Determination of quorum: Quorum reached (quorum is 5 if under 50 members and 11 if over 50 members).

4. **Confirmation of the Minutes for 15 August 2017:** Confirmed: Lyn Swinbourne, seconded Kris Kotopoulos

5. Matt Thistlethwaite:

The context of the debate in last 12 months had been the Gonski Report. In 2010, the [Gillard] Labor government commissioned David Gonski develop a new funding model, because our students' standards on international comparisons had been falling for a decade. The government was concerned that Australian kids would not be as competitive in the global labour market as they had been previously.

The Gonski panel recommended 1) a general increase in funding; and 2) needs-based loadings for Indigenous kids and kids with disability, from a Non-English Speaking Background or at small schools. The panel determined, on the evidence, that if you had a high proportion of those kids, your school performed lower. More money was going to private and Catholic schools than to public schools and private schools were hugely well equipped,

while public schools cannot say no to enrolling a student. As a senator for two years it was patently obvious to me that public schools were being disadvantaged.

The states fund schools, so the federal government had to come to an agreement with the states. NSW was one of the first states to come on board. Adrian Piccoli (Nationals, Murrumbidgee) did a good job as state minister for education. Federal education minister Peter Garrett, Matt T's predecessor in Kingsford Smith, stewarded the legislation through parliament. The funding allowed schools to employ additional teacher's aides to provide more intense, one-to-one support for kids with needs.

During the 2013 election, Tony Abbott promised to support the scheme. As PM, Abbott cut \$30bn from the education budget over eight years. Labor worked with the Teachers Federation to change that. At the 2016 election, Labor promised to restore the full Gonski plan and to fund it from changes to negative gearing and other policies.

The Turnbull government's Gonski 2.0 is \$17bn short of the original plan. Labor is pushing for the full funding to be restored, with savings to be made by reforming Capital Gains Tax and not cutting the company tax rate. The difference between what RBHS would have received and what it will get is \$416,000 over two years. RGHS loses \$600,000 over that period. Some of that funding has gone to private schools. The Catholic sector is upset because they are have lost some funding.

We are starting to see problems with kids not taking on maths and science and not flowing into those universally courses that are going to be fundamentally important in future. All students need a greater emphasis on maths, science and engineering. Labor opposition leader Bill Shorten has announced scholarships for kids to take degrees in maths and science education. A Labor government would write off their HECS debt if a scholarship holder moved into the education sector after graduating. The Liberal-National government has a Bill in parliament now to increase fees for university students and reduce funding for research.

Question and Answer Session

Standardised Testing

Roger W asked if Matt T thought the proposal to test Year 1 students for literacy and numeracy was unreasonable. **Matt T** said Labor has an open mind and shadow minister Tanya Plibersek is examining the issue. He is not an expert on phonics but has noted the evidence from the UK that it can help.

Lance R said he would favour moving NAPLAN to 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10. It would give kids leaving at Year 10 a qualification to take with them, and they would not be under pressure to meet standards in Year 9. Also, high schools are being judged on their Year 7 kids' performance when they haven't had a chance to have any input.

Laura T raised the issue of Year 9 students being asked to prequalify for their HSC by achieving a Band 8 score in the Year 9 NAPLAN, as an alternative to passing the NESA [NSW Education Standards Authority] tests in later years. She said the NESA tests measure skills such as reading timetables and directions on safety equipment, which are quite different from the national standards tested by NAPLAN.

Birgit S asked why education policy changes with every new government. The lack of a continuing policy results in an enormous waste of money, teachers' time and administrative resources. Teachers hardly have time to teach because of the constant changes.

Funding

Helena W said RBHS is being forced to spend \$60,000 on cutting down trees, when it would be better to put that money into learning resources. Acting Deputy Principal Nick Frougas explained that under Local Schools, Local Decisions, the school budget hasn't increased but the range of responsibilities has grown. **Matt T** said: "If you've got an unsafe tree, write to me and I'll speak to the minister."

Antonella A asked why the NSW Department of Education requires schools to use certain suppliers. **Matt T** said he suspects suppliers jack up their prices once they are on they are on the prequalified list. Birgit S said projects valued at under \$30k don't need to go through procurement.

Birgit S asked if Matt T thought schools should have business managers, pointing out that RBHS is only a few students away from having a second deputy principal. **Matt T** said he does not support the idea, since an organisation can't have two bosses. There is no evidence that independent public (self-managing) schools in WA are getting any better results than system schools.

Role of a federal MP in education

Matt T said the word "education" is not in the Australian Constitution. Lionel Bowen won federal funding for non-government, including Catholic, schools [on a needs basis when he was acting minister for education in the Whitlam government, 1972-75]. Gonski recommended that funding be "sector-blind" – that is, kids with special needs should have the same funding regardless of which sector they are being educated in.

Grants

Matt T said certain funds are available as grants. Under the federal **Stronger Communities Programme**, dollar-for-dollar funding is available for local, community-based projects for schools. The grants allow up to \$20k for capital upgrades, such as bush tucker gardens, PE equipment, cricket gear. The application must be done through P&C. Each MP gets \$150k every 6 months to allocate to communities in their electorate. The state **Community Building Partnership** is accessible through the member of Coogee, Bruce Notley-Smith. **Lance R** said RBHS got funding through the CBP for the basketball court; it was a dreadful mire of bureaucracy.

Technical Education

Lance R said raising the leaving age to 17 created problems with kids who did not want to be at school. The old apprenticeship route has gone and TAFE is a mess. Year 10 boys are choosing their TAFE courses for the HSC, but information on what courses will be available in 2018 is still not available.

Alex L said TAFE can take youths at 16 but a lot of paperwork is required. Also, if a person is accepted straight into an apprenticeship they can leave school at 15. The Straight and Skilled courses make it possible to avoid some fees, but Diploma courses are very expensive. TAFE staff have no information to offer on paper or online.

Matt T said Labor's policy was to open Trade Training Centres in schools, so that kids could do trade qualifications and HSC simultaneously. Abbott cancelled this.

Quality of Teachers

Lance R said keeping STEM teachers in the profession is difficult because the pay is not good enough.

Antonella A said male teachers in particular are leaving because they feel weighed down with administrative work. Some teachers are only there for the security and are not accountable like they would be in the private sector. Principals or a panel should have the

right to move people on if they're not doing a good job. **Lance R** said getting rid of someone would be horrendous.

Helena W said Finland has the best system in the world, with teachers constantly upgrading their skills. **Matt T** said Finnish teachers are paid a lot more and must have a Masters, which is why Finland regularly tops the PISA [Programme for International Student Assessment].

Another public high school in the eastern suburbs?

Matt T said a group of parents is pushing for another public high school, in particular the Bondi / Vaucluse area. He believes no new school will be built while there's capacity at South Sydney, JJ Cahill and Matraville, which all have only 200-300 students. We need to improve the standards at those schools instead.

Co-education

Matt T said RGHS will never go co-ed because it provides single-sex education as desired by some groups in the community. **Antonella A** asked for more mixed classes from earlier years. **Lance R** said this is already happening in 11 and 12 with Engineering, Drama, Dance but is not going to happen in years 9 and 10

Reputation

Matt T said the factors that have the biggest impact on a school's reputation are its academic results; parents' involvement; its sense of community; how its students present in public; and the resources available in the school.

Birgit S thanked **Matt T** for his patience and open ears for our issues. Matt T invited everyone to pop in and see him at his electorate office. He said RBHS has a great reputation and is probably one of the best schools in the area. The School Show is fabulous and "blows me away every year".

6. **Paul Bunn demonstrated an Arduino Kit:** Paul B thanked the P&C for their hard work in providing resources for the kids.

At the heart of an Arduino is a tiny microprocessor. It also has a breadboard for building prototypes, plus a bunch of resistors, LEDs, potentiometers, etc that can be used in a lot of different ways. It looks like a tiny circuit board and has a microcontroller to control or actuate mechanical devices, generally called "servos". It is lower-powered than a normal computer, because it is designed to do just one task, while a computer is a jack of all trades. Arduinos have become important to the "Maker Movement", in which people are discovering creativity, using their programming skills plus 3-D printers and laser cutters to fabricate things. Physical Computing is an "interactive physical system" consisting of software and hardware that can sense and respond to the real world. The Top 10 Arduino projects can be found on Youtube. Eg Someone designed a cane for blind people with a distance sensor on it that tells you when you are less than 70cm from something.

An Arduino can be used with any desktop PC or laptop. It is a free, open-source IDE [independent design environment]. It uses the industry-standard C++ programming language, the number 2 language used in professional situations these days.

The Arduino enables "inquiry-based learning", which encourages people to move away from rote learning and learn through experimenting. It's a "future-based skill". It also makes it possible to create a virtual environment where you can learn about risky skills. Simulations and interaction really engage kids. Arduino is a different way of learning, because it allows working with videos, animations, etc. A shift in pedagogy is needed. The revolution is happening.

7. Business arising from 20 June 2017 Minutes:

Film night: At RGHS, the P&C did risk assessment and agreed it would be better to do any film night in the hall. P&C President Lynda Monteiro-Wallace is considering showing a film showing a film inside the hall in conjunction with the school's 50th anniversary celebrations.

Water Filling Station: No news expected until December.

P&C Funds Distribution: The process for allocating funds is yet to be decided. Birgit S repeated that the P&C needs to spend the money by year's end unless we are deliberately saving for something big. **Lance R** committed to coming up with a list by the October meeting. He wants to discourage faculties from asking for small amounts.

8. Correspondence: Nil

9. Reports

President's Report

Council Election Day cake stall and sausage sizzle

Birgit S said the stall made about \$810.40 in profit, but what was really important was that the public saw that we care, we were there. We bought sausages based on what we sold at Federal election, but only sold about half, and 250 sausages went to OzHarvest who picked them up on the Monday. Maybe should look at buying a big freezer for food tech and these occasions. About 20 boys helped out, many stayed for hours and hours, were fantastic. Linda who had the coffee van didn't do great business, but is happy to come whenever we run something.

Treasurer's Report

\$21,204.77 in the P&C account

Principal's Report

- The new Deputy Principal has been chosen by merit selection, but the name can't yet be announced yet we are still in 10-day appeal period.
- Basketball Court: State member Bruce Notley-Smith has been helpful. The Dept of Ed has raised the project to \$200k, installing a thicker slab which will last longer than the original \$65k bandaid solution. The Dept will pay shortfall of \$200k less the \$65k. RBHS still has to pay for trees, as these are not covered in the \$200k. But it's not necessary for the trees to come out first. The slab will be so thick that it won't dip even when the roots rot.
- NAPLAN online – mixed results. School's feedback to the Dept and the Teachers Fedn and Dept was that it created difficulties. Lance R is concerned the system will crash if every kid in state is online at same time.
- Managed Evacuation Practice went brilliantly.
- Staff have had their annual training in Anaphylaxis treatment and CPR.
- Some teachers are going on leave and the school is having difficulty getting a maths and science teacher. This should be easier from 2018 because a new crop of graduates is coming out.

- The Colour Run raised \$800 for the Thomas Kelly Foundation.

10. Agenda Items:

Second-hand uniform shop

Lance R said there is a system for collecting uniforms from boys who leave donate their clothes, but it is not run as a shop, just as a resource for kids who can't pay for their uniforms.

Parents' contribution to the P&C

Birgit S suggested we put the request for contributions out along with the invoice for school fees at beginning of 2018. Some parents say they don't have time to volunteer their labour and may be happy to give money. Rose Bay SC raises \$30k without doing anything. Laura T said need to make clear it is completely voluntary, no pressure.

Moved Birgit S; seconded Roger W; moved on a show of hands.

Learning about Grants

Birgit S proposed inviting Keith Whelan - "The Grants Guy" - to give a workshop on what's available and how to write an application. He charges \$250 plus \$50 travel costs.

Moved Birgit S, seconded Kate B; moved on a show of hands.

Student Garden Proposal

BIRGIT S said Zeke Dauth, Sarah B's son, as part of a Youth Frontiers project, has worked with a mentor on a proposal. The boys have built a raised garden bed in the space outside office. Garden Club is taking ownership of the project and will plant deciduous fruit trees. Total budget is \$783, but Zeke has acquired \$100 through Youth Frontiers. He requests funds to buy soil and geotec water-permeable lining.

Birgit S proposed the P&C donate \$600; seconded by Jane K; moved on show of hand

11. **General Business: Fans for Hall:** This should be put on the list of projects for possible funding

12. **Next Ordinary Meeting :** Tuesday 19 September 2017, 7.00pm

Meeting closed: 8.31pm