

**May 3, 2018**

### **Integration Update #1**

To all parents,

This is the first weekly update on the journey that we are travelling in establishing a new independent school in Bathurst and the Central West – a new school; with a new name; a new educational structure; a new staffing structure; and a unique and exciting new vision for a unique educational experience that builds on the qualities and reputations of both schools. This first update is lengthy, but I wanted to do justice to the activities that have led to this point for those who may have not been actively involved in the conversations and information shared to date.

Key information includes:

- John Weeks appointment to integration team
- Facility upgrades to Boarding & Science
- Name of school
- Parent Forums
- P&F and Integration Committee Updates

The Trustees of the Presbyterian Church (NSW) Property Trust, who purchased All Saints' College in December 2017, did so knowing that the journey of integrating the two schools would not be easy.

We have not and will not rush into decisions, but will continue to facilitate close working relationships with the two school communities as we plan for the future.

The new school will arise from a true merger of both, with a regionally unique school structure, a new staffing structure and new educational and academic programs that will be afforded through the benefits of scale.

### **John Weeks**

I am pleased to welcome John Weeks, who has just retired as the Headmaster of Knox Grammar School, as a member of the integration team. I have mentioned John's proposed involvement to several working group and parent forums. John was introduced to all staff on Monday this week, during which I am advised that he inspired and lifted the spirits of everyone who heard him with his wisdom and experience in leading and growing highly successful schools. John is a passionate and erudite educational leader, who will be working with us in several capacities over the coming months:

- To meet with most if not all staff over this week and next to gain a deep understanding of the gifts and insights of the teaching staff and pedagogies of both schools;
- To advise us on the staffing structure for the new school, which will also include engaging with the staff union, an important and respected stakeholder representing staff interests;
- To chair the independent panel that will receive applications for all duplicated and new positions, conduct interviews and recommend appointments. With the agreement of the staff union, new positions will also be open to applications from our other Presbyterian schools;

- To chair the Educational Excellence Consultative Committee that was formed through the last Integration Working Group forums; and
- To provide ongoing educational advice and support to the Headmaster and the new executive leadership team when it is appointed, as an integral member of the transition team.

## **Facilities**

Plans are progressing to upgrade the boarding facilities at the Scots campus so that we can welcome all boarding students from the beginning of Term 1 in 2019. We are also planning to upgrade the Science and other facilities at the Scots campus before the start of 2019 so that Years 9 to 12 Senior School students will benefit immediately from the merger.

## **School Name**

The Presbyterian Church governance structure facilitates decision making through committees. As anyone who has been involved in a committee will know, decision making by committee is problematic at the best of times. Having said this, we truly believe that better long-term sustainable decisions are made through open and transparent consultative processes that leverage the diverse gifts and experience of all participants. In respect of the name for the new school, the challenge has been to coalesce the many alternate views from widely divergent stakeholder groups that respects all stakeholders as well as reflects the heritage and a core mission of the Presbyterian Church to educate children, adolescents and young people. Merely mixing the letters of the two schools to create a new name does not reflect either that core mission or our vision for the new school as an integral member of our group of Presbyterian schools.

However, the Trustees have received the appeals of many parents, friends and staff from both schools, and are seriously considering them. No decision had been made, and may not be finally made until the Presbyterian General Assembly approves the merger of the two schools in July. In the meantime, Scots ASC, which has been the working group name used in the email address for all correspondence, [scotsasc@pcnsw.org.au](mailto:scotsasc@pcnsw.org.au), will continue as the reference name for the new school.

## **Parent Forums**

Following the parent forum held at All Saints' College at the end of last term, I invited all Scots parents to a Scots parent forum to be held next week on Thursday evening 10 May.

In light of the very positive feedback over the past three days from staff about John Week's engagement in this process, it would be inopportune not to invite John to speak to parents at that forum next week, and also opportune to invite all All Saints' College parents to join the forum. To that end, we will be sending invitations to all parents to join us at the Scots campus for a general information session on the new school structure and expected educational opportunities for all students in the new school. It will be held in the Aikman Hall at 7:00pm. Please join us.

As a consequence of this change, I will be rescheduling the Scots parent forum to occur as soon as possible after next week's combined forum, in consultation with the Scots P&F Executive.

## **Integration Committee and P&F**

Next week, I will be meeting with the P&F Association executives from both schools to discuss how best to bring the two P&F Associations together as a combined representative voice for all parents and friends. We will also be discussing whether we could possibly reform some of the current Integration Working Group Consultative Committees as subcommittees of the new P&F Association, as a better means of providing a consultative voice for parents and friends. I know that many parents are eagerly waiting for the next meetings of their respective committees, which we very much appreciate. But, we want to ensure that we are considered in our approach. We ask if you could please be patient for another week or so as we consult on the best and most effective way of forming these committees on a sustained basis going forward into the new school.

I look forward to keeping you in the loop over the coming weekly Integration Updates, and to seeing many of you next week at the combined parent forum. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me by email at [jfalls@pcnsw.org.au](mailto:jfalls@pcnsw.org.au) or at the central information email [scotsasc@pcnsw.org.au](mailto:scotsasc@pcnsw.org.au).

Kind regards,

Jeof