

The 2016 school comes to an end and it feels to me like it has been the busiest school year that I can remember. Our students have been involved in a massive extra curricular program coupled with the rigour of their normal studies. It is little wonder that staff and students alike are looking a little jaded as we enter the last week of what has been a busy and rewarding year.

Our staff, students and community again showed their ability to combine as a team and produce a musical of the highest quality with our performance of Ali Baba and the Bongo Bandits. To present a musical of this standard takes amazing flexibility and cooperation as timetables are manipulated to fit in the required performances and staff combine to assure the teaching program also continues. The students as always showed great commitment and discipline to learn their lines and dances and fine tune both for a high standard of delivery. The assistance we gained from the community with props, costumes, makeup, backdrops etc was truly amazing. It was a performance that all in our community can be proud of and illustrates the team culture of Maitland Lutheran School.

We were fortunate enough this year to win a grant for a Humanoid Robot for a semester from the Independent Schools Association (AISSA). This French robot was worth well over \$20,000 when purchased and provided us with an opportunity to experiment with the highest level of technology. We certainly gained a lot from the project and quickly realised the engagement of the students was beyond all expectations. There are plans next year to further our programs through the use of Chromebooks and a shared Robotics Program from Reception through to Year 7. We will be using much simpler and less expensive forms of robotics than what we had from AISSA but believe we can teach the students the same skills on a scale that involves the whole school. It is a very exciting time.

For a relatively small country school we have continued to produce sporting results that are exceptional. We won the Southern Yorke Peninsula Athletics Day for the second year in a row and finished a very credible third place in the Faith Lutheran Sports Challenge edging out 2 schools who have 100 or more students than us. We are extremely proud of our Netball and Cricket teams who both won the State Finals this year in the knock-out competition. Our netball team comfortably beat Hahndorf to make them our first ever State Netball Champions. The cricketers won the State title for the third year in a row which is a remarkable achievement. To win two State titles against city and country schools from all over South Australia in the same year is amazing. It is also worth mentioning our football team who finished runners up in their State Final after a titanic struggle with the much larger Murray Bridge School. So we had 3 teams make State Finals in 2016.

The Rite Journey program is another new addition to our school. It is aimed at Year 9 students and is designed to equip and prepare them for the changes and challenges that teenagers face as well as connect them to a support base that can assist them navigate this tricky path. It has been incredibly well received by our students and we look forward to building on the momentum from this years program.

Late last year we started implementing some of the core principles of the "Positive Education" program. The program encourages children to build on their ability to be resilient, to show perspective in difficult situations and to develop a growth mindset in contrast to a fixed mindset. We have seen considerable development and change in many of our students and will be continuing our journey with Positive Education as an important part of our learning initiatives.

This year we celebrated 50 years of Maitland Lutheran School. The celebration started with an Open Day on the Friday, dinner on the Saturday evening and a Thanksgiving Church Service on the Sunday at St Paul's Church, Maitland. Our students were extremely respectful of the old scholars of our school and led by the

School Captains presented “Maitland Lutheran School 2016” with energy and confidence. The comments from visitors and past students about our current students and their endeavours were positive and heart warming. May God bless our school for another 50 years.

During the school holidays the first stage of our \$850,000 building project will commence. We are hoping that by the end of term 2, 2017 we will have refurbished our front office and Reception and Year 1 classes as well as adding:-

- ◆ New meeting rooms for students
- ◆ A large new junior primary agile learning space
- ◆ An extension to the staff room
- ◆ New drink fountains and fridge area for students
- ◆ A new colourbond roof to the original building.

Even though it is inevitable there will be some disruption due to the building and refurbishment process we are hoping to minimise this by doing the bulk of the work during the Christmas, term 1 and term 2 holiday periods. These works are a major part of our school masterplan and draws us closer to the completion of the goals we set back in 2008.

At the end of this school year we farewell a number of staff who have served our school in various capacities. Firstly, Sarah Hollams and Fiona Schulz who have both served as Student Support Staff. Sarah has run our Ready-Set-Go program and worked through a number of grade levels with students. Her caring nature and ability to engage with students have been an asset to us. Fiona has worked in our school for nearly 20 years. Apart from her work with students and support of our office admin staff she has had a leading role in the compiling of 19 of our 20 school magazines. Fiona has been deeply involved in the life of our school and has been a key organiser at many of our school functions and musicals. Her commitment to our school has been above and beyond and we recognise her generous contributions. Seth Matson has taught across a range of year levels and is leaving us (hopefully only short term) to take up a position at Daly River in the Northern Territory. Apart from teaching, Seth has been strongly involved with our bands and school choir and his skills will be missed next year. Sam Diassinias has taught our year 7's for 5 years and has left an indelible mark on our school. Apart from being a much loved teacher he has been in many ways the engine room of our staff team. He has coached several State Championship winning teams in football and cricket and has contributed selflessly to our school for the whole 5 years. We wish him well as he takes up a Year 7 position at Immanuel College next year.

We have 2 new teachers starting with us in 2017. Laura Clothier from Coomandook is taking over our Reception class (Jacki Schulz is on maternity leave) and Mathew Carey an old scholar takes over the Year 7 teaching position. Both of these teachers have had an extensive transition into the school this term and are already well known to the students and our staff. We are fortunate to have such quality staff to take over the two important roles they are filling.

In the middle of this year Pastor Steven Hibbard took over the role of Pastor for our local Lutheran churches and our school. We are truly blessed not only to have a fine Pastor but more so to have one who understands country towns and the importance of community. We welcome Pastor Steve to our community and look forward to him leading our Valedictory Service tonight.

In difficult and changing times God has continued to richly bless our school and school community. We are extremely fortunate to still be in a position to be able to grow and modernise our school buildings and resources to the extent that we have and plan to next year. His guiding hand gives us much optimism that Maitland Lutheran School will continue to thrive and be a wonderful environment for students to grow and learn.

Thank you to all who have supported and contributed to Maitland Lutheran School this year.

David Field