



Parkes High School P. & C. Association Inc.

Box 219, P.O.
PARKES, N.S.W. 2870

Dear School Community,

I am writing to you on behalf of our schools P&C association on a matter of urgency. I present for you the following summary for your immediate attention of which I will expand on below:

Summary

- **P&C membership has reduced to the point that it will have to be wound up.**
- **If the P&C closes, the canteen, as it operates currently, will also close.**
- **Dissolution of the P&C will also have implications for staff appointments to the school**
- **Thus the next meeting of the P&C will need to discuss the matter with the following alternative outcomes:**
 - **Option 1 – quorum not achieved, positions not filled, P&C association advised and forced dissolution of P&C with all PHS P&C funds directed away from our school to a neighbouring association (in accordance with procedure). Canteen Closes.**
 - **Option 2 – quorum achieved, positions filled temporarily in order to move a motion to disburse funds to our school, then a motion to dissolve the P&C and close the canteen.**
 - **Option 3 – quorum achieved, positions filled with agreement for minimal meetings (1 per quarter) in order to keep the P&C and thus Canteen operating (survival mode)**
 - **Option 4 – quorum achieved, positions filled by those enthusiastic to see the P&C be what it should be; supporting the school, raising funds, keeping the school accountable to parents and community.**
- **There is a meeting scheduled for 18th of October at 7:30pm at the Admin building of PHS at which these options will be discussed and outcomes determined. Please give serious thought to these matters.**

Background:

Prior to COVID our schools P&C association has always met monthly throughout school terms. Support from parents has varied throughout the years, although we have always had numbers such that executive positions were filled, and meetings were viable. Just prior to Covid we had a number of P&C members move on. As COVID hit, those of us that remained have endeavoured to keep the P&C operable through online meetings, albeit at a reduced regularity. Craig Bland has been our current president, with myself (Rob MacGregor) as Secretary, and Cynara Jones has been acting as our Treasurer. It is sometime since the P&C has undertaken any fundraising, and our engagement with the school has been limited. We meet to keep informed with what is happening within the life of the school, hear reports from our canteen, and make decisions where necessary to best support as we are able.

The canteen for Parkes high School is a P&C operated entity, and is run on a non for profit basis. We currently employ a canteen manager and other staff, along with a bookkeeper for 1 day a week.

Current Situation

Recently, Cynara has resigned from her roles. Leaving us without a current Treasurer. We have advertised for the role of canteen bookkeeper which we are yet to fill. Craig Bland has also indicated his intention to step down as president from the end of this year as his last child at the school reaches her final year. He has tendered his resignation at the last P&C meeting, which will take effect from the end of this year. This leaves myself as the sole remaining member of the executive.

As such we have a duty to make a decision about the future of the P&C, which must be resolved at the next meeting, and we have a duty to inform the school community about the implications of this. The reality is that without further members joining our P&C, we are not viable and will have to close, and even the manner in which that happens has large repercussions for our school.

First and foremost, the canteen will close. It is likely that this would be from the beginning of next year, although I cannot guarantee that, as it could depend on the manner in which the P&C is wrapped up. It is possible for the canteen to operate in other ways, for example as a private business under contract to the school, but this will undoubtedly lead to price increases as it will no longer be not for profit. There may be other arrangements the school could consider, but this will be out of our hands and likely take time to implement. Thus how, or when the canteen returns is unknown.

Secondly, there is a requirement that there be a P&C representative on the panel for staff appointments. This is currently difficult to achieve due to our small membership, and there seems to be an increase in frequency in which this is required due to increased flux in staff positions. If the P&C closes, we will still have the requirement for a P&C representative on panels and the appointment will be from the state P&C association, who currently do not have a representative in our area of the state. How this will work is unclear at this stage.

Thirdly, and I think most importantly, in closing the P&C we lose an important tool for engagement in the life of our school. We lose the place from which our schools executive and teaching body have an accountability to the parents of those in their care. While most times this may seem insignificant, there are times at which the school community will most definitely want to have a voice about what is happening within public education. The advice we have been given from the association is that once the P&C is closed, it will be extremely difficult to reinstate.

Ways Forward

Our president has approached the state P&C association about closure of the P&C, and we have been advised that there are processes to be followed. The P&C CANNOT be placed in recess. It either exists or doesn't. Thus, as the remaining members of the executive we have scheduled our next quarterly meeting for 18th of October 2022 at the PHS Admin building which will determine the future of the P&C.

As mentioned in my summary, there are really only 4 possible outcomes:

1. The first is that we fail to meet quorum at the meeting, that being a minimum of 5 members. We are required by the association that we notify them, and they will take responsibility for wrap up of the organisation. After payment of all debts and entitlements with termination of employees **all funds and assets held will be taken and distributed to an adjacent P&C association. PLEASE TAKE NOTE OF THIS.** I.e The considerable funds raised for Parkes High School through the diligent labour of previous P&C members could in fact be lost to another public school, for example Forbes High School. This outcome is the least desirable for our school community.

2. The second outcome is for us to resolve to wrap up the P&C rather than be forced to. For this to occur we must achieve quorum at the next meeting (5 members). In this instance we the members would

decide that continuation of the P&C beyond this year is no longer viable. We would draft and move a motion that after paying all debts and entitlements at the end of the year, that remaining assets and funds be donated to the school in some way to be determined at that meeting. I.e. we would nominate a project to which the money could be allocated. Subsequently, we move a motion that after these disbursements of funds, the P&C be dissolved from the end of the year. This outcome at least sees the money previously raised used to benefit the school community. Not only that, we are effectively closing the P&C on our own terms **BUT** this still suffers all the implications associated with closure of the P&C.

Given current engagement with the P&C, options 1 and 2 are the most likely outcomes. As an executive we will strive to achieve option 2 at the least for the sake of our school. But we would also like to present 2 more optimistic options for your consideration.

3. The third outcome is what I have termed 'survival mode'. It is possible that among our community are those that upon reading this realise they are in a position to give minimal time for minimal meetings in order to see the P&C, and thus the canteen continue. Currently we have been operating like this with only quarterly meetings. Please consider whether you are in the position to, at the very least, attend 4 meetings a year. But also please consider if you are in the position to give your time to serve on the executive (president, secretary, treasurer) in order to keep the P&C functioning for now and for future generations. If so, we will need to know at the next meeting. Beyond will be too late. Ideally if you could indicate your intention to stand for positions to school admin ahead of the meeting it would be appreciated.

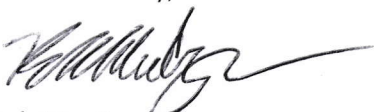
4. The fourth outcome is the most desirable. Perhaps some of you in reading this realise that there is potential to make the P&C what it could and should be. Perhaps there are members of the school community who would love to serve and build engagement. It is possible that there are some who are enthusiastic to do more with the P&C; to develop the platform of engagement, to raise funds for school improvement and facilities, to maintain accountability and keep informed of what is happening across our school. If so, we'd love to see you at our next meeting. For this to happen we will need the commitment of new executive members and many other new P&C members to support the work. Once again, the decision must be made at our next meeting. Once again please notify us of your intentions.

In Conclusion

It saddens me to be writing this to our school community. We have a school of roughly 600 students which as a P&C we have served over many years. It may be that its time is drawing to a close.

On a personal note, for me I was encouraged by the late Laurie Westcott, father of our own former Olympian and student at Parkes High, Scott Westcott, who spoke to me of the importance of engagement in the lives of our children. He encouraged me to be involved, to know what is going on in the schools, and as a parent to be engaged. It seems that all volunteer organisations struggle for members these days, but the need is still there. How can you serve? What can you do to make a difference in the lives of those in your care and the many others who need our support. Please take time to consider ahead of our meeting in October.

Yours faithfully,



Rob MacGregor

Secretary PHS P&C