

**MATTHEW GIBNEY
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**



UNDER GOD'S PROTECTION

ANNUAL COMMUNITY MEETING

PRINCIPAL REPORT

24TH NOVEMBER 2021



Good Evening and thank you for making the time to come along to tonight's Annual Community Meeting.

We had an unpredictable start of the year, with the announcement on the weekend, prior to school commencing Term 1, from Mr McGowen about an additional one week of school holidays with a snap lockdown. Not a great start! However, we have been blessed with only one other short lockdown this year. The wearing of face masks for a period of time, whilst inconvenient, was a minor disruption. We have indeed been very blessed here in WA.

This year has provided us with a year of celebration as we have gathered for a variety of occasions to celebrate our 30th anniversary year. We have enjoyed well attended events and, after the restrictions of COVID with attendances at events in 2020, it has been wonderful to welcome visitors back to the school in large numbers. We commenced our celebrations with the Sundowner and enjoyed welcoming staff, parents, past staff, past parents and past pupils along to reminisce and catch up with old friends. The Parish helped us celebrate with a lovely anniversary international luncheon gift to the school. The parishioners, under the guidance of School Advisory Council member, Clare Arnold, provide a wonderful spread that was enjoyed by the school and parish community. The increasing connection between the school and parishioners has been a highlight of 2021. Our 30th anniversary festivities concluded with the annual Matthew Gibney Day and Grandparents Day Mass, concert, morning tea and finished off with the colour run organised by the P&F. What a wonderful day of celebrations we had! Thank you all for your assistance and support with our final day of 30th anniversary celebrations.

The school has once again been fortunate to enjoy a close relationship with our Parish priest, Fr Joseph. Fr Joseph is always generous with his time in joining with classes to say Mass or to lead Prayer Services. This year we had students receiving the Sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation. All ceremonies were beautifully prepared and were reverent occasions in the lives of our children and their families. This year we trialed a new approach to the Sacramental class retreats. We decided to use the services of Catholic Youth Ministries to facilitate the retreats for our Year 3, 4 and 6 classes. The retreats were very successful, as there is nothing quite as powerful as young people leading and inspiring other young people in their faith. We will continue the partnership with Catholic Youth Ministries into 2022.

The Making Jesus Real program has once again been successful in encouraging and promoting the Gospel values we like to see in our students. This year, the Making Jesus Real values were used to provide the background for developing a student code of conduct.

Earlier this year the school experienced a cyclic review, conducted by the Catholic Education Office. The review of the school looked at all aspects of the school community and gathered data from staff, students, parents and parishioners. We were delighted to receive such a positive affirmation of our school. The review affirmed our improvement journey over the past 5 years and indicated the strength of our position as we plan for the future.

Our connection with the parish community has been supported this year with the introduction of the St Francis of Assisi Parish Bursary. The Parish Bursary, supported financially by parishioners and Fr Joseph, provides funds for the school to pass on to families who are in particular need at various times throughout the year. The Bursary fund has assisted families with school uniforms, some school fee assistance and, on occasion, support for amenities required at school. I am most grateful to the parish for their support of the school through the Parish Bursary program.

Wellness, positivity and the encouragement of resiliency to build and foster positive mental health outcomes has been a focus for our students during this year. The staff recognise that our young people need strategies to have the confidence to identify their gifts and talents and to reach their full potential. The opportunities the staff have provided during this year to immerse the students in positive health initiatives have been successful, however, this is an ongoing process that will continue to be refined in 2022.

Matthew Gibney Catholic Primary School has continued to provide an environment where our students can thrive. During this year the school has continued to provide opportunities for students to be involved in the creative, visual and musical arts, various sport activities, mathematics extension and leadership opportunities. Sport carnivals and sporting exposure, across many sport disciplines, has seen a growing number of students have a go at participating and extending themselves to achieve challenging results. Participation in The Arts has been successful once again in 2021. The Catholic Schools Performing Arts Festival saw a number of student entries with excellent results. The school musical, Oklahoma, performed by the Year 5 and 6 students was an excellent display of the talents of our students. We were delighted that our students could participate in the Catholic Schools Combined Choir at the Catholic Arts Festival concert.

The achievements of our students across all disciplines of learning continues to demonstrate the growth of our students as they move through the school. The results across all domains of learning have been a testament to the hard work of our staff and students, with the support of our parents. Service to our community has continued to be a focus area during 2021. The students have continued to participate in the Mini-Vinnies Association, under the direction of their teachers. The students have organised food and clothing drives, an Advent Appeal and fund raising, including Milo Mondays, for various local initiatives. Participation in the Mini-Vinnies has assisted the students to raise awareness of social issues in the community with a sense of knowledge about their ability to make a difference

The involvement of our parents in assisting the school with functions and events and supporting our staff in their work for the students has continued to be very positive. The visibility of our parents at Matthew Gibney CPS is a great asset to the school. Thank you to the Parents and Friends Association for all their hard work during the year. The P&F meetings always offer vibrant discussions and the sharing of ideas. The achievement of the P&F this year, with fund raising and friend raising events have been terrific. I am most grateful to the P&F for their fundraising toward the installation of the new nature playground in the early childhood play area. My sincerest thanks to retiring members of the P&F executive. Thank you to Jodie Capobianco who retires as P&F President and Esther Robinson, who retires as P&F Vice President. Your dedication to your roles on the executive over many years has been greatly appreciated. Thank you to all on the executive and our parent representatives for this year. Your contributions to our school are highly valued.

I take this opportunity to thank the School Advisory Council for their dedication to the school in 2021. In particular I acknowledge and thank retiring chairperson, Gavin Hogg who has given 6 years of dedicated service to the School Board and School Advisory Council during its period of transition. Gavin has dedicated himself to the role as Chairperson, with attention to detail, commitment of accountability and much good humour. Thank you, Gavin. I thank retiring members of the Advisory Council, Paul Kaciuba and Suraj Karki. Paul and Suraj have been dedicated members of the council, providing much support in a variety of areas.

The success of this school year is testament to the quality of the staff at Matthew Gibney Catholic Primary School. Our staff work with great diligence, commitment and an obvious personal care for

every student they teach. The quality of the teaching here at Matthew Gibney is high. On your behalf, I thank all our staff for their work during 2021. In particular I acknowledge Assistant Principals Karen Keddie and Di Scriven, for their support and significant contributions to the smooth running of the school. Amidst some challenging times, Di and Karen have been admirable in the professionalism and dedication that they always demonstrate in their work. I would also like to Thank Tania Kays and Louell Renzullo. As admin staff they look after me – they check in regularly, keep me on track, decide when my diary is too full and remind me, with courtesy and diplomacy, of things that require a reminder or a gentle prod. Thank you both – I am always most grateful.

We farewell a few staff at the end of this year. We farewell Oliver Battistessa and wish him well as he commences a new teaching position at St Paul's School in Karratha. We farewell Amy Power as she commences her parental leave and we farewell Krystle Neal, and wish her well as she commences a teaching position at Good Shepherd Primary School. Our sincerest thanks to Oliver, Amy and Krystle for all their hard work and dedication to their roles at Matthew Gibney. A full staff list will be in the newsletter tomorrow.

Finally, the school has its students at the centre and, here at Matthew Gibney, we are always proud of our students. We are proud of them for ensuring the Matthew Gibney values and spirit is thriving across all aspects of our school community. Our students, from Pre-Kindergarten to Year Six are well-adjusted, happy, enthusiastic and life loving individuals. They exude joy, hope, love and kindness. In them there is a knowledge that the future is a bright place. However, we can never take our foot off the peddle in maintaining the high standard that we expect from every student at our school. They are remarkable human beings with great potential. As educators and parents, our job is to work with them to fulfil their God given gifts. We look forward to continuing this mission as we prepare for 2022.

Therese Hussey

24/11/2021