



A note from the Gembrook Primary School Council President

Dear Parents,

I am excited and honoured to have accepted the role of President of the Gembrook Primary School Council earlier this month at our Annual General Meeting.

I would like to extend a very warm thank you to Jo McCrohan, who has served as President over the past 4 years and is an inspiring leader. Thank you also to the other departing Council members, for your valuable contribution.

Welcome also to our returning members, as well as our new members of Council. Our School Council for 2020 is as follows:

Brendan Fitzpatrick
Kerri Drew (Secretary)
Karlee McMahon
Kirsten Varga
Ellie O'Mara
Michael Andrews Luke (President)
Jacinta Woehl (Vice President)
Dean Prouse (Treasurer)
Jacqueline Child
Dean Macumber
Dana Simpson Walker
Kafi O'Connor-Ward
Tamara Ware
Tara Farr
Tanaya Lawrence

My wife Michelle and I both grew up in the hills around Gembrook. We made the decision to return to the hills and live in Gembrook 10 years ago, and now in 2020, all 3 of our children are attending Gembrook Primary School. Our family loves being part of this friendly and welcoming community, and Michelle and I have both enjoyed volunteering as members of School Council.

Council meetings are held twice a term, with 8 meetings per year. The three main responsibilities of School Council are to:

- oversee the development of the School's annual budget and ensure proper records are kept of the School's financial operation
- participate in the development and monitoring of the School strategic plan
- develop, review and update policies that reflect our School's values and support our School's broad direction outlined in our strategic plan

Other key functions of School Council are to:

- represent and take the views of the whole School community into account, including the views of parents
- raise funds for School related purposes
- maintain School grounds and facilities
- enter into contracts
- report annually to the School community and the Department
- create interest in the School in the wider community
- regulate and facilitate after hours use of School premises and grounds
- operate a before and after hours child care service.

Anyone is welcome to attend a School Council meeting to participate and contribute, although only School Councillors may vote. Nominations are held at the beginning of each year, with the Annual General Meeting occurring in March.

Remember, we are here to represent your voice, so please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions about School Council or would like to raise any items for discussion at a School Council meeting.

Term 2 2020 has been an uncertain and challenging time for all of us. On behalf of our School Council, I would like to thank all of our School staff for the tremendous effort they have made to ensure that every child has had an opportunity to continue their learning at home (and at school when necessary). The introduction of additional digital communication technologies, including Compass and Webex Meetings, has been much appreciated because it has helped everyone to stay connected.

I would also like to congratulate all of the parents in our community who have worked hard to take on the role of home-based educators on top of all their normal responsibilities. This has been no easy task.

In conversations I have had with other parents, I am hearing that despite the challenges, many positives have come from this time spent at home with our children: many parents have reported feeling more connected to their children, and more informed about and involved in their children's education than ever before.

I hope that as we all return to school, we can continue to strengthen the home-school connection that has flourished during this time, for the benefit of all students.

Warm regards,

Michael Andrews Luke
School Council President

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