

# PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

## 2018

2018 has proven to be both an exciting and challenging time for the Mel Maria Catholic School community.

As I reflect though upon the year I feel extremely grateful for the many blessings we have received and proud of what we have achieved.

### ***Religious Education***

2018 has seen our community grow and flourish in Faith. Religious Education is our first domain of learning at Mel Maria, and our students continue to have access to high quality teaching of Religious Education and Faith formation experiences.

Results in the recent Bishops Religious Literacy Test for Year 3 and 5 indicate our students are performing well above the state average.

Our children's close relationship with Parish on each campus plays a significant role in the lives of our students and their families. We are committed to fostering this close relationship.

Celebrating the Eucharist is an important part of what makes a school a Catholic school. The Eucharist is a memorial celebration of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and as such is the "summit and source" of the Church's life and mission. Our parish Priests Fr. Sean Fernandez, Fr. Don Kettle, Fr. Joseph Lee and Deacon John Kiely celebrate mass regularly with our school classes and community. I thank them for being present in our school and for their availability, pastoral guidance friendship and support.

The school is seriously committed to supporting Parish based Sacramental Programs, which are a central feature of preparation for our students. All sacramental years participate in Retreat days providing reflection and formation experiences for our students.

Parent and Child workshops are important events which recognise parents as the first educators in faith for the children, supported by parish and school.

Mel Maria continues to flourish and is guided by strong principles of social justice. Our attention and service to Catholic charities is embedded within our school and liturgical year. Students are involved in fundraising and awareness raising experiences, which demonstrate how direct action and community co-responsibility can effect change. Our Parents and Friends group support and collaborate with parents during such events. Charities such as

Caritas, Life Link, Saint Vincent De Paul and Saint Patricks in Fremantle are some of the recipients of our successful work.

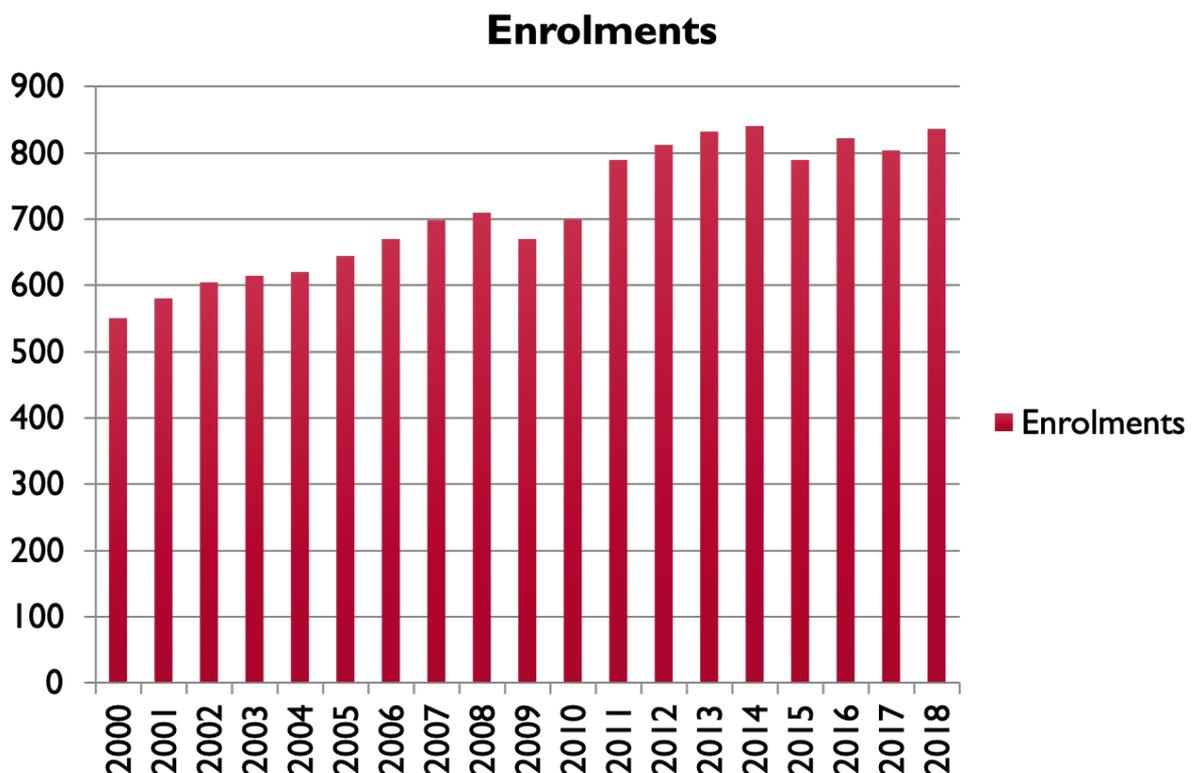
A strong Catholic Culture is present at Mel Maria evidence of a unified community growing with shared values and vision. I thank all our families for your commitment and support to ensure Mel Maria remains a truly Catholic School.

### **Statistics**

During 2018 our school population comprised of 836 students, 520 families and 85 staff members.

Enrolments at Mel Maria have remained steady as the following diagram illustrates: -

### **Enrolment Pattern**



### **Achievements**

Not only am I constantly amazed and proud of witnessing many individuals achieving their goals but also in the fact that all our children are motivated to do their very best.

During the year our children participated in the following –

- Speak Up Competition
- Young Engineers Club
- Tim Winton Young Writers Competition
- Computer Challenge
- Maths Olympiad Competition

Yet again our children have excelled in the national testing arena. Results in the *National Assessment Program in Literacy and Numeracy* (NAPLAN) including a comparison with the previous year is outlined in the following table:-

## **NAPLAN**

### Percentage of Children At / Above National Benchmarks

	Year 3			Year 5		
	2017	2018	Change	2017	2018	Change
READING	98	100	+2	99	100	+1
WRITING	100	100	0	100	100	0
SPELLING	99	100	+1	99	100	+1
NUMERACY	100	100	0	97	100	+3
GRAMMAR &	96	95	-1	96	100	+4

### **PUNCTUATION**

Each year staff examine various sources of data (NAPLAN, school climate data, QCS findings and school assessments) to determine a curriculum focus for the following year. At the conclusion of 2017 we identified the need to focus on WRITING and implemented the BrightPaths Program into the Curriculum. We continued with Brightpaths in 2018 noting a general improvement in outcomes in Writing.

*BRIGHTPATHS* is based on over a decade of pioneering research at the University of Western Australia. The program records the results of assessments and reports a range of formative and summative information to teachers and principals. This provides an informed basis for developing teaching programs targeting the needs of individual students. Teachers match their students' work with calibrated exemplars and can track student growth over time, compare performances across year levels and provide comparative information of performance with that of other schools.

*We will continue to use Brightpath data to develop and extend children's writing skills in the new year. In 2019, our Curriculum focus will be BUILDING VOCABULARY and WRITING skills. Our aim is to continue to develop children's writing skills and to build upon vocabulary to enhance overall literacy skills.*

At Mel Maria we recognize the importance of early intervention. As such we offer Speech and Occupational Therapy screening in our Kindergarten and Pre Primary classes. Our Early Intervention Literacy Program, a vital element in identifying children with literacy concerns, has again proven extremely successful.

In summary our **Literacy and Numeracy** results have been very pleasing indeed. Thanks to Mrs Laura Morgan, our Assistant Principals Mrs Ros Nichols and Mrs Joanne Scouler for their unending commitment in overseeing this area of our curriculum.

## **Technology**

Our technology environment has continually grown and developed in 2018. As part of LEADing Lights, all staff and students in years 4 -6 are now utilizing Office 365.

This year the device used in our one to one program for years 4 and 5 was changed to an apple laptop.

To assist parents with our one to one program we have partnered with Family Zone – a leading cyber safety company. Parents of students in years four – six now have the opportunity to install cyber safety software on their child's device. This has enabled parents to monitor internet use at home ensuring their child have access to appropriate apps and content when online. The school has also been trialing "School Zone" an additional safety filter. More than 600 schools in Australia, New Zealand and America use the product. The mandated Bishops internet filtering system is also in operation. With the added filters of School Zone, we have been able to extend the protection offered to our students at a higher level when online. Our goal is to assist students to become safe, responsible citizens within the technological world.

This year all year three and five students completed the Bishops Religious Literacy assessment online. Year 3 students trialed a NAPLAN online readiness test. Next year, as per the directive from the Catholic Education Office, all Year three and five students will complete NAPLAN online

## **STEAM – Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics**

In 2018 a formalized scope and sequence was developed to embed a technology skill base across the curriculum from Pre Primary to Year 6.

Every child will be presented with the opportunity to have hands on experiences, with a variety of technologies utilizing contemporary learning skills.

By the end of Year 6 all students would have used Bee Bots, STEM kits, Spheros, Animation using iStopMotion, imovie, coding, robotics and virtual reality sets.

Students will build their skill set over their time at Mel Maria and engage each child in futuristic learning.

Such experiences are invaluable and of great benefit to our children thanks to Mr Roman Popadyne, Mrs Teresa Marra, Mr Damian Williams and the various classroom teachers.

### **Music, Dance and Drama**

Our children continue to enjoy their love of music; dance and drama as pleasing results were again achieved in the *Performing Arts Festival for Catholic Schools*.

Mel Maria was presented with many Honourable Mentions and Certificates of Merit – an outstanding achievement.

- Our school choir received an EXCELLENCE AWARD for their Sacred Section and an OUTSTANDING AWARD in the Primary Choral Singing section of the Catholic Performing Arts Festival.
- Year 1 SJP – Choral Speech Junior Primary
- Year 1 PN Excellence Award Choral Speech
- Year 2 SJP Choral Speech Junior Primary
- Year 2 PN Choral Speech Junior Primary
- Year 3 PN Choral Speech Junior Primary
- All Year 4 classes received AWARDS of EXCELLENCE for the Instrumental Ensemble Section of the Catholic Performing Arts Festival
- Year 5 PN Choral Speech Upper Primary
- Year 6 PN Choral Speech Upper Primary
- Year 5 SJP Outstanding Award for a Drama Performance
- Year 6 PN Excellence Award for a Drama Performance

An exciting component of the year 5 and 6 music program has been their exploration of “Garage Band” music recording software.

Our year 4 classes formed “bands”, combining singing, dancing, ukulele, guitar, xylophone, djembe and drums to showcase their efforts during “Open Night”.

A range of instrumental tutors visits each campus enabling children to learn piano, guitar, singing and percussion.

Our School Choir performed at various functions and gatherings on numerous occasions. We extend our appreciation to Mr Luke Murphy and Mrs Genevieve Sumich for sharing their love of music and talent with the children.

## **Sport**

As always, Sport featured prominently on the Mel Maria school calendar. Numerous opportunities were provided for our students to show their talents and involvement in the sporting arena.

Before school swimming training was again well supported with huge numbers of students attending training sessions to prepare for trials and carnivals. A number of staff were involved in Running Club at both campuses on a Friday morning; thanks to Andy Carr, Bianca Sangalli, Jacob Rees, Damian Williams, Judy Shales and Elizabeth Pell for their help. Across our various trials days, Faction Carnivals and Interschool Carnivals there were also numerous parents who helped with an array of jobs – thank you for your ongoing support!

Gold surged back to win their second Swimming Carnival in three years, and also managed to break Blue Faction's stranglehold on the Cross Country title. Blue did manage to win the Sports Day. Students involved in these carnivals showed great sportsmanship and great competitive spirit, which has become a hallmark of Mel Maria sporting events.

It was another strong year of interschool performances this year, despite dropping slightly in Athletics and Swimming where we finished in fourth position out of eight schools in 'A' Division. Our yearly improvement in cross country continued, with a second placing our best result this decade. We performed strongly again in the Year 6 Winter Sports Carnival, winning most of our games and enjoying the day despite the threat of nasty weather. Thank you to all staff and parents who helped at these carnivals and also in the lead up to the events.

Our appreciation is extended to our Sports Teacher, Mr David John, Mr Damian Williams and staff for overseeing these events.

## **Library Resource Centre**

The highlight in the Library for 2018 was the visit by the ***Australian Children's Laureate 2017-2018 Leigh Hobbs***. He spent the day at Mel Maria visiting both campuses. Leigh Hobbs encouraged the children to write down their stories, he shared a variety of drawing tips and spoke about how he creates his illustrations. **Leigh Hobbs** was a hit with staff and students as he relayed his experiences while being the ambassador for children's literature for 2017-2018.

The **Library Webpage** is regularly updated providing the children with a safe and relevant starting point for their online research.

Curated resources are regularly added so the children can easily and securely access quality information and reliable resources at school and from home.

With the growing collection and increased use of the library our parent helpers are relied upon even more to provide assistance with the covering of both reading and library books, along with shelving resources, assisting with incursions and end of year cleaning tasks. A big thank you to all the parents who provide this assistance throughout the year.

Planned literacy activities included our Year 1's visiting the State Library of WA for a wonderful **Fun with Fairy Tales** excursion. The SLWA provides the perfect venue for the Year 1 children to experience the joy of Fairy Tales in this wonderful public space.

The annual **Better Beginnings** promotion for Kindergarten in conjunction with the Melville Public Library is always the perfect introduction into children's literature. Each child received a book pack with reading suggesting and story ideas for parents and a delightful picture book to add to their personal library.

Library & Information Week was celebrated in May with a theme of '**Find yourself in a Library**'. During this week of national celebration for all libraries the Mel Maria children participated in the annual **National Simultaneous Storytime Event** which showcased the story- **Hickory Dickory Dash by Tony Wilson**.

In August **The Children's Bookweek** author/illustrator sessions were held across a variety of Melville Council venues. The 2018 theme was **Find your Treasure** with a continued emphasis on science. The children had the opportunity meet various authors, illustrators and storytellers

Mel Maria Library works closely with the Fremantle Literature Centre, Melville City Council Library and the State Library of WA to promote good literature through Australian authors and illustrators.

Two **Professional Learning** opportunities were organized by the Library- Dr Margaret Merga from Curtin University shared her research on the importance of reading for pleasure for our mental health, debunked a few myths about boys and reading, while also reminding us of the long term benefits for our spoken and written language which flows onto academic achievement. This event was followed by a presentation from The Fremantle Literature Centre on Picture Books and Oral Language. Both events provided concrete material for teachers to use in the classrooms.

It is the aim of the library to provide a safe haven for the children to read, borrow, relax and just enjoy the space while developing their love of reading

For the 4<sup>th</sup> year in a row Mel Maria hosted an **Indigenous Literacy Foundation Book Swap** during **Bookweek**. With the help and support of parents this event gave the children the opportunity to read and share books donated by the students themselves. It is also a pertinent reminder to help those less fortunate than ourselves. The Bookswap has become an annual event in our Library calendar.

**A few events from the Library Calendar:**

Dec/Jan: Premier's Summer Reading Challenge

Feb: Book Lovers Day

National Simultaneous Storytime

March: World Book and World Poetry day

St Patrick's Day

May: Library & Information Week, National Simultaneous Time (NSS)

Aug: Children's Bookweek

Oct: Indigenous Literacy Bookswap

Nov: Nonfiction November and Picture Book Month

Over 1400 new items were processed in 2018 along with subscriptions to World Book Online Encyclopedia and Britannica Online. The emphasis for 2018 has been updating our Fiction resources and with **Laudato Si'** a focus on resources on sustainability which will continue into 2019.

An ongoing review of our Aboriginal resources across the curriculum and the successful submission for funding allowed us to purchase recycled **Yarning Mats** for each cluster area across both sites. This connects with the school focus on writing and storytelling.

A warm welcome to our Library Officer Dawn Plester who joined the library team at the start of the year. Also, a huge thank you to both Dawn and Greta Scheggia for creating engaging displays all year round often at a moment's notice. The students are always keen to see what is new and on display when they visit the Library. These displays help the children connect with what is happening in their community and the world around them.

Our utmost appreciation is extended to Elizabeth Martini and Megan Cooper for providing our children with such a rich and meaningful learning environment.

It is encouraging to see an ever-increasing number of children visiting the library before and after school as well as at lunchtime to read, borrow, relax and just enjoy the space and appealing environment.

In order to meet the diverse needs of our children and indeed to challenge them the school provides additional services and opportunities.

## **Support**

This year approximately 123 children received extra assistance from our Support team in the Numeracy area and 90 in Literacy.

Our support staff are trained in identifying and responding to children's specific learning needs via the ongoing monitoring and assessment of student progress. Teaching strategies such as a Differentiated Teaching approach and focused intensive teaching one on one and in small groups are regularly practiced.

Support staff liaise with Students with Disabilities' consultants from the Catholic Education Office, organize IEP meetings (Individual Education Plans) and maintain contact with parents, teachers and specialists' practitioners such as Speech Pathologists, Behavioural Optometrists, Occupational Therapists, Psychologists and Audiologists. This year approximately 55 children were referred to such professionals.

Assessment programs include: YARK (Yok Assessment of Reading Comprehension), Magic Boxes Assessment, Mathematics Assessment Interviews (MAI's) and PAT Reading, Spelling, Mathematics and Vocabulary Assessments as well as Speech Screening in Pre- Primary.

Support programs used at Mel Maria include: Repeated Reading, Minilit, Multilit, Spelling Mastery Program and Sounds Write Program. Support for Mathematics is based on EMU principles (Extending Mathematical Understanding) program developed by the Australian Catholic University.

We extend our appreciation to Mrs Joanne Ciccarelli, Mrs Pierina Monaco, Mrs Laura Morgan, Ms Tonya Blair, Ms Lisa Evans, Mrs Christina O'Callaghan and our Assistant Principals, Mrs Ros Nichols and Mrs Joanne Scouler for their time, dedication, patience and care afforded to the children in this program.

## **Students Exceeding and Excelling in Developmental Skills**

SEEDS our Academic Extension Program caters to the gifted and talented students from years one to six. It offers multi- aged groups across both campuses opportunities to engage with like-minded peers and be challenged. It is critical and creative thinking at its best.

It offers multi-aged groups across both campuses the opportunities to engage in programs that challenge: **FUTURE PROBLEM SOLVING , MAG SEEDS ,SEEDLINGS , PHILOSOPHY ,ART ,**

**TOURNAMENT OF THE MIND , YOUNG INNOVATORS, WOW SEEDS** and many State and National Competitions.

Helen Smith received a highly commended in the Tim Winton writing competition for her piece entitled "Floating on Air". It is the fourth consecutive year we have had students in the top 10 finalists for this competition that has over 1200 entrants.

**MATHS OLYMPIAD** – We had 30 students participate in this National competition with four children achieving in the top 20% and Anika Zammit receiving a trophy for ranking in the top 10% in Australia.

**TOURNAMENT OF THE MIND-** The PN TOM SEEDS team were one of three schools out of 72 invited to attend the West Australian State Final, held on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2018 at ECU, Joondalup where they completed a three hour long in challenge. They were awarded with team 'Honours' medals being in the top 10% in the State.

Our appreciation is extended to Mrs Teresa Marra and Mr Roman Popadynech for conducting these challenging programs with our children.

### **Social Worker**

Our Social Worker Mrs. Christine Pittman has again this year provided a vital service assisting students, teachers and parents with the management of numerous issues around children's wellbeing. These include friendship difficulties, dealing with emotions, peer relations, grief/loss, stepfamilies, parental separation, anxiety, conflict resolution and transition management.

She has presented vital information on a range of topics to staff, provided regular items for the school newsletter, worked with teachers and parents regarding individual students' concerns and conducted social skills sessions with classes of various levels. Christine runs the "Rainbows" loss and grief program, has introduced lunchtime activities to promote socializing among children, assisted teachers with implementing the new "Keeping Safe" child protection curriculum and a new social emotional program called "Highway Heroes"

Christine continually emphasizes the school's focus on the holistic wellbeing of our children and their families.

### **Japanese**

2018 marks the 20 year anniversary of the Japanese language program at Mel Maria Catholic Primary School.

In 1997 parents at the time were surveyed and in consultation with the school board, Japanese was chosen as the preferred language. In 1998, Mrs Cate O'Connor was appointed to introduce the language program and it continues successfully to this day.

2018 is also a significant year as our Japanese language program has now becoming aligned with the Western Australian Curriculum. All programming, assessing and reporting is according to the requirements of SCSA (School Curriculum and Standards Authority).

The Japanese program at Mel Maria provides the children with a well- balanced program of language and culture. After four years of lessons, our Year 6 students graduate being able to read, write and speak in Japanese. I am sure you will agree that this is an incredible accomplishment for our students.

In addition to learning the Japanese language, students from Year 3 – 6 are immersed in Japanese culture. From dressing up in kimonos, using tea sets and making origami in the younger years, to doing creating art work, doing origami workshops and excursions in the older years; everyone is engaged in Japanese culture.

The Japanese language program is a great success, largely due to our enthusiastic and engaged students.

### ***Staff***

Aside from parents there is no other group that has a greater influence upon the overall education of your children than our staff. I congratulate them all on their dedication, sheer hard work, care and love afforded to our children. They are an exceptional group of educators of the highest calibre as reflected in the numerous messages of affirmation from parents. The quality programs offered at the school reflect upon their commitment!

All teaching staff are registered with the Western Australian Teachers Registration Board and hold the appropriate tertiary qualifications and level of Accreditation as required by the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia.

The retention rate of staff from 2017 to 2018 is 96 % and the rate of attendance is 98 %, which reflects their commitment to the children of Mel Maria.

Our non-teaching staff are also well qualified and experienced to undertake the vital roles assigned to them.

During 2018 staff completed in excess of over 90 hours of Professional Learning, at an average cost of \$ 310 per teacher comprising of instruction in the following areas-

- Walker Learning Approach – Personalized and play based learning.
- Improving Writing Skills – Jenny Baker Fremantle Speech Pathology
- Keeping Children Safe Program - CEWA

- New Directions in Dyslexia
- Sounds Write – Dyslexia Spell
- High quality Mathematics instruction (DSF)
- Laudato Si – Pope Francis
- Outdoor Learning Pedagogy
- Nature Play -Claire Warden
- Visible Learning Symposium – John Hattie
- Celebrate reading national conference – The Literature Centre
- Use of Picture Books to develop Oral Language – The Literature Centre
- AITSL standards & Australian teacher performance & development framework – CEWA
- Anaphylaxis first aid training
- Professional Learning Cluster meetings

We owe a huge debt of thanks to our **Office Staff** – Mrs Cathy Cowcher, Mrs Maree Passmore and Mrs Sylvia Tamigi. Collectively the ladies undertake an enormous variety of tasks in a jovial fun loving manner to ensure the smooth operation of our school. From attending to our school financials, mending the wounded, assisting parents staff and students in whatever capacity – the list is endless. Thank you for the many things you do for they make a huge difference for us all.

I am deeply indebted to the members of our **Leadership Team**, Mrs Ros Nichols and Mrs Joanne Scouler for their assistance, support, loyalty and friendship. These two ladies have given of themselves totally and tirelessly throughout the year often to the detriment of their own personal lives. They have achieved a great deal behind the scenes in planning and preparation for the school. I have certainly appreciated and relied upon Ros and Joanne for their good nature and dedication in ensuring that Mel Maria continues to be a school of the highest calibre. Thank you Ros and Joanne.

As the year draws to a close we wish Tanya Parker well as she takes extended leave for 2019.

Comment is often made regarding the appearance of our **school campuses**. Thanks to our groundsman Mr Mike Stals we continually enjoy a safe, tidy and aesthetically pleasing environment. Mike is amazing in that he tends to two school grounds – a remarkable feat for one man.

My thanks to Mrs Marie Dimeo, our **canteen** manager and Mrs Greta Scheggia our **uniform** manager for their hard work and efforts this year. These ladies have been outstanding in their service to our community. They do the “little bit extra” to ensure all is “just right” for our children, staff and parents. I am most grateful to both of them.

An endearing characteristic of Mel Maria again evident this year is the dedication, commitment and sheer hard work of our parent body.

The current **School Board** is typical of this commitment. Under the leadership of Malena Della Bona, Treasurer James Massie-Taylor and Secretary Scott McDonnell the board have continued to guide the school finances safely through a difficult financial environment.

Sadly, this year we bid farewell to Malena Della Bona, Kylie Hollins and Scott McDonnell. Malena has been an excellent Chair, Kylie's quiet resolve will be missed as will Scott's detailed keeping of minutes. All three have been steadfast ambassadors for our school. We thank them for their great commitment to the families of Mel Maria.

I sincerely thank all members of our 2018 School Board for making themselves available for school matters, attendance at meetings, for their excellent service and expertise, advice and their tireless energy. Their work has been exceptional.

As always our amazing **Parents & Friends Association** is a vital element in the overall functioning of our school. From providing much needed resources and equipment to the building of community spirit through social activities our P&F continually strive to provide nothing but the very best for our children. I am constantly amazed at what is achieved! To President Michael McGoldrick, Vice President Michelle Anderson, Treasurer Gabby Locke, Secretary Narelle Morin, Pauline Tavani Class Representatives and parents you are to be applauded for your remarkable achievements. On behalf of our children and staff I thank you sincerely for your support this year and what you do to make Mel Maria the special community it is today.

To all our **parents** - a huge THANKYOU for your continued support and assistance. From working in the library, in classrooms, on excursions, in the canteen, members of committees or assisted in whatever capacity your commitment to the children of Mel Maria is very much appreciated.

I congratulate you on the way you have raised your children – they are a delight. We are fortunate indeed to have such a marvellous, dedicated and caring community.

To the families leaving us this year, we wish you the very best for the future and thank you for being a part of our Mel Maria family. We pray your lives continue to be blessed.

### ***Children***

I am never ceased to be amazed with the enthusiasm, perseverance and love of life displayed by our children. To see the endeavour, the smiles and hear the laughter as you make your way around our campuses certainly warms the heart. The fact that our children enjoy a 98% attendance rate reflects their love of school life. Thank you children for making our days worthwhile and rewarding.

At the conclusion of the year we farewell our Year six children as they leave to further their education at various Secondary schools. As leaders they have been an exceptional cohort. Always keen to assist they have contributed greatly to the operation of our school. We are extremely proud of the fine people they have become. We wish them every success for the future and remind them they are always welcome at Mel Maria.

Visitors often make comment upon the atmosphere / feel of our school. There is no doubt there is a sense of friendliness and genuine care that is evident as you walk around each campus. I believe Mel Maria is certainly unique - an outstanding community enjoying excellent facilities within the Catholic tradition.

As we come to the end of another school year and prepare for the future I recall recently reading a quote from one of the world's most successful soccer players – Pele:-

*“Success is no accident. It is hard work, perseverance, learning, studying, sacrifice and most of all love of what you are doing or learning to do.”*

This is precisely what we endeavour to do at Mel Maria – to develop in our children a life time love of learning, to believe we can do the best we can, to succeed.

Our main focus in 2019 will be threefold.

Firstly, to continue a curriculum focus on Reading and Writing.

Secondly, to continue the mandated implementation of the Australian Curriculum.

Finally, our ongoing participation in programs focusing on the improvement of student learning outcomes.

I thank you sincerely for a truly wonderful productive year and look forward to 2019 as we together strive to meet the challenges ahead as we expand and grow in the unending quest to provide a dynamic, enriched Catholic Education for our children. As we break for the holidays I pray all families enjoy a well-earned break from the school routine and a Happy, Holy Christmas.

God Bless.

Greg Stinton

PRINCIPAL 2018