

Con High P & C

Meeting Tuesday, 12 August 2008

Order of Business

Apologies: Peter Ward, Aleksandra Collado

1. Previous minutes

Accepted by Antoinette Sampson and seconded by Tim Robinson.

2. Principals Report- Robert Curry

Two items. As Principal (Robert) is attending an OHS course and therefore must leave meeting early. OHS is very important as the school is open to public and is close to the university and is also a heritage building, and therefore has very distinct OHS problems. 'Connected Classrooms' is coming to the Con High. This will allow the high school to expand its course choice. Connected Classrooms will offer talking to partner schools which have strength in other course areas and which the Con High can tap into. CHS can negotiate with other schools and offer courses in music. The teleconferencing and 3D imaging (used by Connected Classrooms) has been used at universities and this technology will also enable the school to showcase music to regional areas. This will need to be trialled and staff need to be trained. R.C. has been in contact with Bambos Meitani, the Bondi District Technology advisor.

National High School Debating competition was held at the school on Friday 25th July. The (CHS) students heard first-rate debaters and it was a great opportunity for our students. We welcome another opportunity to host.

We are also underway with auditions for Year 7 next year. Weekends in August and the first in September are booked solid. The music workshop, by Jeff Willey, enables us to examine musicality- behind the appearance of playing an instrument and to know the aural memory and the music talent so that the panel can make informed decisions. This year R.C. is sitting on interview panels with the chair of unit and a second person on the tertiary side, for which we are very lucky.

That point connects with this bold and very, very important initiative. This is a tremendous initiative and R.C. throws his and the school's support behind the scholarships. R.C. has spoken to the School Education Director and a fund raising contact, independent of education. I believe when we launch this to regional and remote areas we need to get the maximum effect. We need to make a major splash so out there in the country areas

the kids know about the availability of the scholarship. So, what happens if the kid is successful? What arrangements does the kid need to make? Do we have someone in Sydney who can look after the child? Parents need to think about this and tee something up with someone- a contact, in Sydney to look after child. Furthermore, this has never been done in the 90 year history of the school and we need to make the most of the marketing opportunity and we need to target the right personal. How do we fulfil the obligations of the audition- instrument, meeting the counsellor- how do we do that? We need a smattering of kids across the country and a long leadtime otherwise there is a gross unfairness. We also need to know the personality, musical and intellectual capability- with the first one we need a winner- we absolutely need to be sure of this and this will generate a self perpetuating fund. We want to know that the student will wish to stay at the school for their full school career. We need maximum effort to ensure that every aspect of the project is a winner. Audition timetable is chock a block and this is a major organisational feat- it takes three people to undertake a workshop. Late auditions were very difficult last year and therefore we have agreed with the Department not to have late auditions this year. Last year we were scrounging around (Apol for expression) as Uni timetables were set in place. We can assume that the money is there and we can do this in 2010 so that planning can take place. In order to make sure that what we do is of real quality and we offer educational possibilities to all students we need to make sure all the necessary planning is in place. Therefore, I suggest we hold off until next year to ensure we have maximum impact.

There is a discussion paper- more than that, a member of staff Irene Aronis is sourcing jerseys for the students. We will show design and form of jerseys. We need something that is colourfast and Irene has found a very good NZ firm embroidered in colourfast material.

Y.K.: What do you mean by jerseys?

R.C.: House jerseys- for sport carnivals so that the students look good.

I.B.: They wear black sloppy joes or must wear school uniform.

R.C.: Subject selection is coming up. I warmly conclude that we support the proposition with extra time.

J.M.: The school's 90th anniversary is coming up. A good time to announce the scholarship might be then?
How many students are auditioning for the school this year?

I.B.: Originally 180- 30 withdrawn as selective tests have come through, so about 150.

R.C.: These are depressingly small numbers.
The DET review of music program is a glaring public inspection. The DET remains 100% committed to quality programs and education. We will keep to standards and therefore numbers will increase. The school will survive if programs are of a high standard. The DET asked why the school is not up there in the top HSC results. If we keep up our standards the good marks will come.

J.M.: The new Vice Chancellor of Sydney University has appointed a review of the Conservatorium of Music. Will the High School be making representations to that review reminding them that there is a high school here that is affected by the moral and efficient funding of the Uni?

R.C.: The Vice Chancellor is addressing the review to the students and staff of the Conservatorium to make representations to him, if they wish to. Not us, we are with a different employer.

R.D.: This review is for the student body and the staff of the Conservatorium.....

M.M.: Will contact the V.C.'s office and get a copy of the review standards to the P & C committee and do what we can to assist the enquiry.

R.D.: On 4th of August Terry resigned from the school. Julie Montague is working at another school 4 days. There are rumours at the school amongst the students that John Terry has got Aids and cancer and that Julie Montague has been sacked.

R.C.: Julie Montague can't have been sacked if she is working. As regards to John Terry whom I have known for 30 years he is on sick leave.

R.D.: He has resigned.

R.C.: All I can say he is on sick leave and therefore I cannot say anymore.

R.D.: I spoke to J.T. as I was so concerned that he had resigned.

I.B.: I have received an application for sick leave.

R.D.: I Spoke to J.T. and that he has resigned.

Margaret Kay: Back to scholarships for a moment, amongst the 150 auditioning this year are any from regional areas that who could be offered a scholarship?

M.M.: Very practical application.

P.K.: If you live west of Werrington you live in the country. If you live in Penrith you live in the country.

M.M.: Can I pick up on that question, this is a school that is in a period of change, there are strongly held views that how the school should change. The idea of the scholarship seemed to be a good way to use the money. We have consulted widely with the department. We have \$40,000 in bank and we can afford it. The P& C supports the school and we can spend this money on kids from the country who can't afford the school. There is strong support from the School Education Director and the DET and we can link arms with many stakeholders if we can get it going as quickly as possible. We would like to decrease the amount of attrition or ... to build on numbers in the following years. We are advised by the secretary and Michael Smart and we believe we have a history of raising these funds that we can support and can provide this. This is a good way to tell the world we think this place is a good place to come to. We are very grateful that R.C. has supported this and we believe there are some issues and I am a boy who likes to get things done. Let's give 10 minutes thrown open for questions about the scholarship. Any questions?

M.M.: reads motion.
Attachment 1

J.M.: If we could suggest if the year is deleted this would be an effective resolution. I move that we amend this motion that we delete the year.

Seconded by Nick Berg

R.C.: I think it would be shame that -boy oh boy what a lucky strike- we want people to talk about it, to put the word out there a great advantage is that we are not going to Assist one lucky student that the catchment area has drastically changed.

Nick Berg: I comment on this having returned a year or two ago from a project management role given that the chairman said the school is in a dynamic state of flux, we think carefully about the resources, not finance. Time, parents and teachers and if, as you said it is to succeed that we really have to give a careful resource plan to do it well and carefully.

Yvonne Kinney: Is the school 90 years old this year?

R.C.: No one knows when the school was gazetted. The DET does not know. No one knows because the school started as a cell with Steel, but for the first 10 years of the school's life it existed as part of the NSW

Conservatorium. So we believe that is was secondary and tertiary arm and it was conceived that way by Verbruggen.

J.M.: Educated guess of 1880?

R.C.: Steel was seconded in 1917 Conservation which will celebrate it's... and we can celebrate the as well.

Y.K.: Back to \$15, 000 funding we see CHAOS and we see DET what is their contribution?

M.M.: There may be two scholarships that run in tandem. The role of CHAOS is fluid. We had in mind that it would be a collegiate approach and involve the old boys and girls who have experience in scholarships. CHAOS do a special projects school. Who send students all overseas.

R.C.: Another reason for more time and looking at details, As each one is earmarked with conditions and frankly, given the working of these various scholarships..... When the funds are centralised and translated from their present conditions with Sydney Uni, then we can have a more malleable perspective.

M.M.: We can invite donations to a foundation that is administered by the government and can be tax deductible. So instead of putting in fresh money we can also put in money to instruments.

Y.K.: \$15000 over the course of one year but the 6 years of a school careers?

M.M.: Good question: The trial is for a year \$15000. This is a lot of money and therefore this is on a trial basis. If we sit around and do nothing... we need to promote the school and state that it is worth coming to. If there is a fund that has tax deductibility and I have connections who can fund this. It's a great thing, particularly for kids outside Sydney. Thanks Robert, we appreciate this watershed moment in school's history.

It is resolved that the P & C Association approves the allocation of up to \$15,000 from P&C funds for the purpose of providing a financial assistance scholarship to one student from rural NWS to attend the CHS during the 2009 school year on a trial basis.

Vote on motion.

P.K.: Suggestion: a large amount of money is coming into this country to those soldiers affected by Agent Orange and directed to children of these

vets and there is a surplus of funds. This is given to scholarships of \$6000 pa and therefore if there is somebody who can contact the Department of Veteran Affairs, it may be a possibility.

Motion: See Attachment 1

*Show of hands for scholarship motion.
Unanimous*

M.M.: Congratulations this is a very positive moment for the school. We've done a good thing. Thanks for feedback and support.

3. Treasurers report

Allan Fong has just taken over as the treasurer and he is not here tonight as he has just got a new job and had been asked to go to a meeting.

4. Trivia Night

Antoinette Sampson - sent an email out last week have to asked for help. Has had 3am cold sweats because it is a very important event and have been very busy.

Date set is 25th October in school atrium downstairs. Took this decision myself as I often ask people outside the school to this event. I think when we have a few musical performances they are incredibly impressed by what happens at the school. They hate the other place with no atmosphere.

Confer

A.S.: We are very excited that Richard Mew will work tirelessly to gets prizes. Will get Rob Sampson to send an email out to entire school for requesting volunteers. A.S. looking for support and will need to ask about numbers for atrium and this year look for a committee and pull down team so that no one will have to flog themselves. Would like to raise about \$15,000 targeting scholarships. If anyone is interested in this we go out to dinner and we try to make it as pleasant as possible. We can get my son, who is licensed to come down as auctioneer. Could everyone have a think about it please.

M.K.: We could include a page on the website for trivia night. Last year we had some students playing could we do that again.

A.S.: It's imperative that we have students playing.

I.B.: Should we book the wings next to atrium for performances?

A.S.: No we showcase the students while people are there and they are in one place.

M.K.: We have about 150 at welcome dinners

A.S.: If we say this is to raise money for scholarship.

M.M.: People more likely to come if they know where the money is going.

Thanks A.S.

M.M.: What we need to do is to get the Korean and Chinese population involved in the school. There are 30 children whose parents are ESL- 20 Korean..... numbers ??????

Ian has given me some parent's names. We aim to get some of these people and year parents to get involved in the AMEB thing and to come to P & C meetings.

J.M.: Are soloists concerts continuing?

Pieter Oomens : There was a soloist concert tonight.

I.B.: It was fantastic.

J.M.: How can we know if there is a soloist concert?

A.S.: On the email.

5. AMEB report

Margaret Kay

The big end of year for earnings starts now. We have earned \$4000 ytd and will earn much more during the second half of the year and will get sales from parents from auditions.

M.M. : Thanks Ros and Jeff for music document- very informative and a fantastic job. So much I didn't know as a parent.

T.R.: Did anywhere here NOT get a copy of the newsletter??
Did anyone else not get the email notification of this?

I.B.: Happy to ask the assembly to get all check that they are listed correctly in the Buzz Book and IB happy to collect that info.

M.M.: Getting tired of sending out emails as many bounce.

I.B.: Would like a definitive email list to send out email notifications and paper is a waste of time? Some parents didn't get reports and therefore doesn't always get home via mail either.

M.M.: Thanks I will move a motion to extend their appreciation and to RD and J.M..

Seconded

M.M.: Survey results published with a summary included. **(Attachment 2)** I ask Margaret Kay to speak about the results.

M.K.: We had a really good response rate – a 34% response rate is a very good response rate.

The issue that is the main concern is communication from schools regarding behaviour and reports. The School is addressing the website and this will help. Parents want this. Parents would also like some input and opportunity to consult and talk to music tuition educators. The survey also said that parents support the priorities of the school. These are the key issues. M.K. happy to give more detail if required.

Y.K.: Level exams are completely different from last year and we need to be informed.

R.D.: String level exams so damn subjective this year and kids should be identified by number. The students of particular teachers were failed. Students were failed unrelated to their performance. It seems a remarkable coincidence that particular teachers students were failed. I think it is high time that all level exams have students identified by number.

I move that we somehow request that examinations for level exams are done behind screens so that examiners cannot identify students. Whole teacher's studios were failed. I'm not a person who sticks up for kids but results of other students were way higher than others.

Right now we have a situation where kids who are actually leading sections of orchestras have failed their level exams. There is a new string examiner on staff who has a deep prejudice against some teachers.

A.S.: When behind the screen can you access all the criteria? Finger position, holding the instrument etc.

R.D.: This is common practice for SSO.

A.S.: Wanted to raise the point that this is a technical exam, the second part of the year is performance based. Agree with you, see your point and we need to know if there is not some visual need in this exam.

R.D.: The teacher speaks of the technical problems. My issue is that there is a deep prejudice.

I.B.: There was a change to the format to the way that the exam was marked and that was intended to give direction on how to assess the students. What does 75 /100 tell you and what does it mean? We intended to give you criteria on how the students were examined. This is the way it is done by DET across the state and by the HSC, and the mark reflects the criteria. This was provided to the Uni by the school so that we could look at the mark and say- this criteria says....

Y.K.: How does this fit with old High Distinction?

I.B.: We're talking about levels of accomplishment and a technical standards referenced approach across the state and we tried to implement this at the exam to tie it down to levels of accomplishment set in the criteria.

R.D.: We need to do something about the level of string examination.

M.M.: There is an assertion that there is a problem with the string exams.

I.B.: Criteria used by the HSC rather than university standards.

M.M.: House concert judges made comments supporting and explaining remarks.

R.D.: Teachers did not know about the change to the exam marking.

I.B.: The only difference is that the criteria on back of the results.

M.M.: Can a copy of the criteria on the website.

R.D.: Can we get this to the teacher?

T.R.: Is the school aware of the situation spoken of?

I.B.: I have been told of rumours of some politics being played?

T.R. Can research or analysis of results be made?

I.B.: We could try to look at the results of the Brass always gets much higher marks than strings. There can be some analysis for some objective reflection of the marks.

R.D.: In past years if kids are not ready for a level exam the examiner doesn't make them sit it.

M.M.: It seems fundamental to me that the school should have historical marks for students.

I.B.: I agree.

Emily Werlemann: There seems to be tradition of hard marks for string- can this tradition be broken?

Y.K. It's an issue of fair marking. There is a tradition of harder marking than other departments.

P.K.: Looking at survey- brilliant of survey creator. This is a brilliant result. In January it was stated that a culture of mutual respect for parents and staff be practised. A note was written by the Principal that future comments that mutual respect be practised and the Principal's did not practise his own statement- looking at the Principals' comment on my child's report. This music thing, three weeks prior to the level exam his tutor changed his fingering- does give the kids a chance?

Y.K.: We showed it to a friend who works for DOC's and this is not a child friendly approach.

I.B.: Jeff Willey asked has a motion has been moved by the P & C to purchase a **Cor Anglais**.

M.M.: It has come up in the past. Until the new treasurer and M.M. have met and there has been an assessment no decision will be made.

I.B.: A performance is coming up and last time we needed to borrow one from a teacher.

M.M.: We have been trying to be strategic and not live hand to mouth.

I. B.: Another response that came out of survey and communication with teachers- looking at idea of communication with Conservatorium Uni staff. First thing is to call the teacher and speak with the instrumental teacher directly. Please try to communicate with the instrumental teacher directly and regularly. That way you are fully compus mentus of what is happening in lessons and of the relationships. We can assist with a change of teacher and we can able to push the point with the benefit of the students.

M.M.: We'll put a note on the front cover of the newsletter and web page for this (above) with approval from school and the school can put on their web page so that we can work together. At the moment the web page doesn't make clear that we can work together.

J.M.: Make a comment that it is well accepted that there is an onus on the parents to seek out their music teacher so there is not a shock when report comes in. Picking up stress that there is a large proportion of parents who, for linguistic and cultural reasons that cant confidently communicate with teachers and we need seek ways to assist.

M.M. We need to ram home and reinforce to parents with English as a second language and empower them.
School Review- Ian Barker has done a progress report. M.M. has difficulty in understanding it and will attend a meeting with IB and try to understand the review.

On the other two things: with communication. Congrats Aleksandra and Jeff as proof reader on the newsletter.

T. R.: The front cover photo is great!

P.K.: Newsletter is very good.

A.S.: Very good.

P.K.: Very good- avoid red type on orange backgrounds.

E.W.: Yes very good.

M.M.: I feel very good about tonight and feel that there are positive things ahead.

Attachment 1

Scholarship Draft Resolution

If the meeting so agrees, **IT IS RESOLVED** that the P&C Association approves the allocation of up to \$15,000 from P&C funds for the purpose of providing a financial assistance scholarship to one student from rural NSW to attend the Con High during the 2009 school year on a one year trial basis.

BACKGROUND

The allocation of up to \$15,000 funding from the P&C is needed to enable one of two scholarships that are intended to be offered to country children to cover their accommodation and school-related costs, making it possible for them to achieve their musical potential.

This is a joint initiative by the government, the School's P and C and former students and who are represented of CHAOS, the "old boys' and girls'" association. All these stakeholders agree that through the scholarships the specialist teaching and musical resources of the school will be made more accessible to musically gifted children in rural NSW.

The scholarships would be made available to provide support to students who:

- currently attend a NSW school outside the Sydney metropolitan area not including the Blue Mountains or Wollongong areas;
- require financial assistance to cover accommodation and school-related costs; and
- are selected from annual auditions for entry to the school.

Scholarships would be awarded on the basis that funds will be provided to assist with the payment of accommodation and school-related costs on a quarterly in advance basis up to a maximum amount of \$15,000 a year, to be indexed for inflation.

If the first year trial is successful, and if the necessary further funding can be obtained, it is intended that a scholarship would in future be payable for the whole of the student's enrolment at the Conservatorium High School.

Students would be selected for the scholarship by the Conservatorium High School Scholarships Panel, which would be constituted by the Department of Education and Training and would comprise such members as the Department chooses, being at least the following:

- Two nominees of the Department, one of whom will be the Chair
- A nominee of the Principal of the Conservatorium High School
- A nominee of the Parents and Citizens Association of the Conservatorium High School
- A nominee of the Conservatorium High Association of Old Students (CHAOS).

The Panel will meet each year within a week of the Conservatorium Placement Panel recommending any student for admission to the School who has first registered for a scholarship and will decide eligibility according to the capacity to pay criteria set out on the School's web page.

Attachment 2

School Survey Summary

Conservatorium High School P&C Survey – Summary of Responses

In response to the Program Review undertaken in 2007 by the Department of Education and Training, the Conservatorium High School P&C developed a short survey which was circulated to parents at the school in May 2008. The aim of the survey was to give all parents an opportunity to comment on how they felt their child was progressing at the school and to understand parents' priorities for their child's education. Parents were asked to make suggestions on instrument tuition, educational outcomes, student support and wellbeing, school administration and use of P&C funds. The survey was a P&C initiative and was developed independently of the school. All responses were treated with confidentiality.

Surveys were mailed to all families of current Con High Students – around 170. A total of 62 responses were received, a 36% response rate.

The following quote from one parent summarises the sentiments expressed in most of the responses received:

"I think this is a wonderful school, which has the potential to turn out amazing young people, but in particular musicians. I'd like to think that we could all keep a focus on working together to ensure that the outcomes for our children are positive. I do believe, after all, that we all, the teachers, the administration, and the parents have the students' welfare and development at heart".

The key themes from the survey responses are summarised here.

- Most parents were satisfied with how their child was progressing in their instrument tuition, but wanted to be involved in the choice of instrument teacher for their child. Parents wanted to be able to change teachers or to choose an outside teacher. Providing fixed times for instrument tuition each week outside of class time, and verbal feedback was also requested.
- Providing more musical performance opportunities was frequently mentioned as a desire of parents.
- A major concern for parents was the apparent over reliance on casual teaching staff which parents felt disrupted their child's learning.
- Establishing information sessions at the beginning of each year which explain assessment requirements was suggested to improve communication with teachers. Parents also requested more timely feedback and advice from teaching staff when there were concerns about a student's performance or behaviour.
- An issue which the school is already addressing is the website. Parents requested that detailed assignment outlines including due date, presentation expectations, learning outcomes etc be accessible on the website. Using the website to enable parent-teacher dialogue, promote events and report on student achievements, as well as to advise parents of administrative issues was also suggested.
- Over 60% of respondents were satisfied that their child was being given adequate support in a nurturing environment at the school. Again the main area of concern related to the timeliness of feedback to and communication with parents.
- Engendering a culture of mutual respect between teachers and students and setting positive expectations were often mentioned by parents.
- Parents recommended that the school be consulted on how they would like the P&C funds to be spent and then the list should be openly discussed and voted on at a P&C meeting.
- There were a number of suggestions as to how the P&C could spend its funds. The most frequent suggestions were for providing financial support for disadvantaged students, such as a scholarship for rural students, or subsidising music tuition fees for low income families, and enhancing the school's profile in the community through external performances.