

DIRECTOR'S REPORT 2022

Recap: To put the year that was 2021 into context, it is important to point out that in Sydney there were 108 days of hard lockdown. That is, approximately 30% of the year was spent in lockdown. Outside of this, there were then multiple other weeks of COVID-19 related restrictions. So, I think it fair to say, it was a tumultuous year for everyone, including for the staff of TKC.

Fast forward a little and as things seemed to be getting back to normal and we had weathered COVID, we had one of the worst storms on record. Whilst we are lucky to have been spared the devastation which occurred in places such as Lismore, the TKC centre was affected. Flooding occurred within the centre, with damage to the floors, cupboards, books, games, and other assets. There are ongoing discussions with Insurance at the moment, but this will be an ongoing issue for a little while and something for an incoming committee to oversee.

I think it fitting therefore, to thank all our staff for their professionalism, attention to safety protocol, and provision of second-to-none child-care to our community given the challenges that have confronted them. In the last 2 plus years, they have not only carried out their jobs with aplomb but have been required to help families struggling in many different ways, whilst being professional and supportive. What was evident was the care that each member of staff has, and that the systems that have been put in place over the last years are robust and flexible.

The systems I refer to are namely new delineation of roles and responsibilities amongst the senior staff, the bedding down of the Xplor booking and child maintenance system and the appointing of a third-party bookkeeper. The originations and need for these systems came on the back of the removal of previous supplier Becklyn but have proven to be the right decision for the Kids' Castle and its ongoing success. Alex, was appointed as our bookkeeper, but in truth has been pivotal as an administrative support in and helping Roy and Anna with ongoing systems and organisation.

Over the last year, as I am sure Roy will touch on, we have predominantly maintained a core team. However, Roy through this last year has been out on two placements as part of his ongoing education, and away for an extended period of time due to the sad passing of his father. These events highlighted the need for a forward focus on contingency, succession and general planning. I highlight this requirement for the incoming committee as it is something we have spoken with Roy about, but which, through the last year has unfortunately been hard to bed down.

In last year's reports, we identified that this last year would focus on the implementation of new data management systems. Again, sadly, due to COVID lockdowns, this was not achieved, but the coordination by Roy, Anna and Alex across all things administrative

did lower the urgency of this as compared to the years before. It would be my outgoing recommendation that this be prioritised moving into the new year.

From a financial perspective, the year was very hard to predict. No one anticipated the lockdown, no one could predict how the governments would react or the support they would provide, and no one knows what is yet to come. Through this we all remained optimistic but balanced this with pragmatism. COVID and the fact that the school has lost a few students has meant attendance numbers have decreased. This is a function of the lower student body, but also due to increasing numbers of parents working from home and not needing the services of TKC as much. We do believe that these numbers are slowly coming back as evidenced and to be discussed in the Treasurer's report, but temper this with the fact it is only early days in 2022.

As Gino, our outgoing Treasurer will cover, the centres finances remain healthy, and are in a position to start investment back into the centre. This has begun in moderate form with new uniforms purchased, agreement (prior to the floods) to paint the centre and discussions around other infrastructure which is necessary. We have committed to co-investing with the P&C into the new garden and outdoor learning/play area outside the centre and have other items waitlisted for further discussion – including computers for the staff, attention to the shed and training of staff.

Looking ahead, it seems timely to formally declare I will be stepping out of the committee, as I signalled last year. Without wanting to be flowery or self-congratulatory of myself or the great committee I have worked with, I have enjoyed 4 years working with Roy, Anna and other full time employees of the centre and have enjoyed being part of the centres technical and administrative renaissance. I believe the centre is in a great position – floods, pandemic or other unforeseeable events aside – to grow again and to offer first rate services to the Castle Cove Public School Community.

Changes are in the wings though. In December 2021 the State Government announced changes to the way parents led before and after school care centres are run. The options tabled were for centres to privatise, or to be absorbed into the P&C. As a community minded committee, we spoke extensively about this both internally and with the school Principal and the centre Director to work out how to move forward. We then spoke with Mayank the President of the P&C about amalgamating and I am pleased to say we agreed that a P&C run centre was by far and away the preferred model. Some of tonight's meeting will cover the top line of what is to come, but this must be the priority of the incoming committee.

There is a lot to achieve in the year ahead, but the systems are in place to make the challenges ahead surmountable. The new committee will likely act as a sub-committee within the P&C, and the committee will be charged with using the next 6 months to implement a smooth transition. I encourage everyone here tonight to sign up and help ensure the ongoing success of The Kids' Castle.

I wish the new committee well and thank everyone I have had the pleasure of working with over the last year for your efforts and time.



Many thanks,

Hamish