School Council President Report

Ladies and Gentlemen a very good evening. Here at Gray St Primary School I’m known as Ted’s Dad!

On behalf of the Hamilton Gray St Primary School Council, my fellow parents and members of the School Community, it is with great pleasure that I address you at the 2012 Christmas Concert as School Council President.

This year on 21st June, we celebrated 160 years since the school was formed. In understanding the history of Hamilton Gray St Primary School, one becomes immediately aware of the importance of our school to the Hamilton district. In the last 160 years we have had numerous families where four or five generations of children have attended Gray St as students. We have had students who have gone on to important achievements in sport, music, the arts, and people who have attended Gray St and gone through life to become famous. There is no doubt that our school is in the hearts of many people and that the heritage, traditions, educational excellence and total school experience has an enormous impact on those which have been associated with it for more than a century and a half. The students, staff and school council are important custodians of all that Gray St represents and this year’s activities and achievements have again added to the rich narrative of our school.

As parents and as a school council we rely on the classrooms to be an active and nurturing environment. I would like to acknowledge all staff who as leaders of the school are each responsible for taking on different lead functions throughout the year. Whether it be House Athletics, Swimming, Tournament of the Minds, School Excursions or embedding Literacy and Numeracy Strategies across the school curriculum. It is always achieved with good humour and exemplary organisational skills. Our staff help create an environment that is nurturing and provides an excellent learning experience for our children and the school community. To the staff of 2012, well done this year and please accept our sincerest thanks for all your efforts. The end of year also announces the change of direction, retirement or new challenge for several of our staff. Please join with me in wishing long standing staff members in Lisa Speed, Robyn Donovan and Glenys Gleeson the best of luck for the future as they leave our school community for the next stage of their lives.

2012 has seen another busy year of consolidation for the school following on from the major developments of 2010 and 11. We welcomed back the canteen to the school after a 4 year absence and thank coordinator Lyn Battista for providing a healthy and delicious menu to the hungry hoards. This was of course supported by a dedicated group of parents willing to pack and organise lunches – thank you to you all.

Our Out of School Hours Care and Vacation Programs continue to add an excellent service to the broader community particularly in assisting parents to fulfil their work obligations. Both the canteen and Out of school hours care program are offered by the school as a break even proposition, as a service to the school community and I am pleased to report that both services made a small profit to the school in 2012.

Further development of the school veggie garden was made possible through funding of $1000. Under the watchful eye of Julie Graham and the school gardening club we continue to have a very productive and healthy veggie patch that not only assists the school curriculum, but emphasises many environmental and sustainable principles to students.

2012 also saw the further implementation of the landscaping master plan adopted last year. A massive working bee in early October attended by more than 40 parents and staff saw a number of projects completed. The recladding and insulating of the music room was lead by parents Matt Downes and David Graham who have spent countless hours completing the works with good humour and professionalism. The results have been an outstanding refresh of a tired portable classroom. Repainting of the front gates and planter boxes by Chris Annett and family has left a positive sense of arrival to the school. The planting of a shrub hedge around the perimeter fence will in time soften the school boundary and provides the framework to further landscaping projects planned for 2013. Topping up of soft fall around the playgrounds and sand for the sand pits has also improved the safety to our students play activities. Whilst the cleaning of gutters and trimming of branches formed a vital part of the school’s maintenance program. My thanks to all those who gave up time to assist in the working bee and particularly to school councillor’s Jason Muldoon and Leigh Whyte who planned and coordinated the activities of the day. I would also like to particularly mention our former School Council President Alan Wishart who continues to support a number of our facility and ground projects through out the year.

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To compliment the very visible achievements of the working bee, school council has continued to consider and implement a number of new initiatives throughout the year. We ramped up our orientation and transitional programs, further embedded our strategic plan with a renewed focus on delivering literacy and numeracy through the school resulting in an improvement to our NAPLAN results, and continued with the Gray Street Community Learning Partnership with Southern Grampians Adult Education.

2012 has seen the introduction of a refined school uniform policy that will improve the appearance and pride of our students, we have conducted parent surveys to further develop our customer service policy and to reinforce our school branding with a roll out of new signage across the school with the balance to be installed over the summer holidays, the parent class representative program has been further embedded by including a number of social events, there have been changes to the finance policy to allow greater flexibility in the way payments are made to the school and we have applied for numerous grants to improve our infrastructure. Again as I reflect on the activities of 2012 it has been another big year at Gray St!

Another vitally important function of council is in approving of fund raising activities for the year. Without this additional fund raising support to the school’s finances we would be in a far poorer position. Many people within the school community contribute to this important activity, however it is the tireless group of the fund raising committee volunteers led by Lisa Beaton and Bonita O’Brien that I wish to make a special mention to again this year. A huge thank you and we look forward to prioritising those funds towards stage 2 of the landscaping master plan next year.

It is a delight to chair such a terrific cross-section of the school community in your school council. The council has worked very hard this year and have put a hand on the rudder and steered the school through the numerous issues and projects that are both planned and unplanned. I would like to acknowledge my fellow councillors, Deputy Chair and Education Sub Committee Chair, Susan Bradbeer, Treasurer and Finance Committee Chair, Jim Bailey, Facilities Committee Chair, Leigh Whyte, Fundraising Chair, Bonita O’Brien and other parent councillors Jason Muldoon, Simon McKinley and Christine Jeal. Council would not be complete without excellent input from our staff councillors in Kerrie McFadden, Lisa Ferrier and Raquel Potter. Sadly we say goodbye this year to two of our parent councillors, both of whom have contributed greatly to our school. Jim Bailey has been on school council for more than 10 years and most of that time as Treasurer. His detailed understanding of the educational financial statements, passionate and experienced commentary around the council table and unsung efforts in all aspects of school life will leave an enormous gap in our school. Jim has been the great embodiment of a parent getting the most out of your children’s primary school experience. He would attend most school camps, working bees, school sports days, fund raising activities and he tells a great story of taking a day’s annual leave to assist our swimming lessons program, only to spending 8 hours treading water in the outdoor pool on an under 20 degree day. Susan Bradbeer joined school council nearly 3 years ago. In that time she has added great experience to our policy development, led changes to our school branding and has been a reasoned and knowledgeable voice around the council table. They

Susan Bradbeer joined school council nearly 3 years ago. In that time she has added great experience to our policy development, led changes to our school branding and has been a reasoned and knowledgeable voice around the council table. They have both been a great support to me in my role as president and I know Helen and I will miss their wise council and wisdom. Gray St thanks you and your families for all you have done for our school and please know you will be sadly missed.

As a council it is imperative that we strive to have an honest, transparent and open working relationship with our Principal. Principal Helen Freeman has now been at Gray Street Primary School for three years. This year we have continued to enjoy Helen’s great passion and clear vision for the school. She continues to strive to make Gray Street Primary School a place that values the individual learning needs of all students through a varied curriculum, high quality teaching, positive partnerships and innovative programs and practices. On behalf of school council can I publicly express my appreciation for your dedication, insight, incredible hard work and leadership in assisting council to realise Gray St’s true potential. Helen – thank you.

Last week I shared the emotions of a grade six graduation with staff - past and present, departing families and proud grand parents as we reflected on the memories and experiences of our graduating cohort. It again reminded me of the importance that Gray St has played in their lives and the positive influence we can affect on preparing resilient, confident, organised and persistent children. To those families that will be leaving us at the conclusion of term, thank you for allowing Gray St Primary School to be a part of your lives and allowing us to contribute to the development and education of your child. Please don’t forget us. Your time here no matter how brief is part of Gray St’s rich 160 year heritage and you are always welcome to return at anytime, even if it is just to keep an eye on how things are going!

In concluding tonight I wish to thank all those who have added something special to school life throughout 2012 and those who continue to embody the school’s motto “Semper Sursum “Ever Upwards”. We have continued to be fortunate with some very kind acts of volunteering from the school community - whether it is helping students to read in the classroom, perform maintenance and administration duties or work in the canteen – your contribution is invaluable. Our strategic and infrastructure work throughout this year continues to place the school in the best possible position for the future. We continue to see our staff go above and beyond their usual duties to inspire our kids to be confident, independent and enthusiastic learners. We have seen our facilities evolve to create a healthy and happy educational environment that assists our children reach their full potential. We have some exciting plans for 2013 and greatly encourage you to be part of it.

As Margaret Gardner noted in her authoring of the “150 Years of Gray St Primary School” many of our past students have become leaders of their chosen field, today the children of Gray Street Primary are our future leaders, and as School Council President it is a privilege to be able to contribute to their lives. Have a restful, safe and peaceful Christmas and for those back with us next year, I look forward to an exciting 2013.
2013 January Office Hours

**Wednesday January 23**
Office Opened 9.00am – 4.00pm

**Thursday January 24th**
Book Box Collection 9.00am to 12 noon
1.00pm – 6.00pm

**Friday 25th January**
Office Opened 9.00am to 4.00pm

**Monday January 28th**
Public Holiday

**Tuesday 29th January**
Office Opened 9.00am to 4.00pm

**Wednesday 30th January**
Students Return

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**Book Box/Parent Payment Order Forms**

Book Boxes can be collected on
Thursday 24th January, 2013
9.00am – 12 noon
1.00pm to 6.00pm

Any questions please see Leesa or Maree in the office

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**2012 Daniel Hodgson Award & Dux**

Pictured Above: Jakob Greaves, Georgia Muldoon, Georgia Clarke and Kealy Rau

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**New Uniform Shop**

New uniform
New uniform will be available for collection/ordering on the following days before school returns in 2013:

- **Thursday 24th January 2013** - when book boxes are collected
- **Friday 25th January 2013** - 9.30am to 11.30am, 2.00pm to 4.00pm
- **Tuesday 29th January 2013** - 9.30am to 11.30am

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**Canteen**

The first day of Canteen for 2013 will be Friday 1st February.

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**School Concert DVD**

The school concert DVD will be ready for collection in Term 1 next year. Further information next year.

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Cut this out and return to the office

**DITCH THE PAPER!!!**

Help us slash our photocopy costs and help the environment!

Sign up to have your NEWSLETTERS AND OTHER INFORMATION emailed to you.

Student Name/s and grade/s: .................................................................

Parent Name/s: .................................................................

Email Address: .................................................................
Wishing all families a very Merry Christmas and a happy and safe New Year

We look forward to seeing all students for the first day of school on Wednesday 30th January 2013