



School details

School name:	Holy Spirit	Year:	2024
School Advisory Council Chair:	Sue Sukkar Emma Madigan		
School Advisory Council Members:	Alicia Casauria, Rob Costin (Principal), Emma Madigan, Voula Nuske, George Psarakos, Belinda Robertson, Cheryll Seslija, Rev Fr. Shabin, Sue Sukkar, Anne Vernal (Deputy Principal), and Chris Yuen.		

School Advisory Council AGM Principal's Report

The Advisory Council has been a significant support to me, as Principal, throughout the 2024 school year and I am very appreciative of the ongoing, open and honest conversations that we are able to have during our meetings and in general. The Advisory Council's job is to continue to communicate with the broader community that they represent so that families can know that they have a voice. Thank you to every member of the Council for so enthusiastically giving your time and expertise to continue our work.

This has once again been a busy year for us at Holy Spirit. We are seeing more families around the school and many helpers in so many different ways. I thank every family for all they do at Holy Spirit, we are privileged to work with so many people who care about their children's school and community.

During 2024, as a school, we continued to build our contact with the broader parish community. We have continued to engage in weekday masses at a classroom level throughout the year as well as limited involvement in weekend parish masses for specific occasions. The Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation were celebrated well and it has been great to see the family involvement in the ongoing faith journey that our children are on. We were fortunate to once again celebrate the sacrament of Confirmation with Bishop Terry Curtin who is always a welcome and enthusiastic supporter of our school. We are looking forward to celebrating the Sacrament of Confirmation with our three sister schools in our parish mission at St Pat's Cathedral as part of the church Jubilee that is being celebrated around the world in 2025.

2025 enrolments are only slightly up on this year and we will continue to look for opportunities to grow our school and maintain an important role in the Thornbury community. We have engaged extensively with most of our local kinders throughout this year including Clyde St, Thornbury World of Learning and Thornbury Kinder. All of the kinders have scheduled regular visits to our school and engaged with our students who have facilitated their experiences.

This year we farewell 31 Year Six children which is a significant number for our small school and the end of our really big classes. At this stage we are welcoming 12 new Preps into Holy Spirit for 2025. Enrolments for 2025 will see a reduction in our school size for 2025 but we expect this to begin to level out now that our bigger cohorts have passed through the school.

We have significant funding constraints on our school. The financial position at Holy Spirit continues to be extremely tight and we continue to maintain a strict budget to ensure our viability and financial stability. The Government's "Capacity to Contribute" formula continues to see an increase in the amount expected to be raised by our school and this is having a significant impact on both our ability to fund new things and our school fees. This is something that our Advisory Council will need to monitor during 2025.

We are truly blessed at this school with the staff that we have. I once again acknowledge the significant contribution that every staff member makes to making this a great place to be for all. This school is not just a workplace for the staff but a community of support, learning and positive endeavour that ensures the best opportunities for every child.

2024 has been a busy year for our School Advisory Council with a busy agenda.

During the 2024 year, we covered many items that are important issues at the school and in education. The Advisory Council looked at;

- Assessing the school canteen with a view to improving the menu and profitability. Supporting the Canteen manager to continue to be able to provide this valuable service to the community
- School Vision. We began a process of looking at the things we value at Holy Spirit with a view to surveying the community and drafting a new vision for the school.
- Sports Equipment. We are looking at the provision of new equipment including soccer goals to enhance the sports involvement of the students.
- School Sports shirt. A student committee of 6 Year 5 children in designing a new light weight sports shirt. We hope to engage the support of a local indigenous artist to help with the design. Our school Fire Carriers student reps are helping with this.
- Interschool Sports communications. Discussions were held to clarify the needs of the community regarding school communication in this area.
- Holy Spirit Facebook Page incl. We investigated other schools and options before drafting a User Policy and launching a new Facebook page
- Darebin Street safety incl Raleigh and Clarendon St concerns. The Advisory Council engaged with Darebin Council and this will be followed up at any future opportunity.
- Upgrades to the School Playground incl new adventure playground. The Council was kept updated on the progress of the New Adventure Playground.
- Attendance at MACS Advisory Council Dinner Meeting. Our Chair was represented at the inaugural Chairpersons' dinner at MACS. The Council is seeking to continue to engage with MACS to ensure ongoing communications and support.

- Discussion around 2023 MACSSIS Wellbeing surveys. The Council looked at the 2023 MACSSIS survey results around Student wellbeing and Safety. This will be followed up in 2025 when we compare 2024 results.
- Future items to include looking at costing and ongoing concerns around both swimming and camping programs

I take this opportunity to thank each of the members of the Council for their commitment to the tasks that we have covered and their ability to maintain enthusiasm throughout the year. Your time, expertise and willingness to give up your time to support our children is greatly appreciated. I acknowledge the ability of the Council members to engage in frank and honest conversations in a spirit of positivity and confidentiality.

I thank Emma Madigan and Sue Sukkar who volunteered to take on the role of Chairperson of the Council again this year. I thank them for their time and enthusiasm in facilitating our meetings. I note that both Sue and Emma have taken over the running of meetings and managed the setting of agendas etc this year and this has significantly reduced my workload in this area and allowed for a very smooth running Council. We are very fortunate to have had this level of expertise to lead our meetings. At this meeting we will confirm the membership of the council for 2025. I thank George Psarakos, Emma Madigan, Sue Sukkar, Chris Yuen, Cheryll Seslija, Voula Nuske, Alicia Casauria, Chris Yuen and Anne Vernal for their work throughout the year. I acknowledge the work of Belinda Robertson as Secretary who has kept the minutes and agendas for us this year.

The important work we do on the Council moving forward continues to be crucial to our ability to prosper. The direction of the Council clearly needs to ensure a positive and innovative approach to marketing, clear communication within the community, exemplary teaching and learning practices and a close eye on the financial situation. The Council will need to closely work with myself and MACS to ensure that we remain in a solid financial position as we move through the 2025 school year. As we continue our work into 2025, I particularly welcome the support, discussion and expertise that will need to be a priority around maintaining strong future enrolments in a time where the demographics and enrolment patterns for Holy Spirit are so changeable.

I look forward to the ongoing support that I get from Fr Shabin, and Fr Peter as we manage this great school.

I welcome the inclusion of some new Council members in 2025 so that this important work can continue.

I wish you all a happy and Holy Christmas.

Rob Costin
Principal

November 26th, 2024