

Lucas Heights Community School P&C General Meeting 6th November, 2019

Meeting opened: 6:45pm

Attendance: As per attendance book

Apologies: Natalie Chapman, Jennifer McDonald

INTRODUCTIONS OF INDIVIDUALS PRESENT AT THE MEETING

Sean Conlon- relieving Deputy Principal LHCS

Jennifer French- Metropolitan South, Miranda Office Director Educational Leadership

Davide Foti- Deputy Principal LHCS

Colleen Harris- Principal Inspector with Safe Work NSW

Selena Scott- Inspector Safe Work NSW (chief inspector relating to the inquiry into asbestos at LHCS)

Carolyn Lakiss- Deputy Principal, LHCS

Anand Puttarevana- Treasurer, LHCS P&C Association

Rachel Jones- President, LHCS P&C Association

Lucy Cullum- Secretary, LHCS P&C Association

Elizabeth Hastings- Vice President, LHCS P&C Association (taking additional minutes)

Julie Perkins- Principal, LHCS (present via video link)

Kim Maurer- LHCS parent

Dean Slattery, from Department of Education School Infrastructure was unable to attend but available to speak via phone if required. This was not required.

A representative from Department of Education Legal Branch was invited to attend, but did not attend.

UPDATE ON RECENT ASBESTOS CONTAMINATION AT LHCS

The purpose of this meeting was to provide feedback to parents and the community regarding the recent asbestos contamination at LHCS. The meeting will also provide an opportunity for members of the community to raise concerns about the contamination and its management.

Rachel Jones acknowledged that communication with parents at the school has been frequent and thorough via several channels. Rachel has not fielded any inquiries from parents relating to the contamination. Jennifer French (Director Educational Leadership)

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has also not had any inquiries from parents, which she identified as unusual for a matter as complex and significant as this contamination. Colleen Harris (Safe Work NSW) acknowledged that the limited number of parents present at the meeting was indicative that parents were confident in how the matter has been handled and were not concerned. All parties acknowledged that parent confidence has been maintained by the excellent, quick and proactive manner in which Julie Perkins has managed the contamination and communicated with the community about steps being undertaken to rectify it.

Selena Scott (Safe Work NSW) said that Safe Work NSW is responsible for investigating work health and safety concerns when a matter such as this contamination arises. As soon as notified of this matter, Safe Work NSW has been monitoring to ensure that appropriate procedures have been followed according with the risk. She and Colleen Harris have attended the meeting to ensure that there is transparency around communication between herself and P&C President Rachel Jones. They are also available to respond to any concerns raised by parents from the perspective of Safe Work NSW.

Rachel Jones raised concern about a S271 Form forwarded to Rachel by Selena Scott. The purpose of this form is to allow concerned members of the community to challenge a Safe Work NSW decision not to proceed from an inquiry to a full legal investigation of a potential breach of work health and safety. If an inquiry involves a matter of public interest there is an expectation that information about the inquiry is made transparent and that concerned members of the community are informed of its outcome and given the opportunity to challenge this. Colleen Harris acknowledged that the S271 form should be made available when an inquiry is being closed, but that in this instance it was sent to Rachel Jones prematurely, before the Safe Work NSW inquiry has been completed. Selena Scott said this was because she had believed the inquiry was concluding but that it had remained open when new information (that there would be further testing at the school) was received "at the eleventh hour".

Julie Perkins suggested that it may not have been appropriate for this form to be sent to the P&C. Selena Scott and Colleen Harris disagreed, saying the form could be sent to anyone in the community.

Julie Perkins indicated that the P&C being sent this form has caused significant stress and concern for Rachel Jones and for other parents at the school. Rachel added that she was contacted at work and was told that it was urgent, asked personal questions by Safe Work representatives and informed that transparency was important. The nature of this communication raised alarm and lead Rachel, and others, to feel concerned that Safe Work officers were implying that the matter had not been appropriately managed and that the school may not have been transparent in their communication with parents. The distress and concern caused by the manner of communication was reiterated by Rachel Jones. Selena Scott strongly expressed the view that this is not consistent with information communicated by Safe Work NSW and the Department of Education subsequently.

Selena Scott said she had only attended the P&C meeting as she had been invited and that contact had been made with the P&C to provide information about the Safe Work NSW inquiry.

Jennifer French and Julie Perkins provided the meeting with a summary of how the contamination has been managed. Julie found contaminated dirt on site at the school and immediately contacted Jennifer and Schools Infrastructure who immediately took steps to secure the site and begin working towards the safe removal of the contaminated material. This (Stage 1) has been managed very carefully with lots of testing to ensure that the children and the community are not at risk and is now considered complete. During the course of investigating the contamination, some concern was raised about lead found in the area but this was isolated and not at a reportable level. Aerial imagery has also identified previous delivery of "fill" to the school in a variety of locations over the last 4 years. There is no evidence that this is contaminated material, but Stage 2 will include bore testing of all sites which have been identified from the aerial imagery to ensure that there is no further risk. The bore testing will take place during school holidays and on weekends.

Selena Scott and Colleen Harris informed the meeting that the Safe Work NSW inquiry remains open as some work is still required at the school. The inquiry will likely remain open at least until Stage 2 is underway. To date, Safe Work NSW has not discovered a level of exposure and risk that will require a full legal investigation, but this will not be certain until the matter is closed which may not be until the completion of Stage 2. It was clarified that Safe Work NSW only has jurisdiction over investigating breaches of work, health and safety. A decision by Safe Work NSW not to proceed to full legal investigation does not mean there will not be prosecution over the matter, but this may fall under a different jurisdiction, for example the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Julie Perkins clarified that the EPA has commenced its own investigation.

Julie Perkins wished to thank the community for their support while the school has dealt with the issue. She acknowledged Selena Scott and how well she conducted her inspection when she came out to the school and thanked Jennifer French for being so proactive in mobilising the people and procedures required to manage the issue. The Leadership team at the school were also thanked for their support.

It was acknowledged that the School Infrastructure Newsletters that have been provided to the community have been an accurate reflection of the work that has been done and that the information that has been provided is currently up to date.

A parent queried whether students may have been exposed to the contaminated material prior to it being identified and safely contained. Julie Perkins said this was very unlikely as the contaminated area was not a regular playing area and the material was discovered and contained within a very short period of time. Testing has also suggested that the material was not airborne, thus children could have only been affected if they were directly playing with (scrapping or breaking) contaminated material. There is no evidence that this has occurred.

Guests were thanked for attending the meeting. Selena Scott thanked Julie Perkins for her professionalism and communication with Safe Work NSW. Selena Scott and Colleen Harris left the meeting.

Jennifer French commended the role that Rachel Jones has played in managing the communication with Safe Work NSW and acknowledged the difficult position she had been put in. Work Health and Safety from the Department of Education have provided information that the S271 form should not have been sent. The Department will be following up on this. Julie Perkins acknowledged that it was ultimately good that Safe Work NSW made contact with the community- it further supports the transparency with which the school has been communicating with the community.

Jennifer French left the meeting.

CHANGES TO P&C BYLAWS

Changes to P&C Bylaws, as proposed at the P&C Meeting of 6 September, 2019 and advised to general members via email on September 18, 2019 were voted on. The wording of the proposed changes was read at the meeting, as follows:

6. A general meeting of the association shall be held on the first Wednesday of each month at 6.45pm.

18. The Officers of the P&C Association will be responsible for dealing with and managing any Building Fund which has been granted Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status by the Australian Taxation Office.

Rachel Jones moved a motion to support these changes. The motion was seconded by Elizabeth Hastings. The motion was passed by the members present.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Carols by Twilight, combined with a Night Market on 6th Dec.

K-2 Presentation Day Dec 6th 9:30am

3-6 Presentation Day Dec 12th 9:30am

Yr 6 Celebration Dec 12th (evening)

7-12 Presentation Dec 16th 9:30 (7-9) and 11:30 (10-11)

K-6 Movie Day Dec 16th

Combined Schools Furies band at LHCS Dec 7th.

GENERAL BUSINESS

P&C need information from the school about P&C awards for presentation days.

Julie Perkins will be continuing as relieving principal in 2020. It is currently expected that it will continue for the year but will be confirmed term by term.

Next P&C Meeting the Wellbeing Team would like to attend to discuss changes to the merit system to align K-6 with 7-12 more. There will also be a presentation from students re school mobile phone policy.

Development of the playspace is awaiting confirmation from landscapers regarding how we can spend the \$30000 as a complete stage. A TAFE contact has been involved to

assist in providing the tables and chairs for the space. Mr Ramos is also discussing making some street library boxes for the space.

TREASURER REPORT- Anand Puttarevanna

Total Incoming- \$6482.76

Total Outgoing- \$3891.57

Part of incoming and outgoing is \$3599.76 transferred from the P&C general account to the Community Building Grant account with funds dedicated for the building of the outdoor learning area and playspace.

Allocated funds- \$13500 for meeting space in library (to be spent by end of year)

\$10000 for school van

Balance- \$39369.22 (excluding allocated money)

Please email lhcsbandc@gmail.com with any items to be added to the agenda for the next meeting, prior to the 20th October.

Meeting closed: 8:09 pm

**Next Meeting: Wednesday 4th December 2019 6:45pm
(Networking and Sharing from 6pm)**