It is again with much pleasure that I present my report as Chairman of the Wahroonga Preparatory School to its Annual General Meeting for the year ending 31 December 2011. I think it is my fifteenth.

We live in an age where everything seems to be in continuous need of reform. Whatever we do appears to be wrong, old fashioned or has been overtaken by some technological development making the old clumsy, slow or, in some undefined way, inefficient. We are so busy running from one thing to another that we hardly have time to enjoy the view. Change might be good and exciting but some of the old is worth saving and preserving. The art of change is finding the balance between the old and the new.

Over most of my earlier reports I have mentioned the changes that have been made to Wahroonga Prep. The School has been transformed. The need for change and modernization was seen by the School Councils before my time. It has been the job of the recent Councils working with Mrs Mead to identify the changes that had to be made and to carry them out. I am sure that if we had failed the act, the School would have failed as well.

However, the success of the changes we have made is not measured by the new classes, the new building, the smart boards and all the other physical changes made or introduced into the School. The test is whether we maintained the fabric of the School woven by the generations who came before us. That fabric is found in its sense of community, the challenge it brings to learning, the development of the skills and talents of our young children and their ability to cope and succeed in our fast moving world. The balance we needed lay in preserving those while building the modern Wahroonga Prep around them.

I think we have succeeded. I saw it on the faces and heard it in the expression of thanks and fun of our first year 6 class to graduate from Wahroonga Prep last December. I was delighted to have been invited to their valedictory dinner when they expressed their joy as being part of the School and their confidence about heading off to high school knowing that they have the ability to succeed there. The work we have done has been worth it. For the record,
the class comprised William Bennett, Chanelle Carter-Langdon, Emily Donkin, Amelia Faithfull, James Noakesmith, James Reville, Philippa Rich, Alex Tao and Charles Whale. They, along with Byron Panos our first ever Year 6 student, will always be known as the pathfinders for the expansion of Wahroonga Prep to a K-6 Primary School.

The fabric of the School is broader though than that which I just mentioned. It depends on the skill and dedication of the teachers and all the support staff. That dedication does not end in the classroom but extends to the playground, the sports fields, the clubs and all the other co-curricular activities which the teachers sponsor and support. The Council thanks each of them for that.

The parent support for the School is also an essential part of the success of the School and we continue to rely on it. It takes many forms. It is not just the extra money which is raised from the social functions sponsored by the Parents’ Association but also in their support in the classroom, to assisting with drama and concerts but most of all, in their care and concern for the School and the task it plays in educating their children. Any team needs a good cheer squad and I continue to encourage our parents to be ours. I thank the Parents Association lead by their President last year, Mrs Samantha Pain for their support and hard work.

Finally, I also wish to thank Mrs Liesel Reville, Mrs Laura George and Mrs Genevieve Salisbury for their work on the Council. Their insight and assistance with the work of Council have been very much appreciated and I am sure that they can be well satisfied with the School’s progress while they have been on the Council.

The task ahead of us now remains to adopt and adapt the physical changes we have made to Wahroonga Prep to ensure it meets the challenges that come its way and continues to provide a standard of education of which are most proud and well satisfied.

I now wish the School all the best for 2012.

James Loxton
Chairman, Council of Wahroonga Preparatory School

27 March 2012