



## Chairman's Report - 27 February 2015

I welcome you to the inaugural PESA Annual General Meeting. This is indeed a significant milestone in our new Association.

The formalities of this AGM will see a short Chairman's Report. Stuart Johnston, PESA Treasurer, is to present to the AGM a Financial Report followed by notification of the appointment of Auditor. Phil Doll, Executive Officer, reports on membership. We will then elect three Directors to the Board arising from the rotational nature of Board membership set out in our Constitution.

If you are aware of the history of our fledgling organisation, you would know that PESA was first mooted in 2012 when a few of us, who were already involved in Positive Education in our schools, got together at the University of Melbourne, to explore the possibility of forming an association of schools who shared the common goal of promoting student wellbeing - through the adoption of programs underpinned by the science of positive psychology. Foremost in our minds was an association for all schools, whether they are government, independent or faith-based, regional or metropolitan, large or small.

I am joined on stage by some of my fellow Directors of PESA:

**Roger Bayly**, Deputy Principal, Christ Church Grammar School, WA  
**Stuart Johnston, (Treasurer)** Principal, The Peninsula School, Vic  
**Stephen Meek**, Principal, Geelong Grammar School, Vic  
**Dr Julie Townsend**, Headmistress, St Catherine's School, NSW  
**Scott Watson, (Public Officer)** Principal, Euroa Secondary College, Vic  
**Dr Steve Zolezzi**, Director of Positive Education, Knox Grammar School, NSW

Welcome also to **Phil Doll** from The Peninsula School who serves as our Company Secretary and Executive Officer.

I applaud the Board Members with us today, and those who are unable to be here because of the demands in their own schools:

**Dr Alan Campbell**, Headmaster, Anglican Church Grammar School, QLD and importantly his predecessor **Jonathan Hensman**  
**Anne Johnstone**, Principal, Seymour College, SA  
**Steven Bowers**, Principal, Burgmann Anglican School, ACT.

All have been extremely generous with their time and the not insignificant financial support of their schools. Without their enthusiasm and generosity we would never have arrived at that momentous day, again at Melbourne University, some 12 months ago when the PESA was officially launched.

I acknowledge the support of Stephen Meek, Principal, Geelong Grammar School who retires from the PESA Board at today's AGM and who does not seek re-election. Stephen has provided invaluable guidance and direction.

Phil Doll, our Company Secretary and Executive Officer, has been tireless in his efforts to support PESA and this has been done with the generous endorsement of The Peninsula School.

What a great impetus it was for us when Professor Martin Seligman accepted our invitation to be Patron of PESA. I can share with you that there is no greater advocate for our Association. Professor Seligman has told the whole world about what we have achieved so far and has encouraged other countries to follow in our footsteps. Indeed the formation of PESA was a powerful catalyst for IPEN, the International Positive Education Network, which has very recently been launched. As a member of the IPEN Board I have had the opportunity to help shape this new global network, to share our experiences in Australia and to learn of the amazing work emerging in the field of Positive Education across the globe. It is obvious that PESA and the wonderful work we are doing in our schools is of significant importance.

I also applaud you, the members of PESA – individual and institutional – for joining up through our website, and in so doing helping us to achieve our aims which include:

- Facilitating collaboration amongst teachers, students, researchers and practitioners of wellbeing and positive psychology across all aspects of school life;
- Equipping all educators across all sectors with a deeper understanding of positive psychology's applications in education; and
- Establishing links with other international organisations such as IPEN – The International Positive Education Network.

PESA currently has 56 institutional members, with South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland well represented. Importantly we are well represented with institutional members across all school sectors. On an individual membership basis we have 279 members, with over a third in South Australia and with good numbers in Victoria and New South Wales. Our numbers in Western Australia and Queensland are solid and provide an excellent base for growth. Membership in Tasmania, ACT and NT is yet to take off.

Some of the key developments over the past twelve months have been centred on preparation of an application for charitable status to allow philanthropists to more readily support the work of PESA, trademarking of the PESA brand and logo, encouraging activity in different States to support schools and individuals interested in Positive Education. We have also focussed on the establishment and enhancement of the PESA website and promotion of PESA at a range of conferences.

PESA aspires to build a vibrant network of educators who are willing to share their Positive Education journeys. In order to achieve this aim we know that PESA must be more active in encouraging and enabling networking.

The popularity of our inaugural conference this year has been particularly encouraging for our Board. I go on record in thanking Mathew White as Conference Chair and committee members Jenni Cook, Lisa Parsons, Phil Doll, Lisa Kettler, Colette Bos and Trina Cummins for their great work. I also thank our Keynote Speakers and workshop presenters for their willingness to share and support PESA. Such is the interest in this inaugural conference that I certainly hope an annual PESA conference becomes very much the pattern. Planning is also underway to foster State Branches of PESA to promote more local networking of members. Much of this networking is arranged between schools and individuals but there has been some terrific success with PESA conferences organised at a State level. South Australia hosted two PESA conferences in 2014 that were fully subscribed in short time. Clearly there is an appetite for PESA to organise more of these events.

As we look to the future, PESA must establish a significant membership base, both individual and institutional. Subscriptions are modest but provide valuable income for PESA to run the Association. A larger membership would provide the funds to provide enhanced member support. The Board is also looking to encourage philanthropists to support us. Indeed there are some wonderful opportunities for good men, women and foundations to get behind PESA to support the important work so many excellent and dedicated teachers are doing in their schools.

Simon Murray

**Chairman, Positive Education Schools Association.**

#### **A snapshot of the activity of Positive Education in the schools of the PESA Board:**

**Burgmann Anglican School ACT** has a heart for positive psychology by aiming to engage students across the school to focus on that which is achievable and optimistic, especially in terms of individual and group behaviours. With the support of staff specifically tasked with promoting well-being, students are encouraged to speak up about concerns and acknowledge that which is deserving of praise. Complementing this approach, well-being programs work with students to build resilience to assist in the management of difficulties. The past 12 months have been spent constructing a well-being model specifically for the school. In addition, Jenny Fox-Eades complemented this process in conducting a conference and workshop around her character strengths research.

**Christ Church Grammar School WA** has recently appointed a Director of Boy's Health & Wellbeing to lead and promote the school's focus on elements of Positive Education. This appointment reflects the increasing level of importance that the school places on student wellbeing. It has also been complemented by an expansion of the period allocation to the Personal and Spiritual Development classes that are timetabled from Pre-Primary to Year 10. In February, the school is hosting the first WA PESA Network meeting for staff in local schools to get together to learn more about the various Positive Education programs that are being offered in schools.

**Euroa Secondary College Vic** has continued to pursue its work utilizing the system of School Wide Positive Behaviour Support, with particular emphasis on the development of student capacity to display the College Core Values (Challenge, Empowerment, Resilience, Respect) around all areas of the school. Celebration of examples of behaviours displaying these Core Values persist within the College 'Green' Positive Token Reward System at individual and House levels. Further work in 2015 will centre on developing a greater emphasis, in and out of class, on the identification of character strengths of Euroa's students, together with the conscious acknowledgement that by playing to the school's strengths can greatly enhance wellbeing and levels of achievement.

The **Geelong Grammar School Vic** Institute of Positive Education was launched in 2014 and in its first year trained over 3500 educators representing Government, Independent and Catholic schools from each State and Territory in Australia. New courses, Designing Positive Education and a range of four specific one-day training courses, Character Strengths, Mindfulness, Resilience and Relationship management were added to the school's major four day Discovering Positive Education residential course. During the year, the very encouraging preliminary findings from the evaluation of Positive Education at GGS were received from the University of Melbourne research team. These results make a significant addition to the growing evidence supporting Positive Education programs. The School made numerous presentations at National and International conferences throughout 2014 and was a key partner of the very popular series of Positive Schools conferences held in WA, QLD, NSW and VIC. In 2015, the School's book, *Positive Education: The Geelong Grammar School Journey*, will be published by Oxford University Press.

**Knox Grammar School NSW** has been part of Jennifer Fox-Eades training in strengths, together with Burgmann College in Canberra. Jenny Fox-Eades spent the day with all the Year 9 Wellbeing Staff talking about using strengths in the classroom, followed by a day with all Year 9 students looking at utilising their strengths at school. The school has been liaising with staff from Catholic Schools in the area of integrating Positive Education into their schools and has conducted four days of training with San Clemente High School and has worked with others in blending Positive Education and Jesuit Philosophy. In addition, Knox has been conducting "Positive Psychology for Parents" Seminars and invited Catholic schools to be part of this, including Diocesan Schools, as well as hosting Open day visits from Interstate schools such as Xavier College and TIGS Wollongong. Knox has continued offering its Certification in Positive Education Course to all schools, offering four sessions during 2014.

The focus of **St Catherine's School NSW** in 2014 was on developing new Academic Care programs that include mentors explicitly teaching skills in three key areas in order to build PERMA: Building mental toughness; Building strong relationships; Building character strengths. All girls in Year 7-12 worked regularly on "Hunt the Good Stuff" Journals and staff have adapted and developed age-appropriate activities for use in their teaching skills in each of this area. The school continued to work to develop a clear scope and sequence for the Academic Care programs. Students in Years 9 and 10 had the opportunity to be involved in the Supporting Your Friends research program being undertaken by the NSW Commission for Children and Young People and the NSW Mental Health Commission. Music days and Art activities devoted to improving student positive emotion and a focus on blending positive

psychology into leadership training have been just a few of the school's initiatives in 2014 which will further be developed this year.

Over the past 12 months **St Peter's College SA** has focused on teaching Positive Education across the school. Qualitative student feedback from over 800 students shows significant increases in knowledge and understanding of individual and group wellbeing, from Years 5-12. Student leaders spearheaded the 3<sup>rd</sup> Appreciative Inquiry National Student Leadership Summit for 106 School Captains, with leaders across States and sectors attending. Movember raised thousands of dollars and student leaders created a "Going *beyondblue*" sports round where every boy representing the school wore a blue arm band to raise awareness of mens' mental health. Adelaide Football Club team members visited to teach 'resilience' skills and discuss wellbeing with students. Over 40 staff presented peer-reviewed workshops on wellbeing and literature, computing, sport, pastoral care, the arts and humanities. The School partnered with Melbourne Graduate School of Education to bring the Professional Certificate in Positive Education to Adelaide. In 2015, Springer Press will publish *Evidence-based approaches In Positive Education: Implementing a Strategic Framework for Well-being in Schools*.

During 2014 **The Peninsula School Vic** continued to welcome school staff from across the nation who were interested in hearing more about the school's Positive Education program. Of particular interest to the visitors was Peninsula's Middle School Positive Psychology curriculum and the Positive Teen program offered at Years 9 and 10. They were also keen to hear about how the school has set about promoting a better understanding of the encouragement needed by students to adopt growth mindsets within the classroom and co-curricular programs. In 2015, Peninsula's focus will be on the area of 'academic buoyancy' with the aim of building resilience in students to better allow them to cope with the day-to-day, ups and downs of life on campus.

**Seymour College SA** engaged Professor Lea Waters in 2014 to guide the Management team's efforts in embedding PERMA into the organisational leadership of the College. Professor Waters also worked with senior students and boarders on gratitude exercises, mindfulness classes and the application of PERMA in the classroom and co-curricular programs. Brigadier Rhonda Cornum was also a welcome visitor, delivering workshops on mental strength and wellbeing measurement. The appointment of a Positive Education Coordinator to oversee all aspects of the development of the Seymour Positive Education program is seen as an important step forward for the College.