I’d like to warmly welcome everyone to the final P&C meeting for 2015.

I’d like to specially welcome those who this is their first P&C meeting and I hope it’s enjoyable and insightful and hope you will participate in many more.

If you’re new to the P&C - quick intros to the Exec Team. I’m Sarah Still - Vice President I am joined by, Cameron Curtis - Secretary, Ali Satchell - Building (who can’t be here tonight), Sacha Irvine - Clothing pool, Samantha Lambert - Extra Curricular, Sam Peters - Treasurer, George Palmer - environment, Amanda Ramsay - Class Parent Co-ordinator, Ange Davids - SAKG, Maureen Hallahan - Principal and our non-executive positions - Ian Manoval and Michelle Galper and David Satchell who also can’t be here.

I’ll just take a moment to take you through the order of tonight’s meeting.
First of all we need to approve the minutes of our last meeting held last term.

In a moment we are going to hear from the Executive Team as they give us a rundown on their portfolios.

Next we have some spending decisions that P&C Members (that means you) will be able to vote on (I’ll come back to that in a moment).

I’ll then hand over the Maureen Hallahan to run the elections for the 2016 Executive Team.

It’s a tight schedule, so we will move fairly quickly to ensure we are done by 9pm at the latest.
Therefore, reach in and enjoy the snacks - thank you Rachel and Justin from the canteen.

I’d now like to say a few words and reflect on 2015.

The first activation for the parents of Vaucluse was to get tough on pedestrian safety. Safety banners were installed around the school - thank you Tom Staiger. And parent volunteers manned the pedestrian crossings. Thank you Nikki Veale for bringing colour and passion to this campaign.

It worked - parents have been noticeably more mindful about where they stop and drop. But it’s an ongoing campaign which we will no doubt need to reactivate next year as a new set of parents come to the school.

We welcomed the school year with our annual Country Carnival fair - our biggest and best so far. Raising about $17,000 for the school and setting up the school community vibe for the year. Thank you to all the parents who made the night so vibrant. A special thank you to Ali Satchell, Mads Anderson and Amanda Ramsay for co-ordinating all the moving parts.
Other community events this year - In term 3 we held our first Disco - shaking off winter and finding dance groove. And most recently the walkathon - thank you Sacha Irvine for organising this year’s sports hero themed obstacle course walkathon. So much fun and raising $12,000 towards our school’s WIFI capabilities which has just been installed.

This year we have been successful in improving the school’s built environment - working bees have improved the landscaping and safety of the school. Thank you George Palmer for organising these and always being so quick to be hoisted up a tree - chainsaw at the ready.

The biggest investment the school’s made in 2015 has been for the seating around the soccer ground and fig tree in the infants area. The timber seating completes the soccer field – providing not only a space for our sporting stars - but also for our loyal, rowdy fans. So it provides a large multi-purpose outdoor space.

The seating around the fig tree in the infants area provides another outdoor space – allowing both students and teachers to utilise our beautiful grounds. Thank you to Ali Satchel for driving this project.

It’s important to note - building projects like these do not happen by chance - they require a highly detailed documentation approval process through the Dept of Ed - and rightly so - Ali has given enormous time and energy to see this through. Thank you also to Karen and Glenn Wright of IBW constructions who once again helped our plans become a reality.

Speaking of building and renovation - one of the most frequent and pressing topics for parents - the bathrooms - were improved this year in K-2. We thank Maureen for organising this through Dept of Ed. However - the case is not yet closed and we will be talking about a much-needed soap and dryers solution later this evening.

And then there are the day-to-day activities of the P&C. This year our co-curricular program has expanded and now includes, dance, karate, netball and soccer. These activities not only provide huge enjoyment (as well as health and fitness benefits) for the children, they also extend the school day for parents and raise over $27,000 for the P&C. It’s an absolute all round winner - but like all P&C projects, organising such activities takes considerable time and energy. Thank you Samantha Lambert and Ali Satchell for all your efforts.

The Clothing Pool provides so much more than just uniforms: Sacha, Sally, Jo and Olivia - provide that first important contact for parents new to the school, welcoming them and arresting the parental anxiety we’ve all experienced in those early weeks. They cheerfully get up early, work with antiquated equipment, through a diabolical ordering system, and somehow make it all look easy. The Clothing Pool also makes an enormous financial contribution to the school, and I’d like to thank Sacha, Sally Jo and Olivia for all that they do.

Class parents and Amanda Ramsay - our CP co-ordinator - thank you for emailing and facebooking P&C and school activities as diligently as you do. It’s an enormous service you provide to parents and teachers - and helps our school run that much more smoothly.
So what else has the P&C done? We have invested $10,000 into the class readers; purchased a new interactive classroom whiteboard; supported the SAKG program (Thank you Ange); and financially supported Margaret Nay - who assists students who require more academic or social support, thereby helping our entire school community remain inclusive, stimulated, nurtured and happy.

Wow - that’s a big list. And - the year’s not over yet and we still have more events and investments to make which we will touch on later tonight.

I’d like to take a moment to really thank everyone both on the P&C and in the parent and teacher community who have helped to make this all happen. There are just so many parents - who just get in and help. They see something, read an email, talk to each other, read the school letter, and then just show up to help. To all those parents - we thank you. Please know that your efforts make a big difference to our community and to our children’s experience of school and community.

I’d like to say thank you to Stephanie Atkinson for her leadership of the P&C team for the past 2 years. I’d like to thank Sam Peters, David Satchell, Cameron Curtis, Ian Manoval and Michelle Galper for their contribution to the Executive team.

**Moving on into 2016,**

Later this evening we will all vote on the P&C Exec team for 2016. It’s worthwhile taking a moment to consider the challenges and opportunities they will encounter.

When my family started at VPS 4 years ago - there were 160 kids - I used to talk to my friends about our tiny country town type of school. There was even a fluffy white dog in the year 6 classroom!

But since then our school has grown. Maureen tells me that next year we will have in excess of 400 children. There are 5 grades of school size, and we are now a mid-sized school, rated P3. All dogs, no matter how small and fluffy, are now tied up at the front gate.

It’s important to note - that in the 157 year history of VPS it has never had more students - it’s the biggest it has ever ever been.

So what happened? From my observation - some of it could be explained by the demographic shifts and baby booms of recent years. But this doesn’t explain a tripling of students in 4 short years.

The answer is more likely the combination of strong leadership, awesome teachers, a warm, fun and inclusive community and inspiring, attractive grounds. There is growth at both ends: the kindergarten intake has increased, and more children are staying on to finish years 5 and 6 here, instead of beginning their high school transition early. This is something for which we should feel both proud and grateful. We are all lucky to be here through these expansive
halcyon days. For our children the social, sporting and learning opportunities and benefits are more plentiful.

But with this growth comes the added responsibility of having adequate supplies of books, readers and technology: things the Dept of Education just don’t hand out, and even when they do, never quickly enough. This will be the challenge of the 2016 Exec team: to determine spending priorities that cater for the increasing demands of this ever-changing, wonderful school, and we wish them every good wish for their success.

Thank you

A final housekeeping matter - before we hand over to Maureen and the P&C Portfolios. Our P&C constitution reminds us that as an organisation we need to have members. If you would like to be a P&C member for 2016 you need to write your name and email address in this book and pay up 50c - but if you’re feeling dangerous tonight - go crazy and put in $1!

Being a member of the P&C gives you the right to vote on P&C expenditure. And we will be voting later this evening on some expenditure items to complete this year. It also gives you the right to have all P&C minutes emailed to you - so please include your email as well.

I’d now like to hand you over to Maureen Hallahan - to provide us with a principal’s update.