

Presidents Report – Balmain Public School 2023

We started 2023 in a good financial position due to the past P&C committees' efforts and hard work, including the two major events in 2022, being the Trivia Night and Art Show / Family Fun Day. Our focus for 2023 was delivering on the key priorities of the school and in response to the survey results in 2022.

The first of these projects included the remediation and installation of Miss Pauline's Garden giving the students a green space in the school. This was completed in May by Edible Gardens with assistance from Trista Rose (our Environmental Coordinator) and included additional support from Inner West Council's Nursery and Bunnings Rozelle who donated more than 200 plants.

On the back of a request from the Environmental Warriors we also managed to secure sponsorship from Kobi Shetty MP (Member for Balmain) to include a street library in the Garden for the local community to recycle books and the students to enjoy reading in the passive play space.

In addition to the Garden project, we were awarded a \$10,000 Environmental Grant (thanks to the efforts of Renate Harris (our P&C Secretary)) to progress towards our goal of increasing and ensuring school and community participation in sustainable activities. So, in November, the P&C installed a rainwater harvesting system and rainwater meter to collect rainwater from the main building for the purposes of irrigating the garden. The meter will allow students to monitor the harvested water being used to water the garden and learn about the importance of conserving water. To date, we have used 990 litres of harvested rainwater.

The Uniform Shop and Second Chance Uniform stall had another successful year contributing an estimated \$20,000.00 in profit but unfortunately has struggled with access to inventory and storage challenges. These challenges will need to be a priority and addressed to continue to maintain this service to the BPS community in 2024 so as to keep costs down for parents and carers.

In July we held a working bee involving over 100 volunteers who enhanced the school grounds by planting a range of donated plants, shovelling topsoil, and mulching existing gardens, pruning, beautifying, and cleaning the grounds and fence lines. It was heart-warming to see such an enthusiastic turn out and special thank you to: Kennards Rozelle, Bunnings Rozelle, Planet Ark, Hatch Constructions, Big W, Aussie Home Loans Balmain, Total Constructions and Coles for their donations and continuing support.

We dialled up the fun for the students this year with not one, but two school discos - The Winter Disco and Halloween Disco and by all accounts everyone had a lot of fun dressing up and dancing.

In line with the Aussie culture and our love for open-air cooking we did a whopping six BBQ's this year, raising \$10,000 (that's a lot of sausage sandwiches), with the Referendum Day BBQ our biggest success from a foot traffic and fundraising perspective which also saw some very special visitors during the day including Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Inner West Mayor Darcy Byrne.

During 2023 I attended school award ceremonies, assemblies, and special events, including the official opening of Miss Pauline's Garden and personally I wish to thank the P&C Executive, parent and carer volunteers, local businesses and council for their support in the realisation of that project which was well supported with collaboration from the BPS teachers and staff.

One of the key highlights for me this year was witnessing our continued dedication to our environment and sustainability values by the students in many school initiatives and especially the voice of the Environmental Warriors during Kobi Shetty's (Member for Balmain) visit to the school.



I was extremely proud of the students who presented funding requests to the P&C during the year for various initiatives, who clearly put a lot of effort, thought and detailed information in their presentations.

The P&C, parents, carers, teachers and community raised \$20,000.00 in fundraising in 2023. We applied for a number of grants but unfortunately we were unsuccessful, highlighting a gap in support required preparing and submitting the many grants on offer to the school in the future.

The P&C donated over \$37,000 to the school in 2023 (excluding \$33,203 for the Garden project) for classroom resources, readers, investigative learning materials, sports equipment and a contribution towards the Year 6 gift the much-loved sandpit.

We conducted another survey this year and were amazed by the responses and contributions. I am sure many of these priorities will be included and considered in the P&C's Strategy for 2024.

As I reflect on the year that was, and my second year as President, I am both humbled and grateful to be a part of the amazing community we live in, the fantastic school our children attend, and the generosity and support of the teachers, parents / carers, volunteers, and a dedicated BPS P&C team. The 2023 priorities were a success because of you, and your passion, enthusiasm, and energy.

A special thank you to Principal Maria and the staff at Balmain Public School who have always been accessible and engaging, and an enormous support to the P&C in achieving our common goals for the students.

Lastly, I want to say a huge thank you to the Executive team: Paul, Renate, Karen (who left in December), Trista, Tracy, Kara, Sasja and Yann. I appreciate the endless hours you contributed to make the year what it was, and am grateful for your time, energy, and commitment. To Paul and Renate, thanks for a fantastic 2 years, the laughs and the tears. As we hand the baton over to a new Executive committee in 2024 I wish you all the best and look forward to continuing to support you.