

## **Chair's Report to the FRSA (Tas) Inc at the Annual General Meeting on 23 March 2026**

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Prepared by C Mulder

Dear association members

I am pleased to present the Chairman's report for the school year 2025 presented at our AGM March 2026.

In case you had already forgotten the year 2025 was the 60<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary year for the John Calvin School. We celebrated in style and were reminded once again of God's providential care. The commemorative evening provided a perfect opportunity to remember the schools mission, answering the question as to why our school was established some 60 years ago.

Sometimes we can get so caught up with the daily happenings in the operation of the school that we forget to reflect on why we are so busy with these activities and it is at these times that it's good to step back and see the bigger picture. Let me remind you of our school's mission.

*"Equipping children to be active and discerning servants of God by providing education consistent with the fundamental values and beliefs of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia, aligned with the bible and summarised in the three forms of unity, in order to support parents in fulfilling their baptismal promise to raise their children in the fear of the Lord."*

Although this mission is what drives us and gives us purpose, it still needs to transform from words into actions, and it is some of these actions that I wish to share with you now.

The majority of our school expenditure is allocated to staffing, this is obviously the key ingredient to providing education and once again the board is pleased to report that we have sufficient staff to cover all our needs. That being said the board recognises that we do not have the ideal staffing scenario. So, what is the ideal staffing scenario? This is a question that we grappled with and at the end of 2025 we sought the advice of an independent firm to guide us towards what we should be planning for. A summarised version of the report is attached to these AGM papers. I won't detail all items presented in the report, suffice to say that it has become very clear to the board that at the very minimum we need to employ a deputy principal. The beginning of this year has again highlighted how stretched our staffing needs are. On top of his normal duties our principal was standing in for a staff member on LSLeave, he has now also had to take on the student support and wellbeing role and to really

put the pressure on, a complete submission to the Schools Registration Board is required by late March 2026. This level of effort is simply unsustainable in the long term.

The board is acutely aware that once again in 2025, it was heavily reliant on staff who go beyond what is normally expected and we wish to publicly acknowledge the efforts of all staff, including the relief staff who made themselves available time and time again. The challenges that were placed before you all, were significant and we recognise that if it wasn't for your dedication and commitment, the quality of the education at the JCS would have deteriorated considerably.

We are grateful that we could welcome the Mark Fitzpatrick and Alyce Plug to the teaching faculty and by now we hope they have settled into the groove of school life here in Tasmania. We also have a number of new Teacher assistants, and it has become increasingly apparent that their contributions are essential to achieving intervention at the right stages in the educational journey of our students, particularly in the earlier years.

The board also relies on professional advice from the Principal and the Business Manager, thank you to you both, Dan and Karen, we as board are aware for the many hours that you both expend to ensure that school continues to operate as efficiently and effectively as it can. 2025 was a challenging year in many respects and yet you continued to do your tasks with enthusiasm and commitment. It is our prayer that God will continue to uphold and strengthen you for the year(s) ahead.

As we reported last year, the school's registration board has conducted an audit of our school and has submitted their report. We were somewhat disappointed to only be given a further 12 months registration. Our submission was extensive, and we thought it covered all the required standards; however, the registration board has highlighted some areas that we need to concentrate on. What follows is the summary that they provided at the end of their report

*The John Calvin School demonstrated a commitment to maintaining compliance across the Registration Standards with regard to curriculum, learning and teaching, governance, financial resources and facilities. The school had undertaken a considerable amount of work in refining curriculum documentation and scope and sequences across the grades and had commenced work on structured approaches to supporting literacy in line with the Lifting Literacy mandate. Processes to use data to more effectively inform teaching and learning had been another key initiative.*

*Considerable focus had also been given to processes for student support. A full review of this area had occurred during 2023 and 2024. New procedures had been implemented along with some staffing changes to improve service delivery for Tier 2 and Tier 3 students and for NCCD purposes. At the inspection visit the school was able to provide further elaboration about how it was operating more effectively in this area.*

*Standard 5 - Student Welfare was acknowledged as an area that the school needed to concentrate on. Some additional documentation to support the school's*

*registration application was provided before and after the school visit as requested but in many cases did not meet the required standard to be compliant. It is recommended that the suite of safeguarding policies is reviewed and endorsed as a matter of priority. Once approved, they should be made available on the school website.*

*There was a good focus on ongoing improvement in order to deliver positive educational outcomes for the students and community of the school. The school is strongly supported by the Principal and the Board and parents appear to be satisfied with the quality of educational delivery. However, the Board needs to be very proactive and diligent in its governance responsibilities, particularly in relation to maintaining a strong program of ongoing review and refinement of school policies and procedures to ensure compliance.*

Because this summary assessment has been provided by an independent 3<sup>rd</sup> party, it has become a valuable resource to assist us in focusing on the right areas in the operations of our school.

One of the other tasks that the board was asked to execute was the request of the association to consider constitutional changes that would enable the school to employ teachers who were not members of the Free Reformed Churches. The board appointed a committee to do this work, and their report is attached to these AGM papers. We intend to consider the report at this evening's AGM.

Just 3 weeks ago a small army of volunteers descended onto the Westbury Rd Campus and gave it a real spruce up. It was great to see so many helpers, and it was great to see so much achieved. Let's pray that using this building for the education of your children becomes a reality sooner rather than later, unfortunately in the meantime we must be patient.

Tonight, the Treasurer will once again present a financial report and looking at the numbers, we can be thankful for all that our Father in heaven has provided. Tonight is also the last financial report that our Treasurer, Eric Bakker will present before handing on the reigns to a new Treasurer. Thankyou Eric for the many hours you have given to ensure a strong financial position and the steady hand to keep things in check. Alyssa Michthell Collins has also resigned from the board, Alyssa has been working away tirelessly as our secretary and also as recruitment officer. Her work and contributions to the board have been highly valued and we will miss her. We wish both Alyssa and Eric all the best going forward. We know that you both still have the best interests of the school at heart.

To my fellow board members, this past year was difficult in many respects and I as chairman was responsible for many a late evening, so please accept a public apology! Let's pray that this year, school governance will not consume most of your spare evenings and weekends. I am truly grateful for all that you do and may God bless your endeavours.

We are here tonight as members of an association. A definition for association goes as follows "a group of people organized for a common purpose". Although we have a common purpose, it sometimes appears that we are not that united in our efforts to achieve that

purpose. And as the old saying goes "united we can stand but divided we will fall" please let it be the former rather than the latter. Please remember to bring the school before God in your prayers, bring the principal and his staff before Him. It is only in the strength that He provides that our staff can do the work well and do the work with joy!

In Christ

Colin Mulder