



# ST MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL

*"CHRIST IS EVER PRESENT"*

26 March 2019

## **Artificial Turf Newsletter from The BOT**

### ***Background***

We are 10 days away from our first major PTA fundraising event of the year - A Night On The Tiles Cocktail Party. As you will be aware the funds raised from this evening will go towards the development of an all-weather playing surface on the lower playing field. This project links in with our school's charter, *"To strengthen spiritual, physical, social and emotional well-being (hauora) of students, staff and community,"* and has been the priority focus area in the original and refreshed Masterplan that was first created a number of years ago.

We are lucky at SMCS to have relatively large play areas for the size of our school roll. However, the largest playing area is unplayable for at least 2 of the 4 school terms.

The BoT first looked at options for drainage of the lower playing field 7 years ago. This was the catalyst to develop a 20 year Master Plan for the school so that every dollar we spend is spent wisely, with a longer-term vision for the school site in mind.

Since the Master Plan was first discussed 7 years ago we have made excellent progress on enhancing the play areas for our students: a new senior playground, the turfing of the tennis court and a new junior playground. All three were driven by these areas coming to the end of their usable lives, with the playgrounds funded by the school community and the tennis court by the diocese.

### ***Rationale for the school turf***

Despite the progress we have made, we still do not have adequate space for our students to play during the majority of the school year. With the obligation to continue to repay the school hall loan behind us, we have an excellent and exciting opportunity to move on to our next big project – creating an all-weather playing surface that can be used by all students, before, during and after school throughout the year

In deciding to progress this option, and in consultation with the PTA, the BoT considered the following factors:

- a) Whilst installing drainage and re-grassing the lower playing field will increase the usage it will still not be able to cope with heavy use during the wet winter months. Grass can only handle a certain amount of "traffic" before it becomes damaged and needs time to repair (muddy in winter and cracked in summer).
- b) Artificial surfaces like the one proposed have almost unlimited usage and can be used immediately following rain without any damage or mud being carried around the school. Parents would have noticed the increasing usage of artificial turfs for their kids' sports due to the increased asset utilisation they provide clubs and local councils (practices and games are rarely cancelled).

- c) The type of turf being considered requires limited maintenance once installed. Over its estimated 20 year life, the cost of the turf should be partially offset by lower mowing costs.
- d) The majority of costs are upfront costs for the installation and drainage of the field. This means in a number of years' time when the turf itself becomes worn it will likely be a manageable cost to replace it.
- e) There is additional wear and tear on our other facilities including the school hall, turf and classrooms when our children are unable to use the lower playing field.
- f) The tennis court turf was installed with the intention to play sports such as netball, hockey and tennis. The turf proposed for the lower field is a thicker, spongier turf that is more suited to sports such as soccer, rugby and touch. Currently school winter sports teams like soccer practice in the hall or tennis court, which are hard surfaces that increase the risk of injury to our children.
- g) The intention is to leave the school pool untouched. However, the design of the lower field will be mindful of the option that the use of this area may change over the next 20 years.
- h) The school retains the Kings lawn, which is a natural grass area that can be enjoyed by the students in the summer months.

An all-weather playing field will provide SMCS with facilities that enable year-round exercise to maximise our children's learning in the classroom. Please support the PTA volunteers with their fundraising efforts this year as they seek to raise \$50,000 to make this dream a reality.

If you have any questions about the Masterplan or this project please speak with Ann, myself or any member of the Board of Trustees.

Nga mihi,

Mat Croad

**Chairman** (On behalf of SMCS Board of Trustees)