



KERIKERI HIGH SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES
NEWSLETTER – June 2008

Greetings All.

The highs and lows of life at Kerikeri High School over the last few weeks have been extreme.

It is wonderful, on the whole, when Kerikeri High School makes the news. It is not wonderful when the news item relates to an arson at the school. There was an intentionally lit fire in one of the blocks last Saturday night. While the damage was significant things could have been a lot worse. We are very fortunate a passing member of the public noticed the fire and raised the alarm. The prompt action of the Fire Brigade stopped what could have been far greater damage.

It is unbelievably upsetting for staff, students, the Board, and everyone associated with the School, to think that there is someone out in the community who wishes to intentionally damage the School. All sorts of people associated with the School work incredibly hard to try and provide the best possible facility and education for our children. The fact that someone has tried to disrupt that is criminal in every sense of the word. The School is moving quickly to try and rebuild the damaged area and the Board's thanks to all those who moved so quickly to put out the fire, secure the School and who are working to bring the affected area back into use as soon as possible.

The other low point from the Board's perspective was an assault on a teacher by a student. As mentioned in the last Board newsletter the Board is responsible for the welfare of teachers at the School and an assault on staff will always have serious consequences for the student involved. Thankfully such events, not always uncommon at some schools, are rare at Kerikeri High School. It would be nice to change the "rare" to "unheard of".

On the positive side of the scales it was fantastic to learn that our SUSSED team had a win at the world champs in the States. Closer to home there have been some fine sports results lately. The First XV opened its account for the season with a new haka especially written for the team, which seemed to be suitably inspirational in leading to a 67–0 win over Northland College. It was great to see that after such a large number of students taking part in the School cross-country that the representative teams running in the Northland Schools Cross-Country did so well.

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Midway through last month the Board learned that the Ministry of Education are proposing the single biggest initiative in education for many years. Nine government departments are involved in its planning. The initiative, called Schools Plus, involves some fundamental change with massive implications for Kerikeri High School. It includes proposals such as students staying on the School role until they are 18 whether or not they remain at the School or are involved in work for external employers. Some of the potential consequences are mind boggling and extraordinarily, having found out about the initiative by chance (as opposed to through the Ministry) we had until 31 May to formulate and deliver submissions. Like Queen Victoria we were not amused.

In any event a submission was sent within the required time frame, incorporating the Board's concerns about the lack of consultation, the unacceptable time frame, and initial concerns and comments which were able to be raised given the limited information to hand. The Board anticipates Schools Plus will become a well known phrase in this newsletter in the coming years.

Arson, assault and ambush aside the School seems in good spirits. The Board is grateful to all the teachers who have generally with good grace and humour accepted the budgetary restrictions we have been forced to impose this year and are getting on with the business of teaching our students. Thanks also to all staff, parents and helpers who give their spare time to the School and its students. Sometimes it may feel your efforts are not appreciated. They are!

On the topic of budget the Board, possibly in conjunction with the PTA, will be giving a brief presentation one evening with a view to explaining some of the mysteries of education funding. For any parent that doesn't think that the school contribution makes a difference such an evening might be an eye opener. On that subject, while it may become a little monotonous, if you haven't already paid the annual contribution please remember that every dollar received in some way goes to help your child or children's education. It does make a difference.

Naku noa
The Board