



**4 December 2015**

## **An update from your Board of Trustees**

### **Gully Update**

Most of you will be aware that we have been working on the asbestos soil contamination issue in the gully. This issue was made significantly more complicated by geotechnical / land stability issues in both the adventure playground and the (currently fenced off) eastern gully area.

The adventure playground geotechnical issues have been substantially reduced by installing drains to ensure the ground water levels are reduced, and the asbestos soil contamination issues have been addressed with some new permanent barriers that isolate the small areas of contamination.

This work was completed by the Ministry in January 2015, and the adventure playground has been open since then, however the fences were installed until the geotechnical and contamination issues in the rest of the gully could be resolved.

The remaining geotechnical risk in the adventure playground would arise only where we have periods of very heavy rainfall, and a simultaneous earthquake! The adventure playground has survived a large number of earthquakes over the last 25 years without any known impact on people at all. Now the risk has been reduced by the drainage. To reduce the remaining risk further occasionally, after heavy rain, the gully will be temporarily closed in case there is an earthquake.

We are very pleased to advise that the Ministry of Education are currently engaging contractors to remediate the remainder of the gully this summer holidays. This work will involve building two retaining walls (similar in look to the adventure playground walls - however they may be largely beneath the ground), burying the fairly small amount of contaminated soil deeply behind the new retaining walls, then finishing the land around the retaining walls with appropriate contouring and planting. The fences will be removed.

The gully will be back for full school use by the beginning of Term 1, 2016. It will look pretty much how it always has, but it will be safer. What the school does with it from then is up to us - the children, teachers, parents and others who are the Kelburn school community.

### **Building update**

Since the Ministry advised that they had made a budget commitment to proceed with the redevelopment of the school, we have been working with the Ministry to design a complete refurbishment of the main classroom building, administration block and hall. Refurbishment of the main classroom block was required as it was expected to cost about half of what a new building would cost.

Working within an existing building, with its H shaped floor plates with large exterior gaps and so many structural walls that had to be retained, is very challenging. The designers have done an outstanding job to deliver an innovative learning environment within those physical constraints, and the Ministry entitlement rules that govern how much physical space the school is allowed to have. The Board is very pleased with the high level design for the refurbishment of the buildings.

However, the refurbishment design was recently found to cost significantly more than the Ministry budget commitment. The Ministry and the Board have had to carefully consider what each can do about this. We are currently waiting to find out if any additional budget will be allocated, or whether the current scope of refurbishment works will need re-consideration.

If and when the Ministry approve the budget to proceed, we will engage with you so the community's views can be reflected where possible as the high level design concepts are developed into final designs.

We would like to thank the Ministry for continuing to work closely with us on this rather challenging project. We would also like to thank the school community for your patience and support as we have worked towards solutions to the gully and the building issues. We will continue to keep you informed of progress.

We appreciate that this has taken a long time. However, we remain firmly of the view that getting the best possible solution for the school community, one that we expect will last for many decades, is far more important than getting a quick result.

If you have any queries, please give me a call or send me an email, or contact any Board member. We also hope to see many of you at the school assembly at 11am on Friday 11 December.

Kind regards

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