

# SHC Heartbeat

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart

Issue 12  
August 2024



## Opening of Mission House

Tēnā koutou e te whānau

On Saturday 20 July at 6.00am we gathered to celebrate the opening of our new Mission House and blessing of the Kaitiaki gifted by Mana Whenua. This moment marked not just the completion of a project, but a continuation of a cherished legacy and the beginning of a new chapter in our community's story.

A special thanks to Mana Whenua Te Āti Awa ki te Ūpoko o te Ika and Wiremu Moeahu for the generous gift of the kaitiaki "Te Iho o te Manawa" (The Beating Heart), it is such a beautiful and treasured taonga. The kaitiaki at our front entrance has enabled us to transform this to a project that reflects the land it rests on and the young wahine of Te Ati Awa the Sisters came to serve. The morning began with a blessing of the kaitiaki, then Archbishop Paul blessed the entire building. We all followed the Archbishop and prayed in each space. The morning concluded with kai then members of the community came for tours throughout the morning.



One of our loyal and hardworking Mission Trust Board Members, Michael McDonnell, gave a speech which I have included to give the background to this project:

"In 1992, the Sisters established the MCLHTB as the College's proprietor and the Trust Board assumed the role previously undertaken by the Mission Sisters Order, with responsibility for the supervision and maintenance of the College's special Catholic character in accordance with the Private Schools' Conditional Integration Act and the College's Integration Agreement. The ownership of all the land and buildings comprising the College premises was at the same time vested in the Trust Board as Proprietor.

The Trust Board then purchased the convent from the Sisters in May 1993, and undertook extensive remodelling of the building and it was opened later that year as part of the College and named "Mission House."

The name "Mission House" has special significance.

In her Principal's Report for 1993, published in the College yearbook, the then Principal, Sister Valerie Lawson had this to say:

'The name is significant. It links the school to the Mission Sisters whose home it was for twenty years and (it links the school) to Euphrasie Barbier (the foundress of the Mission Sisters Order). Her strong sense of Mission brought her to New Zealand to be involved in education. (Mission House) will remain a place of learning and a place where community and faith will be fostered.'

It is fitting that we recall these words today.

In 1996, a fourth floor was added to Mission House to provide much-needed additional teaching spaces in the face of a steadily increasing student roll.

In September 2017, Mission House had to be closed at short notice, when the Trust Board received structural engineering advice that it was at risk of possible collapse in the event of a severe earthquake. We were also advised that the estimated cost of the seismic strengthening required to retain the building for College use would exceed the estimated costs of complete demolition and construction of a replacement building. The Trust Board had no other option but to demolish Mission House in order to ensure the safety of staff, students and visitors and rebuild.

The former Mission House contained nine teaching spaces as well as the College's administration offices and staffroom. Contractors completed the demolition and cleared the site by mid-January 2018 and to cope with the loss of nine teaching spaces, six relocatable classrooms were found and moved into place on the College's netball courts. I acknowledge here, the great work done by the Trust Board's building consultant, Ian Rattray of IR Consultants, who is here today. Ian quickly located these classrooms and ensured they were on-site and ready for the start of the 2018 school year.

The Trust Board was then faced with finding the funds to rebuild Mission House. This was no easy task. It was not until August 2020 that we received the welcome news from the New Zealand Catholic Education Office that NZCEO Finance Ltd would provide debt servicing funding for the rebuild, of up to \$6.6 million dollars from the National Attendance Dues Pooling Scheme (Te Puna Waihangā). Then, in June 2023 the Trust Board was successful in its case for further funding assistance from NZCEO by way of a grant of \$1.4 million from the Policy One Funds Emergency Common Pooling Scheme (Te Puna Tamata). The total rebuild cost is expected to be \$9.685 million with the balance coming from the Trust Board's own Policy One funds.

I wish to record here the Trust Board and College's grateful thanks to Bill Davies, who is here today. Bill retired as the Trust Board's Chairperson in February this year after serving seven years in this role. As Chairperson, he led the successful negotiations with the NZCEO for the funding to build the new Mission House."

IR Group and Maycroft Builders with Robinson Architects have created a beautiful 'New Mission House'. This is home to administration, the Business Manager, Senior Leadership, the library, staffroom, and four classrooms as well as numerous other offices and staff workrooms. We are so proud of what has been created for us and we are especially proud that one of the architects Hannah Kelly is one of our own Alumni.

Sacred Heart College is very grateful to the Mission Trust Board for their bravery, vision and dedication to this build. The current Trustees are: Ms Irene Newrick, Mr Terence Bartlett, Mrs Philippa Bartlett, Mr Steve Bryan, Mr Joseph Howell, Mr Michael McDonnell, Mr Rowan Southee, Mrs Tanya Wilson, and Mr John van Woerkom.

This is the first stage completion of the refurbishment of Sacred Heart. The Trust Board has included a letter to the community in this newsletter outlining the next steps in the College's development.

**Katrina Kerr-Bell, Principal**



Above (L-R) Past Principals Ms Lisl Prendergast (2000-2014), Sister Valerie Lawson (1980-2000), and current principal Mrs Katrina Kerr-Bell (2024-)



## Mission Colleges Lower Hutt Trust Board

(Proprietor of Sacred Heart College Lower Hutt)

2 August 2024

Dear Parents, Students and Whānau,

### **Property Update**

Over the last 10 years, the Mission Colleges Lower Hutt Trust Board (MCLHTB) has had a strong focus on the rebuilding of Mission House and after the recent opening, students and staff are enjoying all the benefits of this beautiful new building.

The MCLHTB is responsible for the maintenance of the school's buildings and are ever mindful of keeping all buildings safe and well maintained. We, as a Board are also responsible for the funding of capital works onsite and we are pleased to advise that over the next 10 years, our focus will be on the following work:

- Old library – strengthening and refurbishment for the occupation of the Art Department
- Replacing the current roof of Euphrasie House
- Refurbishment of the interior of Euphrasie House.

Given the extensive capital projects planned for the College over the next decade as well as a financial commitment from the MCLHTB, the Board in close consultation with the Mission Sisters and school, have come to the difficult decision to deconstruct the existing chapel to ground level and not to rebuild. Currently the chapel is unusable due to being deemed an earthquake risk back in 2017 and asbestos will also need to be removed from the Chapel ceiling and windows. This work is scheduled for the December/January school holidays.

The MCLHTB recognise the importance of maintaining the College's Special Catholic Character and will, along with the Principal and staff, give special consideration to creating a sacred space for staff and students within the school grounds. We will endeavour to keep staff and the community updated on this plan.

God Bless

The Mission Colleges Lower Hutt Trust Board