



Diocesan e-News

ST THOMAS' SAYS GOODBYE TO PRINCIPAL AFTER 15 YEARS

After fifteen years as principal of St Thomas' Primary School and thirty-nine years in the Catholic education system, Terry Harney thanked the Terang community for its support when he retired at the end of last year. An afternoon tea and a barbecue dinner was served to parents, students and community members as a way to acknowledge Mr Harney's work.

After working as a teacher and principal across several schools in the district, including St Patrick's Primary School in Koroit and Our Lady Help of Christians Primary School in Warrnambool, he jumped at the opportunity in 2002 to become a principal at the school he once attended. "It was a challenge I thought I would enjoy," Mr Harney said. "It was a great help initially, having established relationships with them (the townspeople) already."

He described becoming the school's principal as a challenge which quickly grew into a passion for helping the students grow. "I think the greatest joy of all is making a difference to the lives of children," Mr Harney said. "It's a great pleasure when I see the children as adults and can share a conversation with them."

He said he and his wife, Marie, would resettle to Warrnambool and take a break. Mr Harney planned to travel, fish and play golf, as well as regularly return to Terang in order to stay in touch. "We have life-long friends here and we will miss the people and the children," Mr Harney said. "I believe very strongly that school is not just a place of learning, but an important part of the local community. We have maintained positive working relationships with the local schools. Our community is very lucky to have highly effective schools."

Looking back on his time at St Thomas', a particular highlight was securing \$950,000 in funding towards building a roof for the undercover area under the Federal Government's 'Building the Education Revolution' grant program. "We have seen many changes here at St Thomas", Mr Harney said.

He thanked the Terang community, the school's staff and the parents for their help over the past fifteen years. "I am very appreciative of the support provided by parents and members of the wider community," Mr Harney said. "It has been a great joy and privilege to have worked in Catholic education for such an extended period."

He also thanked the Catholic Education Office for its help. "The basis of Catholic education is the values of the Gospel, which are modelled and reinforced in all Catholic schools, including love, dignity, respect, justice and community," Mr Harney said.

Parents and Friends group president Kirsten Pekin said Mr Harney had made the school a "happy place" for the children. "He's created a really great learning environment," she said. "He will be sorely missed. He is highly respected and liked by all of the students. We wish him all the best."



Moving on: St Thomas' Primary School 2016 Year 6 students wish principal Terry Harney the best for his retirement.

Article courtesy of the Terang Express, text and photo by Matthew Sims.