



Chairo
Christian School

Serving on the Board

Last Revision: September 2018



ARE YOU CONSIDERING JOINING THE BOARD?

Maybe someone has asked you to think about joining the Board at Chairo, or even indicated that they would like to nominate you for election.

Perhaps you see the importance of maintaining and even improving the Christian education that Chairo offers and feel that God is prompting you in this direction ... or you simply value the education being provided for your children and feel that you should volunteer to contribute in some way.

Many Christian men and women have served on the Chairo Board since before the school commenced in 1983, and we are indebted to them for their commitment, vision and sacrifice.

It is essential—for the future of Chairo and Christian education in the region—that current and future Chairo parents follow in their footsteps.

WHO SHOULD SERVE ON THE BOARD?

Those considering joining the Board should have a high degree of passion for Christian education, a heart to serve the Lord in this capacity, and a desire to see young people being thoroughly prepared to serve Him in the world.

They need to be prepared to serve the whole-school, to give due attention to all business of the Board, and to seek the best for all students.

While previous experience as a Board member and relevant professional experience and/or qualifications are highly desirable, they are not essential.

Board members should have or be able to develop a clear understanding and acceptance of accountabilities; possess problem-solving, decision-making, interpersonal and communication skills; and be able to manage matters of a sensitive and confidential nature.

WHAT IS THE LEVEL OF COMMITMENT?

Serving on the Chairboard is a privilege and presents a wonderful opportunity to contribute to the direction and success of the school, and to the cause of Christian education.

However, it is also a responsibility that should not be entered into without serious thought, discussion and prayer. Being a Board member is a voluntary position and entails a significant commitment of time, effort and energy.

It requires individuals to contribute their personalities, interests, gifts, training and experience to the collective Board, and to be willing to grow in wisdom, knowledge, understanding and capacity as they serve.

Joining the Board will probably require a review of other discretionary commitments in the interests of maintaining a good life-balance.

HOW MUCH TIME IS REQUIRED?

The Board generally meets eight times each year on Thursday nights for approximately three hours, plus there is several hours of reading of Board documents to be completed in the week leading up to each meeting.

In addition, the Board holds a whole-day meeting for development and planning on one Saturday each year, plus there are Association general meetings in May and November.

There are various other events that Board members are asked to attend when possible, including early in the year at each campus with new parents or families in general (arrangements vary across campuses).

Most Board members serve on at least one ongoing committee, although this is not an expectation in the first year on the Board.

Some Board members may also be asked to sit on interview panels for executive level positions or other ad-hoc committees or panels, or conduct interviews with applicants for full membership of the Association.

WHY SERVE ON THE BOARD?

In addition to the obvious benefits for the Chairo community of Christians with a commitment to Christ-centred education serving on the Board, there are also various potential benefits for those who sit the Board.

Serving the Lord as a Chairo Board member provides the following opportunities:

- Using your skills and experience, obtaining training and developing your gifts
- Gaining a greater insight into how Chairo is governed and managed
- Increasing your own thinking and awareness of Christian education
- Helping establish the strategic priorities and direction of the school
- Serving alongside others in unity to achieve the school's purposes
- Working in partnership with teachers, other parents and the school leaders
- Attending conferences and learning about (and from) other Christian schools

A WORD FROM A BOARD MEMBER

Kerrie Jackson joined the Board at the start of 2017 and believes that serving as a Board member is an excellent way of supporting and partnering with staff members in their roles.

'I now understand so much more of what happens to enable the school to run so well', explained Kerrie, 'and I have learned (and am still learning) about good governance.'

'Because of my Board involvement, I am realising more deeply how blessed we are in this country to have the freedoms that we do to have a school like Chairo, and how careful we need to be to keep and defend those freedoms', said Kerrie.

Kerrie also commented that it has been wonderful to learn more about the other campuses, and to witness the way they are so valued by their families and communities.

In addition, she has appreciated hearing about why families choose Christian education, and this has helped further develop her appreciation for what Chairo provides.

HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE?

There are multiple steps that you can take in order to make an informed decision regarding serving on the Board. This document is a good starting point, followed by the *Governance at Chairo* booklet and the *Board Charter* (both available on the Governance page of the school website).

Having conversations with one or more current (or recent past) Board members is also essential.

Beyond that, there are multiple policy documents and Board-related books that will all help to build a picture of what the Board does and the level of commitment involved for individual Board members.

Books include *Community Governance* by Resolve Consulting, *The Cause of Christian Education* by Richard Edlin and *Surviving & Thriving as a Safe, Effective Board Member* by Our Community.

Policies include *Board Responsibilities Policy*, *Board Conduct & Professional Practice Policy* and *Finance Policy*.

SOME BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Chairo is a non-denominational, not-for-profit, independent Christian school with more than 1,600 students from Kinder to Year 12 attending campuses at Drouin, Drouin East, Leongatha, Pakenham and Traralgon. Chairo has almost 300 employees, assets of more than \$60 million and an annual turnover in excess of \$25 million.

Over the years, many families have embraced Chairo's approach to education, partnership and community. While spread across multiple campuses, Chairo is one school with one mission, one vision, one set of values, one Association, one governing board and one leadership team.

The Warragul District Parent Controlled Christian School Association Inc., which trades as Chairo Christian School, is one of more than 38,000 not-for-profit incorporated associations in Victoria. Our Association is therefore structured in the same way as most clubs and community groups, albeit on a larger scale than many other incorporated associations.

Our *Statement of Rules* guides how the Association operates, sets out the purposes of the Association, serves as a contract between the Association and its members, and lists the rights and responsibilities of members and office bearers.

