The driving influence of change at Pembroke is the challenge set in our School Aims.

The Pembroke School Aims are:
1. To offer our students the means to develop a broad and deep knowledge base, thus enabling them to act effectively as well-informed citizens.
2. To create a dynamic learning community that encourages self-management, curiosity, intellectual rigour, enjoyment, innovation and the realisation of each individual’s potential.
3. To facilitate the social, physical and emotional development of each student, emphasising personal growth, integrity, respect for differences in people, resilience, an appreciation of the environment, a sense of social responsibility and care for others.
4. To encourage the exploration of students’ spiritual values and their power to make ethical decisions.
5. To promote thoughtful, respectful and informed participation in the community locally, nationally and internationally, with an emphasis on seeking justice for all.

Our Pembroke School Aims should be more familiar to us now. All sections of the School Community—students, staff and parents—have been engaged in developing the Pembroke Improvement Plan over the last 18 months. Groups and individuals were encouraged to present a view on how well Pembroke meets the challenges presented in our aims. From the responses gathered, a plan has been built. It is a plan for the future that will safeguard that which is done well, challenge that which can be improved and innovate in areas where no one approach is obvious or tried and true. It is a plan to encourage a great School to be better.

One of the tasks faced while developing the Pembroke Improvement Plan has been to appreciate the challenge of our aims, not just as motherhood statements but also as inspiration for improvement and call to action.

It has been argued that there is a need for some slight wordsmithing of the aims; however, they remain strong statements and capture within them a responsible, energetic and holistic educational experience that focuses on students as individuals, members of a school community and citizens of the world.

The School Aims demand that all students are exposed to deep and broad knowledge, open and honest self and community reflection and a healthy and joyful life built on a desire to improve both themselves and the world in which they live. To do this, the aims emphasise that students must develop resilience and self-motivation.

The aims also present a clear educational challenge to the School, to educate holistically—to acknowledge in word and deed the interconnectedness of all aspects of student life and how they interrelate and influence one another. The plan ensures that we continue to prepare programs across the School that reflect this by offering a variety of educational experiences and teaching and learning opportunities for students to engage their world intellectually, socially, physically, creatively and spiritually.

The changes in the plan can best be described within the following six areas of school life: student life, teaching and learning programs, staff development, school community development, school property and plant and school systems and structures. The plan is comprehensive in scope and detailed in its consideration of improvements. In some cases answers are prescribed, while in others possibilities are outlined that are to be explored. In some cases ideas are fully developed, while in others they are presented as concepts to be considered.
A publication of the key features of the Pembroke Improvement Plan will be available to our community in the near future, particularly to benefit those who were not able to come to the development meetings. I will take the opportunity to keep all in the community informed about how we are progressing against the plan.

We have already begun to tackle some of the tasks it identifies. Recently, for example, our staff have been considering and debating approaches to critical reflection on teaching and the effective uses of student data to help generate ideas for improvement. Also, key staff members have been developing ideas for improved communication, including an electronic community portal and setting a School strategic direction for the ongoing development of information and communication technology.

There has also been some reorganisation of staff leadership positions from 2013 to improve our ability to meet future challenges. The most notable is the appointment of Mr Kym Lawry as Director of Administration. This is a new position that will focus on leading improvement in our organisational systems and procedures and our calendar of events, both short and long term. It will also take oversight of the impact felt by students, staff and parents of the realities of a holistic education as they engage in all manner of opportunities provided by the School across days, weeks, terms and years. In 2013 our support for staff will also be boosted and improved through a team focused on human resource development, led by Mr Houey and Dr Daws.

In 2013 SACE coordination and School-wide curriculum management will be divided. Ms Ann Rayson will become the Head of SACE, a significant role in itself and one that has traditionally been attached to the Dean of Studies. The creation of this role will allow more time for the Dean of Studies, Ms Petherbridge, to concentrate on School-wide curriculum development. Also in 2013, Ms Grandison will become our inaugural Coordinator of Indigenous Students.

A Development Committee and a Publications Committee have been reinstated, in the case of the Publications Committee after a hiatus of many years. This committee will focus on improving our communication in published form, which is a constant and important task. The Development Committee will concentrate on connecting all our community groups and members together, to make it easier to harness their support to common causes and opportunities for and on behalf of the School and its related associations. We are a fabulously diverse and incredibly talented community capable of sharing and giving much and developing a united approach to activities and events to promote the School and share the excitement of our future is fundamental to the continued success of Pembroke School.

Exciting times are ahead—just as our School Aims challenge them to be. I look forward to sharing them with you.

Mr Thomson
Principal