

14 September 2023

Dear St Paul's parents and community

The upset and confusion of the last two days at St Paul's is deeply regrettable. It is a situation that was not wished for nor deserved by the school community. Before we move on to the future, however, I believe it is important for you to have a fuller understanding of the recent past.

We need to understand how this unfortunate circumstance came about and for you to hear directly from me, in my role as Chair of the Anglican Schools Commission (ASC).

The decision not to extend Dr Paul Browning's contract was made by the ASC earlier this year and Dr Browning was informed in March. Dr Browning was understandably unhappy and sought to challenge the decision. This has prolonged the process.

Such a decision was not made lightly. There was a lengthy and broad consultative process which sought the views of a range of education experts and leaders within the church. The School Council was included and a survey conducted.

The School Council was disbanded in August this year on the recommendation of its Chair who advised that the Council was no longer working harmoniously and productively.

The decision of the ASC not to renew Dr Browning's contract was difficult. Essentially it was about recognition of the fact that the relationship between employer and employee had broken, making Dr Browning's employment untenable.

For some time there had been a drift in alignment between the leadership of the school and the ASC. Disagreement around policy and procedures along with other more fundamental differences in purpose and vision for the school, contributed to this.

I have read Dr Browning's communication to you, and read and listened to media reports which have suggested that part of the reason for our decision not to renew Dr Browning's contract was about the handling of compensation for sexual abuse survivors. This issue has not been part of the contract discussions. To suggest that it has played a part is disingenuous and a distraction.

It is not appropriate to go into further detail about what should be confidential matters.

Anglican Schools Commission

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Be assured that the Anglican Church and the ASC want the very best for St Paul's. Why ever would we not! As with any organisation, the needs of the School change over time and leadership should be renewed to ensure the necessary perspective and energy for the future.

We acknowledge that Dr Browning has achieved many milestones during his 15 years at the School. His passion, creativity and innovation has led to the opening of the Centre for Realms of Thinking.

But we also know that even successful journeys must eventually reach their conclusion, and we wish to thank Dr Browning for his service and contribution during his time at St Paul's.

Next term Mr Simon Gipson OAM will be interim Principal while we undertake the search for a permanent head. Mr Gipson has a reputation as an outstanding educator and experienced Principal from Victoria. We will communicate more about Mr Gipson in coming weeks.

In the meantime, I thank you for your patience and understanding at this difficult time.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeremy Greaves', with a small cross symbol to its left.

Jeremy Greaves
Chair, Anglican Schools Commission