

**CONCORD HIGH SCHOOL PARENTS & CITIZENS**  
**CONSIDERATIONS & PROPOSAL FOR REVIEW OF OPERATION OF**  
**P&C RUN UNIFORM SHOP FOR 2017 & BEYOND**

**UNIFORM SHOP OPERATIONAL SETUP & HISTORY**

The Concord High School (CHS) Uniform Shop is owned and operated by the CHS P&C Association and currently employs a Uniform Shop Manager, Mae Czernkowski, on a casual contract to manage the Uniform Shop, including providing items of high quality at competitive prices, providing efficient and flexible service for the purchase of uniforms, seeking quotations, ordering, fitting, inventory and cash control.

The Uniform Shop Manager is employed by the CHS P & C Association and reports to the CHS P&C Uniform Shop Sub-Committee for day to day operational matters concerning the Uniform Shop and in turn to the CHS P&C Office Bearers for employment, HR and other personnel matters.

The Uniform Shop has historically and is to date operated as a not-for-profit business by the CHS P&C Association with the Uniform Shop Manager to provide an on-site service to the school community and to raise funds for the school.

Whilst it is a not-for-profit business it is really important to note that the CHS P&C and its Office Bearers bear the same tax and legal responsibilities and liabilities with regards to its record keeping, method of operation, employment relations, etc. as any other business.

**RESULTS & RECOMMENDATIONS OF PARTIAL AUDIT 2015/1016**

CHS P&C Association was without a Treasurer for the years 2013, 2014 and partial 2015 and, therefore, the audits of the P&C Accounts as required by law and by the P&C Federation were not able to be completed.

As advised, and agreed by the P&C Federation with Ms Emma Wakefield, P&C President, due to the fact that many of the records prior to the incumbent committee being appointed were missing or incomplete the P&C Federation agreed to accept an audit is for the 5 months from 1/9/15 to 29/2/16.

A partial audit for 2015/2016 was, therefore, completed.

This audit identified a number of absolute and firm recommendations full details of which can be found in the Audit Report. There were a number of recommendations and actions required that, on further review by the Office Bearers, caused concern as to the availability of the volunteer resources, time and expertise available both at present and in the future to successfully complete these tasks.

These were in the main:-

- Recommendation to research, customise, install and monitor an accounting software to assist in maintaining and producing financial records;
- To complete GST registration with the ATO which has to be made which, in turn, makes it important to have accounting software to assist with BAS reporting;
- To transfer the responsibility of producing the financial statements, as outlined in the Uniform Shop Sub-Committee by-laws and as per the P&C Federation guidelines, to the members of the Uniform Shop Sub-Committee from the Treasurer;
- To consider an on-line sales package to allow uniform to be purchased on-line and also will help minimise cash handling and inventory monitoring;
- To review the uniform supply and sale costs to allow for the GST adjustment and to also produce a greater margin.

We know in addition to the above, a significant refit of the Uniform Shop is required both for efficiency and improved Work Health Safety (WHS) and that a WHS audit also needs to be completed as required by law.

The audit also identified that the Uniform Shop had operated at a loss for the period audited although it was acknowledged that there were a couple of extra-ordinary factors in this period affecting the bottom line. A clearer picture will perhaps show at the next Audit (February/March 2017). A simple review of the Uniform Shop indicates it has operated at a profit over previous years, however, not all cost obligations were met prior to 2015 – in particular, Superannuation and Worker's Compensation insurance. It should also be noted we are still to full insure out current stock estimated at @ \$50k – a current possible shortfall in insurance cover of @ \$19k.

The Office Bearers on reviewing the above tasks to be completed, the resources and time required (both voluntary and paid), the not insignificant liability currently resting on Office Holders and the P&C as employers and as volunteers mostly without retail or employment management experience, decided to talk with other local High School P&Cs as to how they ran their Uniform Shops and what systems they had in place.

A survey of Strathfield Girls, Homebush Boys and Ashfield Boys revealed that, for a number of years, they had their uniform supplied by Lowes Burwood Plaza. Burwood Girls have just recently completed a comprehensive review exercise and have decided to move to Lowes. From our initial contact with Burwood Girls the reports are that this arrangement will provide them with a rebate to the school to an amount equal to or similar to that they earn from running the Uniform Shop. Significant funds will be released to the P&C and, ultimately, the school in terms of existing stock purchased by Lowes.

#### **PROPOSAL FOR REVIEW OF OPERATION OF UNIFORM SHOP**

This prompted the Office Bearers to put forward for consideration by the CHS P&C Association a proposal to carry out a review of the operation of the Uniform Shop and its future - whether this is to continue to run a Uniform Shop with a full 2-3 year plan of the resources and work required to keeping this running to profit and within its legal and tax responsibilities, to work with CHS in Partnership with a third party such as Lowes or to hand back the Uniform Shop to CHS for them to tender to a third party or any other suggestion not currently considered.

This proposal to review the future of the Uniform Shop does not in any way reflect negatively on the wonderful work carried out by Mae, our current Uniform Shop Manager, the Uniform Shop Sub-Committee, the Office Bearers and other P&C members past or present involved in the running of the Uniform Shop.

Nor does it reflect negatively on the wonderful service the Uniform Shop has provided to date to the school and the funds raised over the years.

It does, however, acknowledge that the picture has and is changing with more parents having to go back to work and, therefore, an increasingly limited volunteer pool. Our current Office Bearers, committee and general volunteers are very committed but it has to be noted it has taken many hours of time to get us to the position we are in today having been without a Treasurer for a few years.

As anybody involved in a P&C over the years will know, liabilities and legal responsibilities have tightened over the years. We now have to be fully insured as a P&C across a number of areas, for every event we run, for all volunteers to have Working With Children Checks (WWC), etc., etc. We also absolutely have to ensure we are operating to comply with all tax and legal implications and that we have the volunteer knowledge and experience to ensure continuity on this front. We are not sure that we will be able to get volunteers with the necessary knowledge and experience, and most importantly, the time in the future to

work to this level as it is quite significant. If we increase our paid staff to handle these issues, this will impact our bottom line but we still need volunteers to provide a cross check, manage and provide reporting and back up (and ultimately, to bear the liability).

It also acknowledges that we also need to look at improving our services with the offering of on-line services and payment for uniform shop supplies and consideration of whether we are best to do this.

The P&C Office Bearers in putting forward this proposal are also acknowledging that a huge amount of work and volunteer hours have been dedicated to getting our Treasury, Audit and other financial paperwork in order and are required in the future for the running of the Uniform Shop that we propose might better be used in the future for other fundraising, social and community activities such as Harmony Day, Working Bees for the proposed landscaping works, etc. The P&C also holds significant funds locked up in our stock that would be released with the sale of the stock to a third party provider.

### **PROPOSAL TO THE P&C**

The proposal put forward to the P&C by its Office Bearers at its general meeting on Tuesday, 29 November is, therefore, that as a P&C we should consider forming a committee to carry out a review of the operation of the Uniform Shop and its future. Our proposal is that, if this motion is carried, we nominate and appoint the committee members including a committee Chair and that the committee look to convene early Term 1 2017.

Our recommendations are that the committee include the current Uniform Shop Manager, the Treasurer and nominated representatives from the USSC and Office Bearers. The first meeting should clearly define the scope and operation of the committee and its members for approval by the P&C at its first meeting on Tuesday, 14 February 2017.

We also recommend that the committee get in touch with Burwood Girls President & Treasurer given that they have just completed this exercise for any learnings and information sharing as well as other local high school P&C as to what affected their decision to move away from running a uniform shop and how their volunteer resources are now allocated.

We fully anticipate that this review will take at least a six-month period with regular reports required by the committee to the P&C Office Holders and P&C members.