As the term draws to a close, I am delighted to be communicating some exciting news on the renaming of the Factions. Last week, after months of consultation with key members of the Aboriginal community I met with and engaged the highly respected and experienced Walyalup Elder, Betty Garlett, to lead the process with a view to having new Faction names by the end of term 2.

By way of context and background, let me provide an overview of the process so far and how it will look going forward.

In response to the strong and growing school community sentiment around renaming the Factions over many years, the School and RAP Working Group ensured action by embedding this as a Special item within its inaugural RAP. The RAP was endorsed by Reconciliation Australia and the Board in June 2022 and a process to deliver this item was put in place. At the heart of this process are the following:

* Increasing awareness and understanding of Aboriginal culture and language throughout the school, and where possible, beyond
* Engaging respectfully and appropriately and building partnerships with the Walyalup community
* Keeping the students, their awareness, contribution, engagement, and joy of learning at the centre

A copy of our Reconciliation Plan is on the school website.

Accordingly, the process was split into three stages with other items in the RAP supporting this by way of the learning and engagement with the Walyalup community through art, music, signage and classroom curriculum learning; all of which have been richly and beautifully supported by the staff and parents and will remain as part of how our school operates:

* Stage One – Consultation and Engagement (June 2022 – March 2023)
* Stage Two – Renaming (May 2023)
* Stage Three – Transition (May 2023 ongoing)

**Stage One – Consultation and Engagement**

This has been the longest and biggest stage by far. The School and Working Group have worked tirelessly, exploring options of how best to proceed respectfully and appropriately. Members of the team have attended several Walyalup Elders Committee and Cultural Centre Group meetings, receiving advice from these groups as well as from Professor Leonard Collard, Neville Collard, Freda Ogilvie and Betty Garlett. The latter’s engagement and desire to work with the school to achieve a successful renaming is the culmination of hard work by the team and marks the point at which we start to see the change.

**Stage Two - Renaming**

Betty will lead workshops with the students, members of the Working Group, Staff and Board (as representatives of the school community) in Term 2 with details and timings being communicated in Week One of next term. Once the new names have been determined under the guidance of Betty, a whole of school community event will mark their inauguration.

**Stage Three – Transition**

The renaming has several implications for the school and its community. As well as achieving learning outcomes and changing the way we interact with the whole of our local community, there are the pragmatics of phasing out the current faction name shirts, signs, documentation and equipment. There is no expectation that this will be an overnight transition and respect the need for all to manage this as it works for them. Lastly, the school sees this as the start of an on-going partnership with the Walyalup community and the opportunity to embed continuous learning and engagement with meaning. To this end we have also contracted Betty to be Elder-in-Residence for the remainder of 2023 and will extend this into 2024.

Keep watch in the first week of next term for details on dates and the process. This is an exciting time and I am thrilled we have managed to arrive at this point with so much support. I’d like to thank all those involved in the RAP working group who have worked so hard and with such commitment.