WHANGANUI
COLLEGE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

October 9, 2026

Dear members of the Whanganui Collegiate School community,

Please take the time to fully read this announcement. The content is extremely important.

I am standing down from the College Board. I do so not because I am any less committed to Whanganui Collegiate, but because I believe the School now needs the specific skills and drive required to lead a programme of change through to completion. As such, I have been working with some key individuals in the past week to get this underway. There are moments in the life of every enduring institution when it must pause, look honestly at itself, and decide what kind of future it is prepared to build. For Whanganui Collegiate School, this is one of those moments.

For more than 170 years, Whanganui Collegiate has occupied a distinctive place in the educational life of this country. Founded in 1854 through the Anglican Church, and shaped by generations of students, staff, families, Old Boys and Girls, and friends of the School.

Whanganui Collegiate carries a history that is both precious and demanding. Our motto, *Vestigia Nulla Retrorsum* — never a footstep back — has never meant standing still. It has meant having the courage to move forward with purpose, even when the path ahead requires difficult decisions.

The past three to five years have brought into sharp focus a number of weaknesses within the School's operating structure, management and governance. Some of these have been visible for some time; others have become clearer as the environment around us has changed.

Like many schools, we have faced pressure from rising costs, changing family expectations, the realities of boarding in a modern context, increased compliance obligations, and the need to have governance structures and operating models that are fit for the future. What has become clear is that incremental adjustment will not be sufficient. The School has been slow to adapt to changing conditions. We need to be transparent about that and own it.

Our School is not in need of change because its history is weak. It needs change because its history is strong enough to require better of us. We owe it to our students, our staff, our families, our Old Boys and Girls, and the wider Whanganui community to ensure that the School is financially sustainable, educationally excellent, pastorally strong, and governed with clarity and accountability.

St George's
Whanganui Collegiate School

Telephone +64 06 349 0210 | 132 Liverpool Street, Whanganui 4500

In the past year, the College Board has been undertaking a programme of work to address some weakening structures within the School. The pace of change is too slow, and it's important that this programme of work is accelerated significantly. This includes my resignation from the College and School Boards. This is not a cosmetic exercise - it signals a deliberate and fundamental reset of the way Whanganui Collegiate is structured, resourced, governed, and positioned so that it can move forward with confidence. There are a number of principal streams of work, some of which have commenced while others will commence shortly.

1. Governance and accountability
There will be a comprehensive review of the College Board's governance framework to ensure decision-making is informed, clear, disciplined, and properly aligned between the College Board and School Boards, the School's leadership, and its key stakeholders. Whanganui Collegiate requires governance that is transparent, timely, and unambiguous, with clear accountability for outcomes and a clear understanding of the responsibilities that come with being both a heritage institution and a contemporary state-integrated school. In short, we need to get it right from the top. There will be change. At present, the College Board is effectively not accountable to anyone. That is wrong. You do not fix things down below if you do not have accountability at the top.

2. Engagement with the Ministry of Education and the Anglican Church
We were extremely grateful for the opportunity offered by the Government to become Integrated in 2013. However, the management of a campus, where many of its buildings are well over 100 years old and have heritage status, is challenging. In addition, our governance structure, with separate College and School Boards, has proved unwieldy. Accordingly, there are a number of matters in our Integration Agreement that we wish to relook at after fourteen years.

People will be aware of various issues with the Ministry of Education since the School was integrated. To be honest, it has been and remains a minefield. We are working constructively with the Ministry of Education and our Anglican Church partners to ensure that the School's integrated status, special character, regulatory obligations and long-term operating model are properly understood and appropriately supported. Our relationship with the Anglican Church is not simply historical; it remains central to the School's identity, values, chapel life, and sense of service.

3. The financial model, fees, and affordability
We are looking carefully at the School's fee structure, cost base, and long-term affordability. Whanganui Collegiate has always depended on families making significant sacrifices because they believe in the education offered here. That commitment must be respected. At the same time, the School must be honest about the real cost of delivery and the need for a financial model that is sustainable, fair, and capable of supporting excellence without placing avoidable pressure on families or staff.

The school must be competitive in its offering and accessible to as wide a section of the population as possible.

4. Boarding and the student experience
Boarding has long been at the heart of the Whanganui Collegiate experience. It is one of the things that makes the School distinctive. But boarding today must meet the expectations and needs of contemporary families and young people. We are therefore examining the boarding model, including full, weekly, and flexible boarding options, pastoral structures, staffing, and the way the houses system supports belonging, wellbeing, character, and independence.

There is currently a strong focus on cost reduction, but there will now be an equal focus on investing. As a property manager, the College Board's primary role is to deliver fit-for-purpose buildings in which the tenant (the School) can thrive.

5. Assets, campus, and stewardship
There will be a review of the School's property and asset base to ensure that our campus, facilities, and heritage buildings are managed responsibly and strategically.
Our buildings are part of Whanganui Collegiate's story and must be cared for accordingly. But sentiment alone cannot determine how resources are deployed.

Where assets are underutilised, too costly, or no longer aligned with the School's strategy or core purpose, we must be prepared to consider difficult but responsible options, including recycling value into areas that directly strengthen the education and care of our students. We believe that a recapitalisation process will need to be initiated to provide the School with facilities that deliver top quality outcomes for both its day and boarding operations.

6. Organisational structure and support staff
The School's staffing and support structures must be aligned with current and future needs. This includes reviewing all current staffing roles, operational processes, and areas where costs can be rationalised without compromising student safety, educational quality, or pastoral care.

Any decisions affecting people will be approached carefully, respectfully, and in accordance with proper process. Our staff are central to the life of the School, and the Board understands the responsibility that comes with any change of this nature. It is critical that we support the Headmaster and staff through this difficult period and drive the right culture across the School. Ainsley has our full support. We have an outstanding Headmaster who can deliver great things for the School. We must give him the tools, resources and time to do that.

7. Growth
The falling boarding roll is starting to be arrested. We need to ask the hard questions, own mistakes and deliver a strategy for roll growth. Whanganui Collegiate prides itself on a strong record of producing great people. It is a strategic imperative of the School to lift the roll. A rising tide lifts all boats: sports teams, the more efficient use of capital and ultimately the student experience.

8. Areas of excellence where the School can differentiate itself
Parents have a choice about where their children go to school. Whanganui Collegiate needs to address its weaknesses (including costs) but also identify and promote its strengths and points of difference as part of a growth strategy. A stream of work is needed for this.
I recognise that words such as review, restructure, rationalise, recapitalisation and reset can generate concern. Another word needs to be highlighted. It is 'investment'. Investing in the students and the School. The aspiration is to return the School's roll to above 500. We will never be a big school but our history, pride and tenacity tell us we can take on the best and excel.

A lot of change and courage will be required to execute on all of the above. Change will always be unsettling, particularly in a school where generations of families feel a deep personal connection. But avoiding change would be the greater risk. The Board's responsibility is not only to protect what has been handed to us; it is to ensure that Whanganui Collegiate remains strong, relevant, and accessible for the generations still to come.

The Board will communicate openly and regularly moving forward as this work programme is rolled out. We will listen to those who care deeply about the School. And we will be candid about the challenges, disciplined in our decision-making, and faithful to the values that have shaped the School since 1854: service, courage, faith, belonging, and the formation of young people of character.

Whanganui Collegiate School has stood at turning points before. Each time, it has endured because people were prepared to act with conviction rather than comfort. That is what is required of us now. If we acknowledge our weaknesses, are courageous in our choices, and united in our commitment to the students entrusted to us, then the School can move forward with confidence — not by leaving its heritage behind, but by proving once again that its best traditions are living ones.

For this work to succeed, the School will need the right combination of skills, experience, energy, and resolve around the College Board table. The next phase will require people with the capacity to drive complex change, engage constructively with the Ministry, the Anglican Church, the School Board, staff, families, the OBGA and Foundation, and the wider community, and shape the School's future with discipline and care. It is important that the governance of Whanganui Collegiate is matched to the scale and urgency of the task ahead.

Having reflected on what this moment requires, I have concluded that the most responsible contribution I can now make is to stand down from the College Board. I do so not because I am any less committed, but because I believe the School now needs some specific skills and drive to lead this programme of work through to completion.

Until the makeup of the governance group that will oversee the work programme is finalised, Charles Bolt has agreed to act as the Interim Chair of the College Board. Currently the Deputy Chair of the College Board, Charles is an Old Boy of the School (Grey 1980-1984), a former College Board trustee (2015-2020) and has had three children attend the School. He

is a lawyer with experience as a listed company executive and director, a member of the NZX's Corporate Governance Institute, the NZ RegCo's Markets Disciplinary Tribunal and Chairman of the Listed Companies Association.

The College Board will also be supported during this period by Grant Lander, who joined the College and School Boards earlier this year as an independent trustee with deep educational experience. Grant is the former Rector of Lindisfarne College and former Headmaster of St Paul's Collegiate, Hamilton. Grant's wisdom as the Boards execute the work programme will be invaluable.

It is my belief that the School is in good hands in the interim. An update on progress with the matters raised in this correspondence will be provided by another email in the first part of November.

Finally, I want to offer my heartfelt thanks to the School community for the support, encouragement, and friendship I have been fortunate to receive during my time on the College Board and the School Board. Whanganui Collegiate is a school that gets under your skin because it matters so deeply to so many people - to the students who grow here, to the families who place their trust in it, to the staff who give so much of themselves, and to generations of Old Boys and Girls who continue to carry it with them. It has been a real privilege to serve this School.

Although I am stepping down from the Board, I do so with great affection for Whanganui Collegiate and with genuine confidence in its future. There is a strong and committed management team in place, dedicated staff, loyal families, and a community with the heart and determination to see the School flourish.

The road ahead will require courage, but I firmly believe Whanganui Collegiate School has every reason to look to the future with optimism, pride, and confidence.

Yours faithfully



Jason Bowie