



2018 NEWS ROUNDUP

Heartfelt thanks to all friends and supporters of The Hornsby Trust. This News Roundup highlights activities in 2018 at St Andrew's High School, Nuku'alofa, and ways in which the Trust was able to assist.

The past year was a difficult one for the school, but there were many positives too.

Fees scholarships for students. It is good to report that, through an increase in donations, the Trust was able to support a record number of 58 students with fees scholarships. Three ex-students were also given financial support towards tertiary study (*pictured right, Sione Finau, top music student at Tupou Tertiary Institute*). We are grateful to many individuals, schools, churches and trusts for their generous donations and grants.



This type of support helps the school as well as the individual students and their families, because the Tongan government pays a grant to the school for each student whose fees are paid by 31 March.

It is worth noting that there was a record number of 25 students in Year 12 last year, which we feel is a very positive sign. There is still no Year 13 at St Andrew's, so those students wanting to continue with their secondary education have to go to other schools.

Cyclone Gita. Cyclones are a fact of life in the Pacific. Finance often prevents buildings being built up to cyclone-resistant standard, so damage is inevitable. Cyclone Gita passed over Tongatapu on 12 February, causing widespread damage. Although other schools were badly affected, St Andrew's was not hit too hard. However, many staff and students' homes were damaged, and this factor, together with flooding and general transport disruption, meant that the school had to be closed for a period of about a month.



The government of Tonga made some emergency funding available for repairs, but there was a severe shortage of builders, so non-urgent repairs had to wait. In St Andrew's case this meant that although we were able to begin repair work in July, it was not until a group of volunteers (*left*) from Chartwell Co-operating

Church in Hamilton offered to come and help in August that work could be done in earnest. Jack Brinkman of Chartwell read in one of our newsletters that there was a need for builders, and raised support from four of his friends to spend two weeks at St Andrew's repairing roofs, doors, windows, and classroom equipment.

The school and the Hornsby Trust are very grateful for their generosity and their skills.

School band success. The school band under Kaveinga Vaka (*right*) has continued its rise through the ranks to become the No 2 school band in the country. In the annual competition for school bands, the Australian judges awarded them three gold medals and one silver - a remarkable result. We were pleased to be able to offer advice and encouragement to the band and to Kaveinga during the very intensive July rehearsal period when we were at the school. Kaveinga himself has capped his success by getting married to the sister of the No 1 band's conductor – a triumph of diplomacy as well as love!



The Band had planned a concert tour to New Zealand in April, but for various reasons this has been rescheduled to December with a shortened itinerary. They will be well worth seeing and hearing. We will send details when we have them.

Kaveinga is keen to continue his musical studies in New Zealand, and hopes to audition for the BMus degree at the NZ School of Music in Wellington in March, with a view to beginning his studies in 2020. In view of his success and commitment to both school and church music, the Trust will offer him support where possible.

ESOL at St Andrew's. Over the years it has become increasingly clear that fluency in spoken and written English is a pre-requisite for Tongan school leavers to gain employment. A considerable number of the Trust's volunteers have already helped with this, and there were important contributions in 2018.



Jessica Hedge from Hawkes Bay (*left*) spent two months at St Andrew's helping teachers and students with English. Her time there was disrupted by the cyclone, but she proved a versatile and resourceful worker by volunteering with the Red Cross while the school was in recess. Janet Jones, a very experienced ESOL teacher from Waikanae, (*right*) volunteered at the school for six weeks during July and August, taking small groups of students for remedial work in English, and making a very positive contribution.



VSA at St Andrew's. For some time we have wanted to involve NZ Volunteer Service Abroad in the raising of educational standards at St Andrew's. In 2018, with the support of the NZ High Commission in Nuku'alofa, we were able to put together and negotiate a partnership between VSA and the school to raise the standard of spoken and written English. We have mentioned in previous reports that external exams for school students in Tonga are set and answered in English, and that fluency in English is a huge advantage to school-leavers

seeking work, especially overseas. For this reason all external school exams in Tonga are set and answered in English. Students who are not fluent are severely handicapped by this.

In 2019 a VSA volunteer, Lavinia, will be based at St Andrew's to train a small number of teachers from St Andrew's and five other mission schools in Teaching English as a Second Language. Through a generous grant from St Andrew's Parish, Epsom, the Hornsby Trust is able to provide the school with the equivalent of one teacher's salary, to allow teachers to be released for training. After this year, the trained teachers will be able to use their skills to raise English standards among students and other teachers.

We are grateful to VSA, the NZ High Commission and St Andrew's Parish, Epsom, for their support in this venture.

Computer upgrade. Our generous sponsor, Aiscorp from Wellington, has again made a major contribution to the school's computing facilities. The project for 2018/19 included building two new servers and providing 25 higher quality PCs, new cabling and switching, a UPS and various other upgrading measures. This was a massive amount of work in itself, but Aiscorp's Managing Director, Elmar Gailitis (*left*) also arranged sponsored shipping to Tonga and paid for a technician, Michael France, to travel to Tonga for six days to set up the equipment and train its users. The whole project was finished in mid-January 2019. All this comes on top of Aiscorp's commitment to troubleshoot and keep the system running remotely from NZ.



The Trust and the school owe a huge debt of gratitude to Elmar and Aiscorp staff for their generosity.

School finances and organisation. News on the financial side is not so positive. The annual grant from the Diocese of Polynesia was discontinued in 2018, leaving a big hole in the budget. Before he retired in August, Archbishop Winston Halapua challenged the local churches to increase their support in financial and other ways, but this has not happened yet. The school took immediate action to replace the lost income by arranging to lease some of its town land to a neighbouring business. This took time, however, and the income was not available to meet costs in the first half of the year. At the same time, and more seriously, the government's annual grant, normally received mid-year, was not paid until mid October. By July, the school was in dire straits financially. Teachers could not be paid, stopped coming to school, and classes were not offered. We were not told of the seriousness of the situation until later.

Coming after the disruption of Cyclone Gita in March, this crisis was a serious blow to the students' education, and to teachers' confidence in the school. However by the end of 2018 some confidence had been restored, and 2019 has begun well. External exam results have been satisfactory, apart from two subjects where other factors came into play. There are still issues to be sorted out, but Dr Sitiveni Halapua, the Chair of the Board, is working closely with Rev Mo'unga Maka the principal, to reorganise staff and finances.

Education Consultant. Once again, we are indebted to Dr Kay Hawk (*right*) of The Education Group for her work at the school. She spent a week at St Andrew's in January 2018, offering advice and training to the leadership and teachers prior to the beginning of Term 1, and a further week in October, when she was able to offer support to those who were struggling to cope with the financial crisis, as well as her normal educational input.



Thanks. The Trustees of the Hornsby Trust would like to record their thanks to the many individuals, schools, churches and trusts who contributed to St Andrew's High School during 2018.

We would also like to thank and pay tribute to our previous treasurer, Dennis Blank of Waikanae, who had to resign in August because of illness in the family. In the short time he was our Treasurer, as well as normal duties, Dennis organised the filing of our first return to Charities NZ in their new format. We are immensely grateful to Angus Ogilvie of Auckland who quickly volunteered his services on hearing of our need, providing for a seamless transition. Angus is now Trustee/Treasurer of the Hornsby Trust. We would like to thank our other Trustees, David Brown and Dr Jonathan Austin for their wisdom and support.

Copies of the Trust's annual accounts will be available shortly on request (tipping@xtra.co.nz).

Simon and Rachel Tipping
8 February 2019