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**A message from the Director of Schools to Parents, Students and Families of
St. Anthony's Catholic Primary School, Picton**

Dear Parents

Earlier this week you will have received your school newsletter. In that letter, Principal Don O'Brien provided an update on the rebuilding works at the school site in Picton as well as providing information about how well the students and staff have settled in to their new routines at Rosemeadow.

I would again like to express my deep appreciation to you as parents and carers for your support and understanding during this process of transition. I write this letter to keep you informed about the overall progress to date and to advise about the ongoing provision of learning and teaching for your child during Term 3.

While this rebuilding project continues, I believe there are four key priorities to be considered/achieved;

1. The safety, wellbeing and ongoing education of the children
2. The wellbeing and care of the Principal and staff
3. Our system's responsibility to support the Principal
4. Provide support and assistance to families as best we can.

Firstly, I need to indicate that the current arrangements will be in place for the foreseeable future. Given the extent of the damage this is the simple reality. The need to strip back most of the buildings to bare bricks and studs on framework suggests just how extensive the refurbishment works will be. However, as Mr O'Brien indicated in his update, so much has already been accomplished in a remarkably short space of time.

Let me assure you that we are constantly monitoring and assessing the progress of the rebuilding works. We continue to explore and consider all options and we are working as hard and as rapidly as we can. Our relationships with builders, architects, local Council and the NSW government are excellent and all are committed to achieving the same outcome; restoring St Anthony's Catholic Parish Primary School to a beautiful, first-class school facility. Your children deserve no less!

I do appreciate that not being able to name a specific date or timeframe for completion is a source of frustration, both for parents and for us. As I clearly expressed to parents at the information evening earlier this month, we do not control all of the variables, conditions or circumstances involved in this restoration process. These variables not only include the restoration works and tradespeople, but also the supply and delivery of materials like carpets and gyprock.

DIRECTOR OF SCHOOLS

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We need to remember that this storm and the subsequent inundation of water is a whole of community crisis. The damage and repair work at St Anthony's is just one part of that crisis. While I am deeply sorry for the dislocation that this has caused families and staff, we must accept this reality. That many people have lost their businesses and livelihoods, are without adequate insurance, and are facing significant financial distress, is deeply concerning. We continue to pray for all those who are experiencing significant hardship as a result of this disaster.

Finally, I remain committed to ensuring that we provide parents and the wider community with regular updates and communication about our progress. I want to make it explicitly clear that, as a system of Catholic schools, we remain at the ready to respond and provide the necessary support and assistance to the St Anthony's Picton community over the many weeks that this rebuilding work will take. We haven't gone away and we aren't going to!

The Catholic Education Office has taken on the total responsibility for coordinating and managing the restoration works as a defined building project and has established a project control group to oversee the project. As a result, the most appropriate place to direct any enquiries regarding the rebuild is to the Catholic Education Office, and not the Principal or staff of St Anthony's. In the first instance please contact Mr Tim Gilmour in my office on (02) 4253 0938 or tim.gilmour@dow.catholic.edu.au

Over the upcoming school holidays, the project control group will be undertaking a full and thorough assessment of the work completed to date, and detail the scope of works still to be completed.

In the light of that assessment we will provide an update to parents and staff and we will host another parent information evening on **Wednesday 20 July 2016** at St Anthony's Church in Tahmoor, commencing at 7:00pm. At that meeting we will also announce some of the specific support strategies we intend to implement during Term 3 to provide students, families and staff with ongoing care and support, as well as providing parents with an opportunity to ask questions.

I look forward to seeing you at our meeting and I hope that your child has a restful and safe winter holiday break.

Yours sincerely



Peter Turner
Director of Schools
Diocese of Wollongong