

Mr Ty Fletcher, former member of the Teaching Staff: (written in 2022)

I joined Trinity in May 1987. I was editor of the Trinity College Yearbook for 17 years. Each year in my editor's report, I reflected on the developing nature of the College. I find it useful to group my perceptions and recollections under the focus of each Principal.

Brother John Mullins – Trinity as a place to experience Marist values. In 1982, the College was a bridgehead offering a Marist view of teaching, a tiny school of four blocks with few staff members of whom three were in religious orders. The resident Marist Brothers lived on-site in a house on the northeast corner during construction. When the initial phase of construction finished, the main office was in Room 1.1. Opportunities were limited initially, but it was a period of intense growth; frameworks for education were created from scratch. The small but dedicated staff set up courses that would endure for decades. There was limited infrastructure; commitment and passion were essential for teachers; everything was future-focussed. Some religious staff were present but decreased rapidly. The Senior Formal was held at nearby venues like Dreamworld and Moran's Wharf in Beenleigh.

Mr Robert Peacock – Trinity as a caring place, equitable treatment for all. All the Brothers left and Brother John Mullins as Principal was replaced by Bob Peacock and Deputy, Tom Dowden. There was an increased focus on a very small number of students with disabilities. A special room called the TLC (Teaching and Learning Centre), that supported these students' needs, was created in Room 1.1.

Trinity won the 1993 Rock Eisteddfod giving a welcome boost in self-esteem. Three teachers and College secretary/choreographer inspired a vast number of students in a musical satire of the tumultuous Charles-Diana scandal. It was thrilling on the morning after the win, as the soundtrack played over the PA system and special assembly.

The annual Windaroo Fun Run was replaced by a Walkathon through Eagleby. This was later moved to the Gold Coast.

Bob Peacock decided that we needed as a school to watch "Schindler's List"; the entire school boarded buses and watched it in a city cinema.

The student population fell markedly in the mid-90s as new local high schools opened. Staff numbers were reduced.

Mr John Lamb – Trinity as Business. By 1996, the school population numbers needed to rise. John Lamb brought a business edge to Trinity. College dress code for staff was formalised. PR became important e.g. news items written for local newspapers, promotional lightboxes appeared in malls, and a large sign was placed near Boundary Road side of the oval. The College Formal moved to a Gold Coast 5-star hotel. The College Yearbook expanded in physical size, number of coloured pages and a professional structure was formalised.

There was a huge surge in IT infrastructure and training for staff. Computers rapidly increased in number in the staff room. Huge increases in use of MS Word for tests, exams, and assignments. Spreadsheets replaced mark books. Photocopiers became vastly better. Staff notices were replaced with email. Technology invaded class rooms. One room of Microbee computers, in Room 7.8, spread to the library and at least one room or bank of computers in each block. A College webpage was started but later absorbed by Cath Ed. Moodle was added as an online learning platform in the College webpage.

Early on, in 2001, the Responsible Thinking Process (RTP) was implemented, immediately and dramatically lowering the ambient noise throughout the school. The RTC room was installed in Room 1.7, later moved to 7.8. Room 1.6 became a performance space for drama. Discipline became less externally imposed and punitive e.g. “Red spots” for “infringements” and replaced by referrals to RTC. Sheltered walkways were added to connect all blocks. In 2008, John Lamb organised for a local artist to create a mural that reflected the Aboriginal history of the area.

Mrs Catherine Thompson – Trinity College as an integral part of Brisbane Catholic Education and the Marist family. From 2010, there was a surge in building activity. Vast amounts of money were spent. With Federal government assistance, a large multi-purpose block and training facility were constructed on a previously underused grassed area on Yalburu Street. The auditorium was upgraded and expanded to include a purpose-built music section with visiting tutors. Both the admin and staff block grew. A new art block that carefully matched the needs of this subject was created. A courtyard was added between Blocks 4 and 7. The oval was upgraded too. Administration load became very detailed as reporting demands and accountability from Head Office skyrocketed.

Catherine Thompson as Principal also brought an increased focus on the history and connections with the Marist movement. Buildings were named to honour the French origins of the Marist Brothers. To the delight of all, air con was extended to all rooms in the College.

The College webpage was subsumed by Head Office. The webpage increasingly became a learning repository, later called a learning portal. As part of a Federal government imperative, computers were to be made available to all students. This involved adding vastly upgraded connectivity and bandwidth to all classrooms, associated staffing and computer servers. Controversially, iPads were given to Junior classes, while Apple laptops were given to Seniors. This was later revised to MacBooks for all students.

“Visible learning” was promoted by Cath Ed and a committee regularly presented its concepts to staff over a 2-year period. In response to universal decreases in literacy in Australian schools, a curriculum-wide increased focus was brought to bear. Student numbers fell again, resulting in a large decrease in staff at the end of 2016.

Mr Chris Raju – a time for reflection and reorganisation of our core business. From 2015 to 2016, there was an unusually fluid time in top leadership positions and drastic staff reductions. Chris Raju brought a welcome sense of calm, backed by years of experience in Brisbane Catholic colleges. Chris Raju instigated a deep review of many aspects of Trinity College. Almost immediately, mobile phones were banned in classrooms. This was universally approved by teachers and backed by vast amounts of overseas’ data.

Sport was intensified into targeted programs and removed as a general part of the school week.

There was an increased focus on English and Mathematics new training courses in a commercially competitive environment were offered. Chris provided calm stewardship during the pandemic of 2020 and the massive and rapid shift to online learning.

At the end of 2020, I retired after 33.5 years at Trinity. I left feeling assured that Trinity was in safe hands and looking forward to steady progress in meeting the needs of its community.

Ty Fletcher

