The Essington School
Chair's Report for Annual General Meeting
12 May 2026

2025 in Review

The 2025 school year was one of steady progress, growth and continued investment in the future of The Essington School.

Following a period of significant transition and strategic renewal, 2025 was a year where the school moved from planning into delivery, with a clear focus on implementing the Strategic Plan 2025-2030 while continuing to provide outstanding outcomes for students.

As always, our core focus remains delivering an exceptional educational experience for every student, supported by dedicated staff, strong leadership and an engaged school community.

Throughout the year, the Board worked closely with the Principal/CEO and Executive Leadership Team to support the school's strategic direction, ensuring Essington remains well positioned for continued success.

Student Achievement

Essington students once again delivered exceptional academic outcome in 2025, reinforcing the school's position as a leading independent school in the Northern Territory.

We are immensely proud to report a 100% NTCET completion rate for the fourteenth consecutive year.

Academic excellence was demonstrated through exceptional ATAR outcomes, including the Northern Territory's highest performing student achieving an ATAR of 99.8. Essington students represented 11 of the Northern Territory's Top 20 ATAR results, including an exceptional Year 11 student, and 33% of our ATAR cohort achieved scores above 95, with 46% ranking in the top 10% nationally.

While academic achievements remain a hallmark of Essington, our commitment extends beyond results alone. We remain equally focused on developing well-rounded young people through opportunities in sport, arts, leadership and co-curricular activities.

Strategic Progress and Campus Investment

2025 marked the first full year of implementing the Strategic Plan 2025-2030, with a strong focus on turning strategic priorities into practical outcomes.

This included continued investment in facilities, learning environments, and broader school improvement initiatives designed to enhance the student and staff experience.

A significant milestone during the year was the commencement of the new Junior School Playground project, an important investment in the wellbeing and experience of our younger students.

Further improvements across the campus included the installation of covered walkways, upgrades to Learning Support and Inclusion spaces, music facilities, and a broader program of ongoing infrastructure improvements.

These investments reflect a commitment to ensuring our facilities continue to support contemporary teaching and learning while creating an environment where students can thrive.

Financial Performance

The school remains in a strong financial position, supported by careful financial management and a clear focus on long term sustainability.

Revenues in 2025 increased by 9.8% to $24.8 million, with the school delivering an operating surplus of $1.1 million.

This allowed continued investment into strategic initiatives, educational programs, and campus improvements, while maintaining financial strength for the future.

Fee remissions increased slightly to 10.4%, remaining in line with sector benchmarks and reflecting our ongoing commitment to balancing accessibility with financial responsibility.

Good financial management is not simply about delivering a surplus. It is ensuring the school remains in a position to invest in its people, its facilities, and the quality of education we provide for current and future generations.

Community, Growth and Governance

Continued enrolment growth throughout 2025 reflects the confidence families place in the school and the strength of the educational experience we provide.

Demand remained high across the school, particularly in our early years programs, reinforcing Essington's reputation as a school of choice with the Darwin community.

The Board remains focused on strong governance, thorough oversight, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the school.

During the year we worked closely with leadership across strategy, financial performance, risk, compliance and key capital initiatives, always with the best interest of the school community in mind.

I would like to acknowledge the professionalism and commitment of my fellow Directors, whose stewardship continues to support the school's success. This year one of our valued Directors Jocelyn Cull passed away suddenly. Jocelyn joined the board in 2023. She was instrumental in the early stages of our strategic planning and policy development and brought different perspective to governance matters. We are forever grateful to Jocelyn for her service and passion for the school

Appreciation

On behalf of the Board, I extend my sincere thanks to our Principal/CEO, Mr Paul Nyhuis for his leadership throughout 2025, and to the Executive Leadership Team for their continued commitment to the school.

To our staff, thank you for your professionalism, care, and dedication. The outcomes achieved by our students are a direct reflection of your expertise and commitment. We see so many examples every day of staff going above and beyond for our students and it shows the sense of pride in our school.

To our families, thank you for the trust you place in Essington and for your ongoing partnership with us in the education of your children.

To our students, thank you for the energy, enthusiasm, and excellence you bring to our school community each day. You remind us what possibility looks like.

Finally, to my fellow Board Directors, thank you for your time, insight and commitment to the governance of the school. I appreciate each one of you for being such steady, principled, and good-humoured colleagues. Working with you strengthens both our board and me personally.

2025 was a year of meaningful progress, and the Board remains confident in the direction of the school, the strength of its leadership, and the opportunities ahead.

The Essington School is well positioned for the future, and I look forward to continuing that journey together.

Thank you,

Mrs Vicki Bridge

Chair
The Essington School Darwin Limited