

CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

Triennial Election 2025.

VOTING CLOSES : 4pm on 8 September, 2025

There are 14 candidates and 5 (FIVE) vacancies. This document has 6 pages.

Check your email for the electronic Invitation to Vote. If you receive a postal voting paper, it may be returned to the school office or via NZ Post. You can only vote once. Duplicate votes are declared invalid.

Bekki Pope



Kia ora koutou,
Ko Bekki tōku
ingoa.
My name is Bekki
Pope and I'm the
proud parent of
Frankie Manu
(Yr5) and
caregiver to ex-
student Ruby
Iupeli, my now
teenage niece.

Our household is a proud blend of Samoan, Māori and English language and culture and I care deeply about creating a school environment where all tamariki feel they belong, are celebrated for who they are and are supported to thrive.

I'm putting myself forward for the Board because I believe in the strength of diverse, connected communities and I want to contribute to decisions that support every child's learning, wellbeing and future. I bring a wide range of experience from both my professional and personal life that I believe will add value to the Board.

In my professional role as Manager - Organisational Development at WorkSafe, I'm responsible for organisation wide training, development, performance and capability. This involves strategic thinking, communication, facilitation and supporting people and systems to grow. Outside of work, I've spent

decades coaching, playing and managing women's rugby teams. Through that I've led teams, coordinated international tours, overseen fundraising, navigated risk and created inclusive environments where people work together toward a common goal. Across all of these spaces, I've led with values - fairness, humility, service, compassion and integrity. These values closely align with the Catholic character of our school and shape how I engage and make decisions. I believe strongly in ensuring every child has what they need to succeed - not just academically, but socially, culturally and emotionally.

I also understand the responsibility that comes with governance. I'm comfortable reading reports, asking thoughtful questions and supporting clear, strategic decision-making. I'd bring a collaborative, considered voice to the Board table and a genuine commitment to serving our whole school community - tamariki, staff, and whānau alike.

It would be a privilege to serve on the Board and give back to a school community that plays such a big role in shaping the future of our children. Ngā manaakitanga.

Caleb Te Taku Ware

Ko Whitireia te maunga
Ko Parirua te awa
Ko Tainui te waka
Ko Ngāti Toa Rangatira me ngā iwi o Te Whanganui-a-Tara ōku iwi
Ko Takapūwāhia te marae
Ko Caleb Ware tōku ingoa

I was born and raised in the Māori community of Takapūwāhia, and my wife and I have two daughters currently attending Sacred Heart Cathedral School. I'm standing for re-election to the Board of Trustees because I value the role our kura plays in shaping confident, well-rounded young people.

I bring over a decade of governance experience, including 10+ years on Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira (where I previously chaired the Remunerations and Appointments Committee), 5+ years on the Whitireia Park Board, and current roles with the Elsdon Camp Board and as Chair of the Toa Kairuku Dive Club. I also currently serve on the Sacred Heart Cathedral School Board of Trustees.

I bring a strong Māori perspective to the table and have had several opportunities to apply that perspective, along with my governance experience, in board discussions and decisions. I'm committed to working collaboratively to support strong educational outcomes, uphold our Catholic character, and help the school continue to grow in its efforts to reflect mana whenua and the diverse communities that make up our school whānau.



David Aldred



My name is David Aldred. I am a current member on Sacred Heart Cathedral Schools board. I am a director at a leading construction company in Wellington and bring valuable expertise in project management, health and safety, and strategic leadership. I have a strong focus on creating safe and supportive environments. I am passionate about ensuring our school is a place where students, staff, and whānau feel protected and empowered to thrive. I feel my practical experience in compliance, risk management, and long-term planning will continue to support the board's commitment to providing a secure and future-focused learning environment.

Elizabeth Reardon



I

I'm keen to get involved in the life of the school and to lean in to support the board of trustees moving forward. I'm organized and have

skills across a number of fields due to my diverse employment history (military, teaching, property management & tourism). Thank you for the consideration.

Gabrielle Wheddon

Kia ora koutou, ko Gabrielle Wheddon tōku ingoa.



Originally from the UK, I have lived in Wellington since 2011, with my husband Karl. We have two daughters, Sophia

(Room 7) and Ada-Mae who has just turned 4 and will hopefully join the Sacred Heart Cathedral School whānau next year.

Since Sophia started at Sacred Heart in 2020, I have been impressed by the wonderful sense of community that the school and especially the Board of Trustees has established

I have 20 years' experience of working in the public sector, both here and in the UK. Primarily my work has been in the external audit and assurance space, but for the last 18 months I have been working as an Assurance Specialist at the Ministry of Social Development. I believe that as a result of this, I have valuable skills and contributions to make to the Board.

Outside of work (and having a young family) Girlguiding has been an important part of my life for a long time. I have run Brownie units (here and in the UK) for the 25 years, and this has given me many opportunities to develop valuable skills such as teamwork, event planning and risk management in addition to creating lasting memories for youth members.

I have also volunteered for several organisations that have been important to me and my family. Most recently this has included being on the management committee of our youngest daughter's ECE centre and a local community theatre group.

I would be honoured to be elected to the Board of Trustees at Sacred Heart.

Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou
Gabrielle

Johnny Asiata

Kia ora, talofa lava and warm greetings to our school community.



O lo'u igoa o Johnny (my name is Johnny) and I'm honoured to stand as a candidate for our school board. I am a proud father of three wonderful children - my eldest graduated from our school in 2022, and I'm currently supporting my Year 5 and Year 1 children on their learning journeys. This gives me real insight into the needs of our families and how we can work together to support every student at our school.

As a proud Pacific leader and career public servant, I bring a deep commitment to serving with integrity, care, and strong relationships. My core values - alofa (love), fa'aaloalo (respect), and tautua (service) - guide me in all that I do. My faith and family keep me grounded and inspired.

I have deep respect for our principal and teachers—their hard work, patience, and passion help nurture our children into confident, capable young people. I want to support them in continuing this vital work by lending my diversity of thought and commitment to help foster an environment for effective decision-making.

I've been privileged to support our school over the years - helping with sports, dances, fundraisers, and class and school trips. These experiences have shown

me how important it is to create a safe, inclusive space where every child feels seen, valued, and uplifted.

I also currently serve my local community as a volunteer firefighter, and I coach junior rugby - roles that have strengthened my leadership, resilience, and commitment to service.

I honour the Treaty of Waitangi as a foundation for partnership and equity and as a board member, I will be a strong, authentic voice for our diverse families—helping to build a school where everyone belongs, every child thrives, and our shared values are lived every day.

Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou mō tō tautoko. Thank you for your support.



Justin Tester

Kia ora — I'm Justin Tester, father of Alex (currently thriving in Room 2) and Jack (joining Sacred Heart School as a new entrant next year). Since we joined the school community, we've been warmly welcomed by the Principal, whānau, parish (and our fellow parents)—

and importantly, we've seen how Sacred Heart lives the Catholic values of kindness, service, and faith in action.

With 20+ years in finance and governance, I started my career auditing schools and now lead finance at one of New Zealand's largest construction firms. Beyond numbers, I've helped develop strategy, manage risk, and set policy direction. My mum has been a teacher and principal for over 40 years—so I understand school life from many angles.

I stand for this position because Sacred Heart has given our whānau so much, and it's time for me to give back. I'm committed to: Long term financial sustainability and facilities planning, supporting teachers, staff and student wellbeing and maintaining the school's special catholic character.

If elected, I will prepare carefully and participate actively in all board meetings. I value honest collaboration, strong governance, and above all—putting children's learning and wellbeing at the centre.

I would be honoured to serve our children, tamariki and staff. Thank you for considering my nomination—and I would be grateful for your support on Monday 8th September 2025.

Lalita Schmidt



Kia ora and Talofa lava Sacred Heart Cathedral School whānau, I'm Lalita (Lali), proud mum of Lyla (year 6) and I'm excited to put my hand up for a place on our

Board of Trustees.

Why I'm standing

"Over the past two years I've run the school's netball programme (Year 3 and up) and currently coach a Year 5&6 team. I have also coached a mix of different sports teams at school. Through this coaching and volunteering, I've seen firsthand how our diverse school community enriches everyone's learning

experience, and I'm committed to ensuring every family feels valued and heard.

My connection to Sacred Heart runs deep - my younger sister, nieces and my first cousins were students here, and I currently have my cousins' children from both sides of my family attending the school. This multi-generational connection has given me insight into how the school has evolved while maintaining its core values of inclusivity and educational excellence.

Spending time on the sidelines has shown me just how much our tamariki grow when they're backed by a caring community and have plenty of chances to shine—on the court/field, in the classroom, and everywhere in between."

What I bring

- Relationship-building & strategy – In my day job as an Account Manager at Cello I spend my time listening, planning, and bringing people together to reach a shared goal.

- A dual lens – As a hands-on school volunteer and in my role at Cello I understand the balance between big-picture planning and the practical realities for teachers, parents, and—most importantly—students.

- Heart – I believe every child deserves the chance to discover their strengths, build resilience, and feel they belong. That belief is what drives me to serve.

My focus as a trustee

- Champion student wellbeing and inclusive opportunities

- Strengthen the ties between whānau, staff, and the wider community

- Protect and enhance the reputation for excellence that makes Sacred Heart such a special place

A team effort

I value collaborative decision-making and would love to work alongside fellow trustees and school leadership to guide our kura into its next chapter. My biggest supporters—my husband Lemi, Lyla, and our 15-year-old dog Bear—are right behind me.

Thank you for considering my nomination. I'd be honoured to contribute my time, energy, and

experience to our wonderful school.

Ngā mihi nui

Lalita

Lisa Horsman



As a former pupil of Sacred Heart Cathedral School and now a Mama-bear to a five-year-old who has just begun his journey here, I feel a deep connection to this special community. Sacred Heart helped shape my own early education and values, and I'm excited by the opportunity to

contribute to its future through service on the board.

While this would be my first time serving on a board, I bring valuable professional experience from my role as Manager, Regulatory and Risk Assurance at the Ministry for Primary Industries. In this role, I lead a team responsible for overseeing regulatory activities, ensuring our systems are fair, effective, and well-supported. I use human-centred design principles to guide decision-making and deliver products and services that support better regulatory outcomes. My work requires strong collaboration across diverse teams and agencies, as well as clear, values-based leadership - strengths I would bring to the board in support of our school's strategic direction and Catholic character.

I am committed to supporting the Catholic character of Sacred Heart Cathedral School, promoting a positive and inclusive environment, and working

collaboratively with staff, parents, and board members to ensure our tamariki thrive academically, spiritually, and socially.

I would be honoured to give back to a school that has meant so much to me, and to help ensure its continued success for future generations.

Ngā mihi nui, Lisa Horsman

Michael DCosta



I am Michael Dcosta, father to Aaron (Room 6) and Amaia (Room 3). Our family joined the Sacred Heart community this year, and we have been profoundly impressed by the kindness and support demonstrated by the Principal, teachers, and wider parent groups. We arrived here as part of the cohort of children from another Catholic school and will forever be amazed by the love our community received and the warm welcome we received as we joined this beautiful whanau. This positive experience has motivated me to seek a position on the Board of Trustees, to contribute

to the school's ongoing success, and uphold its values. My professional background spans over two decades, encompassing strategic leadership, governance, and technical roles. I began my career as an officer in the Merchant Marine's carrying crude oil around the world before transitioning to the telecommunications sector in New Zealand, where I was a key contributor to the national fibre rollout (Chorus). Currently, I work with New Zealand's energy companies to advance smart meter adoption, with a focus on clean energy and technology.

This diverse experience has equipped me with a strong understanding of robust frameworks essential for driving organisational excellence and sustainability. I am committed to applying this expertise to support the board in key areas, including:

- Academic Excellence: Implementing robust frameworks to foster high educational standards.
 - Financial and Enrolment Sustainability: Ensuring the school's long-term viability.
 - Ethnic and Cultural Perspective: Providing a diverse perspective to support the well-being of teachers, staff, and students.
 - Special Catholic Character: Upholding and advancing the school's unique Catholic identity.
- My approach to board service will be one of active engagement and strong governance. I believe that Trust is the truest form of resilience today, and as catholic schools, we will be called increasingly to take on pastoral roles within our communities- wellbeing needs to be at the core of all decisions. I will do my best to ensure that the trust you place in me by supporting my candidacy will be well placed. It will be a privilege to serve this community and the Tamariki who will define our future.

Nicola Nation



Hazel and Violet. My daughters are in Y8 and Y6 at Sacred Heart Cathedral School and we have been members of this vibrant school community for 12 years. I have served on the Board since 2017 and am standing again this year.

I am passionate about education, equity and community and what I love about being a trustee of Sacred Heart is that this brings all of these things together. We are led by a fantastic Principal and team of teachers, who are dedicated and go the extra mile for our akonga - students.

I am proud of the work the Board has done to promote equity for all our tamariki and to make school a place where all children can learn. I believe that it is important that we celebrate all the cultures we have in our school community, while working to honour Te Tiriti in the Catholic school environment.

Working with the Board I have supported the development of the SHCS Strategy, including identifying the initiatives that will help us achieve our desired outcomes in the areas of Faith, Students, Teachers and Community. We have a detailed action plan to support us. We have been responsive to the

Kia ora
koutou
Ko Nicola
Nation
toku ingoa

My name
is Nicola
Nation and
I am the
proud
mother of
Felix,

changing requirements of the Ministry and the curriculum which has required us to be adaptable and flexible!

I would love to see greater diversity of thought on our Board and I am always happy to chat to anyone about their wishes for our school community.

Peter Du Plessis



I am proud to stand for nomination to the Sacred Heart Cathedral School Board. As a parent of two daughters—Margaux in Room 6 and Colette in Room 5—I have seen firsthand the warmth, care, and excellence that define our school community.

Watching both girls be welcomed and thrive in their learning and friendships has deepened my commitment to supporting Sacred Heart's mission.

Professionally, I bring over a decade of experience in marketing and sales, a career that has honed my ability to listen, communicate clearly, and build strong relationships. These skills are essential for effective governance, collaboration, and advocacy—qualities I will bring to the board as we work together to serve every student and family.

I am especially passionate about fostering an inclusive environment where all children feel valued and

empowered to succeed. Whether in the classroom, on the sports field, or through creative and cultural activities, every student deserves the opportunity to grow, explore, and shine. I believe in policies and practices that celebrate diversity, support wellbeing, and ensure equity in access to learning and enrichment.

It would be an honour to contribute to the continued success of Sacred Heart Cathedral School and help shape a future where every child can thrive.

Smitha Merin Rinil

My name is Smitha Merin Rinil and I'm running for a



seat on the school board because I believe it is a great way to give back to our school community. Also I want to contribute my skills and experience to

the school. As a parent itself, my daughter is studying in year 5 and I understand fostering a safe and inclusive environment where every student can thrive. I believe this role is a vital bridge between families and the school, and I am committed to fostering open communication, collaboration, and a supportive environment for all students.

Professionally, I'm an analyst with years of experience in business analysis, where I've led cross-functional teams, facilitated stakeholder engagement, and delivered strategic solutions that drive positive

outcomes. These skills have equipped me with a strong foundation in listening, problem-solving, and advocating for diverse perspectives—qualities I believe are essential for a parent representative. My volunteer work with the Red Cross has further shaped my approach to leadership and service. Whether assisting in emergency response efforts or supporting community outreach, I've learned the importance of empathy, resilience, and teamwork. These experiences have deepened my commitment to inclusive and compassionate advocacy, especially in environments where every voice matters. As a Parent Representative, I aim to be a proactive and approachable liaison between families and the school. I am particularly passionate about promoting student well-being, encouraging parent involvement, and supporting programs that nurture both academic and emotional growth.

I also bring a data-informed mindset to the role, which can support school decision-making and help identify areas for improvement. Whether through surveys, feedback sessions, or collaborative planning, I believe in using insights to guide meaningful change while keeping the needs of students and families at the heart of every decision.

I am enthusiastic about the opportunity to contribute to a school culture that values partnership, respect, and continuous improvement. I look forward to working alongside staff, parents, and students to build a vibrant and inclusive community where every child can thrive.

Thank you for considering my nomination. I am committed to serving with integrity, empathy, and a genuine desire to make a positive impact.

Wilson Ryan Jay Agustin Pareja

I'm honored to submit my nomination for the School Board. With a career spanning government and



private sectors, I bring leadership and governance experience to the role. I've led diverse teams and transformed complex requirements into solutions that serve real community needs.

My approach is grounded in clear communication, continuous improvement, and people-first decision-making. Both as a parent and a professional, I'm passionate about fostering inclusivity, innovative and enjoyable learning environments. I value collaboration and open to methods that support every child's potential. I welcome the opportunity to serve, listen, and contribute to our community.