

## MDCA UPDATE

At the MDCA's December 12 monthly meeting, Mapua School principal Neil Chalmers and Board of Trustees Chairman Mark Bruce-Miller, gave a presentation outlining the current status of the Mapua School, its growth challenges and decile ranking change. Below is a summary of their presentation:

There is no doubt Mapua Schools is an excellent school! We know this because of the feedback we get from our pupils, from our parents, from our community and from the Ministry of Education Review Office. The teaching and support team in place are fantastic and the leadership team, led by Neil, form a tight knit and highly competent team. As we all know however, Mapua is growing rapidly and the school is under increasing pressure to welcome new enrolments from within the Mapua School Zone.

Whilst this is positive for our community it does raise some significant challenges for our school. Our funding is based on our roll (ie -number of in zone students) and planning for future growth is dependent on the population forecasts generated from the Ministry of Education. These forecasts do not seem to take into account the rapid recent development within the village and, as such, we are struggling to persuade the MoE that significant growth is imminent. As it is, we have just under 300 students on the roll. We want to be able to plan to build, redevelop and grow our school in a strategic and planned manner as opposed to sudden ad-hoc reactions when we have the children walking through the front gate!

Our rating as a decile 10 school is a reflection on the perceived affluence in our community. Whilst this may be true for some families it certainly is not true for all, and yet this system calculates the relative funding we receive for our school. Decile 10 is as high as a school can go, and thus the relative funding we receive is as low as it can go. To combat this, and in order to provide a learning environment that allows all our children to 'be all they can', we rely heavily on our community. This is in the form of parent donations, a very active PTA, fundraisers and the Easter Fair. It is wonderful to have this support. Put quite simply, we could not do without it! The need for parent donations remains quite a topical and political subject. We all have our own political and social views with regard to the right to a 'free' education. BUT, these are ideological views and, as a school, we have to work within the existing system. It is quite clear that if we want our children to 'be all they can' we need to supplement the MOE funding our school receives.

The Easter Fair is our major fundraiser of the year and is one that the school relies on heavily. With the recent developments in Mapua, and subsequent implications for the parking of vehicles at this event we recognise the need to change the format. We really want to keep this fantastic event in Mapua and as a part of our community. And there is every opportunity to help. Please contact Neil at the school if you have anything to offer. We welcome all community input. **ENDS**