In my Term 3 2014 VIM article I promised that in this edition of the VIM I would comment on social etiquette and new technology, in particular how this relates to omnipresent mobile devices. Given some exciting developments in relation to planning for advancing the College into the future I felt it important to deviate from my plan to comment on one aspect of the work of our College Council.

This term the College Council engaged the services of Mr Mark Vincent of Insight Plus to facilitate a process of strategic planning with the view to advancing into the future. The student centred approach of All Saints’ College means we are not an organisation that moves forward by looking backwards, constantly reflecting on and engaging in the past. All Saints’ College is a place where the most interesting aspect of the organisation is its students, their aspirations and ensuring the College provides the best possible experiences for these aspirations to be realised. A strategic plan is a critical framework identifying the means by which the College can advance, continue to meet the needs of students into the future and have control of its own destiny. Mark Vincent’s extensive experience working on strategic plans with not-for-profit organisations, a large variety of corporations in Australia and overseas as well as work across all sectors of education provide him with unique skills and insights into the needs of a regional, Anglican, independent, co-educational boarding school such as All Saints’ College.

The strategic planning process this term has involved consultation with groups representing parents and students as well as all teaching staff and members of the College Council. Each group was asked to identify key strengths of our College, challenges for the College into the future. In collaborative workshops each group devised a number of actions they felt would advance the College in light of the identified strengths and challenges ahead. The sessions with Mark Vincent involved countless numbers of coloured sticky notes, much movement around the room, lots of questions, answers and robust conversations. Some words not to be used in actions by participants included “maintain, ensure or continue”. This project is not about maintaining the status quo. The actions suggested in the workshops had to include words such as “advance, develop, improve, engage, deepen or establish”. As a result, the workshop conversations were lively and very positive in all groups.

Following the wider consultative process the College Council engaged in a weekend workshop in November to bring together the enormous volume of material. Under the guidance of the facilitator the College Council gained a very deep understanding of the issues raised by the student, staff and parent groups. The College Council also gave detailed consideration to the actions and priorities brought forward through the consultative process. It is from this comprehensive process that our final plan will emerge.

It is premature to anticipate exactly the format of the strategic plan because it is still taking its final shape. The strategic plan will be available at some stage in the New Year. Its focus will be to take us to our sesquicentenary (150th anniversary) in 2024. The consultation process this term has identified some collective aspirations, goals and actions to take us to 2024 with a sense of purpose, controlling of our destiny and advancement.

An important aspect of this process for me has been the very positive manner and great optimism of everyone involved. We are looking towards a bright future advancing with purpose to our sesquicentennial year in 2024. The process undertaken this term has been very worthwhile and rewarding. Thank you to everyone involved.