



25th October 2017

Dear Parent/Caregiver

It is with a deep sense of regret that I let you know that the College has made the difficult decision to no longer commit to competing in Pedal Prix events.

The critical concern is for our students' safety. Unfortunately, the events have become professional sporting events with fast moving adult professional riders sharing the track with younger student riders. The younger riders have limited road sense and get quite scared competing with bikes travelling at twice their speed. Whilst Pedare teams have been fortunate to avoid serious injury, weighing heavily on this decision are the serious accidents that have occurred in both 2016 and 2017 at Murray Bridge.

At the recent Murray Bridge event school students were injured and the race was stopped for a number of hours as the emergency workers sought to extract an injured student from a bike. Students in severe crashes are likely to end up with spinal injuries from the impact or broken bones, as happened in 2016 and 2017. It is not the case of if, a serious injury will happen, but more a case of when it will happen. Once a bike has crashed it is very common for another bike, at speed, to collide with the rolled bike. This results in a T-bone collision and it is only a matter of time before a Pedare student may be seriously injured.

In addition, the race is no longer about students and their learning. In the past, it was about students building a bike in class to race against other schools and then looking at ways to modify their bike for next season. The race has really changed, and it is a professional sporting event. Schools are now spending more resources on buying professionally built bikes, worth on average \$6500 each. Students are not a part of the build process as they do not have the skills to repair or build these "high spec" machines.

Finally, training here at school is not taken seriously by the majority of participants. Often there are only the 3 – 5 really dedicated and regular attendees. This is from the 30 plus team members.

The College has committed to providing STEM learning opportunities for students through the Robotics program. Student teams develop, program and build robots for competitions with other schools. Competitions extend a range of transferable skills such as using collaboration, problem-solving and interdisciplinary thinking that build upon the content developed in class. Pedare competes in the First Lego League, is the event partner for VEX EDR & IQ Robotics, and enters the First Robotics Competition held in Sydney each year.

The Old Scholars Pedal Prix team will continue to participate in the Pedal Prix events as they are one of the 'faster' teams in the competition. As adults, they are much more comfortable racing at speed and bring an adult road sense to the competition. The College will continue to support this program.

I know that the decision to cease Pedare's student involvement in Pedal Prix will be disappointing for the Pedare Community but it is a considered and timely decision given the very significant concerns about student safety and participation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. Millard". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "M" and a trailing flourish.

Mike Millard
College Principal