

SUPPORTER Q&A

WITH PAUL & MARGARET WAKELING

Paul Wakeling (OAM) is the Chair of the Mater Dei Golf Day Committee. Up until last year, he also served as a member on the Mater Dei Development Program Committee and the Mater Dei Foundation Management Committee. He and his wife, Margaret, have been long term supporters of Mater Dei through their Macarthur business the Paul Wakeling Motor Group. Recently retired, they have continued their relationship with Mater Dei privately.

Q How did you first become involved with Mater Dei?

A We first became involved with Mater Dei through the Golf Day. Phil McCarroll, a local businessman at the time who is still a supporter of Mater Dei, approached us to be part of the first Golf Day he was organising with Camden Police, 20 years ago.

Q What have you learnt since you began your connection with Mater Dei?

A We have learnt that we have been blessed to have five healthy children and seven healthy grandchildren. We feel privileged to have personally witnessed the positive impact that Mater Dei parents and staff and indeed our wider community has had on producing positive outcomes for the children of Mater Dei and, in turn, how this goodwill has had a positive impact on them and us.

Q You have stayed loyal to the cause for some time. Why?

A It is easy to stay loyal. You only have to visit the children at Mater Dei and see the learning and joy that happens there every day.

Q Do you have a favourite story to tell about Mater Dei?

A At last year's Golf Day, the boy School Captain, Joel Beers, gave an impromptu speech. He spoke confidentially, knowledgably and was very entertaining! He ended his speech by inviting questions from the audience. This brought the house down! Straight after this, a business partner of mine turned to me and with a big smile on his face wrote a cheque on the spot for \$1,000 for Mater Dei. One couldn't have scripted a better scenario. Occasions like this are truly memorable for lots of reasons - Paul



Q Who is the most inspiring person you have met?

A Maree, who is a friend of our daughter Justine. At 25 years of age, Maree gave birth to a beautiful baby boy, Luke, who was severely disabled. Her husband found this difficult and left her to raise Luke on her own. She and Luke resettled in Tumut, where she won the local community over with her sheer determination and personality, and she eventually met and married a great guy called Mike, and they had two more sons. Maree is an inspiring woman and our family is blessed to have her and her family as part of our lives.

Q What book has had an impact on you?

A A very timely question, as the last book we both read had a great impact on us. It's called 'The Story of a Beautiful Girl' by Rachel Simon. It's about a woman who cannot speak, is institutionalised and overcomes great challenges to become an outstanding painter.

Q If you could invite any special guests to dinner, who would they be?

A We would invite two special guests - Peter Ingham (Bishop of Wollongong) – because he is a great bloke and joke teller - and Hillary Clinton. We would then invite members of our immediate family.