



ABBOTSLEIGH

Old Girls' Union Inc.

The Loom

ABBOTSLEIGH OLD GIRLS
NEWSLETTER

October 2021



North Sydney Olympic Pool

1947

UPCOMING EVENTS



Thursday 28 October 2021
Old Girls vs
Current Girls Debate
Via Zoom

Tuesday 9 November 2021
Wellbeing and mindfulness
webinar with Charlotte
Jameson (Rees, 2000)
Via Zoom

Wednesday 17 November 2021
AOGU AGM
Via Zoom

Friday 22 July 2022
Marian Clarke Society
Black and Gold Lunch
Dining Room
Senior School

President's message

Empowerment through education, networking and philanthropy

This is the last time I will be writing to you as the President of the AOGU and as I reflect upon the last four years, this phrase aptly describes the driving force of my leadership during my term. At the recent Speakers' Breakfast, I spoke of how this phrase resonates with me and of its relevance to Old Girls. As Abbotsleigh girls, we have been graced with a strong education and I am very proud that the AOGU continues and grows its support of an Abbotsleigh education through the Kathleen McCredie Award, Centenary Scholarship and the Boarders' Drought Assistance Fund.

Making connections and building networks has been a key theme for the AOGU over the last few years and while Covid restrictions have created numerous challenges, we continue to try to find new ways of building connections and supporting each other as demonstrated by our special 'Covid edition' of *The Loom*, new Zoom events and the establishment of the Old Girls Business Directory. Our latest project is the launch of 'The Yarn', a Facebook group targeted at our most recent Old Girls (see page 6) which I hope will become an active and relevant space for our younger Old Girls to connect and support each other.

It was fantastic to be able to cheer on our Abbotsleigh extended family (see page 4) at the Tokyo Olympics as they did Australia proud and helped to keep spirits up while many were in lockdown. We are also very grateful to have squeezed in a few in-person events during Term 2 and I hope you enjoy some of the photos from the Mothers' Breakfast, Mother's Day Classic and Card Day.

Last but not least, 'philanthropy'. The project that I am most proud of is the establishment of the 110th Anniversary Grant program. It has been so rewarding for the AOGU to fund a program that helps Old Girls to 'pay it forward', making the world

a better place one project at time. While our financial support is relatively small, the difference and the positive outward ripples are disproportionately large and the hope is that the chain of positive impact continues to grow (see page 3 article from one of our 2019 Grant recipients).

If you were unable to attend, I strongly encourage you to view the recording of our Speaker's Breakfast where our 2020 Grant recipients, Linda Dalton (1979) and Nina Dunn (Tesoriero, 1995) together with Josie Parata (the founder of Lighthouse for the Community) spoke about their projects and demonstrated how education, networking and philanthropy are the cornerstones of empowerment.

Thank you also to everyone who participated or supported Team AbbGirls in its fourth year of the Mother's Day Classic. With our largest team to date, 40 team members walked and ran, smashing our fundraising target of \$1,000 by raising \$2,752 towards breast cancer research and support for affected families.

Through education, networking and philanthropy, we empower not only ourselves, but we empower others through shared knowledge, support (moral, emotional, physical, financial) and creating opportunities and hope. My best wishes to you and your families in these continued uncertain and challenging times. Thank you for the opportunity to serve you and I hope to see some of you join the 2022 AOGU Committee.

Keep safe and well and stay connected.

Belinda Burton (Tjeuw, 1991)
Honorary President, AOGU



110th Anniversary Grant recipient 2019



'Most' of the MotorOn Committee including 1999 leavers Suzette Graham, Kristy Graham, Felicity Anderson, Gill Carpenter, Georgia Buchanan, Lucy Baldry, Kate Carr, Mel Smith, Georgia Sevier and Susanna Robinson (missing Emily McGregor and Belinda Thomas).

The power of friendship should never be underestimated. Especially between a group of Abbotsleigh Old Girls!

A group of 1999 Abbotsleigh leavers came together in 2015 to set up MotorOn, a charity working in partnership with Macquarie University to raise money for Motor Neuron Disease (MND) research. MND is a progressive, terminal neurological disease with no known treatment or cure. Every day two people in Australia die from MND, while another two are told they have this devastating disease.

To date, MotorOn has raised more than \$1,000,000 for vital MND research, including a donation from the AOGU, which awarded MotorOn a 110th Anniversary Grant to go towards a neurotrack module microscope that will assess new drugs for neuroprotection and neurorepair for MND.

This grant was greatly received, as sadly the Abbotsleigh community has been touched by MND too often. There are many Old Girls whose parents have died or have themselves been diagnosed. From

the leaving year of 1964, three Old Girls have been diagnosed alone. By supporting MotorOn, the AOGU has ultimately supported the Abbotsleigh community.

MotorOn was established following the MND diagnosis of Gill Truman (Carpenter, 1999) in 2012, shortly after the birth of her second child. Gill says she can't imagine how she would have remained so positive and courageous without her school friends' support. "Every person diagnosed with MND inadvertently affects 12 others significantly," Gill said. "Thanks to my incredible friendships and support network from Abbotsleigh, this number would be much greater."

The Macquarie University Centre for MND Research receives no direct financial support from the government. All of its funding is through successful grant applications and philanthropic donations.

Although there is currently no cure for MND, inroads are being made into therapies that prolong the life of those with MND.

At the Macquarie University Centre for MND Research, research begins in the MND clinic, with researchers partnering with patients to better understand the causes and biological processes underlying the disease. In the laboratory, they look for clues and potential targets for developing therapies to slow and stop the disease in its tracks. They all work together in the one facility, on the one topic and with one goal – that is, to stop MND.

MotorOn will continue raising money for MND research, demonstrating its love, support and admiration for friends and family fighting MND. For more information, please visit www.motoron.org.

Snippets

OLD GIRL OLYMPIAN

Congratulations to Kiana Elliott (2014) who competed in her first Olympic Games in the Under 64 kg class in Weightlifting in Tokyo in August.

Kiana scored a personal best with a 101 kg snatch followed by a 108 kg clean and jerk for a total score of 209 kg, placing her first in Group B and finishing 11th overall. A spectacular performance topped off by the fact it all happened on her birthday!

Many of Kiana's classmates remember her grit and determination to fulfill her dream to make it to the Olympics one day. Until the age of 14, Kiana was an elite gymnast; however, after several major injuries, she had to make the tough decision to retire early from the sport which is when she took up weightlifting.



Kiana Elliott (2014) always dreamed she would compete at the Olympics.

Image: Kiana Elliott's Facebook page.

OLYMPIC OLD GIRL MUMS

Congratulations to Old Girl Bronwyn Purnell (Howard, 1978) and her husband Rod whose sons Alex and Nick both competed as members of Australia's rowing team at the Tokyo Olympics. Alex claimed a gold medal as a member of the winning Men's Four and Nick (who also competed at London in 2012) made it through to the finals again as a member of the Men's Eight. The boys' sister Prue (2010) is also an Abbotsleigh Old Girl.



Old Girls athletics team champions Sarah Healey (2016), Mia Hemsworth (2019), Ash Bruce (2012) and Charlotte Banks (2019).

TWO FROM TWO!

Old Girls are the dual champions for 2021 after taking out both the swimming and athletics events at this year's Senior School carnivals! As reported in the last edition of The Loom, the Old Girls triumphed in the pool at Sydney Olympic Park Aquatic Centre in February and it was on a soggy track in May at Sydney Olympic Park Athletic Centre that our Old Girls succeeded again. Victorious athletics team members included current Abbotsleigh athletics coaches Mia Hemsworth (2019) and Sarah Healey (2016), softball 1sts coach Ash Bruce (2012) and Charlotte Banks (2019) who coached Abbotsleigh netball last year and is a current athlete in training. Congratulations to arguably some of the strongest Old Girls teams to ever take on the Day Girls and Boarders in these hotly contested relays!



Congratulations also to Old Girl Kate Hoare (Ball, 1980) whose son, Oliver, finished 11th in the final of the Men's 1500 m at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. Olli qualified for the final after running one of his best times ever (3:34.35) in the semi-final. Kate said that Olli has been studying and training in the USA for the past five years. "We have not seen him much and COVID is not helping!" she said.

We know that the families of Olympians do a lot of hard work and make countless sacrifices behind the scenes to help their athletes achieve their dreams, so congratulations to the entire Purnell and Hoare families!



News

Mothers' Breakfast

The AOGU was delighted to welcome back Old Girls with daughters currently at school at the Mothers' Breakfast held earlier this year with an extra special welcome made to those with daughters or granddaughters who started in 2021.

Held in glorious sunshine on the Abbotsleigh Junior School tennis courts, it was wonderful to see three generations of nearly 80 Abbotsleigh girls enjoying each other's company.

In particular, Old Girls with daughters in Year 12 and Year 8 were strongly represented as were 1991 leavers with daughters currently at the School.



A group of close to 80 including current students and their mothers who are Old Girls along with Old Girls who are grandmothers of students new to Abbotsleigh gathered in glorious sunshine on the Junior School tennis courts for the 2021 AOGU Old Girl Mothers' Breakfast on Friday 30 April.



Year 12 girls and their mothers who are Old Girls.

Front: Karina Conn (Lorsch, 1986) and daughter Sophie, Karen Love (1987) and daughter Amelie Nichols.

Back: Carla Herbert (Knox, 1991) and daughter Sophie, Rachel Hargreaves (Logan, 1984) and daughter Kate, Rebecca Baillie (1989) and daughter Olivia Santow, Jennifer Matthews (1985) and daughter Mia Navratil, Kelly Swann (1985) and daughter Hannah Cerezo, Charlotte Wingfield Digby and her mother Megan (Baker, 1983).



Emily Kemp (7) with mother Jenny Kemp (Garland, 1990) and grandmother Sue Garland (North, 1858)



Grandmother Ingrid Wiseman (Prinsen, 1963) with daughter Philippa Loel (Wiseman, 1991) and granddaughters Laura Loel (9), Annika Loel (7), Mia Loel (5), Alison Loel (2) and Kathy Bestic (5).



AOGU Executive team:

Treasurer Margaret Jordan (Thiel, 1986), President Belinda Burton (Tjeuw, 1991) and daughter Poppy Burton (9), Secretary Sarah Franks (1991) and daughter Audrey Kennedy (9), and Vice President Rebecca Baillie (1989).



Year 8 girls and their mothers who are Old Girls: Amy Dawson (Whalan, 1993) and Zoe, Charlee-Robyn and Alex Lightfoot (Doherty, 1987), Morag and Victoria Rennie (Gosper, 1987), Harriet and Rhonda Kaan (Turner, 1993), Kate Walters and Erin Maher (1992) and Georgie O'Hara (Buchanan, 1999) and Annie.



1991 leavers and their daughters: Philippa Loel (Wiseman) and Laura (9), Annika (7), niece Kathy Bestic (5), Alison (2) and Mia (5); Rebecca Overton and Emily (9) and Charlotte (9) Ellis; Carla Herbert (Knox) and Sophie (12); Sarah Franks and Audrey Kennedy (9); and Belinda Burton (Tjeuw) and Poppy (9).



Old Girls who are mothers of current students Sally Smyth (Emptage, 1994) and Gretel Sachs (1993).

Card Day

After the cancellation of Card Day last year, it was with great pleasure that we welcomed back a number of our long-standing card players for the AOGU's 2021 Card Day held in the Grace Cossington Smith Gallery.

Play took place amongst a lovely and bright new art exhibition and it was a beautiful sunny day for tea and lunch out on the veranda.

All the proceeds from this event go towards the Kathleen McCredie Award (a scholarship which enables a girl who would otherwise not be able to attend Abbotsleigh to do so) and we are proud to have raised almost \$1,000. Many thanks to the generosity of this small but supportive group.



Team AbbGirls Mother's Day Classic 2021



Emma Thornthwaite, Head Prefect 2020/21, played a key role in organising Team AbbGirls members to meet and walk together at Narrabeen Lake as part of this year's Mother's Day Classic.



Ashley Chan (11) and her parents Rebecca and Victor Chan



AOGU President Belinda Burton, husband Mark and daughters Jasmine (Year 11) and Poppy (Year 9) getting into the spirit of this year's Mother's Day Classic.

Speakers' Breakfast

The 2021 AOGU Speakers' Breakfast held last month was an opportunity to hear how Old Girls are helping make our world a better place, one project at a time.

AOGU President Belinda Burton spoke about empowerment through education, networking and philanthropy with guest speakers, both recipients of the 2020 AOGU 110th Anniversary Grant, bringing this phrase to life with their inspiring stories.

Old Girl **Nina Dunn (Tesoriero, 1995)** is involved with Lighthouse for the Community, an organisation that provides frontline support for those experiencing domestic and family violence. Nina was joined by Lighthouse for the Community founder and CEO Josie Parata, who shared how the organisation aims to assist those who want to move forward from their domestic violence experiences by helping to set goals to break the cycle of abuse and prevent welfare dependences.

Josie and Nina explained that one of the key factors in paving the way for a more secure and independent future is the ability to enter the workforce. Specifically, the AOGU grant will help support a pilot program for the provision of training and resume writing workshops and one-on-one case management as well as support with employment identification.

"At school we were really taught to give back to people and communities in need and it's great to see that through all the different years, people are still giving back," Nina said.

As featured in the last edition of The Loom, **Linda Dalton (1979)** was the other recipient of the 2020 AOGU 110th Anniversary Grant. Linda is the founding member of The Two Way Street project, which supports under-privileged learner drivers from the local rural community of Bellingen.

If you missed the Speakers' Breakfast, a recording is available [here](#).



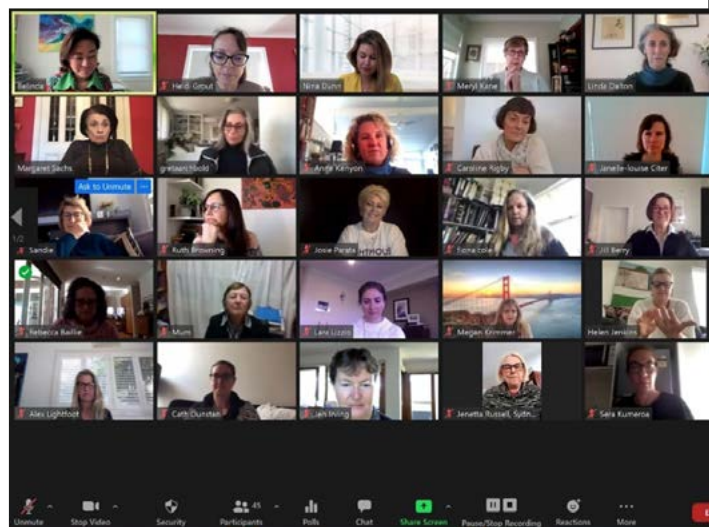
Linda Dalton (1979)



Nina Dunn (Tesoriero, 1995)



Lighthouse for the Community founder and CEO Josie Parata



Some of the guests at the Speakers' Breakfast Zoom



Welcome to The Yarn

The AOGU would like to announce the launch of a new Facebook group for our younger members called The Yarn.

The Yarn is designed to help you connect with other young women like yourselves and stay in contact for various social, networking and school opportunities. Your cohorts contain so many diverse and talented individuals and provide a very valuable community.

This group offers a space to facilitate:

- University tips, study help and sharing course texts
- Mentorship and job opportunities
- Social events of interest
- Whatever else you could want! We want this to be your space

If you left Abbotsleigh between 2013-2021, please join The Yarn [here](#) and refer to [this letter](#) for more information.

Calling Old Girls: Committee members and Treasurer needed

Do you answer “yes” to any of the following?

- ✓ I want an opportunity to represent Abbotsleigh Old Girls
- ✓ I want an opportunity to reconnect with the Abbotsleigh community
- ✓ I want an opportunity to gain a different perspective within the Abbotsleigh community
- ✓ It is important to build and strengthen connections between alumni
- ✓ I would like to share my time, skills and contacts to help build the Old Girls Network

If you answered YES to any of the above statements, you should join the 2022 AOGU Committee and we warmly

invite you to join us at some of our 2021 meetings to see what we are all about. The Committee meets twice a term on a Wednesday evening at 7.30 pm.

All skills and contributions are valued and required, but we notably have a skills gap in the areas of:

- Accounting
- Investment finance
- Events management
- Communications strategies
- Fundraising
- Data management

So, if you have experience in any of these areas, we need you.

The Executive Team will be stepping down in November as they will have served their maximum term. Therefore, if you are interested in taking on an Executive Committee role or joining the Committee, please contact Sarah Franks at aogu.secretary@gmail.com.

Being part of the AOGU Committee is a wonderful opportunity to support the Old Girl community and to build our network of women supporting each other, as well as maintaining a connection with the School. I strongly encourage you to get involved.

Belinda Burton
President, AOGU

Notice of the Abbotsleigh Old Girls' Union Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 17 November 2021.

The Annual General Meeting of the Abbotsleigh Old Girls' Union Incorporated will be held via Zoom on **Wednesday 17 November 2021** commencing at 7.30 pm. All AOGU members are welcome. Please RSVP to the Old Girls Office and a Zoom invitation will be sent to you.

Order of business

1. Confirmation of the minutes of the previous AGM;
2. Receive and consider the Annual Report of the Honorary President;
3. Receive and consider the Annual Report of the Honorary Treasurer including the audited financial statements and the Auditor's report for the year ending 30 June 2021;
4. Appoint the auditor for the year 2021/2022;
5. Receive and consider the Annual Report of the Honorary Secretary;
6. Elect the Committee and Officers for 2021/2022 including confirmation of AOGU nominated Abbotsleigh Council Representatives; and
7. To conduct any other business of which 14 days prior written notice has been given.

All Committee and Officer positions will be declared vacant at the AGM and nominations for these positions are now open.

Nominations of candidates for positions on the Abbotsleigh Old Girls' Union Committee must be signed by the proposer and seconder and be accompanied by the written consent of the nominee. Nomination forms can be obtained by contacting the AOGU Secretary at aogu.secretary@gmail.com. Nominations must be received **by 5 pm Monday 8 November 2021** to: The Honorary Secretary, AOGU, Locked Bag 1666, Wahroonga NSW 2076 or via aogu.secretary@gmail.com.

Members of the AOGU who wish to receive a ballot paper for the election of the Committee must write to the Secretary requesting a ballot paper **by Monday 8 November 2021**. Ballot papers must be returned **by Monday 15 November 2021** to: The Honorary Secretary, AOGU, Locked Bag 1666, Wahroonga NSW 2076 or via aogu.secretary@gmail.com.

For more information, please contact Sarah Franks, Honorary Secretary of the AOGU via email at aogu.secretary@gmail.com.



Aprons \$25 each or two for \$40

Tea towels \$15 each or three for \$35

Portable chargers \$25 each

All profits from merchandise sales go towards the Kathleen McCredie Award.

Order now via Trybooking at

www.trybooking.com/BFWZW

Or call 02 9473 7740

Year group reunions

1950 Leavers' 70 Year Reunion

2022, date TBC
Abbotsleigh Dining Room

1951 Leavers' 70 Year Reunion

2022, date TBC
Abbotsleigh Dining Room

1952 Leavers' 70 Year Reunion

2022, date TBC
Abbotsleigh Dining Room

1960 Leavers' 60 Year Reunion

Monday 11 April 2022 – Tour of
Abbotsleigh
Tuesday 12 April 2022 – Pymble Golf Club,
lunch

1961 Leavers' 60 Year Reunion

Postponed until March/April 2022
Details TBC
Pymble Golf Club, lunch

1962 Leavers' 60 Year Reunion

2022, date TBC

1965 Leavers' 55 Year Reunion

Wednesday 4 May 2022, lunch
The Queen's Club, Sydney

1970 Leavers' 50 Year Reunion

Friday 4 March 2022
School tour in the morning
Roseville Golf Club, lunch

1971 Leavers' 50 Year Reunion

March 2022, date TBC
Abbotsleigh Dining Room

1972 Leavers' 50 Year Reunion

Friday 29 July 2022

1977 Leavers' 45 Year Reunion

2022, date TBC

1980 Leavers' 40 Year Reunion

40 year reunion cancelled
See you all at the 45 year reunion in 2025

1981 Leavers' 40 Year Reunion

2022, date TBC

1982 Leavers' 40 Year Reunion

2022, date TBC

1985 Leavers' 35 Year Reunion

2022, date TBC

1990 Leavers' 30 Year Reunion

Organisers needed
Contact the Old Girls Office

1991 Leavers' 30 Year Reunion

Postponed until 2022
Date TBC

1992 Leavers' 30 Year Reunion

Organisers needed
Contact the Old Girls Office

1995 Leavers' 25 Year Reunion

2022, date TBC

1996 Leavers' 25 Year Reunion

Saturday 26 February 2022
Greengate Hotel, Killara

1997 Leavers' 25 Year Reunion

Organisers needed
Contact the Old Girls Office

2001 Leavers' 20 Year Reunion

2022, date TBC

2002 Leavers' 20 Year Reunion

Organisers needed
Contact the Old Girls Office

2005 Leavers' 15 Year Reunion

15 year reunion cancelled
See you all at the 20 year reunion in 2025

2006 Leavers' 15 Year Reunion

2022, date TBC

2007 Leavers' 15 Year Reunion

2022, date TBC

2010 Leavers' 10 Year Reunion

Date TBC

2011 Leavers' 10 Year Reunion

Organisers needed
Contact the Old Girls Office

2012 Leavers' 10 Year Reunion

Organisers needed
Contact the Old Girls Office

2015 Leavers' 5 Year Reunion

2022, date TBC

2016 Leavers' 5 Year Reunion

2022, date TBC

2017 Leavers' 5 Year Reunion

2022, date TBC

2020 Leavers' 1 Year Reunion

Sunday 12 December 2021 (note new date)
Greengate Hotel, Killara

Regional and other reunions

North West Reunion

Goonoo Goonoo Station
13304 New England Highway, Timbumburi
4 March 2022

Canberra

2022, date TBC

Central Western Reunion

2022, date TBC

Qld and Northern NSW Reunion

4 September 2022
Toowoomba
To coincide with Toowoomba Carnival of
Flowers, (www.tocf.com.au)

Tasmania Reunion

Late February/early March 2022
Royal Yacht Club, Hobart (TBC)

Marian Clarke Society Black and Gold Lunch

(for those Old Girls celebrating 35 years
or more since leaving school)
Friday 22 July 2022
Abbotsleigh Dining Room

For more information about your reunion or to contact the organiser, please contact the Old Girls office. If your reunion doesn't yet have an organiser for 2022, and you would like to lend a hand, we would love to hear from you.

Organising a reunion

Organising your reunion is easy and lots of fun with plenty of support available from the Old Girls Office to help make your event a success.

The Old Girls' Office can assist in terms of administration including creating and sending of save-the-dates and invitations, RSVPs as well as the processing of payments etc. The format of the event is up to the event organisers as is where and when to hold the event. The Abbotsleigh Dining Room is an option, or the Old Girls Office can suggest venues where other

reunions have been held successfully in the past. We can also offer a school tour and/or chapel service around your event should you wish.

Your first step may be to find some other members to form an organising committee and to perhaps investigate possible dates and venues. In the meantime, the Old Girls Office can share a list of Old Girls from your year group indicating who we do and do not have contact details for – it's a good idea to enlist the help of the committee to follow up those where there are gaps.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Old Girls Office to find out more about how we can help you organise your next reunion!

A future worth supporting

Abbotsleigh Celebration Giving Day: Friday 22 October

Celebration Zoom event: Saturday 23 October

We are excited to announce that we will launch our inaugural Abbotsleigh Celebration Giving Day in conjunction with our Foundation Celebration Zoom, back by popular demand!

We will be holding a huge, virtual community fundraising event, where the whole Abbotsleigh community can come together, have some fun and celebrate being part of this wonderful school while raising much needed funds for Indigenous scholarships and new building works.

Our MC will be the fabulous Laura Tunstall (1991), Channel 9 News reporter, who did a fantastic job for us last year.

Visit the Abbotsleigh Celebration Giving Day page.
www.charidy.com/abbotsleigh

Buy your Celebration Zoom tickets now!

<https://events.humanitix.com/foundation-celebration-zoom-2021>



Abbotsleigh has an incredibly strong debating program and the girls regularly bring home championship trophies in various debating competitions. Last year's debate was a huge success and this year the Old Girls and the Current Girls are looking to do battle again.

Watch Old Girls Elizabeth Luu (2018), Georgia Chahoud (2015) and Niki Nojournian (2017) battle it out with Current Girls Megan Wang, Anjali Lambotharan and Arwyn Stone in our second Old Girls vs Current Girls debate.

The adjudicators will be Sarah Franks (1991) representing the Old Girls and Jasmine Burton representing the Current Girls. The Chairperson will be Rebecca Wallwork.

Thursday 28 October 2021

6.30 pm

Via Zoom

RSVP here by Tuesday 26 October 2021

Enquiries to **Heidi Grout**, Old Girls Relations Manager or 9473 7740.

**Moving House?**

Update your contact details [here](#)

Old Girls Business Directory

Please [click here](#) to view the directory, where you will find a vast array of goods and services provided by Abbotsleigh Old Girls.

**Stay Connected
Contact the Old Girls**

Office: aogu@abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au
or 02 9473 7740

Locked Bag 1666
Wahroonga NSW 2076

Belinda Burton: aogu.president@gmail.com

Sarah Franks: aogu.secretary@gmail.com

Follow us on   

***Cover image**

Before Abbotsleigh had its own pool, students used to travel to the Olympic Pool at Milsons Point for swimming carnivals.

This photograph, taken in 1947 after the 100 yards race, is kindly provided from the collection of Jessie Quigley OAM (Goldsmith, 1950).

