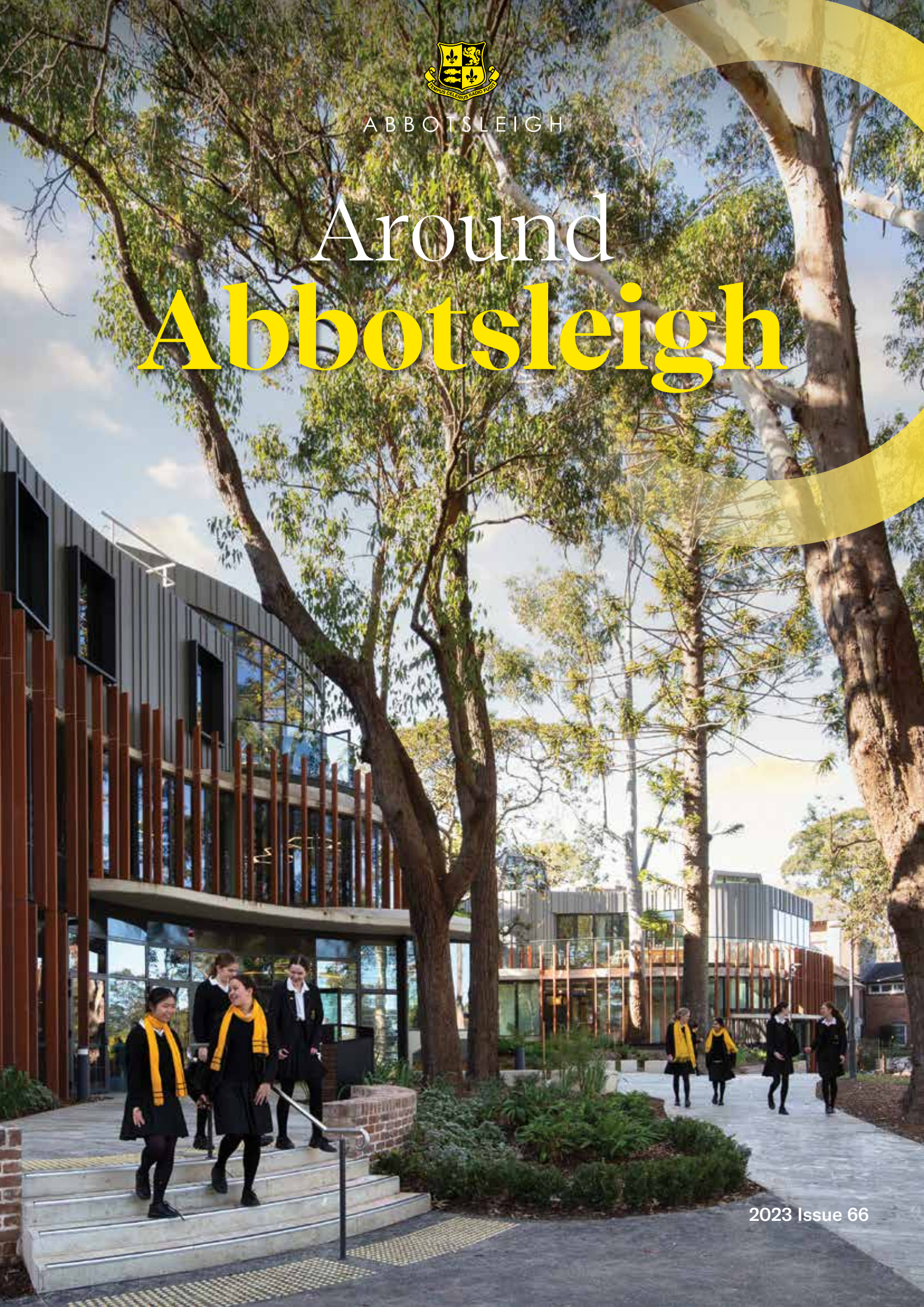
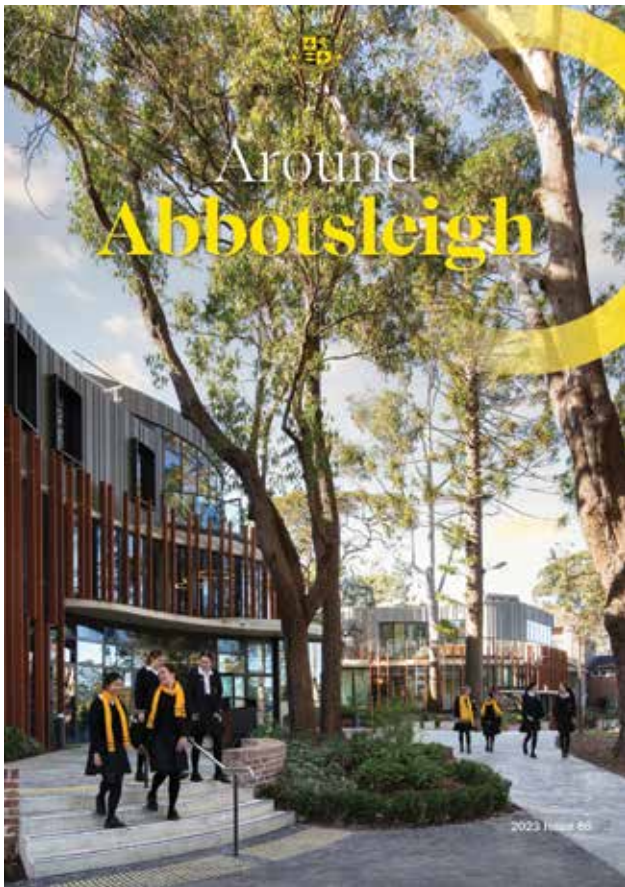




ABBOTSLEIGH

Around Abbotsleigh





Cover

The new Senior School Science and Art buildings, opened on Sunday 4 December 2022.



Page 73

Tameea Lock (AOG 2021) alongside her HSC major work, *Blueprint for a shifting, fragmented world*, as displayed in the ART NORTH 2022 exhibition.



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Around Abbotsleigh is a publication for the Abbotsleigh school community.

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Abbotsleigh 2022: 'A Vibrant Community that Shines Very Brightly'

After two years of incredible disruption, every member of the Abbotsleigh community was determined to emerge from the restrictive Covid cocoon in the best way possible. Indeed, as soon as we were able, we threw off the restrictions and literally roared back into life. This edition of *Around Abbotsleigh* clearly demonstrates how our whole community used every opportunity to reconnect and to fulfil our 2021/2022 Prefect theme – 'Shine Bright'.

That being said, 2022 did begin somewhat gingerly. Covid cases were rampant, everyone wore masks (even our youngest children), the girls had to stay in year groups ('cohorting'), parent and community meetings were largely on Zoom, it was very hot and everything – communicating, getting to know new teachers and friends, boarding, chapels, assemblies and the co-curricular activities that could go ahead – seemed just that little bit harder. Despite this, there was also an atmosphere of expectation and determination. Things were going to get better! We were able to come to school, undertake many activities and we were learning to live with Covid. In typical Abbotsleigh style, our girls and our staff rose to every challenge, they gave everything their best shot, they supported one another at all times, and they certainly shone very brightly – as did all members of the Abbotsleigh community.

Things did get better! As soon as we were given the go ahead, our girls discarded their masks and joined every co-curricular activity they could possibly fit into their days. Our parents immediately began to organise face-to-face community activities, as did our Old Girls. Indeed, the number of Old Girls reunions that occurred in 2022 as we played catch up after a two-year drought, was legendary. The photos of our Old Girls enjoying each other's company in this publication provides but a glimpse of these wonderful women shining very brightly.

Our parents enjoyed fantastic community activities – Trivia Night; year group activities; Mother/Daughter, Father/Daughter, Parent/Daughter breakfasts; dances; tennis; and dinners – just to name a few. And finally, our oft-postponed Foundation Gala at the Gallery was able to go ahead. What a sensational evening that was!

Even with the different challenges faced in 2021 and 2022, our girls' impressive focus on, and love of learning has not wavered. This is not surface level learning, this is very deep learning Pre K-Year 12, and I commend to you the article written by Mrs Donna Moffatt, our Director of Learning Innovation. Mrs Moffatt's article demonstrates the sophisticated learning that our girls are undertaking and shows that, by fostering important learning and character dispositions so that they may lead a purposeful life and make a positive social impact, we are preparing our girls for the world well beyond the gates of Abbotsleigh.

Further inspiring examples of the implementation of our learning framework in the classrooms across the School are highlighted in this edition of *Around Abbotsleigh*. These clearly demonstrate the talent and dedication of our teachers who are determined to provide an education that adds significantly to the curriculum provided by NESAs for our girls. We like to call this an 'ATAR +'.

Evidence of our girls' learning is exhibited regularly both within and beyond the School, and we are very proud of each and every Abbotsleigh girl for their dedication, determination, grit and drive. We are delighted that our girls in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 demonstrated their knowledge, skills and understanding extremely well in NAPLAN this year. We congratulate them all and their teachers who, despite learning (girls) and teaching (teachers) in masks for an extended period of time across 2021 and 2022, they continued to keep to and even exceeded the high standards for which Abbotsleigh is renowned.

In the same vein, we are extraordinarily proud of our Year 12 girls, who attained exceptional HSC results, placing Abbotsleigh 7th in NSW and named as Top Independent Girls' School in the State. Indeed, 24% of the 2022 cohort were placed on the All Rounder Achievers List for attaining Band 6 in 10 or more units, and almost 50% of the cohort attained an ATAR of 95 and above. These are outstanding achievements.

Despite three years of disruption due to Covid, our Year 12 girls did not let adversity affect them. Instead, they persevered, worked closely with their teachers, collaborated with, and supported each other, strived to achieve their personal best in every endeavour and sought to lead balanced and well-rounded lives through involvement in myriad activities. Their courage, resilience, grit and determination meant that the class of 2022 fulfilled their theme, 'Shine Bright', in spades.

The girls in Year 12, 2022, were excellent student leaders, encouraging younger girls to shine, each in their own unique way. Deeply compassionate, they embraced and inspired the younger cohort with their Service project, the International Justice Mission, by shining a light on injustice, such as modern slavery, and by raising funds and awareness. Further, they brought energy and fun to assemblies, house events and so many other activities. Outside the gates of Abbotsleigh, we are sure these young women will each make a positive difference. Their legacy will certainly live on at their school.

Making a positive social impact, especially through Service, is a very important pillar of Abbotsleigh and our service to others continued throughout 2022. In addition to our whole school Service project, our Junior School girls enthusiastically raised money for a number of organisations, including World Vision and St Jude's, the school we support in Tanzania. They also participated in 'Light Up Vanuatu', a collaborative and very effective Service project with Knox.

Our senior girls made a significant difference to residents in Anglicare nursing homes and contributed to many worthwhile causes and groups, such as Zonta, Fairtrade, Flood Appeals, Ukraine, Domestic Violence Support Groups and Pay it Forward for Yalari.

Further, the whole School contributed to the annual 'Toys 'n Tucker' Anglicare Christmas appeal. Our girls believe passionately in Service and making a positive difference, and they were determined to look out for others who are less fortunate.

Similarly in the spirit of Service, our School Council gave of themselves unstintingly, worked extremely hard and provided excellent governance throughout 2022. It was a great delight to see their hard work and support come to fruition with the completion and opening of our first Priority Projects: the outstanding Library and Innovation Centre and surrounding playground areas in the Junior School, and the superb Science and Art Centre in the Senior School. These buildings are truly magnificent and we are so grateful to our School Council and to all members of our School community for their hard work, dedication, generosity and support. The girls of today and tomorrow will benefit enormously from the vision, drive and generosity of all who have been involved, and I commend to you Ms Sally Ruston's article, Architecture and Pedagogy in Dialogue, which provides insight into how the environment is such an important third educator for our 21st century girls.

2022 was like an exciting roller coaster ride. Like all roller coasters, it seemed to start slowly with the engine huffing and puffing its way up that first huge 'mountain', then suddenly the first summit was reached and the roller coaster was off, speeding down the other side, continuing inexorably towards its goal, along the tracks 'up hill, down dale, looping the loop', hanging upside down, all at exhilarating (if not terrifying) speed. Then suddenly, in a rush of smiling faces, laughter, noise and fun, the end was in sight, and the finish line reached!

The story of Abbotsleigh 2022 is certainly one of vibrance, exhilaration and the sheer joy of learning and reconnection, with our whole community shining very brightly indeed. This edition of *Around Abbotsleigh* captures this beautifully and I hope that you enjoy reading it as much as I have.

Megan Krimmer

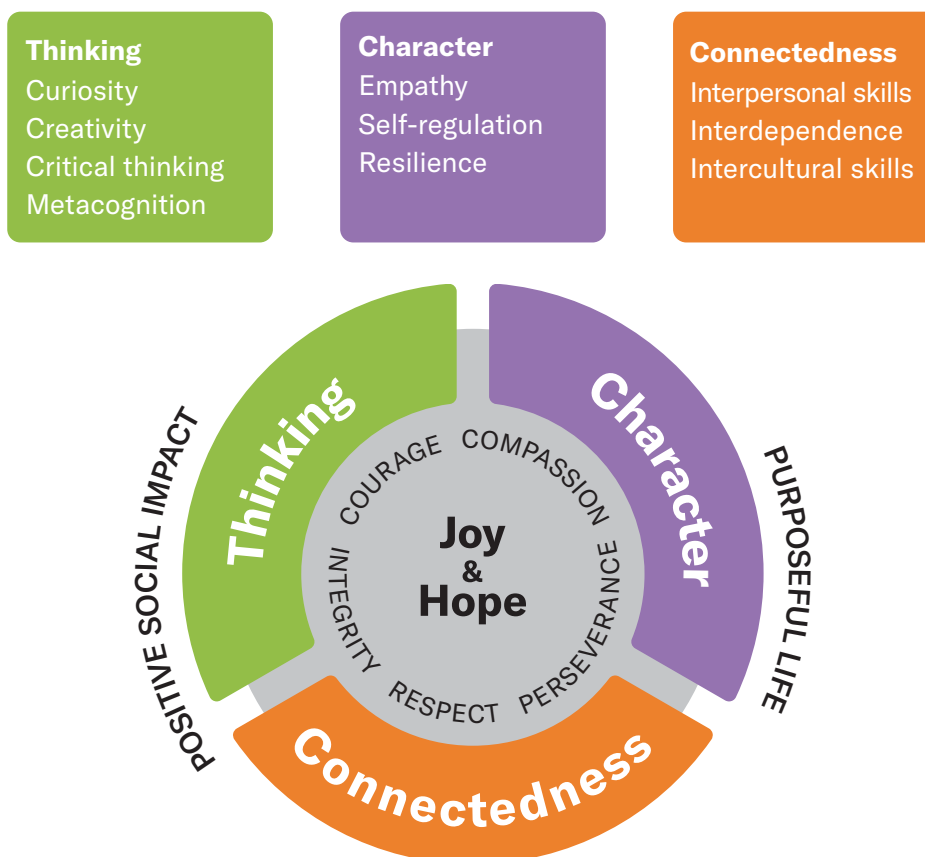
Lessons that last a lifetime

What are the skills that students should be learning?

Donna Moffatt, Director of Learning Innovation

Over the past five years, within an increasingly uncertain, complex and volatile global environment, this has become one of the most asked questions in society and education. What knowledge, skills, attitudes and values will today's students need to thrive and shape their world? The 'three Rs' are the building blocks for higher order learning, upon which more complex skills are developed, and while we cannot predict the future or the skill requirements of employees of the future, we do know the type of learner that we want to develop – '...students who are critical and reflective, open to a lifetime of learning and relearning, who are comfortable with change and have empathy and a global outlook.' – Mark Scott, Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Sydney and previous Secretary of the New South Wales Department of Education.

At Abbotsleigh, we have been responding to this challenge through developing a learning framework that has our School Values at its core and focuses on the way students think rather than the right answer. Our Kindergarten children of today need to be powerful learners who will be able to make their way and find purpose when most of their working life will be spent in the unimaginable second half of the 21 century. They need to be active contributors to whichever community they find themselves in. They need to be able to deal with issues critically, listen to other people's ideas, empathise and act accordingly. They need to be able to take risks in their learning and innovate, to know how to communicate their message and collaborate with others. They need to be curious and show character through adversity. Transferable skills such as these are a very important part of Abbotsleigh's Learning Framework. The framework, which is divided into the three main areas of thinking, character and connectedness, targets the explicit teaching and learning of a number of learning dispositions:





The learning dispositions that form the basis of Abbotsleigh's Learning Framework are those that are recognised by academics and industry, and in research as being important for citizens of the future to be productive, innovative problem solvers. Most importantly, the framework does not take the focus away from academics, but rather seeks to place learning dispositions alongside knowledge as necessary to prepare our girls for tomorrow. It aims to create a culture of learning that makes explicit our desire to have a positive social impact and a purposeful life. No longer can we expect our students to develop empathy or foster their creative skills incidentally. We need to teach learning dispositions explicitly alongside content.

In doing so, we have been supported by a partnership with the Association of Independent Schools NSW and New Pedagogies for Deep Learning. This is a global partnership including more than 1,800 schools across 17 countries where educators are continually developing their knowledge of learning and assessment processes to meet students' diverse needs and interests.

Entering our fourth year of this partnership, Abbotsleigh's Learning Framework is now well established, and our focus has expanded to an exploration of how success is currently defined and recognised. How can we give prominence to and validly assess soft skills such as the learning dispositions? How do we recognise the whole student and not just what they have shown on pen and paper tests that emphasise the knowledge component of learning? These are the questions that we are grappling with along with many other schools both nationally and internationally:

- New learning ambitions
- New assessments
- New standards
- New credentials
- New partnerships
- New metrics

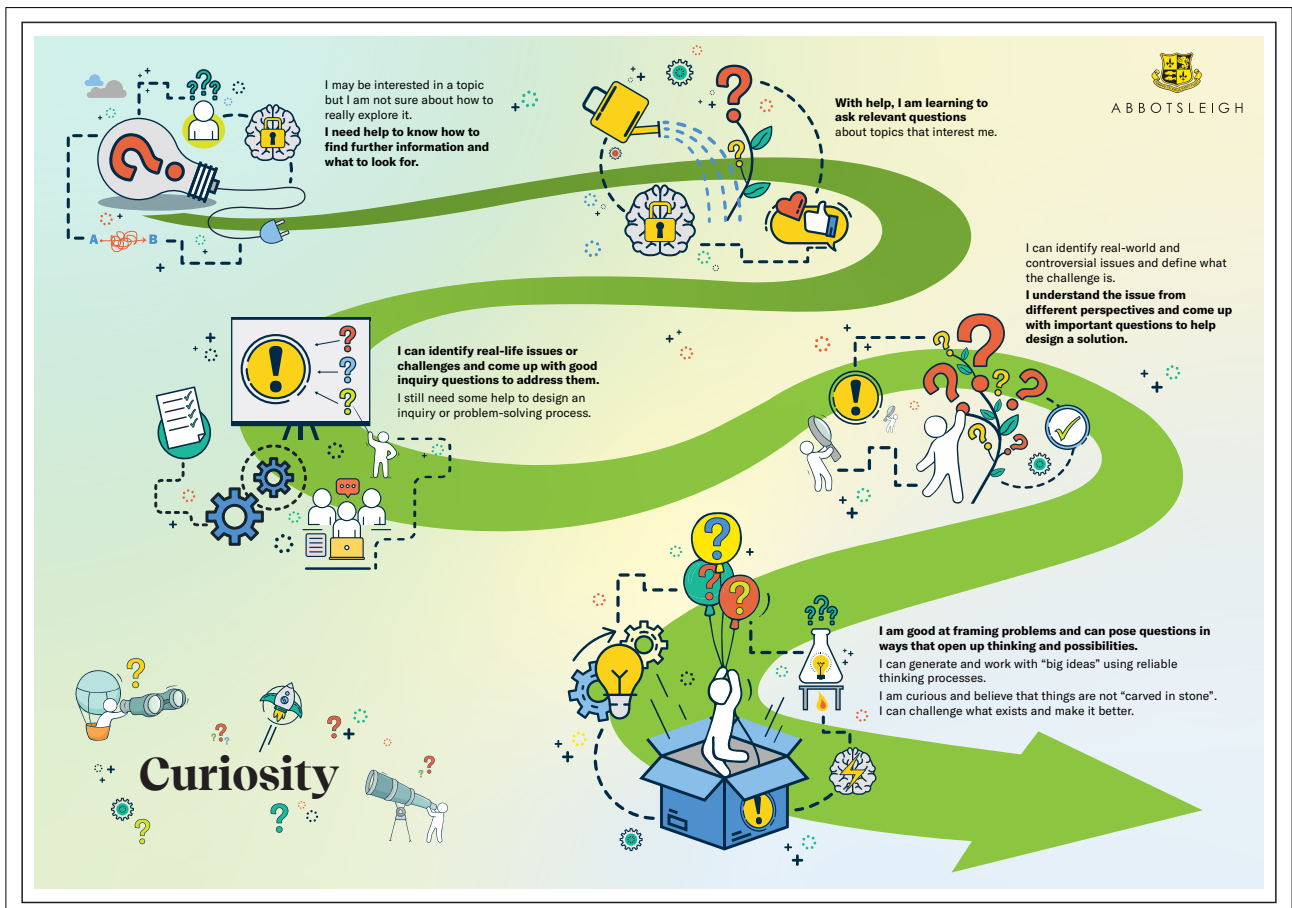
On the following few pages, you will see how we have visually represented the learning dispositions mentioned above in such a way that students can track their way along a progression – no matter the year group. You do not ever 'complete' a progression. Rather, they are revisited numerous times in different subjects and contexts, as this edition of *Around Abbotsleigh* aims to demonstrate from classrooms across the School.



Learning dispositions

Thinking:

The process of considering and reasoning about something



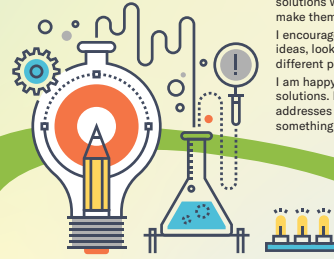


When I face a challenge. I look for what others did or the tools they used to solve it. If a solution looks like a good one, I will use it without considering other ideas.

When facing a challenge, I look for different solutions that may have been tried. With some help, I try to adapt these to suit my goals. I know and can use some strategies that help me work or think in new ways.



When facing a challenge, I think about how and why previous solutions worked and what I can do to make them even better. I encourage and consider other people's ideas, looking for opportunities in the different points of view. I am happy to take risks in creating solutions. I ensure that my solution addresses the issues and adds something of real value.



When facing a challenge, I can imagine and create new solutions or ideas. I can organise my creative thoughts in a way that helps me come up with promising ideas. I often use "what if" thinking to create or add value to what already exists.



When facing a challenge, I not only come up with "game-changing" solutions but know how to build a plan and use the right resources to make it happen. I can change problems into opportunities and develop solutions based on multiple perspectives. I think outside the box and my solutions make a real difference in people's lives.

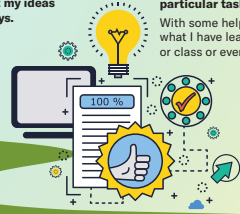
Creativity



I can understand the task but often don't see how it fits in with who I am and what is important to me. **Sometimes, with help, I can test my ideas out in different and relevant ways.**

I am beginning to learn how to experiment with different ideas and figure out what works best for a particular task.

With some help, I can see how I can use what I have learned in a different subject or class or even outside school.



I can think about the impact of my ideas and design new courses of action to improve outcomes.

I use what I have learned in one task to solve new or different tasks. I use techniques I learn in class to solve problems in my life and the world.



I can test and evaluate my solutions in diverse settings to find out which are most effective. **I reflect on my work and can explain why it is successful and how I can apply what I learn in different situations.**



I can regularly apply what I learn in different contexts, adapting and transferring my knowledge as needed. **I understand how to evaluate ideas and their potential for success in new contexts.**

Critical Thinking

Experimenting, reflecting and taking action on ideas in the real world

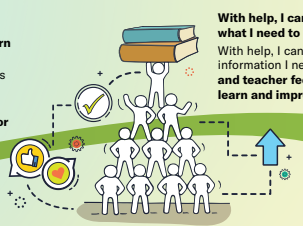




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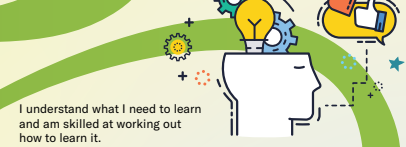
I am not clear about what I need to learn and why I need to learn it.
 I can complete tasks my teacher prepares for me, but I need help to reflect on and understand how I am doing with a task.
Learning is not a positive experience for me yet.



With help, I can identify what I know, what I need to learn and why.
 With help, I can choose a topic and find the information I need. **I am learning to see peer and teacher feedback as opportunities to learn and improve.** I think I can learn and achieve.



I can describe what I am interested in, what I know, what I need to learn and why I need to learn it. I can choose a topic and create/design a project to help my learning.
 I listen to peer and teacher feedback and use it to improve the way I learn.
 Learning is a positive experience and it leads to a feeling of accomplishment and achievement.



I understand what I need to learn and am skilled at working out how to learn it.
As I learn, I reflect on my progress and seek feedback to improve my learning.
 I use what I learn to help improve current and future projects.
I enjoy learning and see it as a way to improve my life. I try to balance work with play.



Metacognition



I have the skills to find and create my own learning opportunities.
 I am continually building the knowledge and skills that help me succeed in life.
 I create meaningful solutions that impact my life and the world.
I actively seek out feedback and use it to better understand how I learn and what helps me grow. I look for any opportunity to learn something new, even when it's challenging.
I balance work with play.



Character:

The combination of mental and moral qualities of a person

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I am not sure about what other people might feel like when I am interacting with them or when I hear about issues happening in the world.
I see the world from my own perspective and don't understand or appreciate the perspectives of people in different cultures.

I am beginning to put myself into the shoes of others. I can sometimes see what their experiences must be like.
With help, I am beginning to understand my own culture and some differences of other cultures.

More and more, I can imagine how others experience the world, even though I may not have experienced these things myself.
I am beginning to understand that who I am and how I see the world is influenced by where I was born and how I was raised. With guidance, I am learning to understand what the experiences of others might be like and respect the values and worldviews of other cultures.
I would like to be courageous about doing the right thing - whether it's in class or beyond it.

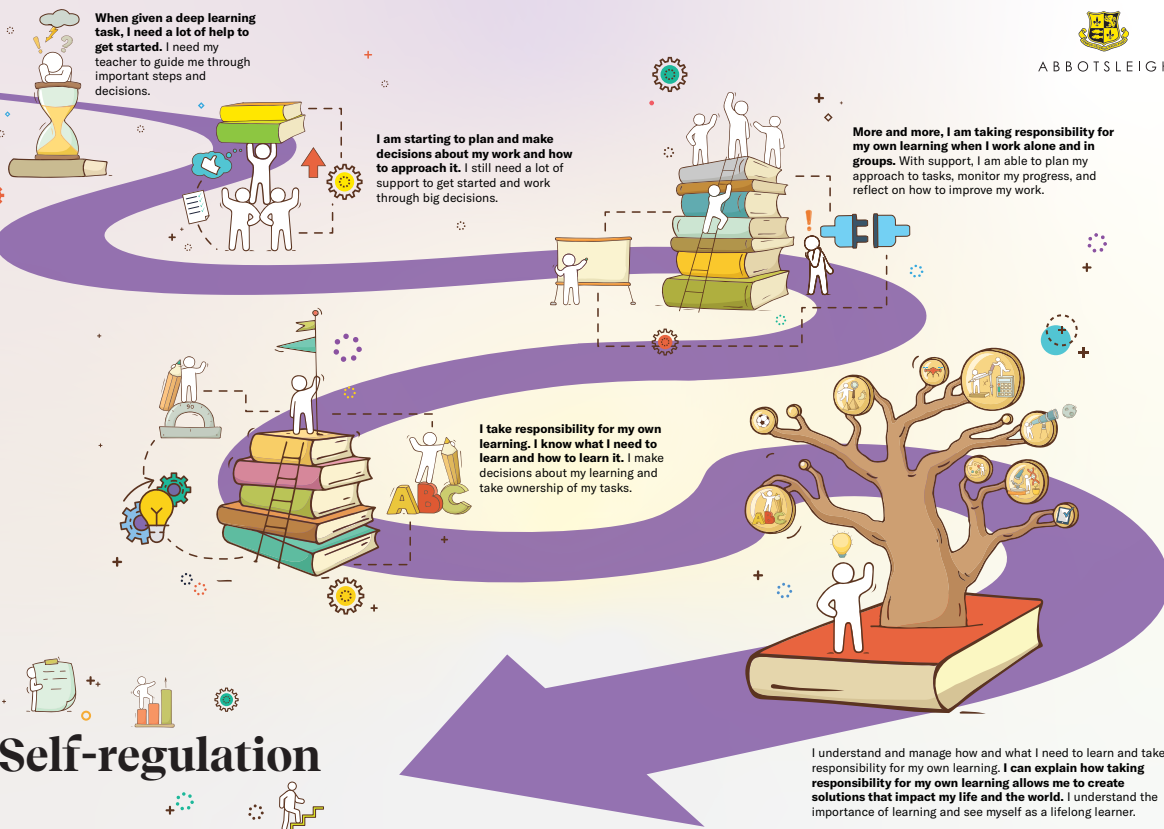
I regularly reflect about how I can feel more empathy and show more compassion for others. This is an authentic goal for me.
I really care about the world and everyone who lives in it. I am curious about different cultures and worldviews and have a strong understanding of my own. I care about the welfare of people from across the world, even though I don't know them.
I strive to be courageous within the class and beyond it.

I regularly show and model compassion, empathy and integrity, even when no one notices or when it is inconvenient to do so.
I use my strong understanding of my culture and other cultures to better understand global issues from different points of view. When I speak up for others (who can't speak up for themselves), I am helping to make the world better. It is this wider view that allows me to take action to improve the human condition in small and big ways.
Virtues such as sincerity, fairness, trustworthiness and bravery matter to me and it's how I wish others to describe me and the work I do.

Empathy



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Connectedness:

A willingness and openness to develop relationships and build shared understandings

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I may help or work with others on tasks, but I often don't understand why we are working together or the best way to go about it.

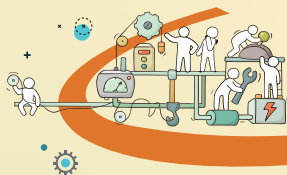
When working in a group, I am aware of the common goal or solution that we are all working to achieve.
Key group decisions are often made by one or two group members, rather than the whole group.

I work well with others, and our team effort makes the learning experience more successful.
I talk with and listen to my group members and we agree upon plans and desired outcomes of our work.

I understand and can clearly explain how each member of my team works together to produce our best outcomes.
I work with others to resolve conflicts and to achieve group goals.
I am a very good listener, and make sure that everyone's voice is heard and appreciated.

Interpersonal Skills

I interact with other members of my group to make sure our collaborative process is as effective as possible.
I make sure that everyone's ideas, knowledge and abilities are heard and valued.



When working on a group task, I often work by myself instead of working together with my team. I discuss some of the work with my team but do not discuss many important decisions.



I can work with others to successfully complete a team task, but we have a hard time making sure that every group member is able to contribute equally. Important group decisions are usually made by one or two members instead of the whole group.



When I work in pairs or in a group, we agree how to share jobs fairly so that the group achieves its best work. We involve all group members in making important decisions about the task.

I can explain how my group uses all our strengths in the best possible way to develop our solution. Each team member clearly contributes to the final product or solution.



When working in groups, I find ways not only to use my own and others' strengths but also to build on our strengths and learn new skills. I understand the importance of group decision-making and make sure that all team members are able to contribute to our solutions.



Interdependence



I am beginning to see that my behaviour has an impact on others but still have trouble seeing things from other people's perspectives. I sometimes struggle to form positive relationships with my group members.

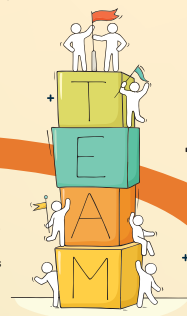


I am developing a better understanding of who I am and what I am interested in. I see how my behaviour affects others and know that people may have different feelings and opinions than my own.



I understand who I am as a person and why I have my perspectives. I listen to and understand other people's viewpoints, and I value their perspectives even if they differ from my own.

I have a strong sense of who I am. I fully understand my own perspectives and why they differ from the perspectives of others. I listen to the emotions and viewpoints of others and use them to improve my own learning. In teams, I work in ways that help me grow as a person, and that help my team members grow as well.



Intercultural Skills



My social and emotional skills show that I have a strong sense of myself and my culture. I communicate respectfully with everyone and form positive relationships with team members. I understand other people's perspectives and am able to change my behaviour after listening to others.

Architecture and pedagogy in dialogue

How does one take raw building materials and produce a learning environment that educates and enables children to thrive?

Sally Ruston, Head of Junior School

In building a centre for information, research and innovation in the heart of the Junior School, a once in a lifetime opportunity existed for us to transform outmoded 1950s classrooms into spaces that invite enquiry, curiosity and connection. We wanted to build a learning environment that educates as well as nurtures. We see our girls' wellbeing and learning being inextricably linked, just as the metaphor of the mobius strip models. It is therefore inherent upon us to find means of using architecturally designed built environments to provoke and enable circumstances that see our girls thriving and learning.

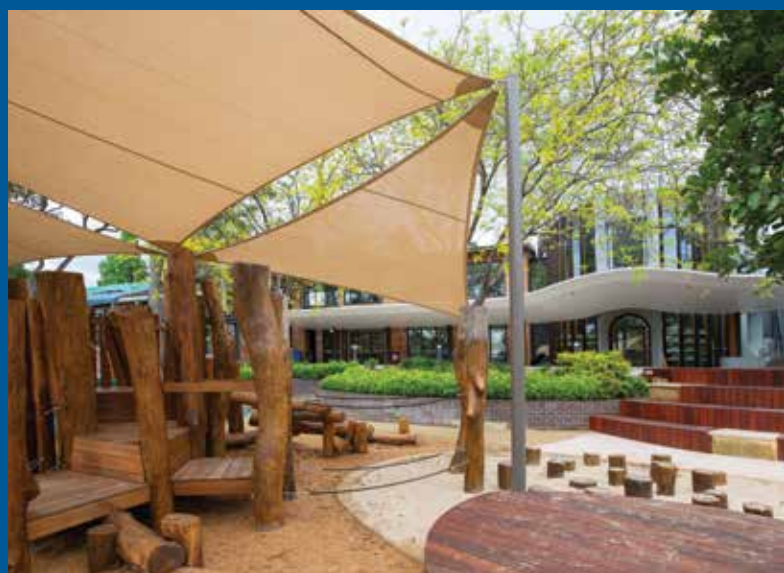
Stakeholder input right from inception was paramount. We see our girls as capable learners who are well placed to identify environments that respond to their learning and wellbeing needs. Thus, it was through our

Student Representative Council that girls provided input through description and drawings of their ideal literacy environment. Similarly, staff were consulted so that their study, work and teaching spaces would be enabling, functional and fit for purpose. Equally important was the need to create aesthetically stimulating areas that mirrored and were informed by the stunning natural environment already present. We wanted learning and to be able to seamlessly transition from the indoor to the outdoor spaces that captured the imagination of the young.

Essential to 21st century learning was the remit to create technology and resource rich spaces throughout, including an immersive dome enabling augmented reality experiences to be routinely integrated. Rooms needed to be flexible and able to expand in size to seat from one in an inviting nook to 300 in the auditorium. Bookshelves, desks and furniture had to be movable to enable optimal flexibility responsive to changes in learning needs. We were determined to create an interconnected space; one where girls could congregate, engage and collaborate as we know this is essential to their learning and wellbeing. Equally, we wanted to build a transparent space where innovation is visible both inside and out.



We value space, to create a handsome environment and its potential to inspire social, effective and cognitive learning. The Space is an aquarium that mirrors the ideas and values of the people who live in it.





The reality of this build is that the outdoor footprint of repurposed spaces is actually larger than the indoor. We are excited to have been able to respond to the girls' requests for outdoor spaces that are both playful and functional for learning. Science and Art classes can be outdoor events. Performance areas abound on the terraces and in the amphitheatres. Imaginative and robust play is well catered for with extensive scooter paths, climbing nets, tunnels and an inground trampoline.

We were inspired by the Reggio Emilia concept of the environment being the third educator. We took this to heart in creating a stunning landscape that responds fulsomely to the learning and wellbeing needs of our girls today, tomorrow and as they become leaders of thought and action into our future.



Partnerships framework

Our vision is to foster authentic partnerships, expand opportunities and transform learning to empower our girls to lead lives of purpose

Terri Moore, Head of Research, Learning and Enrichment

Since the design and implementation of our new Learning Framework in 2019, we have continued our journey to reimagine learning and design deeper learning experiences so our girls can have a positive social impact and lead a purposeful life. With this as our foundation, a small team of teachers from the Abbotsleigh Research Centre turned their focus to one of the four elements of learning design from the New Pedagogies for Deep Learning, learning partnerships. Our team of Teacher Librarians, Research and Support Staff had been seeking to support learning beyond our physical and virtual library collection to support our teachers and girls as they conduct research and enquiry projects. We enthusiastically began investigating ways in which we could intentionally create and enhance learning partnerships across the School with the goal to facilitate growth and build new relationships between and among teachers, students and the community.

The 'why' of partnerships – what the research says

Increasingly, evidence points to the role partnerships play in enhancing learning outcomes and creating future pathways for students. This is not a new idea; teachers have always engaged support beyond the classroom to enhance the design of their learning experiences. What we are more conscious of today is intentionally curating experiences that allow our students to identify, document and articulate their skill development from these experiences. If we want to prepare our girls for the real world, we must provide them with experiences that are in it. In designing learning that allows our students to engage in authentic experiences, we aim to prepare them for life beyond the school gates.

Our Abbotsleigh and AIS NSW consultancy – developing the framework

Through initiatives across a range of departments, our small team soon realised the magnitude and potential of the program. We were reaching beyond our current resource capabilities and knew the potential for this to grow. Seeking some professional learning and support through the Association of Independent Schools NSW, we were joined by Education Consultant: Pathways and Partnerships, Angela Schumacher, to guide us through developing the framework. The team then expanded to include teaching and non-teaching staff from across the School including our Early Learning Centre, Junior and

Senior Schools and our Development and Community Relations teams. Expanding the expertise has enabled us to begin to develop a Partnership Framework for our community that will foster existing relationships, build new connections, and broker partnerships with potential partners.

Partnerships@Abbotsleigh – Our vision and goals

Our aim is to inspire students by enriching their curiosity, knowledge and resilience through contextual learning. The integration of real world learning into the curriculum will provide the opportunity for students to experience activities that will help to shape their understanding of potential societal and workplace demands.

Our intention is to promote development, training, mentoring and career opportunities for our girls to become lifelong learners. At the same time, our goal is to empower teaching staff to create new pathways to develop innovative practices.

Our desire is to enable students and staff to explore new horizons through meaningful collaboration and to develop the confidence and courage to grow in their faith, leadership and service to be agents of positive change in the global community.

We seek to engage in mutually beneficial partnerships within and beyond our community to enhance learning and wellbeing.

Looking forward – Expanding the horizon

Taking a whole school approach to partnerships means that we are still in the early days of developing our Partnerships Framework. As it is a priority project within our strategic plan, we are expanding our resources to explore opportunities for this venture.

We continue to investigate workplace opportunities and alternate pathways for our learners to develop industry and workplace skills and an alignment with micro credentialling of these skills. Our hope is to inspire, excite and ignite passion in our community of learners by expanding horizons for personal and professional growth. With a new lens on the relationships that we foster and build for wellbeing and learning, we aim to create opportunities that are an accelerator for learning that does not happen by chance.

Learning to love a phasmid

How some interesting visitors to a classroom developed into a range of unexpected outcomes

Linda Mathews, Early Learning 4-5 Room Teacher

We welcomed seven phasmids into the 4-5 Room at the beginning of the school year. With the children curious to know and understand more, we embarked on an investigation about these exciting insects. We listened to the children's questions, gathered their ideas and wonderings, and provided various media for the children to represent their understanding.

It soon became evident that the children were personifying the phasmids. They were interested in their gender, giving them names and wanting to know more about their relationships with each other.

Analysis of their initial observational drawings highlighted observable features of the phasmids. Subsequent drawings emphasised details that had emerged in their wonderings, such as the phasmids getting married, wearing clothes and hanging out with their friends in the playground.

We noticed that some of the children would leave a gift or offering for the phasmids at their cage each day. They made food and toys from playdough, drew pictures for the phasmids, cut them out and stuck them to their cage. Concerned for their wellbeing at night, they hung curtains to the screen of the cage.

The lens of curiosity through which the children initially viewed the phasmids had shifted to a relational lens. The children were developing empathy for them. The more the children observed, learned and cared for the phasmids, the more they developed empathy for their situation, fuelling their creativity.

Concerned with the living conditions of the phasmids and inspired by a freshly stacked loose parts trolley, a small group of children collaboratively designed and built a hotel for them.

Revisiting their building, the group thought of new ideas, sourced the needed materials and supported each other in their constructions, actively pursuing innovative ideas that reflected their appreciation of the phasmids' situation.

The children's investigation into the phasmids encouraged a connection to them that we had not predicted. The curious and scientific lens we had anticipated shifted to a thoroughly engaging empathetic, creative exploration.



“I think she’s marching or doing a handstand... her exercises...”



“I wonder if they like building with sticks and digging with dirt...”

What will your professional digital presence look like?

Donna Moffatt, Director of Learning Innovation

Digital portfolios offer unique learning opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning, their achievements and their growth. They provide a range of options for recording and presenting artefacts in electronic form and are widely recognised as adding depth and understanding to learning through the process by which students interact with the portfolio. As well as supporting a range of multimedia, opportunities for reflection and comment lead to much greater author and audience interaction than would occur with a paper portfolio. Indeed, there is strong evidence that digital portfolios help to refine students' thinking, challenge their beliefs about their learning and how to present themselves to an audience, as well as developing technological skills.

As formal written reports are, by nature, quite static documents, we have been developing our emphasis on digital portfolios as a way of capturing a student demonstrating skills in a dynamic way that captures the whole story about a student. It is an area that we have wanted to focus on and that has been facilitated by the increasing emphasis on digital technologies brought about by two years of managing learning through a pandemic.

The Early Learning Centre (ELC) has been using digital portfolios for several years, with StoryPark as the means by which educators document what children know, can do and can make. In Semester 2 last year, we launched digital portfolios for our Kindergarten to Year 2 families and this year all Junior School families have had access to their daughter's digital portfolio using Seesaw.

When we began work with the Junior School teachers on digital portfolios, we had many discussions about the place of the digital portfolio in facilitating a feedback cycle. Most importantly, we wanted to reverse the trend towards a social media feel, preferring that there is purpose and intention behind every post.

It is important to note that our digital portfolio platform changes in different sections of the School in order to accommodate for the age and developmental differences of the students. In the Senior School, digital portfolios take on a different feel again. In appearance, they reflect a student version of LinkedIn. This digital portfolio is part of our Canvas environment and we selected it based on the way in which it can connect students to mentors at universities which use Canvas.

The focus for the Senior School girls is on posting evidence of the way in which they are developing learning dispositions as well as social and emotional skills, especially those from our Learning and Wellbeing Frameworks. For Year 7 students, the first post in their digital portfolio was all about teamwork. Having identified their own character strengths and where they sit on a learning progression for interpersonal skills, the girls reflected upon their experiences at camp. This reflection now sits alongside photographic evidence and a learning progression on interpersonal skills.

In Year 10, the first post in the digital portfolio was related to work experience. When the girls returned from their work placement in Week 5 of Term 2, they reflected upon the skills that were most needed and how they developed them. In talking with Year 10, we shared a video of an Abbotsleigh Old Girl, whose strong recommendation was to focus on the soft skills, especially looking out for your team and staying curious.

The importance of the soft skills that form the basis of our Learning Framework cannot be overestimated and it is important that our students learn to identify experiences where they have engaged with and developed these dispositions. In a recent job advertisement for Apple for a leader of business partnerships, the key qualifications were listed as:

Know people: what drives, motivates or derails them

See around corners: keep one eye on the future... while managing the myriad demands of the present

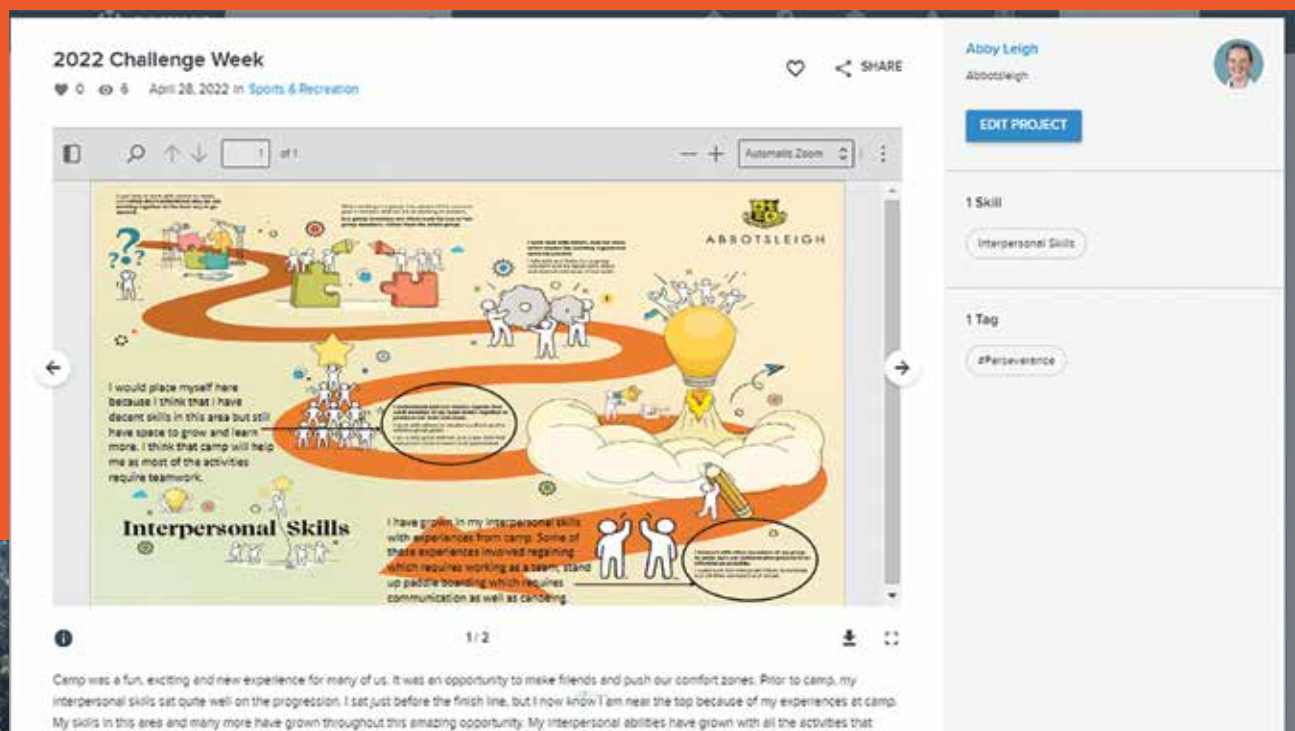
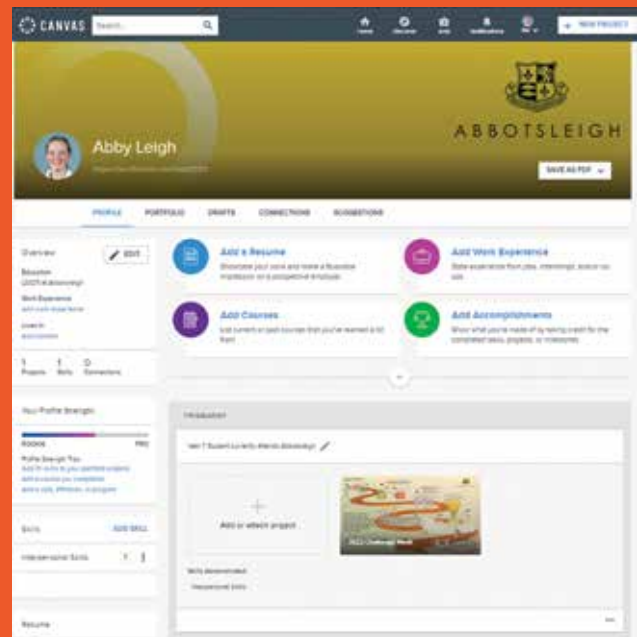
Approach problems flexibly and generate a range of solutions

Drive what matters and know what matters

Stay curious: about the untold or undiscovered story

Education and experience: we anticipate you will have a Bachelor's degree or equivalent experience

Increasingly, it is soft skills such as those listed that are recognised as essential work and life skills. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in its Skills for 2030 report (OECD, 2018) lists cognitive skills such as critical and creative thinking, learning to learn and self-regulation alongside social and emotional skill such as empathy, responsibility and collaboration as essential for successful engagement in the workplace. Academics and researchers are consistent in their recognition of the importance of such dispositions as are the tertiary institutions to which our Year 12 students aspire. For many years, educators in the Senior School have helped Year 12 girls individually with applications that require evidence on capabilities such as creativity, problem solving, teamwork, sporting endeavours and community service. Now, the girls will be able to develop their own curatorial skills as they build their professional digital presence and skills that will last them a lifetime.



How to fetch a pail of water

Rachel Mitchell, Transition Teacher

The National Early Childhood curriculum is a very flexible framework for contextual learning. In Transition this enables us to follow the children's interests and explore new and interesting pathways.

At the beginning of the year, we were relating to the students' prior knowledge by singing nursery rhymes. When singing 'Jack and Jill' I posed the problem, "I wonder how Jack and Jill fetched the pail of water." There were various explanations and we tried out the students' hypotheses by using large garbage bins full of water and small buckets. At the beginning there were more questions than answers as the girls wondered how to get the water out of the 'well' as it was too deep for their reach, and the buckets were too heavy to lift.

After some experimenting in Transition, one of the students suggested using a rope tied to the bucket handle which we then tried lifting from a variety of positions. This made it easier to reach the water at the bottom of the bin, but strength was still required from above to pull it up, which the girls solved by standing on tables. Finally, we tried placing a rope over a bar which made the bucket easier to pull from the ground.

In Transition our goal is always to help the girls learn how to work together. Being actively involved in helping one another to solve problems develops collaborative skills and the ability to recognise the strengths and ingenuity of one another. Through the Interpersonal Skills learning progression, the girls were exposed to the language of collaboration and began to use this in their discussions on the way others had helped them to reach a common goal.

As a further provocation, we read a book called *Tikki Tikki Tembo* about two boys who fell down a well. We acted out

the story with some dolls. We wondered if we could find an easier way to pull them out using the rope and noticed that in the illustration of the well in the book, there was a wheel which the rope went through. We experimented again this time using some pulleys. While we observed that the friction was lessened, we also noticed that when we tried out the pulley with something heavy such as stones, the weight meant that the stands holding the pulley started to tip over. We wondered how we could stop this. We asked Mr Howard, our Abbotsleigh Groundsman, if he could help us make some sandbags to hold down the stands and counterbalance the weight of the buckets of stones.

To further extend this learning, we wanted to take the activity to the outdoor environment. After all, young children thrive, and their minds and bodies develop best, when they have access to stimulating outdoor environments for learning through play and real experiences.

The students had been asking for water to use when playing in the sandpit and bark chips at the ACEE (Abbotsleigh Centre for Environmental Education) which we had been visiting weekly at the Senior School. There were no taps located close by, so we thought about how we could create our own well using the technology and skills we had been investigating. We installed some ropes and pulleys with a counterbalance which allowed the girls to access water from a 'well' making the experience of simple machines meaningful and useful.

Our pulley investigations reached new heights when we took an excursion to Treetops Adventures at St Ives Showground. Outfitted in helmets, gloves and safety harnesses, we clipped on to steel wires strung between the trees and set up our individual pulleys to zipline through the canopy. It was an extremely exciting and satisfying finale to our learning.



Rosie crosses the curriculum

Amber Thomson, Year 2 Teacher

As educators, we are always aware that the social and emotional development of all students plays a vital role in enabling children to be prepared for an ever changing world. These skills determine social, educational, economical, health and wellbeing outcomes a person can achieve throughout their lifetime.

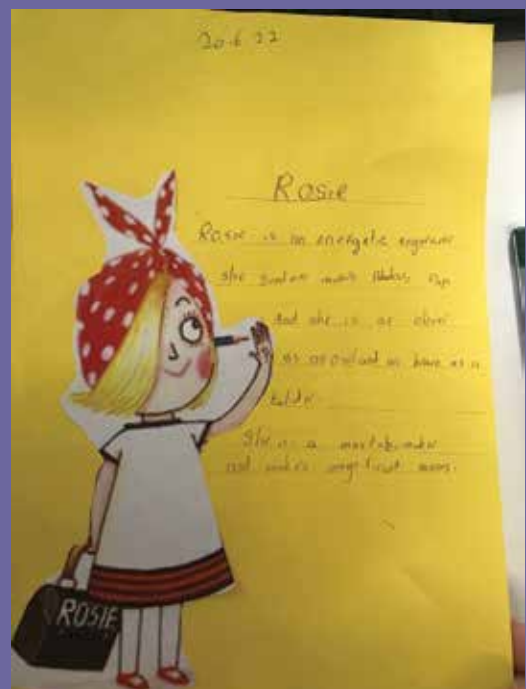
What are some of these important skills with which we hope to arm our girls? Empathy, self-regulation, resilience, curiosity and interpersonal skills are highlighted as some of the essential long-standing capabilities that will serve our girls well. In conjunction with these capabilities, we strive to ensure that the competencies of collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, citizenship, character and communication permeate all that we do.

With this in mind, Year 2 embarked upon a new unit of work based on the character Rosie Revere, from the book *Rosie Revere Engineer* by Andrea Beaty. In developing this unit, which was aimed at connecting great reading with purposeful writing, we were determined to focus on helping our girls develop the character trait of resilience, not only supporting great learning, but building mechanisms to support a positive wellbeing.

Engineering, innovating and creating were central ideas that connected our writing and shared reading for the term. Rosie Revere became the key focus, and through her, we not only built students' understanding of engineers and innovators, but also encouraged creative thinking in many areas of the curriculum. In HSIE, the girls became 'Izzy Innovators'. They delved into a variety of books during class and library lessons, reading and writing texts that were closely linked to authentic examples of innovating, engineering and designing. The exploration of the attributes of the characters in these texts, such as being resourceful, mistake makers, resilient and persistent supported students to draw on examples and come to their own conclusions about the traits required to be engineers or innovators.

When asked to describe what an engineer does, the students' responses began to take the form of the language and examples found in the literature explored, including statements such as, "they make mistakes", "they are creative", "they are resilient" and "they never give up". Through this, students began to understand that they too can be like those characters. The dialogue created an environment where the girls were given permission and felt empowered to take risks, fail and try again.

The girls' writing soon took on an additional layer. Not only were they writing about what an engineer or innovator does, but they were also using language to describe what characteristics they demonstrated.



Their writing became more reflective and embedded in the ideology of resilience. Within the HSIE unit, the students embarked on a design process task that allowed them to explore the older gaming technology of a Tamagotchi. Adding depth to this work, in Science, they explored push and pull forces, which tied in with what mechanical engineers do, and they practised skills of hypothesising, experimenting and observing. The idea was for students to step into the shoes of an innovator to creatively adapt and improve on the old gaming technology of the Tamagotchi. The girls were given the opportunity to design a physical animal made from various materials and code a Micro:bit to enhance what they enjoyed about the Tamagotchi. The idea of resilience was ever present throughout this cross-curriculum unit of work, where the girls demonstrated resilience in writing, exploring, designing, making and innovating.

It became evident early that the students had begun to make connections with Rosie Revere and the character traits she possessed. They highlighted character attributes that made her a creator, an inventor, an engineer, a success and someone who had an abundance of imagination. The girls also recognised that Rosie was an individual who faced challenges, setbacks and failures as she embarked on a journey of

learning about resilience. Within these areas, highlighted by the students, we began to see how the dispositions and character development intertwine with ideas of grit, perseverance, self-confidence and adaptability. As aptly illustrated in the book *Rosie and the Raucous Riveters*, the students began to change their language from simply “it’s not working”, “I made a mistake” and “I can’t do it” to confidently owning statements of making a... “fabulous flop”, “magnificent mess” and “creative catastrophe”.

Students were so engaged and in touch with the nuances of the character Rosie Revere, that they began to understand the complexities of emotional states of a person at various times. They could see that just like them, Rosie too faced obstacles and as a result, often felt vulnerable. With this, they were able to learn how to get back up and persist. The girls reflected on and learnt to try again with their thinking, problem solving, writing, designing and creating. They became free to take risks in their learning. This project provided the girls with a space to feel safe to try new things and begin to learn to navigate around the feelings of discomfort, as well as feeling success through persistence. Stimulating this thinking for the students, by encouraging freedom of expression and creativity, allowed such learning to take place in a genuine way.



Exploring empathy

How can our younger learners recognise empathy in others when they are still learning what empathy looks like for themselves?

Ronelle Tang and Meg Lim, Year 4 Teachers

Through a deep exploration of concepts in History and Geography, our Year 4 students engaged in a journey of discovery and personal growth with a focus on developing empathy in our unit of enquiry into the Age of Exploration. Students delved into identifying what empathy looks like for themselves as well as imagining what the early explorers experienced on their expeditions and how this impacted indigenous people all around the world.

To begin with, the students developed their understanding of what empathy was and considered where they might place themselves along the empathy progression.

Throughout the study of many influential explorers including Zheng He, Vasco da Gama, Christopher Columbus and Captain Cook, students were constantly reflecting on how or if the explorers were successful at demonstrating empathy towards the people they came across on their voyages.

This newfound knowledge and understanding allowed the students to reconsider what empathy meant to them and transfer this to their interactions in the classroom and the playground.

The girls celebrated their learning journey by stepping into someone else's shoes and presenting to their peers, parents and teachers. They spent time dressing up, adopting the persona of an explorer and sharing their recent knowledge of how the world changed through exploration. An important element of this showcase was the students, acting as their chosen explorer, sharing their reflection of how empathetic they were as they explored the globe.

With the assistance of Nicole Hunt, the Digital Learning Innovator, the students selected various natural or human landmarks related to one of Australia's neighbouring countries, which the explorers visited hundreds of years prior.

The girls engaged in self driven research and they recorded and constructed 3D models of landmarks, identifying its location on a map. Following this, they used Scratch and Makey Makey to code this information and present it to their peers in an interactive and engaging way.

By the end of term, the students were well on their way to developing greater empathy, as they searched for and identified this characteristic in the stories of significant people.

Empathy can only be found by looking outwards!





Courage under fire – deep learning by design

Kylie George, Year 5 Coordinator

As educators we never teach the same unit twice – how simple our profession would be if this was the case! With every iteration, we always strive to deepen the learning for our students. But what does this actually mean? Essentially, deep learning is quality learning that sticks with you for life – acquiring the six Global Competencies: Character, Citizenship, Creativity, Critical Thinking, Collaboration and Communication – skills and attributes needed for learners to flourish as citizens of the world.

At Abbotsleigh, we pride ourselves on planning lessons that last a lifetime, but learning does not ‘stick’ by accident. It ‘sticks’ because we design it to do so, which is exactly what we hoped to achieve with the reimagining of our Year 5 Courage Under Fire unit. When we first embarked on the unit in Term 1 of 2021, it was a Geography program exploring drought and bushfires. Now, with just a few important changes, we have designed a fully integrated unit of work that matters; a unit that has enabled our girls to recognise that yes, they can make an impact and how to go about making that change.





What did we keep?

Key concept – Impact

Focus question – How do we make an impact?

Conceptual learning involves students engaged in quality learning experiences based around key concepts and central ideas rather than using the more traditional method of focusing on learning content and facts. By hooking the learning onto the conceptual understanding of ‘impact’, the students understand that when they see a need, they have the skills to do something about it. A lifetime from now, they will not remember the names of Australia’s six climate zones, but they will remember how fulfilling it felt to pack hundreds of care packages for the people of Lismore following the devastating floods earlier this year. That lesson will last a lifetime.

Learning disposition – Critical Thinking

By focusing on critical thinking, our students could see firsthand the skills and attributes needed to build this disposition. I want to make an impact, but how do I go about making that change?

Abbotsleigh Value – Courage

In Year 5, we also weave our Abbotsleigh School Values throughout our units of work. We wanted to retain the title for our unit as we believed Courage Under Fire encapsulated the essence of the unit – that with Courage (the ability to take risks) and Critical Thinking, no challenge is insurmountable.

To put this idea to the test, our students took part in an immersion activity titled The Floor is Lava, which required the girls to act with courage and work in teams to get across the playground using a single sheet of newspaper. They were challenged with trivia questions and members of the team could be sacrificed along the way. The focus of the immersion was not to pre-test their Geography knowledge, but rather an opportunity to ignite our students’ critical thinking skills and reflect on where these might be currently placed on the learning progressions. Perhaps more importantly, it was also a lot of fun, which is essential for learning that sticks. In the words of Reggio Emilia’s Loris Malaguzzi ‘nothing without joy’.

What did we change?

One of the most significant advantages of having the one collaborative program was that we were able to truly engage in team teaching. Integrating the learning across multiple disciplines also allowed us to make visible to the girls the dovetailing of concepts. As noted by one student, “It’s clearer understanding the one topic because you don’t have to store different information in different subjects and then it can get confusing.” Simply put, the learning stuck because we were able to reinforce this one big idea that mattered at multiple touchpoints each week.

The final challenge was for the girls to independently design and make a Micro:bit kit device that would help reduce the effects of their chosen natural disaster before, during or after the event occurs. As expressed by one Year 5 parent in attendance at the Celebration of Learning Year 5 Micro:bit Market, “I loved the vision that each girl had to use technology to solve real world problems... it was also incredible that you consolidated

the marketing, creativity and technology together as an integrated solution. There was one design pamphlet that was so good I would hire that girl to help with my own presentation slides.”

Our students were successful in this final challenge not by accident. The design choices we made to make deep learning a priority meant that the girls had multiple opportunities to practise and reflect on their critical thinking skills so that they were better prepared to solve problems during the culmination task. We facilitated this process by encouraging our students to use schemas, graphic organisers and visible thinking routines.

Deep learning, the learning that lasts a lifetime, does not happen by accident. Actively designing and redesigning units of work that value big ideas and celebrate depth of thinking takes time, but we as educators must choose – do we want to teach content, or our students? It is our duty to prepare our students for the world they are inheriting, and they will need more than just content knowledge to be able to flourish.

Progressive feedback on the learning continuum

“To solely use standardised achievement tests is like casting a net into the sea – a net that is intentionally designed to let the most interesting fish get away. Then, to describe the ones that are caught strictly in terms of their weight and length is to radically reduce what we know about them. To further conclude that all the contents of the sea consist of fish like those in the net compounds the error further. We need more kinds of fish. We need to know more about those we catch. We need new nets.” – William T. Randolph, former Commissioner of Education, Colorado.

Victoria Rennie, Deputy Headmistress and Head of Senior School

In 2021 Bill Lucas, Professor of Learning and Director of the Centre for Real-World Learning at the University of Winchester in the UK and advisor to the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority in Australia, issued a paper echoing Randolph's thoughts and calling for new ways of thinking about assessment that are aligned with the needs of the post-school world. Lucas wisely observes that assessment is needed of knowledge, of skills and also of character and that it needs to be highly nuanced, multimodal and focused on what young people can achieve.

At Abbotsleigh, we continue to undertake active and ongoing research into how we can best capture our students' learning across all areas and provide them with rich, powerful and timely feedback. Indeed, in 2020, Abbotsleigh joined New Metrics for Success – a collaborative research venture between the University of Melbourne and selected forward thinking schools to reimagine and influence schooling in Australia.

Abbotsleigh is one of the 38 schools from across education sectors engaged in the partnership. The project aims to develop and embed 'new ambitions' for learning in assessment and recognition; seeking to define student success of learners more broadly to encompass the whole child and what they need to thrive.

As part of the New Metrics partnership, we have been working towards generating new and validated assessment tools. Following participation in a pilot in Term 4, 2021 to inform this year's trial, which we have now completed, we are about to begin analysing the findings.

Through our research, it has become abundantly clear that the future of sharing significant moments in learning is both digital and visible and that there is a move towards using learner profiles, transcripts, records of achievement and portfolios alongside whatever standardised data is felt to be important.

Much of 2022 was spent considering the implications for future learning design of complex competencies and learner profiles. With a focus on the production of initial learner profiles and building a fuller evidence base, there is much to do!

For Abbotsleigh, most importantly, our goal is to provide a contemporary and progressive system that captures time critical feedback, in turn supporting the students to understand where they are on the learning continuum. With this in mind, we will be moving toward designing e-reports for Year 7 2023 and then build on these. At the heart of all we do is a desire to facilitate student learning as they develop the skills and dispositions they will need to move from being dependent learners to deep thinkers able to contribute meaningfully to society.



Writing and producing a musical from scratch

Lynette Clarke, Head of Music

For Year 8 Music students, the end of Semester 1 marked the exciting conclusion to an exploration of the topic, Musicals. Each Music class actively studied this topic in depth through writing and producing their own mini musical culminating in four premier performances for each other to watch. While the end product of students shining in their roles on and off stage produces a sense of great accomplishment, it is the actual process of the converging musical elements over time where the real student learning lies.

It is widely recognised by researchers in education that the more differentiated a classroom, the more its students feel successful and motivated. The following roles were required for students to select according to their interest and areas of strength:

- Directors
- Script writers
- Composers and lyricists
- Orchestra members
- Performers (acting and singing)
- Choreographers and dancers
- Prop and set designers
- Costume coordinators
- Lighting operators
- Audio visual designers

The students enjoyed taking ownership of their chosen roles throughout the process, while developing their understanding of the content along with their listening, composing and performing skills.

“Something that I enjoyed most about the process of creating the musical was being able to work hard with others as a big group and encourage each other through the task. Another personal thing that I enjoyed was being able to be more confident in front of others and work on my social skills.” – Year 8 student



“Teamwork and cooperation skills are something that we constantly used in this project. It’s a lifelong skill that I feel we’ve been developing through organised and respectful discussion: learning to listen and respond in a constructive manner.” – Year 8 student

Research also shows that increased opportunities for experiential learning may help students cultivate their musical identities and support the development of skills such as leadership, communication, collaboration and flexibility in a variety of settings. When programming this activity, the Music staff aimed to create an authentic, student centred activity that was driven by a clear goal and structured with a taste of real life theatre, facilitating the development of learning dispositions such as working collaboratively, problem solving and thinking critically and creatively.

The Music staff are excited to see the Year 8 students continue to develop their learning dispositions and flourish in their performance skills throughout their years at Abbotsleigh.

Fostering empathy through creative writing

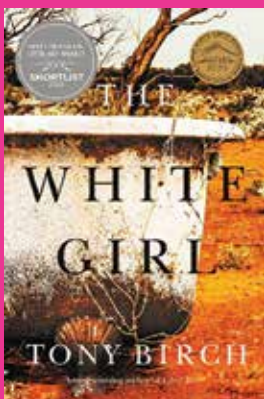
“You think your pain and your heartbreak are unprecedented in the history of the world, but then you read. It was books that taught me that the things that tormented me most were the very things that connected me with all the people who were alive, who had ever been alive.” – James Baldwin

Brett Kriedemann, Assistant Head of English

Every good writing journey begins with reading. The Year 9 girls in Term 1 read *The White Girl* by Tony Birch. Birch's novel explores the experiences of First Nations people in 1960s Australia. The titular character, Sissy, learns much about her culture through her conversations and engagement with her grandmother, Odette. Through storytelling, Birch draws from his own life experience and the experiences of the women of his youth to invite his readers to better understand the complexity of First Nations history.

The Year 9 girls interviewed a family member or acquaintance, either as a firsthand or a secondhand account, of a significant moment of upheaval that defined a stage in the subject's life. The transcripts of these interviews were then used as the source material and catalysts for fictional retellings of the events described, with the girls placing themselves, as Birch does, in the shoes of others, by conjuring something of the world described to them and thus giving life to authentic characters who inhabited those worlds.

Our aim was to have the girls move beyond their limited perspectives and develop a greater understanding and appreciation of the experiences of others; in so doing, crafting original narratives that reflected real world experiences and authentic characters born out of empathetic response through the act of perspective taking. This process has its roots in psychology, with theorists describing perspective taking as a



process in which one might become “more aware of how the world looks and feels to somebody else with a different personal history and in a particular situation” (Leake, 2016).

Grace Li's (Year 9) short story ranked third in the Nan Manefield Young Writers' Award. Her opening immediately ushers us into the domestic life of her protagonist:

Morgan Wood was 65 years old when the figure first came knocking at the door of her granny flat.

At the time, she was in the shower, belting out her favourite pop tunes. She savoured how the warm water massaged her back and slid like silk across her frail figure. Morgan loved music; she imagined that she was David Bowie, performing for thousands of adoring fans in Madison Square Garden. The bathroom lights were strobe lights, casting a warm and golden glow; the showerhead was a smoke machine, draping her in a veil of curling steam. Really, there was no way she could have heard the knocking, and even if she did, she could not answer the door.

Eventually, the sound stopped.

Perspective taking allows the girls to be curious about different cultures and world views and develop a better understanding of their own. This is further enriched when the girls engage in peer review, extend their audience by entering competitions like the Nan Manefield and through self-reflection. Most pleasing were the comments from parents who enjoyed talking with their daughters about their own life experiences or spending time with of the girls' grandparents talking about their experiences and learning about their family history.



Leading by example

Alison Fell, Dean of Middle School

The structural changes made to our Senior School for 2022 and beyond, involving the role of the Dean of Middle School being expanded to include Year 9, helped our tutors, girls and parents with continuity of relationships. In addition, the teaching team was keen to capitalise on the authentic leadership opportunities associated with this structure.

All Year 9 girls were encouraged in their 'everyday leadership'. A good understanding of values and ethical principles guides everyday leaders when faced with difficult decisions. The School Values encourage students to display integrity, respect, compassion, courage and perseverance in their interactions with others and are the foundations for all behaviours.

Currently, all girls are allocated to one of two tutor groups, Black and Gold, within a particular house. We decided that it made good sense to appoint a Year 9 House Leader for each of our eight houses. Rather than this process having a bearing on the selection of Year 12 Prefects, we made it clear that this was an opportunity for girls to develop their leadership skills.

All girls in Year 9 were invited to complete an online application which required them to address questions about leadership and our School Values. The stronger candidates were interviewed by the Dean of Middle School and the Year 9 Coordinator, which provided them with valuable interview experience. The eight Year 9 House Leaders were announced in a school assembly.

We committed to training these Year 9 girls to lead the Middle School and met with them once a week following their appointment. It was important to emphasise to those selected a sense of building on everyday leadership for the greater good of the cohort. Some of the strategies shared with these leaders included the following:

- Formation of a yarning circle and importance of culture
- Learning about and understanding of differing world views
- Use of Uncle Steve Mam's Cultural Action Plan
- Understanding similarities and differences in personalities
- Understanding of culture and creation of cultural norms
- Valuing of different types of personality and world views
- Importance of perceptual positioning in terms of stronger collaboration in groups
- Consideration of how teamwork, personalities and character strengths affect culture

Enabling the leaders to participate in meaningful decision making has many benefits for their wellbeing, their learning and their connection to the School community.

Following the explicit teaching about leadership over two terms, our Year 9 House Leaders were asked to put some of their learning in practice. They planned and executed a number of activities from building of an inclusive culture in the Year 9 playground and assisting with the distribution of lunch orders at the Tuckshop, to barbecues and Orientation Day games for our Year 7 2023 students.

Future prospects include gathering student voice and feedback on pastoral sessions and whole year group activities. Doing so develops their interpersonal relationships and connections, ultimately enhancing year group dynamics and fostering a positive school environment.

Intergenerational connections and wellbeing

When an old man dies, a library burns to the ground – African proverb

Annette Ware, Dean of Senior College

The disruptions brought about by COVID-19 in 2020 necessitated a new way of thinking about Service Learning programs at Abbotsleigh. We needed to find authentic programs that met a real need yet did not rely on 'in person' engagement between students and members of the broader community. This also coincided with Anglicare's growing interest in Service Learning, and a mutual desire to see young people develop into informed, service oriented, empathetic citizens was another factor that propelled us forward.

Anglicare and Abbotsleigh staff began to meet, talk and co-design a program. Early 2021 saw the launch of a pilot program; pairs of Year 7 students were linked with an aged care resident from Anglicare's Warrina Village, while pairs of Year 8 students were linked with a resident from Anglicare's Donald Coburn Centre. The students and residents met online for 30 minutes across four consecutive Fridays to get to know each other. Anglicare invested in iPads for the participating residents and the students used their school laptops. Prior to the first meeting, the students learnt from an Anglicare aged care staff member about the joys and challenges encountered by many older people, including the high rates of loneliness and the propensity to feel as though they have nothing of value to give. Deep learning for our students was underway, so too was empathy development.

The students used scaffolded questions to guide their conversations week by week, and they were encouraged to jot down key ideas as they were shared. This helped facilitate a growing knowledge and understanding of their resident. Most students started tentatively, but it wasn't long before their conversations were relaxed, and clearly mutually enjoyable. The program culminated in students and residents meeting over morning tea where the students presented their resident with a handmade gift that reflected something of the resident's life and interests. While a very touching and meaningful element of the program, the value of the Virtual Visiting program was not dependent on this face-to-face meeting. Had Covid prevented it from happening, the virtual visits would still have had immense value.

Following the success of the pilot program, Year 7 students linked up with residents from Anglicare's



Goodwin Village in 2022, supported by Anglicare Chaplain Jayne Dedrick, who helped prepare the students before they met their residents online.

Everyday technology was the conduit through which wisdom and experiences were shared. Some residents, when approached about participating, felt they had nothing to contribute. Jayne reminded them of how fascinating life in 'the olden days' is to the young people of Generation Z, many of whom have grown up swiping a mobile phone for as long as they can remember and find it difficult to conceive of a life before television. The life experiences of older people are fascinating and intriguing to them; the students' post program reflections certainly attested to this.

There were plenty of smiles and embraces when the residents and students eventually met over morning tea at Goodwin Village. When it was time for the students to depart, tears were equally shed. They had given each other the precious gift of time and attention. The students helped validate the worth and dignity of the residents by treasuring their stories, their interests and passions, and life's journey. Perhaps unknowingly, the residents provided the students with one of the most profound and effective positive wellbeing experiences they are likely to encounter during their schooling days. The program allowed residents and students alike to taste afresh the joy that comes from connecting in meaningful ways with others, irrespective of age.



Pushing the boundaries

Rob Winslow, PDHPE Teacher



The Year 9 PDHPE project on sport aerobics is a rewarding, yet challenging combination of gymnastics and dance. During this unit, the girls are placed into small groups where they learn a complex Level 3 routine, with the final performance task involving the girls presenting it to their peers.

Throughout this unit, teachers encourage a culture of deep, engaged learning by focusing on specific dispositions from our Learning Framework – resilience and interpersonal skills. Resilience is built as students push themselves out of their comfort zones by performing a complex routine, managing setbacks and facing constructive feedback. Interpersonal skills are developed as they work with others in the collaborative process, encouraging each other to perform at their personal best.

As well as communicating in person, discussion threads were placed on Canvas for the girls to

leverage technology, providing additional opportunities for student interaction to achieve the groups' goals. These discussion threads included anything that promoted effective group work such as group Zoom meetings, or uploading of resources such as practice performances.

To document their learning across the dispositions, some classes chose to employ reflective surveys where the girls noted their feelings towards the unit pre, during and post learning. The surveys provided evidence of the students' personal growth and demonstrated the importance of being resilient in overcoming challenges, along with the significance of working collaboratively with others in order to achieve a shared goal. By creating a unit with a focus on physical skills as well as the learning dispositions of resilience and interpersonal skills, the girls engaged a more holistic learning experience.

A place for learning, imagination and positive engagement

Mary Faith, Head of Visual Arts

“The arts and humanities help us weather the storms of life, but more than that, they can help guide us to new possibilities as we imagine and create more fulfilling lives and thriving communities.” – Martin E P Seligman

There has been a consistent focus on contributing to the life and culture of the School by creating an inspiring learning environment and a welcoming destination for our students and the wider community since the bold foundation of the GCS Gallery in 2013. By providing a constantly changing exhibition program of works by national, local and student artists, the gallery exposes visitors to fresh concepts and ideas, inspires curiosity, encourages open mindedness, invites deep engagement and promotes discovery.

Exhibitions provide opportunities for visitors to interact with artworks, artists and spaces they may not otherwise encounter. The exhibitions curated by the GCS Gallery staff seek to embed inter-disciplinary learning through art as an integral component of the curatorial process. To be able to meet artists and view artworks in an authentic situation is a unique experience in a school environment and a genuine context for experiential learning opportunities.

Three of the exhibitions presented in 2022 showcased this curatorial focus and amplify the diverse approaches and opportunities that Abbotsleigh provides, while reflecting the strong and effective relationships built with Old Girls, parents and staff. This creates rich opportunities for partnerships and connections with community and other schools, and the creation of relationships with local and national artists and groups.

Cross-sectoral experiences for Young Curators

The innovative Young Curators art program enabled students to participate in the authentic process of

exhibition curation. Young Curators was created by Max Germanos, a businessman who is also a collector of art and the Director of **3.33 Art Projects**. In 2021, Year 11 Visual Arts students were invited to partner with Hornsby Girls High School students to organise an exhibition of works by leading Sydney artist, Euan Macleod. The girls from both schools worked as a collaborative curatorial team to research, interpret and select the primary resources, as well as develop and stage the exhibition. They visited Macleod's studio to investigate and select available artworks, examine his painting process and develop a theme for the exhibition. The exhibition, *Euan Macleod Plein Air*, was held in April 2022, and the girls organised catalogue text and participated in the 'artist in conversation' at the lively opening. Young Curators enabled student voice and agency and the development of collaboration skills. The social and intellectual experiences accommodated students' different learning preferences and provided valuable insights into various perspectives and facets of the creative arts industry.



Recollections of First Nations female artists

In 2020, the GCS Gallery commenced negotiations with Artbank Sydney to host an exhibition of works selected from their collection. Established in 1980 by the Australian Government, the core objectives of Artbank are to

provide direct support to living Australian contemporary artists through the acquisition of their work and to promote the value of Australian contemporary art to the broader public. The Artbank partnership eventuated in a compelling exhibition in May 2022, with a focus on First Nations female artists.



Kamilaroi/Gamilaraay artist, curator and educator Dennis Golding (pictured above, with curator Oliver Watts) was engaged by the gallery to curate the exhibition and to work with Artbank staff. For Golding, “Recollections brings together a selection of works by First Nations women who trace generational experiences across time and place that link memory with traditional and contemporary expressions of artistic practice. Each artist’s work extends stories of strength, resilience, cultural practice and caring for knowledge and children.”

The exhibited paintings, sculptures and videos brought history and stories to life, and students from our Early Learning Centre to Year 12 visited to engage, imagine, interpret, draw, photograph or create culturally inspired poetry. A diverse series of community events was held throughout the course of the exhibition. Abbotsleigh Old Girls enjoyed their annual Card Day in the gallery with the background of the *Recollections* exhibition. An afternoon public event featured curator Dennis Golding in conversation with Artbank Head curator, Dr Oliver Watts. Year 11 Visual Arts students and teachers visited Artbank and Dr Watts guided the girls through Artbank’s vast collection in Waterloo, while Dennis Golding shared ideas about the significance and broader concepts of the artworks.

Recollections actively challenged and engaged students in their learning by providing the opportunity to engage deeply with artworks, find ways to respond creatively, and discuss observations and insights with others.

Ages, a survey of works from artist Stephen Hall

During the *Ages* exhibition, artist talks, drawing workshops, book readings and class tutorials provided many experiential opportunities for varied groups to connect with art. Stephen Hall (pictured above right)

did not see his exhibition as a static viewing experience, believing that the artist could continue creating work in the gallery, engaging in conversation and storytelling, and thus enlivening the visitor experience. Hall encouraged and deeply engaged Abbotsleigh Visual Arts students through his ability to both talk about and demonstrate his practice in a lively, heartfelt way.

Hall is a local artist who has maintained a strong connection with the GCS Gallery as both an artist and a visitor. Curated by Mary Faith and Lisa Jones, artworks for the *Ages* exhibition represented a survey of Hall’s practice since the 1980s. His flexibility to choose from drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, ceramics and artists’ books revealed his extensive art media and conceptual repertoire. Hall is committed to art education, teaching at TAFE NSW, and he enjoys sharing his love of art, his art practice expertise and deep knowledge of art history with students and visitors. He delves into issues such as the environment, political power, violence, terrorism, humanity’s past and future and its impact, as well as art, his own personal experiences, satire and absurdity to try to understand ‘us’ and our place in the universe.



Abbotsleigh’s dynamic school life is reflected in the daily interactions and exchanges that take place in the GCS Gallery. Public visitors and school classes are offered the opportunity to take time out to engage deeply with artworks, to respond creatively and to communicate observations and insights. The gallery programs have an interdisciplinary approach and are not confined to a fixed body of knowledge that predetermines each exhibition. While art is the subject of the conversation, it is the innovative, ambitious and adventurous approach of our teachers and tutors that brings the space alive. The gallery is a place for visitors to relieve stress, to invite thoughtful conversation, to encourage imagination, to engage in greater reflection about self and the world, to tolerate ambiguity and responsible risk – and flourish!

Times flies faster than a weaver's shuttle

Julie Daly, Archivist

How true these words seem.

As we watch from the sidelines each year as another Year 12 cohort is farewelled, we are reminded that time is fleeting and no matter how tight we may hold on, time will still unwind.

This is the final article I will write at Abbotsleigh, an event I knew would one day arrive but did not fully comprehend its meaning.

Indulge me as I reminisce on 21 years at Abbotsleigh.

When I arrived Judith Wheeldon was Headmistress. Known for her eccentric earrings and giant dogs, she added colour to her leadership and I felt welcomed to my first role in a school.

When I arrived the newest building on the senior campus was the Senior Studies Centre, built in 1996. There has been a definite uptake in building work on both campuses since this time. The Middle School Block – built in 1938 – I referred to as the new building, but that might just be because I was reading all the school histories and the *Weavers* so my viewpoint might have been slightly skewed! It did take another 22 years after that building was completed for the next Senior School building to be built, which was the library and science wing in 1960.

When I arrived the Library was in what are now the X rooms, and the first Archives space was a small room beside the library where there was a display of Lesley Sykes' much-loved Abbotsleigh dolls dressed in all our school uniforms. This room had been provided for the Archives at the time of the centenary in 1985.



When I arrived the Archives was housed in a series of small and completely inappropriate spaces around the School. These included the veranda upstairs in School House; the tiny room at the bottom of the turret (which our founding Headmistress Marian Clarke's sister, Emily, had as her sitting room where she taught singing and elocution); the corridor outside the old library as well as cupboards in the U corridor. Moving into a purpose-built archive inside the ARC with a compactus, proper storage and temperature control was a definite improvement!

When I arrived our students were wearing a mix of two different uniforms, the old green check uniform as well as the current uniform. I was initially confused by these two contrasting uniforms, but soon understood the cleverness of the changeover.

When I arrived the main car park was a sloping, tree-filled area where the Archives and Library are now located. Interestingly this site had been earmarked in the 1940s/1950s as a possible site for the Junior School, but brick shortages post-Second World War limited non-essential building. Due to this, the Junior School now enjoys its own wonderful campus.

When I arrived I did not know that I would have favourite Abbotsleigh photographs. One is of the horse being used to level the garden behind Vindin House (now the Grace Cossington Smith Gallery) in 1934, not long after Abbotsleigh purchased Vindin as a boarding house. Another is of Abbotsleigh students humorously posed for their fencing club photograph in 1971, and a final less dramatic but beautifully posed scene from 'Harold' during the 1909 Tennyson Centenary. Abbotsleigh has a wonderful collection of photographs, and I have felt privileged to have spent my days surrounded and absorbed by these images.

During my time at Abbotsleigh I have learned a lot about myself, especially how much I love history, and how I love talking and writing about history. I have become fluent in Abbotsleigh, and I feel privileged that I have spent the past two decades learning this language. Time does fly, but I hope that a small piece of me remains deep in the heart of Abbotsleigh, just as the memory of each Year 12 cohort can be found throughout the school.

Thank you for a wonderful 21 years.

Julie Daly
Archivist



Gala at the Gallery – an outstanding success

What a fantastic night was had by all on Saturday 20 August 2022 at our Abbotsleigh Foundation fundraiser, Gala at the Gallery, held at the Art Gallery of NSW. The venue was spectacular at night, as were the black tie outfits on display. Some parents enjoyed a VIP showing of the Archibald, Wynne and Sulman Awards exhibition prior to the event.

Guests were also treated to an Abbotsleigh musical performance as they had their drinks and canapés in the Modern Australian Galleries by the TEK Trio, made up of Year 11 students; Trinity Teh – Violinist, Emma Yap – Cellist and Kotoko Takehara – Pianist.

It was so wonderful to see so many of our Abbotsleigh parents coming together again to celebrate and raise funds for our Indigenous scholarships and exciting new state-of-the-art facilities.

Our sensational Old Girl co-MCs, Laura Tunstall and Edwina Bartholomew did a brilliant job, especially making our games and competitions so much fun. We also had an excellent charity auctioneer working with us for the first time, Duncan Schieb, who ran a live auction and raised more than \$100,000 from guests in the room, for our Indigenous scholarships program.

It was also great to hear from Mrs Megan Krimmer, Mrs Victoria Rennie and Ms Sally Ruston about the new buildings launched this year in both the Junior School and the Senior School and the positive impact they will have on our students' learning.

The night ended with some fun and dancing with the live band, Bermuda Social.

Due to the generosity of parents, Old Girls and staff, we are thrilled to announce we raised a total of \$242,462! This is the highest amount of funds ever raised at a Foundation fundraising event, so we are so grateful to all those who contributed.

We would like to thank all those who supported this event by buying a ticket, making a donation, participating

in the silent or live auctions, all those who donated prizes and the businesses who provided sponsorship.

We would also like to thank, once again, our Gala at the Gallery organising committee for their time and effort, and the support we received from the APA in all the planning stages. Special mention must go to Mahta Rahimi, a Year 1 parent, who worked as a volunteer with the Development team all night long.

We look forward to seeing our Abbotsleigh community come together again next year for our 2023 Foundation fundraising event, which will be a Sports Lunch on August 11 at Doltone House, Pyrmont, from 12 noon until 4 pm.







Scholarships

Each year the Foundation supports means-tested scholarships for students. These scholarships provide an opportunity to girls who, without this scholarship, would not be able to attend Abbotsleigh.

\$264,000 | 12 

INDIGENOUS SCHOLARSHIPS

\$206,020 | 6 

BETTY ARCHDALE SCHOLARSHIPS

\$87,430 | 5 

FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIPS

\$71,000 | 2 

KATHLEEN McCREDIE
AWARDS

\$35,500 | 2 

ROYLE SCHOLARSHIPS

\$103,010 | 3 

MOLLIE AND NANCY DOUGLAS
SCHOLARSHIPS

\$17,090 | 2 

EVERETT SCHOLARSHIPS

\$784,050 | 32 

**TOTAL SCHOLARSHIPS
FUNDED**

Additional Support

Donors to the Foundation can make a gift to the fund of their choice to support an area of the School about which they are passionate. Together as a community we can continue to build on our strong foundations and create greater opportunity in girls' education.

\$250,000

**SUPPORTING NEW
STATE-OF-THE-ART FACILITIES**



Such as:

- Junior School Library
- Senior School Art and Science Building

\$46,750

**SUPPORTING FAMILIES
EXPERIENCING HARDSHIP**



So that no girl should leave Abbotsleigh due to drought or COVID-19

\$5,780

SPORTS, MUSIC AND ACADEMIC PRIZES



\$44,725

ADDITIONAL SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORT



\$1,131,305

**TOTAL FUNDS
DISTRIBUTED**

Funds Raised 2022 Giving Day

Our Abbotsleigh community contributed an extraordinary amount of

\$323,707*

* funds raised are included
in other items

The Foundation could not have raised these funds without the very generous Abbotsleigh Community of current parents, past parents, Old Girls and staff. This support makes a very real difference to our students' learning every day. We look forward to working with our donors to grow the impact of the Foundation in 2023 and beyond.

Ava Seaton (2018-present) Indigenous Scholarship

"I plan to go to university and study a Bachelor of Social Work, possibly leading to running my own social work business... so I can then help those smaller communities, like the one I grew up in, focusing on family."

Ava is currently in Year 12 at Abbotsleigh.



Satara Uthayakumaran (2011-2020) Foundation Scholarship

"Abbotsleigh facilitated my love of global affairs, ability to think critically about my social context and helped me develop the skills I need to confidently voice my opinion in a public forum. The Foundation Scholarship made it possible for me to take part in myriad interdisciplinary pursuits such as debating, public speaking, choir, service learning, sports and more. Without these opportunities, I would not be as prepared to engage with the world I am in now, as an adult and law student, working in legal reform and the domestic violence policy space. This scholarship is about accessibility, and I hope that others will similarly benefit from such a privilege, to autonomously pursue their own ambitions."

Satara is in her third year of a Bachelor of Arts/Law at the Australian National University.



Tallulah Hagen (2020-2022) Kathleen McCredie Award

"I feel blessed to have received the Kathleen McCredie Award, which enabled me to attend Abbotsleigh during my final years of high school. Abbotsleigh facilitated many academic challenges, while providing resources and a supportive network of peers and teachers to help manage them. I am confident that the values, skills and connections gained from my time at Abbotsleigh will positively translate into my future studies and beyond. For this, I would like to express my gratitude to the Abbotsleigh Foundation, the Old Girls' Union and Headmistress, Mrs Megan Krimmer."

Tallulah is in her first year of a Bachelor of Exercise Science/Master of Exercise Physiology and Physiotherapy at the University of New South Wales.



Joy Gayed (2018-2020) Foundation Scholarship

"My time at Abbotsleigh was the most important and influential opportunity for me and opened the door for my university career and beyond. I would not be where I am today, or the person I am today, had it not been for Abbotsleigh and the Foundation Scholarship. Aside from striving for academic excellence during my time at Abbotsleigh, I grew in perseverance, confidence and resilience, which have proven to be invaluable in life after school. I attribute this to my time at the School and the community that encouraged me through many difficult times. I am proud and very grateful to be the recipient of an Abbotsleigh Foundation Scholarship and am happy to continue to see the positive impact it has on the lives of many young women."

Joy is in her third year of a Bachelor of Architectural Studies at the University of New South Wales.





ABBOTSLEIGH
FOUNDATION

Supporting academic excellence

Each year many generous members of our school community encourage excellence by endowing a Speech Day prize. Donors endow prizes for many reasons: celebrating achievement and inspiring students; acknowledging their daughter's/granddaughter's/ mother's or perhaps their own experiences at Abbotsleigh; being passionate about an area of study; or simply taking the opportunity

to give back to the School. A gift of \$1,000 to the Abbotsleigh Foundation endows a prize for five years. A gift of \$5,000 to the Foundation will endow a prize in perpetuity with the option to name the prize.

Please note that prize endowment gifts are not tax deductible.

Prizes available for endowment

Junior School

- Citizenship in Kindergarten
- French in Year 4
- Margaret Read Prize for Citizenship and Effort in Year 4
- Citizenship in Year 1

Senior School

- Music 1 in Year 12
- Dorothea Poole Prize for Studies of Religion
- A G Lang Esq Prize for Extension 2 Mathematics in Year 12
- Creative Writing in Senior College
- Technology and Applied Studies in Senior College
- Theology in Year 11
- Japanese in Year 12

- Latin in Year 12
- Ancient History in Year 12
- Cynthia Bidencepe Prize for Art in Senior College
- Creative Writing in Middle School
- Music Composition
- Barbara Fulton Prize for Geography in Year 12
- Business Studies in Year 12
- Academic Achievement in Year 8
- Chinese in Context in Year 12
- Creative Writing in Senior College Archdale
- EAL/D in Year 12
- Extension History in Year 12
- Sport and Sportsmanship
- Standard English in Year 12
- Standard Mathematics in Year 12

If you are interested in endowing a prize, please email foundation@abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au or call 02 9473 7738.

The full list of prizes available for endowment is also available on our website. Visit www.abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au/giving/prizes-for-endowment.

Grace Cossington Smith Gallery exhibition calendar 2023

Young Curators

Young Curators and 3:33 Art Projects

27 July to
16 August

HSC 2023 Showcase

Abbotsleigh Year 12 Visual Arts

22 to 26 August

Transformations: Art of the Scott Sisters

19th-century Australian botanical illustrations from the Australian Museum

1 to 30 September

Fieldwork

Group show of artists engaging photo-organically with ecology, materiality and temporality

6 to 28 October

Rituals and Methods

The practice and process of Lynne Eastaway, Nicole Ellis and Pollyxenia Joannou

10 November to
14 December



Dates subject to change

Please check our website and social media sites for updates and planned events

Bequests to Abbotsleigh

A woman's will is a powerful thing

She chooses how she leaves her money;
who it goes to and how it's best used.

A bequest to Abbotsleigh is an investment in independent
young women.

Your will, your way

You can speak confidentially to us about how you create a will, what kinds
of gifts you can leave, and if you'd like them to go towards a specific
cause such as Indigenous or needs-based scholarships, a prize, or
school improvements.

No matter the size of your gift, Abbotsleigh is deeply appreciative of
bequests from members of our school community.

Further information about gifts in
wills can be found at
[www.abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au/giving/
gifts-in-wills](http://www.abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au/giving/gifts-in-wills)

Alternatively, you may contact
the Director of Development and
Community Relations, Alex Lightfoot,
for a confidential chat by phone on
02 9473 7737 or by email at
lightfoota@abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au.



From the President of the Abbotsleigh Old Girls' Union



We often take for granted the joy we get from simple things. I certainly took it as a given to be able to walk through Abbotsleigh's gates to participate in school life, both as an Old Girl and a current parent. A Covid gift was the heartfelt gratitude that we felt of being able to connect with others and to return to on-campus events in 2022. And from the smiles on the faces of everyone when chatting at a gathering or being surrounded by the whole school raising their voices 'to Abbotsleigh', I know that I wasn't the only one.

The desire to have real connection through community drove the Abbotsleigh Old Girls' Union (AOGU) throughout 2022. We continued to hold our traditional events, such as Mother Daughter events, Card and Golf Days, and of course reunions. We also introduced new events such as our 'Meet the Author' Zoom events where Old Girl authors shared their writing and publishing journeys, along with their creative process.

Another new focus was on connecting more strongly with the whole school community – not just the Old Girl community. We invited current parents, staff and girls to events such our Speakers Breakfast and Meet the Author evenings in order to raise awareness of the AOGU and share the diverse paths that our Old Girls have taken and hear their fascinating stories.

It was also wonderful to see Old Girls join with current and future parents and staff at the regional Community Events that the School hosted. Strengthening these connections are worthwhile for all of us.

Traditionally, Abbotsleigh girls interact with and hear from a lot of Old Girls, with guest speakers at assemblies and career nights, and sport, dance and debating coaches helping the girls to excel. However, the girls rarely hear from the Abbotsleigh Old Girls' Union itself. We appreciated the opportunity in 2022 to have more of a presence, explain what the AOGU does and how the AOGU and Old Girls' pasts connect to the current girls' futures. It was small things like explaining the history of the AOGU Centenary Scholarship when it was presented, or sharing what we do with the Year 12s. After all, every current girl will one day be an Old Girl! It was particularly special for the Year 12 Welcome to the AOGU Lunch to feel more like an AOGU reunion or event, with lots of opportunity to chat, connect and have a laugh.

The AOGU Committee wants all Old Girls to feel connected to the AOGU and to the Abbotsleigh community. Old Girls have a commonality, not only through our school days, but also through the years since. We have all weathered the joys and heartaches of family, study, work and all the things in between. There is a fierceness to Abbotsleigh Old Girls, in believing in the ability of girls and women, valuing education, having a voice and navigating with a moral compass. When we reconnect with Old Girls, whether our best schoolmates, those we knew loosely, or those from another generation, there is a genuine understanding and appreciation for our foundational values, for each other and our very human journeys. It is this connection of which I want today's Abbotsleigh girls to become a part when they leave school.

Sarah Franks (1991)
Honorary President, AOGU

Meet the AOGU Anniversary Grant 2021 winner

Grace Pattison (2013) is one of the founding members of School Girl Essentials (SGE) and the recipient of the 2021 AOGU 110th Anniversary Grant. In this Q&A, Grace highlights the stark contrast between her experiences as a young girl at Abbotsleigh compared with girls in Tanzania but how SGE is changing mindsets for the better.

Please tell us about SGE and what needs it addresses.

SGE, officially founded in 2020, is a Tanzanian non-government organisation which aims to address barriers to education and empowerment by providing reusable sanitary products as well as interactive, sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) education sessions. While these barriers are experienced worldwide, in Tanzania, 42% of adolescent girls are not attending school, in comparison to 34% of their male counterparts. Many families cannot regularly afford sanitary products and limited awareness and misinformation contribute to harmful narratives which result in menstruating students missing, on average, four days of school every month, resulting in more than a month of missed school a year. Consequently, many fall behind in class and sometimes drop out of school altogether. SGE contributes to closing this gendered gap; our motto is 'Education all month, every month.'

What inspired you to get involved with SGE?

Despite being relatively new, SGE has been eight years in the making. One of my dear friends, Zion Issangya, now the Executive Director, saw both an immediate and systemic problem in her community and continues to work for short- and long-term solutions. As a founding member, I'm very grateful to be able to support her in growing and actioning these solutions.

Additionally, I'm appreciative of how menstruating was almost a non-issue for me when attending school. I never had to worry about whether my family could afford pads or tampons, getting an infection from the lavatories at school or having adequate privacy. Additionally, primary and secondary schooling provided a safe environment which taught me about menstruation and how to care for myself. There was also little to no shame involved. Although I know that pain affected many and continues to do so due to conditions like endometriosis, bleeding once a month did not significantly undermine our opportunity to learn. This should be a universal experience for all who menstruate.



How was SGE set up and how is it run?

We work closely with primary and secondary schools identified by the local government as particularly experiencing low attendance of its female students. We source reusable packs of sanitary pads, which last up to three years, from a local Tanzanian, women-run social enterprise which are then given to each adolescent in the school community, alongside underwear and fundamental educational materials such as stationery and a backpack. This is partnered with multiple sessions run by young Tanzanian educators who discuss healthy and sustainable menstrual hygiene management as well as open and interactive sessions which dispel stigmas and myths. The male students are also included in these discussions, together and separately, to ensure the whole school community is involved in the dialogue. The SGE team also works with the school to redress issues with lavatories and any other identified barriers.

What impact has SGE already had?

Since mid-2020, we have worked with eight primary and secondary schools. Research conducted by our team

shows that our interventions have reduced absenteeism amongst girls by an average of 3.5 days per month and bring other important benefits in terms of girls' self-esteem and self-confidence. It's great to have data reinforce that what we're doing is effective and we continue to monitor and evaluate each school community over a two-year period to ensure the sustainability of our efforts.

We have served ten schools so far which is approximately 3,000 girls. We have also recently been able to start working with students with disability which has been a huge milestone for SGE.

How will the AOGU 110th Anniversary Grant contribute to the work of SGE?

We are so thrilled that the AOGU 110th Anniversary Grant has allowed us to reach more communities at a faster rate than would otherwise have been possible. We are currently partnered with the African Children's Fund as well as Tanzanian corporate-giving initiatives who financially support our activities, but due to the AOGU's generosity, we are partnering with an additional two secondary schools, directly benefitting 362 girls and indirectly benefitting their male counterparts, families, schools and wider communities. We are grateful to have a partner which is so aligned with our values.

Some student survey responses from the schools that the AOGU Grant is supporting:

- "I used to think menstrual period is such a dirty process. Each time it arrives I would really hate the situation. The lessons I have learnt from the program now gives me so much confidence to talk about my body changes with people close to me including my brothers."
- "Thank you for providing us with sanitary pads. I am a hostel student who joined the school on scholarship, my family is far and network is not always friendly to reach my mother on the phone to ask for sanitary pads. Sometimes I use pieces of cloth which is really uncomfortable. I am happy that I now have reusable pads to last me three years."
- "We wish we had these lessons sooner but we are happy to have received them even now. Being a student with disability can be very costly because of all the other medical procedures involved. Thank you SGE for visiting us and providing us with lessons and sanitary pads".

What are the organisation's plans for the future?

Ultimately, an effective NGO should work itself out of a job. So, while we meet the immediate needs of the girls, one of our longer-term goals is to shift harmful narratives and taboos around menstruation. We are also currently fostering collaborative relationships with local, regional and national policy-makers so that these issues

can be funded and addressed at a structural level by governments and their education systems.

Relocating to live in another country and setting up an organisation are two significant life-changing events. Can you share some of your journey since leaving school in 2013 and challenges you've been through to get to this point?

After finishing school, I took a very stereotypical Gap year to volunteer in a school in Arusha, Tanzania. While I have a number of regrets regarding the 'white saviour' complex which underpins such trips, I am grateful for the enduring relationships forged there, including with Zion. I then studied a Bachelor of International Studies at UNSW for four years, including an incredible two-semester exchange at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Throughout my undergraduate studies I was lucky enough to return twice to Arusha. My first full-time job was working within St Vincent de Paul Society's excellent Ability Links program. This enabled me to save up (just!) enough to move to Kenya in September 2019 to start my Master of Gender and Development at the University of Nairobi. Although I am based in Nairobi, Arusha is just a six-hour bus ride away and so I am lucky to be able to travel between the two.

Of course, moving to a new country just before and helping to start an NGO during a global pandemic presented a number of challenges. The most overwhelming was the emotional toll of not knowing when I was next going to be able to see my family back in Sydney. While my studies were delayed due to lack of pre-existing online infrastructure, I was very privileged to be able to isolate with my partner for stints in both Arusha and Nairobi as well as receive vaccinations at our apartment. I am also thankful to have started remotely working for a brilliant continental women's rights organisation, Make Every Woman Count.

Schools in Tanzania were temporarily closed although opened again relatively quickly, especially in comparison to neighbouring Kenya, which closed schools for almost a year, and Uganda for two years. Unfortunately, these closures have led to an increase in Female Genital Mutilation and Cutting (FGM/C) and child marriages. Our SGE team were therefore very happy to be able to resume operations later in 2020, although modified with COVID-19 safety measures.

How can other Old Girls support SGE?

We would absolutely love to partner with you! If you are in a position to support us financially or perhaps you know someone or a community who can, please get in touch via info@schoolgirlessentials.com and/or gracepattison@outlook.com. We are really proud to be able to back up the claim that a little really does go a long way. We also know that the younger readers might have the passion but not necessarily the resources, so we would also really value your volunteering of time and skills. Looking forward to hearing from you!



Website: www.schoolgirlessentials.com/
Instagram: [@schoolgirl_essentials](https://www.instagram.com/schoolgirl_essentials)
Facebook: [@Schoolgirlessentials](https://www.facebook.com/Schoolgirlessentials)

Matisse exhibition tour

A group of 32 enthusiastic Old Girls and their guests gathered at the Art Gallery of NSW on Friday 25 February 2022 to view the Matisse Life & Spirit exhibition.



AOGU Mothers Breakfast

A rainy day did not stop girls from Kindergarten to Year 12 gathering with their Old Girl mothers and grandmothers for the AOGU Mothers Breakfast on Friday 1 April 2022 in the Outdoor Kitchen of the Junior School. It was extra special having five Old Girl grandmothers, including two who had granddaughters start at Abbotsleigh in 2022, as well as six new Old Girl mothers. Of the more than 70 guests, Old Girls with daughters in Year 10 girls were strongly represented at this year's event!



Mother's Day Classic

Team AbbGirls hit the pavement for the Mother's Day Classic for the 5th year running in 2022; a wonderful event to bring the Abbotsleigh community together while supporting a very worthy cause.

Team AbbGirls organiser and AOGU Treasurer, Belinda Burton, said she first signed up as an individual nine years ago as a personal challenge, but mainly because, as a mother of two girls, she knew breast cancer would affect their lives in some way.



With options to walk or run, and several distances and locations to choose from, the Mother's Day Classic is a very inclusive event for all ages and abilities. The team consisted of Belinda Burton, Mark Burton, Jasmine Burton, Poppy Burton, Eloise Orme, Bronwyn Smith, Sarah Hornery, Simon Tan, Lachlan Tan, Emily Tan and Luke Tan.

Thank you to everyone who supported Team AbbGirls and breast cancer research through participation and donations.

Card Day

A small but enthusiastic group of card players gathered for the annual AOGU Card Day at the Grace Cossington Smith Gallery on Thursday 12 May 2022. Commencing with morning tea and later a basket lunch, four tables of players enjoyed a morning of conversation and games surrounded by the artworks on display. Proceeds from raffles were donated to the Kathleen McCredie Award, which is awarded to a girl entering Year 10, who but for the award would not be able to attend Abbotsleigh. The 2022 Card Day is sadly the last one being organised by the AOGU for the time being, due to a steady decline in attendance over the last 4 years.



Speakers Breakfast

On Friday 10 June 2022, we held our Speakers Breakfast once again via Zoom. We used this opportunity to share the impact that two Old Girls are having in Tanzania, and the difference that the AOGU's 110th Anniversary Grants have made with their work.



Rev Helen Hoskins (1969) established the Bunda Girls Secondary School, where day and boarding students complete high school, with most going to college and jobs outside the home. Helen shared the obstacles girls faced in being able to access an education beyond the primary years. The school has an adjacent sewing school, which trains the girls who are not academic with an employable skill. We are proud that we were able to contribute funding for one of the students, Mary Masanja, to attend two years at Bunda Girls Secondary School.

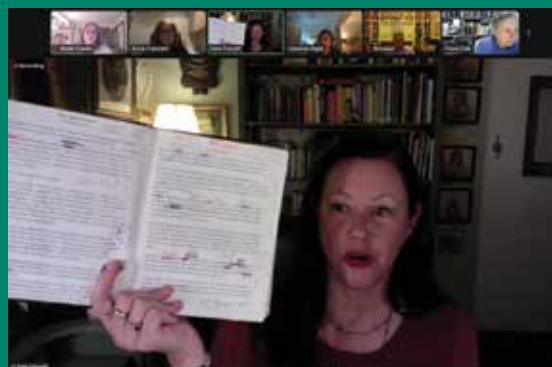


Grace Pattison (2013), Founder of School Girl Essentials (SGE) and Zion Issangya, described the challenges that face girls once they start their menses, with girls skipping school during their period and many dropping out completely. SGE targets the heart of the issue, with education of both girls and boys to reduce menstrual stigma, as well as practical advice about menstrual hygiene and the provision of reusable menstrual products. Our grant enabled them to roll out their program to a new school and more students. The smiles on the faces of the students say it all! You can read an interview with Grace on page X of this edition of *Around Abbotsleigh*.

We are thankful to both Helen and Grace for sharing their experiences and for what they do for others, and are delighted to be able to support them in a small way.

Meet the Author

The AOGU started a new event this year to celebrate and profile our members who are authors. We commend these events to you as a chance to understand what it takes to not only write a book, but to be published. These events were attended by Old Girls and current parents.



Kate Forsyth (1984) generously gave of her time in June to tell us how she became an author and shared her creative process. She even shared her first published piece from *The Weaver!* We were treated to a delightful peek at Kate's notebooks where she writes copious notes to develop her characters and stories. They were true works of art. Kate's writing spans historical fiction, young adult/children and non-fiction, and her latest book, *The Crimson Thread*, is a reimagining of 'The Minotaur in the Labyrinth' myth set in Crete during the Nazi invasion and occupation of World War II.



Nicole Alexander (1983) spoke to us in September. We started by having a laugh at some photos of Nicole and her friends during her school days, before Nicole shared her writing journey. She came to writing late when moving back to her family property, inspired by the land and the people. Nicole diligently researches people, places and history to bring together her interwoven stories based on Australian life and times. Nicole has published 11 historical fiction novels, as well as poetry, travel and genealogy articles, and her latest book, *The Last Station*, is set on the Darling River during the dying days of the paddle steamer.

AOGU Mother Daughter High Tea

The AOGU welcomed two generations of Old Girls with their current girl daughters and granddaughters at a special Mother Daughter High Tea on Saturday 30 July 2022. It was fabulous to once again host an event in the Senior School Dining Room after two years of postponements.

The girls sipped pink lemonade with umbrellas while the Old Girls started with champagne. We ate, reminisced and laughed over sandwiches, wraps, fruit, cakes and slices, surrounded by fairy lights and balloons.

AOGU Committee member Bronwyn Cooper (Ross-Jones, 1981) hosted a couple of rounds of heads and tails, asking trivia questions about Abbotsleigh today and in the past. This is a very special event where current girls get to appreciate their connection to the greater fabric of the School.

Many thanks to AOGU Committee members Bronwyn, Catherine Twyman (Gorfin, 1990) and Carly Bull (Mansfield, 1991) for organising a superb event.



Welcome Year 12 2022 to the AOGU

We were honoured to welcome the Class of 2022 into the AOGU as our newest members last September. We hosted the girls at a casual lunch in the new Year 12 Common Room, which was set up in long tables with cheerful sunflowers and star chocolates to reflect the 2022 Prefect theme 'Shine Bright'. The Common Room would be particularly unrecognisable to those Old Girls who sat their HSC exams in what was then the Old Gym!

After Mrs Krimmer said Grace, the girls heard from AOGU President Sarah Franks (1991) about some of the surprises she experienced leaving the safety of Abbotsleigh. She encouraged the girls to 'be bold' as they start their next journey and throughout their professional career, and to use the strong voice that Abbotsleigh has instilled in them.

The girls were familiar with online trivia quizzes during their periods of online learning, so they were introduced to a lot of Old Girl knowledge with a Kahoot. Questions included whether there were any male members of the AOGU (answer: yes, Reverend MacDonald was made an Honorary Old Girl upon his retirement), and what colour the pool was

coloured twice in the 1980s (answer: purple). There was much chatter and laughter throughout the event.

Each girl received an AOGU gift bag, containing information about the AOGU, a personalised, handwritten card from a Committee member to wish them luck in the HSC and welcome them, lollies and an inaugural AOGU Abbotsleigh camellia keyring. The keyring depicts Abbotsleigh camellia and is exclusively available when joining the AOGU.

At the Valedictory Assembly on their last day of school, the Year 12s were loudly applauded by the Old Girls in the Assembly Hall to officially welcome them as Old Girls, and then cheered by the entire school to acknowledge their transition beyond Abbotsleigh's gates.

These newest Old Girls can now join *The Yarn*, a Facebook group exclusively for the AOGU's more recent leavers to support and mentor each other. We can't wait to see them at AOGU events in the future, and especially their One Year Reunion in September this year.





School's birthday 2022

The School's 137th birthday last July was a day of special celebrations for the whole school community, including Old Girls.

Former Headmistress, Miss Kathleen McCredie OAM, attended the special birthday assembly and received an award for her service to IPSHA (Independent Primary School Heads of Australia). AOGU President Sarah Franks shared the history behind the AOGU Centenary Scholarship with the girls and presented 2022/23 recipient Maya Khanna-Boyle (Year 11) with her certificate.

The Black and Gold Lunch followed in the Senior School Dining Room, hosted by Headmistress Mrs Megan Krimmer and the Marian Clarke Society. Attendees included Head of Junior School, Ms Sally Ruston; Deputy

Headmistress and Head of Senior School, Mrs Victoria Rennie; Dean of Senior College, Mrs Annette Ware and Miss McCredie. Sarah Franks, Belinda Burton, Fiona Hobill Cole and Anne Mitchell represented the AOGU. Old Girl Rev Helen Hoskins (1969) spoke at the assembly and lunch, home after just visiting the Bunda Secondary School for Girls in Tanzania for a month. She told more fascinating stories of her school and the progress of the student Mary Masinja Igima, who was sponsored via the AOGU's 110th Anniversary Grant, and of the challenges girls in Tanzania face to gain an education.





Tamworth Community Event and AOGU North West Reunion

Old Girls made the most of two events held in Tamworth in July 2022. The Tamworth Abbotsleigh Community Event was hosted by Abbotsleigh, the Abbotsleigh Boarder Parents' Association and the Abbotsleigh Parents' Association and followed on from the AOGU North West Reunion held earlier in the day.

A total of 23 Old Girls attended the reunion, spanning from 1964 leavers to the 2000s, talked until the restaurant closed, with some continuing to catch up for more hours overlooking the setting sun.

Thank you to Susie Lyle (Craig, 1964) and Anne Mitchell (Macfarlane, 1964) for organising such a great event.

It was a different crowd of Old Girls who attended the Community Event, with a great showing from some of our younger set who have moved (back) to Tamworth after their studies. Community Events were also held in Dubbo in May and Wagga Wagga in June to coincide with the Boarding Expos.



ABBOTSLEIGH

Old Girls' Union Inc.



AOGU Merchandise

Apron

\$25 each or two for \$40

Tea towel

\$15 each or three for \$35

Portable charger

\$25

Camellia pendant

\$90 (pendant only)

All items can be ordered over the phone with credit card details or online at www.trybooking.com/BFWZW \$5 postage.

Enquiries: aogu@abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au 9473 7740

1960 Leavers – 60 Year Reunion

The wait was worth it for a patient group of 1960 leavers who were finally able to celebrate their 60th reunion last year. More than 30 attendees gathered at Pymble Golf Club for lunch on Tuesday 12 April 2022 with some also taking the opportunity to tour the School the day before. Organised by Anne Le Couteur (Bullen), the reunion was subsidised by the AOGU with immediate past AOGU President Belinda Burton (Tjeuw, 1991) also in attendance.



1. 1960 leavers finally celebrating their 60 Year Reunion **2.** Susan Smith (Gorick), Judith Bleechmore (Evans), Ruth Collins (Cranna), Ros Egan (Ridley) and Vivienne Birrell (Croxon) **3.** Bev Chapman (Irons), Philippa Hudson, Jenny Creal (Black), Jill Sherlock (Paterson) and Elizabeth Havas (Anderson) **4.** Jill Mogg (Greenwell), Janet Williamson (Simpson), Sandra Batkin (Willis), and Sue Spencer and Caroline Payne **5.** Jane Meggitt (Rutherford), Glenys Fitzpatrick (Richards), Elizabeth Tomlinson (Mills), Phillippa Baird (Bishop) and Gabrielle King (Storey) **6.** Sandy Luxford (Parrott), Penny Lancaster (Addison), Felicity Wilson (Gowing), Ailsa Le Page (Elmslie) and Elizabeth Bowden (Thornhill) **7.** Morag Hollway (Hollway), Susan Ramsay (Parkinson), Felicity Wilson (Gowing), Caroline Payne, Gillian Richmond (Blackbourn) and Caroline Kennedy (Adams).

1961 Leavers – 60 Year Reunion

Like many others, the 1961 60 Year Reunion had to be postponed until April last year, but the group made the most of their milestone celebration with a school tour in the morning followed by lunch at Pymble Golf Club. Organised by Julie McFadzean (Dillon) and kindly subsidised by the AOGU, 2021 AOGU President Belinda Burton (1991) joined 32 Old Girls for the special event.



1. 1961 60 Year Reunion attendees **2.** 1961 60 Year Reunion **3.** 1961 60 Year Reunion **4.** Helen Poolman (Croxon) and Jill Auld (Cowper) **5.** Robyn Raffles (Vaughan) and Pip Everall (Mendl) **6.** Judy Bettington (1959) and Marilyn Rollings (Maunder) **7.** Tour 1 – Prue Shannon (Harrington) and Helen Poolman (Croxon) remembering their school days during the tour.

1962 Leavers – 60 Year Reunion

Following a tour of the School, the Abbotsleigh Dining Room filled with chatter and laughter last September when the 1962 leavers came together to celebrate 60 years since leaving school. Organised by Rosemary Szente (Dawes), the theme for the lunch was 'Remembering' and included a display of photos, uniforms and publications from the past with plenty of memories also being shared. A special 'In memoriam' tribute to 1962 leavers no longer with us as well as the group's fondly remembered Headmistress, Miss Betty Archdale, was also presented. Welcomed back to school by current Headmistress, Mrs Megan Krimmer, the event was kindly subsidised by the AOGU who was represented by AOGU Treasurer and immediate past President, Belinda Burton (Tjeuw). The boarders also enjoyed a lunch at the home of Janet Cater the following day.



1. Elizabeth Loneragan (Black), Dimity Bendiksen (McGown), Elizabeth Taylor, Rosemary Szente (Dawes), Krissie Sodersten, Kate Hunt (Darnton) and Christine Easton (Feather) **2.** Class of 1962 enjoying their 60 Year Reunion lunch in the Abbotsleigh Dining Room with the theme 'Remembering' **3.** Clockwise from left: Judy Brien (Croxon), Helen Salkeld (Dight), Sally Smith (Robinson), Pepita Carpenter (Owens), Wendy Watson (Westbrook), Elizabeth George (Smith), Jill Willes (Watson), Julie Barker (Gilling), Susan Walsh (Adams) and Chrissie Hoeben (Grundy) **4.** 1962 leavers reviewing the memorabilia on display **5.** Susan Walsh (Adams), Elizabeth Klinger (Lanser), Lissa Coote, Roberta MacNee (Paterson), Clare Bishop and Maggie Arnott (Hipsley) **6.** Kate Hunt (Darnton), Imogen Steiner (Osborne) and Libby Black (Loneragan).

1965 Leavers – 55 Year Reunion

It was a warm and wonderful Wednesday in May 2022 when 36 Old Girls gathered at The Queen's Club to celebrate their 55 Year (plus an extra couple of years!) reunion. Organisers of the event were Dimity Riley (Wood), Pip Bowmaker (Wilkinson), Margaret Sachs (Coburn), Jane Hewett (Elmslie), Stephanie Hardy (King), Libby Tracy (Lee), Belinda Dawkins (Petrie), Penny Sharp (Petrie) and Virginia Ryan (Rorke).

Thank you to Diana Fickling (Vernon) for capturing the special event in photographs. In addressing the gathering, Pip Bowmaker said that it seemed like a homecoming of sorts. "Fifty-five (well, 57!) years had suddenly collapsed and here were the faces and personalities who had populated the classrooms, labs, cloakrooms, courts and corridors (even the – shudder – swimming pool!) of my 1960s' world." Given the delay in holding the reunion due to Covid, the group is looking forward to meeting again in now only another two years!



1970 Leavers – 50 Year Reunion

While the celebrations may have been a couple of years later than originally planned, the 1970 leavers made sure they didn't miss the opportunity to mark the milestone of 50 years since leaving school. More than 20 Old Girls braved the outing in May 2022. The celebration weekend included a boarders' dinner, school tour and a lunch at Killara Golf Club. Organiser Libby Gardiner (Amos) said that everyone really enjoyed the day and the chance to catch up and reminisce about their fond school days.



1



2



3

1. 1970 leavers finally enjoying their 50 Year Reunion 2. Nancy Jensen (Huenerbein) and Jenny Williams (Jones) 3. Katrina Ballantyne (Woodley), Pam Thompson (Brennan), Libby Gardiner (Amos) and Josephine Crawford (Hudson).

1972 Leavers – 50 Year Reunion

The starting time was 11 am and by 11.30, the sound of happy chattering was so great, we wouldn't have heard the bell, had it rung! Our indefatigable reunion organiser, Mandy Harrowell, had once again tracked down and invited almost every girl from our year, and five decades (how can that be?) simply slipped away as 62 women from the class of 1972 laughed and hugged and exchanged news, as well as photos of children and grandchildren. Some had been to every reunion and a couple were attending for the very first time; some had travelled from interstate and one – Carol Stow (Kilroy) – zoomed in onscreen from the UK at 5 in the morning!

Not everyone who wanted to attend was able to be there, and in recognition of health challenges of several girls in our year, we were pleased to raise \$2,300 for MND, thanks to the generosity of Kirstie McCauley (Atkinson) who donated a painting for a silent auction.

The time flew faster than the proverbial weaver's shuttle and after a raucous catchup and each clutching a lolly bag (thanks Mandy and Margaret Abbott), filled with the types of lollies we might have bought at Mussett's (but not eaten in the street, of course), we went our separate ways again, vowing that our next meeting should be in five years, rather than 10.

There are those who scoff at school reunions, but as the 'official' photographer, I can honestly say that what I captured for a few hours that day was utter joy on the faces of a wonderful group of women, none of whom is defined by a momentary photograph, but all of whom are inextricably bound by having known each other for a seminal decade or so, before we went on to live our very varied lives for the next half century.

Georgina Bitcon



1. Lesley McCusker (Snedden), Fiona Hare (Smith) and Sally Manning (Ewen) **2.** Anne Laidlaw (Batt), Jane Crew (Stanfield), Janet Forbes (Hughes) and Janelle Cook (Hanson) **3.** Sally Toole (Ashe), Jenny Hyles, Penny Roberts (Davey) and Barbie Blake (Hobbs) **4.** Mandy Harrowell and Maide Welch (Reilly) **5.** Gill Tunstall (Cadell), Rachel Dawson, Kay Drummond (Walsh) and Robyn Dwyer (Stevens) **6.** Janet Walsh (Greenhalgh) **7.** Sam Royal (Mc Alpin) and Sally Cook (Payne) **8.** Pip Low and Deirdre Kirke **9.** Mussett's lollies!

1981 Leavers – 40 Year Reunion

The 1981 leavers had a lot of fun celebrating their 40 Year Reunion at the Manly 16ft Skiff Club last October. A sign of a great night was that many of the 55 Old Girls still remained at the end until the staff tried to get them to leave! Organisers said it was lovely to catch up in person with so many Old Girls and the venue worked really well with plenty of room to move about and not surprisingly, the foreshore of Manly Cove made for a fabulous location.

The celebration continued the next morning with a group of boarders who stayed nearby at Q Station and others who stayed locally, gathering for breakfast. This was followed by another casual catch up on Saturday night at the Blues Point Hotel with partners. Organisers included Louise Birt (Atwill), Ruth Browning (Southwick), Lisa Archibald (Brown), Fiona Hobill Cole (Armstrong), Sue Jamieson, Liz Rodgers (O'Connor), Carey Hewett McLoud and Libby Myles (Gilder).



1. Carey Hewett McLoud (Hewett), Lisa Archibald (Brown), Sue Jamieson, Liz Rodgers (O'Connor), Ruth Browning (Southwick), Louise Birt (Atwill), Fiona Hobill Cole (Armstrong) and in front, Libby Myles (Gilder) **2.** Elizabeth Bernard, Mary-Ann Chapple, Alexandra Ranken, Louise Birt (Atwill), Fiona Hobill Cole (Armstrong) and Katherine Ward **3.** Karina Timores (Metcalf), Melanie Baxter (Edwards), Lisa Mayo (Cowie), Susie Poate (Scott), Libby Myles (Gilder) and Liz Rodgers (O'Connor) **4.** 1981 leavers enjoying their 40 Year Reunion last October.

Congratulations



Alex Easton (2004) and Jacob Munzer are delighted to share news of the birth of their daughter Ada Rowena Munzer. Born November 2021 in York, England, she is the first grandchild to proud Grandmother, Avril Easton (Craig, 1973).



Clare Rannard (2002) and husband Dean have added a second daughter to their family. Phoebe Delta was born on 4 June 2021 and is relishing life with great appetite and gusto. Her big brother Edmund, now 3, loves showing her what it's all about – they are both treasured. Their sister Lydia (deceased) is living on in our hearts while absent from our arms. Keanu Reeves, another bereaved parent, who has been quoted as saying “Grief changes shape, but it never ends,” is not wrong.



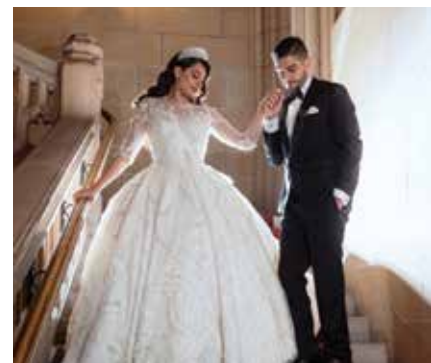
Alex Easton (2004) and Jacob Munzer were married on the outskirts of Florence, Italy on 6 July 2022 after two years of postponements, surrounded by family and friends. Alex had an all Abbotsleigh bridal party including Jo Craig (2003), Alina Murray (Foulkes, 2004) and Katrina Haynes (Christie, 2004).



Lydia Feng (2010) and her husband Sam McKeith are delighted to announce the birth of their first child, Roy William Kai McKeith born on 3 March 2022.



Dimity O'Brien (Norton, 2009) and her husband Justin welcomed Nina Lucinda to their family on 18 May 2022. Big sister Primrose (born September 2020) has finally come to terms with the new arrangements!



Sabreen Hussain (2017) and Bilal Shehata celebrated their wedding reception at Doltone House, Darling Island on 21 March, 2021. As per Arab tradition, the couple's civil ceremony took place in the bride's home earlier that day, followed by a procession of Lebanese drummers. The couple had their Islamic ceremony on 15 February, 2020. Many Abbotsleigh Old Girls were in attendance at both the reception and civil ceremony.



Eloise Gillespie (Norton, 2008) and her husband Adam are delighted to announce the addition to their family of Amelia Forsyth Gillespie, born on 2 March 2022. Now one, she's a busy little sister for Ruby (November 2019).



Peggy Lyon (Pountney, 1938) celebrates her 100th birthday

Peggy was born in Port Macquarie on September 29 1922, the daughter of Rupert and Ethel Pountney and the granddaughter of A.E. Pountney who founded the Port Macquarie News in 1882.

In 1931 her father purchased the Wauchope Gazette from the Bains and the family moved to Wauchope. Peggy had two younger siblings, John and Heather.

Peggy started school at four-and-a-half years of age and started learning the piano at the same time. Later, she attended school at Abbotsleigh.

At 18 she joined the Army and trained at the Holsworthy Barracks in Sydney. At the completion of training she was stationed at Macquarie Street doing shift work at the Botanical Gardens where the Army monitored the airspace. It was her job to send messages to the gun sites about all aircraft movements.

For eight months Peggy worked for the Army until her father requested she return to Wauchope to help him at the Gazette, which was experiencing staff shortages due to the war effort.

In 1945 Peggy married Cliffe Lyon and moved to "Boonoo Boonoo", the 2300 acre beef cattle property on the Ellenborough River at Toms Creek, which has been home to the Lyon family since 1876. They had six children: Bill, Leonie, Sandra, David, Richard and Clifford.

Peggy played a very active role in the Upper Hastings Community. For many years she was the Treasurer for the Wauchope Show Ladies' Auxiliary. Peggy was a keen tennis player and enjoyed horse riding and taking part in all aspects of farm life.

Peggy and Cliffe moved into Bundaleer in Johnstone Street in 2013. Despite being in a wheelchair and with diminished vision, Peggy was very active. She had a thriving garden growing on converted hospital beds, propagating succulents, growing vegetables and raising seedlings to give away. When she had surplus plants she organised a street stall, the profits used for purchasing a Christmas tree to put in the Bundaleer foyer and a sound system for the courtyard.

Throughout her 100 years Peggy has been an amazingly strong, vibrant and resilient woman. Despite losing her husband Cliffe, daughter Sandra and son David, she maintains a positive outlook.

"I am 100 and not out," Peggy said with a grin.

Peggy celebrated her special day with a party at the family farm, surrounded by those who love her; her children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, her neighbours and friends.

Peggy's family said she also very much enjoyed receiving a letter of congratulations from Abbotsleigh Headmistress Mrs Megan Krimmer in honour of her special milestone.

Barbara Higgins (Lawson, 1940)



1923-2021

My cousin Barbara Higgins, who has died aged 97 years, spent much of her adult life in the UK and Brazil. Nevertheless, she maintained her links with Abbotsleigh and, after returning to Australia, particularly enjoyed Old Girls' gatherings and humorous reminiscences of her school days.

Barbara was born in Roseville in 1923, the only child of Hilda and Max Lawson, and had a happy childhood full of games and horse riding in the bush. She attended Abbotsleigh from 1934 to 1940, where she was both academic and a sports all-rounder, captaining senior basketball and tennis teams and winning the Five Sisters Prize. In her final year, she was a prefect, described as 'active and energetic, and always very dependable'. Her sense of humour and independent streak were also surely apparent!

After school, during World War II, Barbara applied to join the navy, but was rejected as she was too young. As her father did not approve of university for girls, she went to business college and joined the ABC as a typist. However, feeling limited, she decided to go to Sydney University at night and graduated with BA(Hons) in 1949. Then began the period she described as among her happiest, when she travelled overseas to study Social Anthropology, first at the University of Chicago and then at the University of Oxford, where she was taught

by luminaries of the anthropological world such as E E Evans-Pritchard and Mysore Srinivas.

Barbara's life changed again when she met Englishman Lawrie Higgins, fittingly in a pub in Earl's Court. After a whirlwind courtship, they married and left for Brazil where Lawrie was a senior manager for an English pastoral firm. The firm disapproved of wives working and instead expected her to take a lead role representing the firm in British expatriate society. This may not have been the career she had planned, but a recompense was the opportunity for adventurous holidays and remote travel to the firm's many properties around Brazil.

After Lawrie's death, Barbara retired to St Alban's in the UK and later home to Australia, where she lived happily in a retirement village at Narrabeen for more than 25 years. She re-established old Abbotsleigh friendships and continued to travel extensively, including with friends Marki Ward (Butters, 1940) and Robin Deakin (Doyle, 1940). Favourite activities also included opera, theatre, swimming, golf and regular bridge games, which she continued playing until the Covid lockdown.

Barbara maintained a keen interest in the world and other cultures until her death after a short illness in 2021. She is dearly missed by her many cousins.

Kerrie Lawson

Margaret 'Skeet' Lark Tink (Andrew, 1941)



Margaret, always known as 'Skeet', was born on November 13 1924, the middle daughter of Bill and Essie Andrew.

Skeet attended Eldinhope School for Girls, run by Miss Helen Robinson, who later became the Headmistress at Abbotsleigh Junior School. She met her lifelong friend and fellow Abbotsleigh girl, Shirley Forrest, at Eldinhope.

Skeet started at Abbotsleigh under Miss Everett, fondly known by the girls as 'Ev'. Her passion at school was music, choir with Miss Beynon and piano, taught by Miss Patience Hardwicke. A family friend, ophthalmologist, Dr Hugo de Burgh, together with Miss Beynon, encouraged Skeet's love of music and she became a subscriber to the Sydney Symphony Orchestra in 1949, continuing to subscribe and attend concerts until COVID-19 in 2020.

Another Abbotsleigh favourite was teacher and librarian Thurles Thomas. The Andrew girls had a Cairn terrier called Jock who would leave the house in Illoura Avenue to spend most of the day sitting in the sun on the silent cop in the middle of Wairoonga opposite Mussett's newsagency (where the roundabout is now) or mooching around Abbotsleigh. He eventually just went to live at Abbotsleigh and was adopted by the School when Glynn, the family home, was sold.

Skeet's group of school friends who did the Leaving Certificate in 1941 included Moira Barnes, Pamela Jones, Margaret Ruse, Shirley Forrest and Joan Snow – nicknamed Barnes, Pamela, Ruse, Fish and Snowy. It was rather special to introduce them as 'Fish', 'Barnes' or 'Snowy' as growing up, we only knew these friends by their nicknames. They were all Prefects in 1941 and Skeet was Head Girl and Macquarie House Captain. They remained friends at university and formed a close group again in retirement to attend concerts, play Scrabble, enjoy lunch and talk! When transport became difficult, they used to meet at the Queen's Club and kept in close touch by phone, often with daily calls.

Skeet was accepted to study medicine at the University of Sydney in 1942. She lived at The Women's College where she made lifelong friends and was elected Senior Student in 1946. After graduating, Skeet was a resident at the Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children, followed by a position at St George Hospital and work with the Red Cross Blood Service. In 1950 she travelled by ship

to the UK, the Continent and Scandinavia while deciding between Royal Naval Officer, Michael Gerken, and Manly boy and later paediatrician, Arnold Tink, with whom she first locked eyes across the anatomy table in first year medicine. She married Arnold in 1951 and had three children, Andrew, Barbara and Elizabeth.

Skeet became an avid bird watcher and retirement from work in community medicine with the then Health Commission of NSW allowed time for volunteering in the bird department at the Australian Museum, camping in the desert, delivering Meals on Wheels (until she was 89), enjoying concerts and 'Meg's Music', music history classes run by another Old Girl, Meg Matthews (Giblin, 1959).

Generations of Skeet's wider family have attended Abbotsleigh – Skeet and her sisters Dorothy FitzSimons (Andrew) and Jean Himmelhoch (Andrew, 1944), her cousin, Joan Gorman (Snow, 1941), her stepmother, Beryl Bennett and stepsisters Pam, Prue and Robin Searcy. Daughters Barbara Tink (1974) and Elizabeth Tink (1978), granddaughters Sarah (2006), Elizabeth (2009) and Katrina (2009) Andersen, nieces Jane (1973), Margaret (1974) and Anne (1977) Himmelhoch, and great nieces Megan Horne (2010), Cathy, Helen and Jenny (2006) Cook. Skeet continued her connection to Abbotsleigh, attending concerts, Easter and Christmas chapel services, class reunions and Golden Old Girl lunches.

Skeet died on 22 September 2020, a couple of weeks short of her 96th birthday. She always insisted that she would be carried out of her Gordon house, in which she lived for 65 years, in a box. And that was so. She had been independent at home but the need for help increased after several falls and the last six months were very difficult for her.

Her funeral would have been held in the Abbotsleigh Chapel (to which her generation of girls contributed their offertory pennies to fund the building), with a rousing rendition of *Praise my soul the King of Heaven* by a full congregation. This was not to be due to Covid restrictions, however Mr Mac [Rev Ross MacDonald], much loved School Chaplain, remembered by many Old Girls, officiated at Macquarie Park.

The love and care for which she was renowned was cherished by her large and varied circles of friends and her central role in the lives of her immediate and extended family.

By daughter Barbara Tink (1974)

Dr Eleanor Dawson (Shiels, 1943)



According to her Abbotsleigh classmates, Dr Eleanor Dawson (Shiels, 1943) had a reputation as arguably one of the School's most talented students of 1940s. However, she was not only a top academic achiever, but she also featured in the sports of tennis and netball. Similarly, she excelled while attending the University of Sydney where she studied Medicine.

Former Abbotsleigh Archivist Julie Daly described Dr Dawson as "a great friend of the School Archives who would call and visit regularly." She was also a regular participant in Abbotsleigh Old Girls' Union activities until recent years.

Dr Dawson generously endowed in perpetuity the school's Marjorie Shiels Prize for Excellence in Practical Science in Year 12 in honour of her mother, Marjorie Shiels, who had been a teacher at Abbotsleigh. The prize replaced the Marjorie Shiels Prize for Practical Biology (formerly the Eleanor Shiels Prize for Biology) founded in 1953 by Majorie Shiels MSc FLS Biology Mistress 1952-54 and endowed in perpetuity since 1970 by Dr Dawson. According to archive records, Marjorie had come to Abbotsleigh at Miss Everett's invitation to "put practical Biology on a sound footing".

Read more about the life Dr Dawson in an article written by her grandson for the *Sydney Morning Herald*: [Link: <https://arichlife.com.au/vale-eleanor-mary-dawson-1-november-1926-to-7-april-2021/>]

SENIOR YEAR BOOK

75



STUART J. SHIELS



ELEANOR MARY SHIELS

Our mystery just recently unravelled concerns his silent and mysterious shootings through to Newcastle, to which we can now ascribe his recent success in the matrimonial stakes.

His ability to arrive at a diagnosis after having been told it by Rossy has not been surpassed by his colleagues (or by his fellow radiologists).

Diffuse in his remarks and wary in his attitude, nevertheless his immaculate precision in smiting the golf ball is remarkable.

His extreme good nature and capacity for effort augur well for his future career.

We can be sure of one thing: that neither he nor his fiancée will ever get wet in the rain.

ELEANOR MARY SHIELS.

Eleanor came to the Faculty from Abbotsleigh, having been awarded on the results of the Leaving Certificate Examination the James Aitkin Scholarship, the John West Medal and the Grahame Prize Medal for General Proficiency and the Fairfax Prize for General Proficiency among women candidates. Continuing the good work, she topped the lists in First and Second Years and was awarded the Renwick Scholarship.

Nor has her prominence been academic only. Eleanor came to the fore as a popular and capable representative on the Medical Society and as a Director of the Women's Union. Retaining a love of sport from school days, she tackles golf with enthusiasm in holiday time.

Of late her occupation has changed somewhat. As well as planning splints and treatments she is engrossed in the plans of a model home, and although



Diana Miriam HIGGINS (Mackenzie, 1952)

Formerly of Queensland, Hong Kong and Switzerland, Diana passed away peacefully at Nambour Hospital on 31 May 2022 aged 87 years. Beloved wife of 56 years to Mark Anthony Higgins and mother to Louisa Higgins-Hughes and Pelham Higgins. Loved by many across the world who knew her.

Messages of condolence can be sent to Diana's son at pelhamhiggins@gmail.com

Sally Lorimer (Naylor, 1952)



Sally Lorimer passed away peacefully on September 17, 2022 in Bowral, aged 87 years.

Sally's three grand-daughters Sarah (2009), Kate (2013) and Jane (2015) all attended Abbotsleigh, as did her daughter-in-law, Linda (Pratten, 1980).

Helen Violet HILL (Graham, 1958)

Fiercely loyal wife of David Alexander Hill (deceased). Irreverent, sassy and formidable mother and mother-in-law to Elizabeth (deceased), Thomas, Andrew, James, Matthew, Dellice, Rebecca, Kate and Richard (deceased).

Witty and playful Gran, Granny and Ninny to Isla, Jessica, Matilda, William, Alex, Lucy, Nicholas and Lachlan. A dedicated charity and community volunteer. Recipient of the Medal (OAM) in the General Division for service to community.

Elizabeth (Libby) Olive Maher (Edwards, 1965)



Libby was diagnosed with bronchiectasis at age two and this, with its endless complications, was to be her health burden her entire life. Nonetheless she was an over-achiever in every field of life; academically, socially and in everything she attempted.

Her husband Ken said that she never let a chance go by and was always looking to help, especially their family and others, in any way possible.

A highly valued and active member of the Australian Heart Lung Transplants Association (AHLTA) committee,

Libby was instrumental in the transition from snail mail postage of its newsletter, *The Biopsy Bugle*, to delivery via email, and faithfully took a huge array of cakes to the AHLTA's fundraising stalls in the foyer of St Vincent's.

Libby's fascinating story, told in her own words, is one of determination, perseverance and love. You can read it in the winter *Biopsy Bugle* of 2018 on the National Library of Australia's Trove website (page 5) at <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-2595565113/view>.

Libby died peacefully at home on Saturday 5 December 2021, aged 73, following a long illness. She was surrounded by her close family and will be dearly missed by her husband, children and their partners, her grandchildren, her siblings, and her extended family and many friends.

Jennifer Jill Hobson (Garnock, 1963)



Jenny came to Abbotsleigh as a boarder in 6th class (1958), fresh from country Bombala. From the start, Jenny was well liked by both boarders and day girls, and this continued through school life and beyond. Quietly popular, a good 'all rounder' Jenny tackled things and did well in swimming, tennis, singing and schoolwork. Jenny led the Lawson School Choir in 4th Year, was an outstanding tennis player (Senior A and Tildesley) in both doubles and singles and was a Prefect and Vice Boarder Prefect.

It is for Jenny's personal qualities that we will always remember and love her. She was creative, with a witty humour and endearing sense of fun. There was a memorable Heron Island excursion performance in 1963 where Jenny dressed as a nun in a sheet (habit), swinging rosary beads, pouting with outrageous lipstick lips, singing and swaying to the music. At tennis, Jenny was a fabulously reliable doubles partner, and after leaving school, played in local tennis groups in Wahroonga, including a top Grade Comp team. Through tennis Jenny made many life-long friends.

Following Leaving Certificate, Jenny had a year at home on the beautiful family property 'Bukalong' at Bombala, working as a doctor's receptionist in town. Then Jenny commenced RN training in 1965 at Royal North Shore Hospital. She excelled as a nurse; competent, caring and undertook a variety of nursing roles during her career,

retraining in community nursing when they moved to Merimbula. In the latter part of her life she worked as a Nurse Volunteer in the palliative care ward at Pambula Hospital.

Jenny met the man she would marry at a school formal. Michael Hobson was a blind date for another girl, but it was Jenny he pursued from that moment forth. They had eyes for no one else. They were well matched and it was an enduring, happy relationship, which lasted well over 50 years. They had two children, Megan and Angus, and four grandchildren, whom she adored and was adored in return. Jenny and Michael moved from Wahroonga to Merimbula once the children left home and made many new friends. Jenny also maintained earlier friendships from the Bombala region. She sang in the Pambula Choir and joined the music scene in Merimbula.

There were some wonderful holidays exploring Australia and Jenny helped organise the 20th, 30th, 40th and 50th 1963 leavers' reunions, and her boarder networking was a great asset. Jenny sadly succumbed to ill health in early 2022. She will be deeply missed. Rest in peace dear Jenny, you who will always remain in our hearts and memories.

Hilary Steel and Helen Muir (Hawthorne)



Susan Evan Tennant (Roberts, 1965)

It is with heavy hearts that we report on the death of our loved and loving wife, mother, grandmother, daughter and sister. Sue always spoke enthusiastically about her formative time at Abbotsleigh and Betty Archdale's encouragement, enthusiasm and influence. She threw herself into many activities, particularly participating in various dramatic productions. Sue left Abbotsleigh with a thirst for knowledge and a lifelong enjoyment of literature and the arts. Sue was beautiful, vivacious and gregarious, and remained so all her life. She was also intelligent and applied her intelligence well, completing a Master's degree followed by a PhD in Linguistics and a long career as an academic at Macquarie University.

Sue spent most of her childhood in Beecroft, with her large family of siblings, often having boisterous discussions at the dinner table. She had fond memories of those early years, recalling them with pleasure and enthusiasm whenever she had the opportunity – particularly playing with the local neighbours and exploring the bushland nearby. Sue attended West Ryde Opportunity School and then to Abbotsleigh, matriculating to the University of Sydney, where she graduated with Honours in Psychology.

Sue's heart was clearly fastened to both her family of origin and her family of creation. She was a loyal and dedicated wife, mother and grandmother. She would do anything to support us, and her love and dedication was returned.

Sue remained very fit and healthy right up until her cancer diagnosis. She loved yoga and running, running 6 km every second day at less than six minutes a kilometer. She remained an avid reader and was a member of a great book club. She also loved bridge, which she continued to play online when Covid arrived.

Apart from an initial time in hospital, Sue spent her remaining life in the home she loved in Castlecrag with the support of her husband, children, siblings and friends. She was quite content, exclaiming she was having a good time watching old movies and spending time with us. She did not need any pain relief until the last few weeks of life, and any pain was managed well through very professional health services. She never complained and she faced her demise with a sense of hope rather than despair.

We are such stuff as dreams are made on, and our little life is rounded with a sleep
- The Tempest

Mark, Annie (1989) and Erin Tennant

We remember

- Robina Bleach (Stayner, 1949 and 1950)
- Judith Cameron-Smith (Moxham, 1935)
- Robin Cant (MacPhillamy, 1949)
- Anne Davies (1977)
- Kate Ferguson (1971)
- Jane Francis (Boston, 1985)
- Carolyn Gorton formerly Stephens (Harvey, 1958)
- Diana Holdgate (Henderson, 1954)
- Mabel (Rae) Holmes (Stephen, 1939)
- Deirdre Hordern (1946)
- Elizabeth McKinnon (Hobbs, 1968)
- Margaret Macmillan (Stewart, 1956)
- Mary Manchee (Kirkby, 1949)
- Susan Mann (Gengos, 1965)
- Mary Mason (Macoun, 1954)
- Anne Mulready (Croxon, 1960)
- Jill Pain (MacPhee, 1947)
- Robyn Payne (Reid, 1960)
- Penelope (Penny) Porter (Turner, 1967)
- Margaret Scrivener (Tugwell, 1939)
- Shirley Selosse (Forrest, 1941)
- Kathryn Stanley (Calov, 1977)
- Lydia Storey (Worledge, 1965)
- Judith Thompson (Denmead, 1971)
- Jane Tyner (Adams, 1962)
- Sue Webster (Capp, 1959)
- Jane Wilcox (Allsop, 1949)
- Alice Wong (2005)

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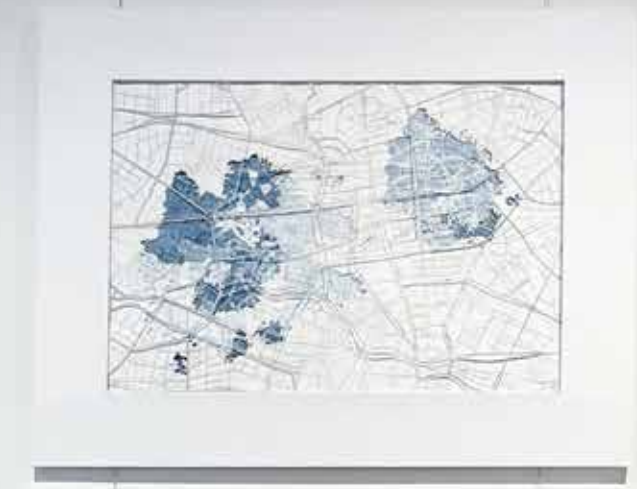
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