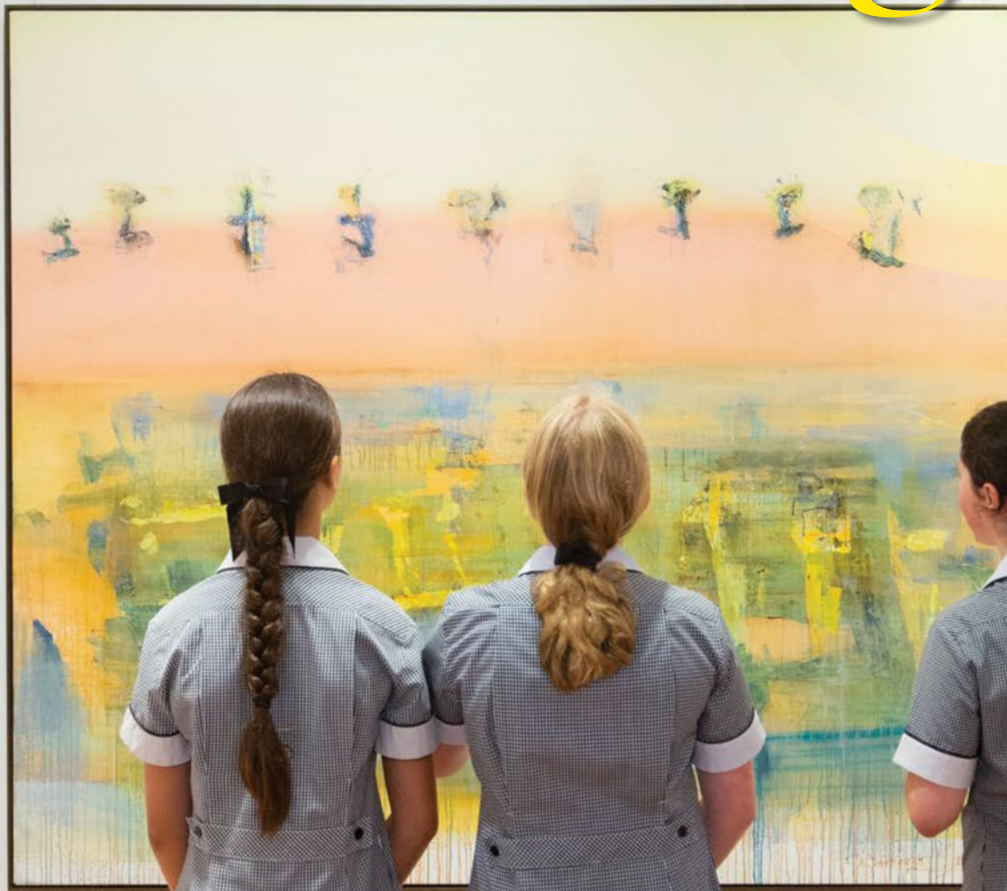




ABBOTSLEIGH

Around Abbotsleigh





Cover

The Grace Cossington Smith Gallery celebrates ten years of artistic achievement and endeavour. Full story on page 40.



Page 20

Abbotsleigh's House Choir is the 'ultimate battle of the bands', showcasing great musicians and covering many musical genres. In 2023, Franklin was victorious.



ABBOTSLEIGH

Around Abbotsleigh is a publication for the Abbotsleigh school community.

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Abbotsleigh seizes every moment in 2023

It has been a wonderful year at Abbotsleigh. After years of Covid dominating almost every area of our lives, the School burst forth at the beginning of 2023 and did not look back. Capturing our collective imaginations, our inspirational and aspirational Prefect theme – ‘Seize the Moment’ – galvanised the whole Abbotsleigh community to seize every opportunity to be involved, to learn, to make a positive social and environmental impact, to have fun and to truly flourish.

Learning, whether it be in the classroom or beyond, is at the forefront of all that we do at Abbotsleigh and this edition of *Around Abbotsleigh* captures creativity and learning very well indeed. As you read the many inspirational articles about learning, such as being ‘brain architects’ in the ELC, finding ‘treasure’ in Year 2, linking Mathematics to Indigenous culture in the Senior School, futuristic Science experiments and experiences, just to name a few, I am sure you will be inspired by the many enriching learning activities in which our girls have been involved.

Equally inspiring is Music at Abbotsleigh and 2023 saw music flourish. House Choir and the creation of Chapel Bands in the Senior School, as well as the beautiful concerts to which we have been treated, are remembered and celebrated in this publication.

We are very proud of our Class of 23 who, having created their highly motivational ‘Seize the Moment’ theme, led the student body – Pre K to Year 12 – with distinction. Superbly led by Head Prefect Phoebe Luu, our Year 12 leaders have been exceptional role models – incredibly well organised, creative, good humoured and entertaining. Equally impressive has been the way in which the girls focused on their learning alongside their involvement in myriad co-curricular activities. It is with great pleasure that we

congratulate each girl for her hard work and excellent HSC results. I know the whole Abbotsleigh community wishes our Class of 2023 the very best as they embark on their next exciting adventures.

In what has become a tradition in *Around Abbotsleigh*, our archivist, Dr Jennifer McLaren, has provided wonderful insights into our rich history, this time contributing a great feature article on the inspirational leadership of former headmistress, Miss G Gordon Everett, who led the School from 1931 to 1954. ‘Always courageous and willing to try new innovations’, Miss Everett steered Abbotsleigh through the Depression, established the Junior School campus and many traditions that we still follow today.

Also highlighted in this edition is service, which is at the heart of who we are at Abbotsleigh. Our Junior School girls were delighted to welcome Gemma Sisia, the founder of the School of St Jude in Tanzania, to their assemblies. In person and via Zoom, the girls worked very hard indeed to continue to support the excellent work Gemma and her team do to provide education for impoverished Tanzanian children. Our Year 1 girls also worked beautifully in collaboration with Knox boys to help ‘Light Up Vanuatu’. And, in a wonderful initiative this year, our Senior girls have formed a partnership with Bunda Girls’ Secondary School, a school established by AOG Helen Hoskins, to provide funds for buildings as well as scholarships for young Tanzanian girls who would otherwise not receive a secondary education.

In keeping with the values that they hold so dear from the time they were at Abbotsleigh, our Old Girls have been ‘giving back’, too. I know you will be inspired by the work of our Old Girls, who are making a positive social impact in the world and at our School. We are equally grateful for the

incredible work and generosity of our parents, members of our Foundation and the School Council, who also have service at the heart of all that they do.

As the Old Girls welcome the Class of 2023 into their fold, it also is exciting to read about the great Old Girls' reunions that have been organised during the past year and the unique opportunity we had to honour two Abbotsleigh Old Girls who turned 100 in 2023!

From our littlest people in the ELC to our oldest girls in Year 12 and everyone in between and beyond, this edition of *Around Abbotsleigh* captures the energy, vigour and 'lightness of spirit' of our Abbotsleigh community. Together, we have indeed 'seized every moment' possible in the year that was 2023. I commend this edition of *Around Abbotsleigh* to you and hope you enjoy reading it as much as I have.



Service 4 Service

The inspiring story of one woman's determination to provide a school for under-privileged children in Tanzania – and how Abbotsleigh girls are helping

Sally Ruston, Head of Junior School

Our connection with the School of St Jude in Tanzania is wonderfully long and deep. For more than a decade now, we have supported the work of its founding Principal, Australian Gemma Sisia, who has realised a truly remarkable vision of fighting poverty in Africa through education. We were delighted to have Gemma come to speak to our girls and parents earlier this year and to hear firsthand the wonderful goals achieved for the poorest of Tanzanian children.

Gemma is a remarkable visionary and extraordinarily hard-working individual. She opened a school for children in 2002. She had only three students in the first class. Today, through the empowerment of local Tanzanians, Gemma has created free learning environments for 1800 of the poorest students. There are now three campuses, including a secondary girls' boarding school, with 350 local staff progressively breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty, one student at a time.

Here at Abbotsleigh, we have found ways of fundraising for St Jude's that have resonated with our girls and parents. From 'spellathons' and 'factathons' to recent wellbeing focused initiatives, as we emerged from pandemic isolation, we have raised funds so that more children in Tanzania can receive an empowering education, as our girls do here on a daily basis.

This year we are taking a service approach to our fundraising. We are asking our girls to perform acts of service at home and in the local neighbourhood to raise money so that we can, in turn, enable St Jude's to continue to give service to the local Tanzanian community.



Through the Student Representative Council, we have asked the girls to identify acts of service they feel are achievable and that would bring joy and value to their families and the community. They have been remarkably innovative in their identification of ways in which they can help out and serve. From simple tasks such as emptying the dishwasher, feeding or walking the family pet and preparing their own lunch to sending a card or ringing a grandparent or reading a book to a younger sibling, the girls' ideas are practical and doable.

Giving service is an essential habit to develop if we are to feel connected to family, school and community. It is when we are able to see the good we can do for others that we recognise our power to create, one small step at a time, a better world for all. As 2023 concludes, our last act on Speech Day was to announce the monies our Abbotsleigh community raised to support St Jude's fighting poverty through education. We were pleased to have contributed \$12,687.25 and thank and congratulate everyone who took part in this fundraiser.

If you are interested in finding out more, I commend to you Madeleine Kelly's book, **The School That Hope Built.**



Why early childhood educators must become ‘brain architects’

Shelley Laycock, Director of Early Learning

Early Learning hosted a successful two-day conference in early June. It was opened by our Headmistress Megan Krimmer and followed by a Welcome to Country from Darug Elder Chris Tobin. The conference focus was Neuroscience and Pedagogy: the integration of research into practice and was attended by more than 70 Early Childhood delegates from ACT and NSW.

Its purpose was to bring together thought leaders to promote thinking and discourse among early childhood teachers about the significant role that neuroscience has on pedagogy. There is compelling evidence that quality relationships and learning environments have a considerable impact on brain development in very young children. Beyond learning outcomes, these can have significant long-term implications on self-regulation, wellbeing and overall mental health.

Our keynote speaker was Dr Sarah McKay, an Oxford University-educated neuroscientist, educator, presenter, media commentator and director of the Neuroscience Academy. Sarah shared the seven (and a half) most important concepts related to the development of a child’s brain, including the first 1,000 days; brain development trajectories from birth through childhood and adolescence; how adults ‘wire’ little brains to the world; attachment and brain-to-brain synchrony and the significance of adult wellbeing as a factor for the developing child. Not only did Sarah share these lessons in an accessible manner, enabling the delegates to understand and implement evidence-based neuroscience strategies – such as her Bottom-Up, Outside-In, Top-Down brain framework – into everyday life and work, she also shared new social neuroscience research to help educators rethink how they



Dr Sarah McKay



approach the transition from home into early childhood education and ways to optimise how learners engage in the classroom.

Dr Kristy Goodwin was our second speaker, and she gave us a lot to think about regarding how much technology we offer young children. The research she has conducted certainly supported the notion that technology is changing the way that children’s brains are developing but, rather than being alarmist, she advocated moderation. Technology is here to stay, but we need to think how we use it. We have positive responses to technology and parents are under increasing pressure to provide their children with the latest app, but the



Darug Elder Chris Tobin

neuroscience is telling us that children need ancestral parenting more. Kristy urged the view that young children need to be exposed to three-dimensional concrete experiences and resources. Interestingly, toddlers younger than 36 months cannot make sense of a two-dimensional screen. She was very concerned that children are not spending enough time developing Fundamental Movement Skills, which have an impact upon their



learning. Kristy likened parents and early childhood educators to ‘brain architects’, as 90% of neural pathways are made in the first five years. We need to strengthen and stimulate these pathways in the early years to maximise brain development. She also touched on technology and its interference in getting a good night’s sleep. ‘Devices need to have a bedtime too,’ she said, ‘which is at least 90 minutes prior to bedtime.’ This is good advice for adults and children alike.

Anthony Semann set the tone for the start of the second day. Anthony is an agent of change and well known in the early childhood sector. He is one of the founding directors of Semann & Slattery, a boutique consultancy with more than 25 years’ experience in the early and primary education and community sector.

Anthony posed the question: ‘What does it mean to build cultures of thinking within educational sites?’ He explored the notion of building a culture of thinking for both adults and children, drawing from a strong evidence base about the impact of teaching and learning. Our desire to innovate means our work is always under construction and, to teach with innovation, Anthony suggests educators must enter children’s worlds. The success of innovation is measured by the difference it makes. Its aim is to improve ‘what is’, by capitalising on new knowledge, technology and theories. It also challenges educators to act and think differently, and Anthony insisted that when a teacher stops thinking the children stop thinking. Therefore, it is imperative that we dream about possibilities and play with wonder.

Our next speaker was Karen Young, a psychologist

and founder of Hey Sigmund, an internationally popular online resource that provides contemporary, research-driven information on anxiety and the neurodevelopment of young people. Karen acknowledged that early childhood is a particularly critical time for the developing brain. The environment needs to be rich with the necessary experiences and relationships to support children in their development, behaviour, learning and social and emotional wellbeing. With many more children spending their early years in Early Childhood Education and Care services, early childhood educators have a profound capacity to provide the experiences and relational conditions that will nurture the holistic development of the children in their care. Young children’s brains will wire towards connection or protection, and this is very much dependent upon the environment these young children experience.

The conference’s final speaker was Chelsea Pottenger. An international motivational speaker, who trains professionals in every field to take charge of their mental wellbeing, Chelsea is founder and director of EQ MINDS. She had a highly successful corporate career before experiencing life adversity and in her journey to recovery, she re-trained and adopted a new way of living, integrating a new set of tools into her life to manage and optimise her mental health. Chelsea shared some valuable and practical brain hacks that could allow us to take control of our own health and help reduce stress and burnout, which is rife in the early childhood sector. She reiterated the need to learn healthy habits. Referencing the fact that more and more children are spending significant time in care, she said it is crucial to acknowledge that educators must recognise that how they present to work, and their interactions, can influence children’s learning and emotional wellbeing.

All in all, the sequence, synergy and quality of all the speakers involved across the two days could not have melded better. Each speaker provided delegates with the opportunity to gain insight and knowledge. The first few years of life are critical and early childhood educators are in a unique position in establishing authentic and supportive relationships with the children in their care and helping to optimally wire a child’s brain for life.



Transition finds treasure

Peita van Bussel, Transition to Year 2 Coordinator

Transition's curiosity was sparked as they pondered how rocks, crystals and gems formed underground. Their drawings often featured sparkly jewels below, protected by unicorns above, and so we began our explorations into all things 'treasure'. The girls' theories about how gems formed ranged from pirates to queens to unicorns. The project then took two directions: physical and metaphorical.



Firstly, the girls were keen to explore how crystals form. Using our experts here in the Junior School, we invited Mrs McCarthy, one of our science teachers, to Transition to create salt crystals. The girls brought in rocks and crystals from their holiday adventures, keen to examine how different they were with magnifying glasses and microscopes.

Their thinking deepened as we started to explore whether treasure was always something sparkly or if we could sometimes treasure the intangible. In the lead up to Mother's Day, we explored what we treasured about our mums, and curated a collection of treasures from home – photos, special lullabies, a baby blanket. Not necessarily beautiful, but treasures all the same. At the end of the term, we saw a theatre adaptation of the story *Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge* by Mem Fox, a beautiful story of boy wanting to bring back treasured memories for his elderly neighbour.

The girls wanted to spread the Transition Treasure further, so made friendship bracelets for our World Vision sister Adidja, who lives in Burundi. The girls drew pictures, wrote letters and carefully threaded gems to create bracelets. The true treasure being the gift of friendship through kindness.

Kindergarten: Where the wild things are

Melissa Tilbrook and Katie Devine, Kindergarten Teachers

Using the modelled text *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak, Kindergarten entered the world of the Wild Things, embedding the deep learning disposition of empathy into their geography and writing units. The girls explored language, characterisation and plot development by pulling apart the story, innovating components then putting the newly written sections back into a narrative structure. Much of the unit was spent taking on the perspectives of others: How was Max feeling when he headed to the land of the Wild Things? Why did he return? How did the Wild Things respond to Max as their leader and why didn't they want Max to go home again? The girls revelled in the creative vocabulary exploration – after all, you cannot describe a Wild Thing without wild words!

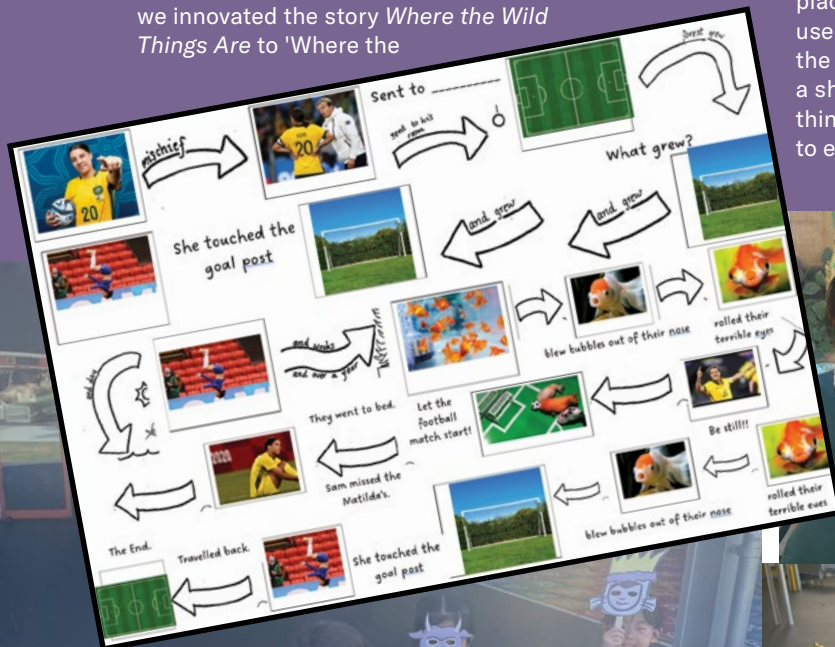
Inspired by the FIFA Women's World Cup, as a class we innovated the story *Where the Wild Things Are* to 'Where the

Goldfish Are'. This story saw our much-loved Matildas' Captain Sam Kerr travel to the Land of Green and Gold Goldfish and play a game of football underwater. However, just like Max missed his mum, Sam became homesick and missed her beloved Matildas friends.

The girls thoroughly enjoyed engaging with this unit and used this whole-class story as inspiration to innovate their own stories. We saw characters going to the Land of Lollipops, Unicorn Land, Toowoomba, Land of the Puppies, Mushroom Land and Elsa's Castle.

Identifying special places in the book helped to ground the geographical content in the literature unit. The girls established reasons for places being special for different people and how to care for spaces.

The unit culminated in the design of clothing for suitable places, aligning with the Science unit on weather. The girls used the Book Creator app to remake illustrations from the text in different climatic settings. They then designed a shoe for Max to wear in the rain. Applying their critical thinking skills, they selected materials and used reasoning to explain their choice.



Year 1 Light Up Vanuatu

Peita van Bussel, Transition to Year 2 Coordinator

The Light Up Vanuatu collaboration with Knox Prep School is now in its third year. Increasingly, the focus has been on developing the service component, helping the girls to reflect on the impact of their involvement on others, rather than their enjoyment of the solar light build or the fundraising initiatives themselves.

This year, the girls completed acts of service at home to raise funds. They looked for things they could do to help others at home, in turn raising funds to help families in Vanuatu. Having the girls directly involved in the design of their service initiatives heightened their understanding of what it means to give to those in need. Not only were bedrooms tidied, stories read to siblings and dishwashers packed but, importantly, every girl in Year 1 raised enough funds to purchase one solar light kit.

The build day itself has also evolved. Building alongside the Year 1 boys at Knox fostered friendships and a need to work with others – after all, those silicone seals are tricky to keep in place without the help of a new friend! It was heartwarming to hear the students' reflections, highlighting how much they gained from the collaboration. They learnt firsthand of the consequences of missing a step, using their problem-solving skills to work out what had gone wrong and find a solution together.

We are eagerly awaiting news from Solar Buddy to hear when our lights have arrived in the remote villages of Vanuatu, lighting children's futures, one solar light at a time.





Board game challenges in Year 2

From Monopoly to Operation, exploring the effects of technology


Peita van Bussel, Transition to Year 2 Coordinator

Year 2 explored the history of toys, determining how technology has changed the way toys and games are played. To deepen their understanding of the shift in technology, the girls designed their own board games.

Initially, they explored a range of board games from the past, with Monopoly and Game of Life moving from cash to EFTPOS transactions, and the red and white pegs of Battleship making way for digital board configurations. Reflection was built into each lesson: how had the games improved? Were they always changed for the better? For some girls, the set-up of each piece of the 1990's version of the games was tedious; for others, they reflected on not being able to see accumulating success in the digital versions.

Tasked with designing their own version of Operation, the girls designed a new board layout, featuring pets, snowmen and wildlife. Each gameboard needed to be large enough to fit the pieces inside, yet still provide the challenge of being able to operate with tweezers without getting buzzed. Carefully, the students taped foil around each hole in the gameboard, before coding and attaching Micro:bits to buzz when the surgeon wobbled, and the tweezers made contact with the foil. Using technology to enhance the game proved challenging, and required perseverance and collaboration to get each piece in position and working.



CHANCE	COMMUNITY CHEST	OXFORD STREET	REGENT STREET
?		\$ 300	\$ 300

Positive thinking

Year 3's Wellbeing Day explored strategies to keep minds and bodies healthy and happy

Murray Keating, Year 3 Coordinator



Year 3 students and teachers very much enjoyed our Wellbeing Day in October. This special day was introduced into the Year 3 program in 2018 and has attracted consistently positive feedback from students, teachers and parents. The aim of the day is to help the girls develop important skills that can support their general sense of wellness and connectedness.

It began with a delicious hot chocolate and shared breakfast among friends, and the girls quickly realised how important it is for their wellbeing to feel connected with one other. The day's activities included the making of a kindness chain, mindful weaving, breathing exercises, an exploration of positive thinking through the 'Grow Your Mind' program and a discussion about good sleeping habits.

Wellbeing Day helped our Year 3 girls to develop strategies that keep their minds and bodies healthy and happy. A survey conducted at the end of the day highlighted the students' enjoyment of, and engagement in, all activities. In addition, those girls surveyed indicated overwhelming support for future Wellbeing Days.



Year 4 Mathematics project

Innovative and calculated approaches to improving our environment

Sarah Vincent, Year 4 Coordinator

Sustainability and environmental issues have been at the forefront of Year 4's Mathematics project this semester. The girls started their journey by considering our First Nations people's connection to country and what we can learn about that and consider in our own day to day lives.

Each of the classes had a different focus, based off ideas from discussions: 4G focused on the flora and fauna around Abbotsleigh; 4O considered the rubbish and recycling habits of our students; and 4L highlighted opportunities for developing more sustainable practices centred around lunch containers and paper usage.

With each class following their own passions, we set off on a mission to learn mathematics through investigation and project-based learning. Each class began by collecting various pieces of data to better understand and identify areas of strength and need.

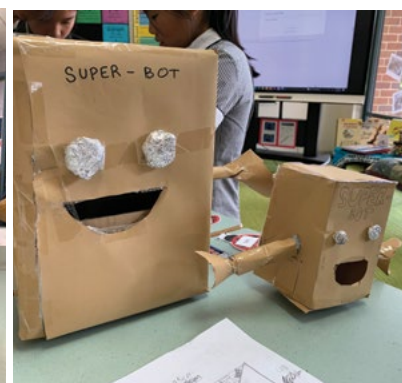
4L led the charge, documenting areas and types of rubbish found in the playground. Finding a high level of plastic and paper rubbish, as well as food scraps, they decided to become inventors – designing and creating their own machines to assist in rubbish and recycling collection and sorting. These designs incorporated skills of measurement, scale, 3D objects and their nets and

were used to act as a motivation for others, through an assembly item, to take better care of the environment where we work and play.

4O investigated the types of materials we use, particularly in our lunchboxes. They highlighted the prevalence of plastic, paper and foil and decided to design their own prototypes with reusable parts. These would be more versatile for holding a range of different foods. While this was happening, another group designed and made beeswax wraps as an environmentally sustainable way to keep food fresh. A third group then collected recycling bins from around the School and mulched the paper to make some recycled paper and gift tags of their own.

4G considered the flora and fauna around the School, deciding to make their own garden. This was designed to attract insects and to allow the girls to grow their own fruits, herbs and vegetables. They planted two gardens, purchased the equipment needed and created watering schedules to help maintain them.

Through completing these projects, the girls have not only developed mathematical skills in real life contexts, but also have been able to pave the way for modelling respect and consideration for the environment around us to other students.



Irresistible writing opportunities: crafting creative writing and nurturing poets in Year 4

Sarah Vincent, Year 4 Coordinator



In the realm of creative writing, igniting students' imagination is key. In Year 4 this term, we used the innovative technique of 'Talk for Writing' to guide our students towards creating vivid and evocative poems.

Talk for Writing is an engaging approach to the teaching of writing developed by English educational trainer Pie Corbett. This method is firmly rooted in research of how children learn most effectively. A distinctive hallmark of this approach is its emphasis on children internalising the essential language structures required for writing by 'talking the text'. Students discuss and debate ideas, crafting a collective understanding of the poetic concepts they are about to explore. By encouraging students to express their thoughts aloud, they gain confidence, their ideas flow more freely and they form a strong emotional connection with their work.

Our process started with Year 4 girls being immersed in quality poetry. They discussed themes, literary devices and emotions associated with this literature. Their conversations acted as a springboard for their creativity and helped them understand and articulate their feelings, which are integral to creating poetry that resonates.

During Term 4, the students delved into the creative process, moulding their ideas into various poetic forms, such as abstract noun poems, metaphor poems and prepositional poems. Having already formulated the essence of their poem through discussion, the transition to writing was seamless.

In the final phase, our girls became an audience to their peers. They guided each other through a process of constructive feedback to edit and skilfully redraft their writing. This collaborative effort led to the production of high-quality work that filled them with pride.

In Year 4, we have discovered that adopting this approach has fostered a strong sense of belonging, inspiring our girls to explore their creativity and build their confidence. We are thrilled to be nurturing Abbotsleigh's next generation of passionate poets!



Year 5 Leadership Day

An exercise in collaboration and connectedness,
community and character building

Dani Salt, Year 5 Classroom Teacher

In a spirit of collaboration and learning, Year 5 students, alongside their peers from Loreto Normanhurst and Knox, engaged in a Leadership Day, dedicated to nurturing the leadership potential within young minds. Through a series of self-reflective and hands-on activities, our students embarked on a transformative journey that not only honed their leadership skills but also instilled in them the values of connectedness, community and character building.

The day began with students hearing invaluable insights from our experienced school leaders. The meaningful discussions revolved around the vital themes of connectedness and community, emphasising the significance of building strong, supportive networks. Insights gleaned from these conversations served as a foundation for the students' understanding of effective leadership.

Among the highlights of the day were the collaborative activities, designed to challenge students and encourage them to explore their leadership potential. Working with their peers from Loreto Normanhurst and Knox, the Year 5 girls delved into various exercises aimed at enhancing their skills. These activities provided a platform for self-reflection, fostering an environment where young minds could learn from one another and grow collectively.

Delving deeper into the realm of leadership, the young leaders investigated the teachings of Martin Seligman, a pioneer in the field of positive psychology. Exploring Seligman's 24-character strengths, which range from resilience to kindness, the students understood that these were not just theoretical concepts but practical

attributes to be embraced and adopted. By understanding these qualities, students were able to consider how they could shape their own leadership identities.

The importance of building resilient leaders was highlighted through challenging leadership scenarios. These scenarios required students to not only showcase their interpersonal abilities but also employ innovative problem-solving techniques. Witnessing their determination and creativity in overcoming challenges was testament to their growth as emerging leaders.

At the core of this event was the belief that leadership is not merely a position: it is a responsibility to nurture, support and inspire others. The students emerged from the day with enhanced leadership skills and a developed sense of empathy and understanding. They learnt the power of listening and the strength derived from collaboration.

As these young leaders continue to blossom, guided by the values instilled on this day, they represent a promising future where leadership is defined by compassion, wisdom and service.



Rising to the challenge

Year 6 embarks on an unforgettable kick-off

Brittany Carrington, Year 6 Coordinator

In the bright and early hours of the morning, Year 6 students eagerly gathered at the school gates. It was Adventure Day, and the start of Term 4 promised an unforgettable experience. The air was buzzing with excitement as the students set off for a day filled with thrills, camaraderie and a dash of friendly competition.

Adventure Day was designed to challenge students in novel environments, to coax them out of their comfort zones, and to encourage them to take risks. Among the towering trees and atop the imposing warp wall, a rainbow of house shirts could be seen. The sea of smiles was a reflection of the anticipation and enthusiasm that the students carried with them, ready to embrace every opportunity.

As the day unfolded, it became evident that Adventure Day wasn't just about physical challenges. It was a unique opportunity for the students to learn and grow in an alternative space, one that focused on developing their interpersonal skills. The cheers and supportive words that resonated through the air were heartwarming. Girls were not just conquering obstacles; they were conquering their inhibitions and fears, too.

The students exhibited remarkable strength, agility and flexibility as they climbed, balanced and swung their way from one obstacle to another. Each obstacle represented a different challenge, testing their physical abilities and resilience. It was clear that they embraced each challenge with unwavering determination.

Adventure Day was more than just an opportunity to test individual limits; it was a day that saw girls reconnecting with friends from different classes. Amidst the adventure, they embraced the chance to be in nature, breathing in the fresh air and appreciating the beauty that surrounded them.

As the day drew to a close, the sense of accomplishment and togetherness was palpable. It was a day that will not be forgotten, a shared experience that will be cherished by all who participated.



Miss G Gordon Everett: Modernising Abbotsleigh

Headmistress 1931-1954

Jen McLaren, Abbotsleigh Archivist

Continuing our series on Abbotsleigh's headmistresses, this profile sheds light on the School's fourth headmistress, Miss Gladys Gordon Everett. Appointed from a field of 20 applicants in 1930, Miss Everett led Abbotsleigh for 23 years. She never used 'Gladys' – personal letters were signed 'Gordon Everett', official documents 'G. Gordon Everett' and her 'gels' called her 'Ev' – but not to her face.

Born into a large family in New Zealand in 1888, Gordon was determined to pursue an academic career rather than parenthood. She attended Nelson College for Girls and Victoria University College, Wellington, graduating with a Master of Arts in 1916. She was at some point engaged to be married, but it seems that, like many women of her generation, her fiancé was lost in the First World War.

After the war, Gordon moved to Sydney and joined Presbyterian Ladies College, Pymble, as a foundation house mistress. When Mr Marden resigned as principal in 1919, Gordon was appointed PLC headmistress. Her spirit of adventure prevented her settling down though, and she soon resigned to travel and study in Europe. The PLC community was disappointed to lose a 'leader' with her 'strength of character, her dignity, her keen sense of justice, her far-seeing brain, and her quick judgment, as well as her wonderful power of teaching'.

On her travels, Gordon studied in France, then taught French in England and possibly in Italy and Germany. The Abbotsleigh Archives is fortunate to hold the original certificates she attained from the University of Grenoble and the Sorbonne.

Gordon returned to Sydney's north shore in December 1930 and was appointed to replace Miss Dorothea Poole, in the midst of what came to be known as the Great Depression. Her major achievement was to nurture the School through this difficult time: no mean feat as financial distress forced many schools to close. By 1939, however, Abbotsleigh was so popular that a waiting list was created and by the time Gordon retired in 1954, enrolments had more than doubled. To accommodate the growing student body, Gordon expanded the School's footprint through judicious purchases of houses and land

in 1933 and 1937, and she turned the first sod on a new classroom block in 1938. She lamented that a loan was needed for the building works – 'bricks, I am told, are expensive'. The state-of-the-art block opened in 1939 and still stands just inside the Senior School gates. Just 10 days before her retirement in 1954, Gordon was thrilled to open the new Junior School campus in Woonona Avenue.

The 1954 *Weaver* described Gordon as 'always courageous and eager to try innovations'. Among these were the House system (1931), the first Foundation Day (1933) and a Jubilee year for Abbotsleigh's 50th birthday. In leading these events, Gordon fostered a sense of community and laid down traditions the School follows to this day. One of her most popular innovations was the launch of a new uniform in 1936. She noted that the 'women members of the Council have felt for some time that our School Uniform was neither becoming nor suitable'. In contrast, Gordon was enthusiastic about the new green short-sleeved summer dress and winter tunic (worn with brown shoes, stockings and gloves), describing them as 'both pleasing and suitable. The hat, too, is one that will not lend itself to the vagaries of fashion and will always retain its original shape.'

As always with Gordon, strict instructions accompanied the new uniform. According to Miss Kathleen McCredie (Abbotsleigh's seventh headmistress and an



OUR HEADMISTRESS *A memory of Miss Everett*

We looked up to her,
We callow schoolgirls
Encased in bulky box pleats.
A lofty goddess of learning,
Blonde, smiling, high cheekbones
Ruddy in the brisk Wahoonga air.

She ruled with charm and acerbic wit.
Ever delighting in flowers,
Beautiful gardens, fine buildings,
The prose of Marcel Proust,
Art galleries of Russia.

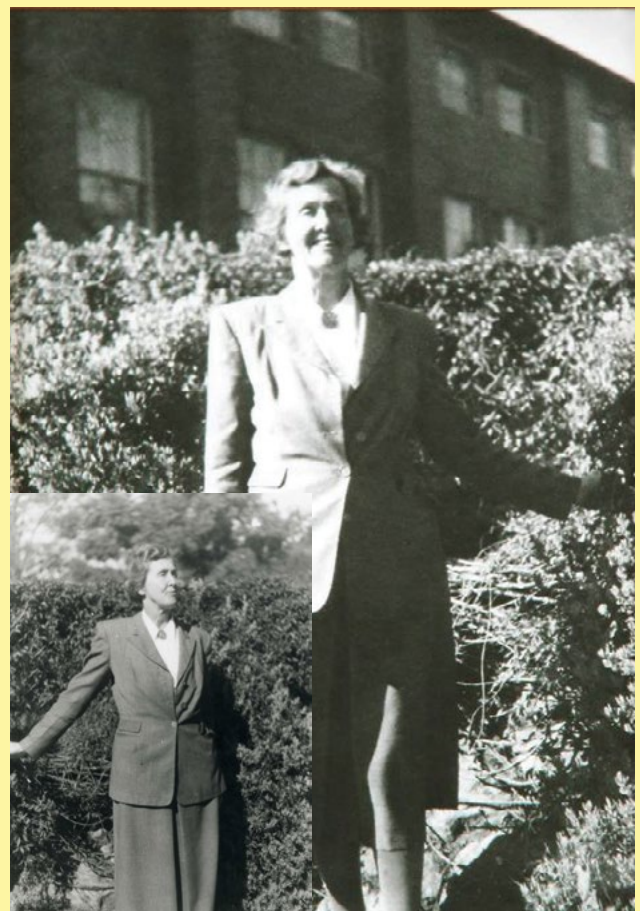
Contemtuously of danger, she travelled
Where angels fear to tread.
Sparred with archbishops –
Yet cared for her homesick 'gels'.
An Edwardian Athene,
She moved above us all.



Abbotsleigh Old Girl), 'We were given many homilies on what to wear etc and I can well remember her scathing remark that those who wore blazers over their shoulders were like third-rate film stars.'

After retirement Gordon lived in Wahroonga, maintained an interest in the Abbotsleigh community and kept in touch with many of her 'gels'. Her students recalled her as a striking woman, often vague and forgetful, rather eccentric, a terrible cook and a dreadful driver, but an excellent French teacher and inspiring headmistress. One former student remembered her as 'tall, spare, ramrod straight, pink cheeks, no lipstick, fair hair (well brushed), quick, confident step, her deceased fiancé's army cane tucked firmly under one arm'.

In 1960, Gordon was humbled to receive an MBE for her services to education. She travelled widely in her retirement and was adventurous to the last. She died in 1971, while touring Russia solo, at the age of 83.



Abbotsleigh House Choir

One of the School's most cherished traditions

Lynette Clarke, Head of Music

Abbotsleigh's House Choir competition is a cherished tradition, woven into our school's vibrant tapestry since its first inception as the 'Rosebery Cup' eight decades ago. The singing spectacle unfolds at the beginning of each year, serving as a catalyst for nurturing house unity, forging connections through different year groups, fostering teamwork and showcasing the musical talents of the students. The girls also thrive on the competition aspect and the energy on the day is always electric!

This event is a testament to the leadership prowess of our Year 12 students, who select the annual theme, arrange music, guide rehearsals and conduct their houses. The melody, harmonies and choralography are taught in just six short rehearsals, which is a remarkable challenge. According to our archivist, Dr Jennifer McLaren, 'Starting in 1959, the Rosebery Cup became the Inter-House Choir Competition. Gordon won in that year.' The year 1963 marked a particularly significant milestone when the competition relocated to the

newly constructed Assembly Hall, where it has remained the traditional competition venue, except in 2022 when it temporarily moved to the larger Sports Hall to adhere to Covid distancing requirements.

As the competition evolved over the years, a theme for each event was introduced, along with engaging skits and interactive activities between each house's presentation. The contest is masterfully hosted by the Head of Houses and Music Prefect. Each house is tasked with presenting two songs: a designated set-work hymn and a song of their own choice that aligns with the selected event theme. Memorable themes include 2017's 'Girl Power', 'ABBAtsleigh' in 2019, and last year's 'The Soundtrack to our Childhoods'. In 2023, the theme was 'Battle of the Bands' and included songs by Queen, The Script, Journey, and Backstreet Boys. This year's competition featured dazzling solo vocalists and edgy guitarists and drummers, complemented by rocking arrangements for orchestral instruments and even the inclusion of a Chinese guzheng.





Songs of praise

The Chapel Band is back, stronger than before, and singing loud and clear

Ben Hunter, Senior School Christian Studies Teacher

With Covid restrictions behind us, 2023 was a year to revitalise music in Senior School Chapel services. Our younger years lacked confidence and our repertoire was shrinking. Our organ sat silent as the Chapel underwent repairs and renovation, and the dozen students who served in Chapel Band were only able to provide accompaniment once a term. With our Chapel in regular use again, students are being reintroduced to the stirring experience of hymn-singing to the majestic sound of a baroque organ. In addition, we have significantly increased student involvement in chapel music, with our Chapel Band program now across five year-groups, with 74 students regularly rehearsing and sharing their musical gifts by leading the School in song from week to week.

In Term 3, a team from EMU Music ran a training day for our girls. It provided insights into the reasons Christians sing, instructed students on musical collaboration, encouraged songwriting and facilitated practical workshops. Our girls participated enthusiastically and have been inspired to share their God-given gifts with purpose and joy.

The initiative was received very well by staff and students. It takes courage to stand in front of your peers, inviting them to sing songs of praise, and it has been a great pleasure to witness our Chapel Band members approach the challenge with confidence, mutual support and prayer. Long-standing staff members have commented that the School is finding its singing voice again.



Exchange at Abbotsleigh 2023

Marg Selby
Careers Advisor and Exchange Coordinator

With the lifting of restrictions on international travel caused by Covid over the past few years, Abbotsleigh has been delighted to revive and extend its exchange program. We believe strongly in the value of international exchange because of the multiple opportunities it launches for the participants and because it provides additional openings for our girls to extend and promote the development of Abbotsleigh values.



Going on exchange takes courage and it helps to foster a spirit of adventure and enquiry when girls move to the other side of the world to live for about six weeks. Consequently, they develop new learning and living skills and their growth of independence and initiative is stimulated. In addition, exchange provides an opportunity to encounter other cultures, customs and traditions, experiences that can help shape a broader, more open-minded, respectful view of the world. Exchange fosters tolerance and resilience, as girls experience living in a new family, studying in an unfamiliar environment and learning to appreciate differences. Exchange can also help our girls develop their problem-solving skills and their ability to persevere when they need to manage their own affairs.

On the return part of the exchange, when our girls and their families host their exchange partners, they learn to act with compassion, maturity and integrity towards their exchange partner, especially if she is struggling. For those who do not go on exchange, many of the same opportunities are available when they interact with the students who visit Abbotsleigh.

In 2023, we resumed our exchanges with our long-term partners in Palmer Trinity, Miami, and Ridley College in Canada, with girls in Years 9 and 10, and our Year 8 mini-exchange with Nowra Anglican College. In addition, we commenced a series of new Year 9/10 exchanges with St Joseph's in Suffolk, UK; Collingwood School in Vancouver, Canada; Queen Margaret's School on Vancouver Island, Canada; and St George's College in Buenos Aires, Argentina. In 2024, we will be reviving our Year 9 boarder exchange to Moreton Hall in Shropshire, UK, and with Queenswood in Hertfordshire, UK. We also hope to resume our exchange with the Diocesan School for Girls in Grahamstown, South Africa. In addition, our language exchanges to France and Germany are back again and provide a wonderful opportunity for students to improve their fluency in their preferred language, before they commence their senior studies.



Gene cloning in the holidays

Senior School Science teacher Yael Payne highlights the wonderful opportunities afforded to students via the teacher-led Amgen Biotech Experience

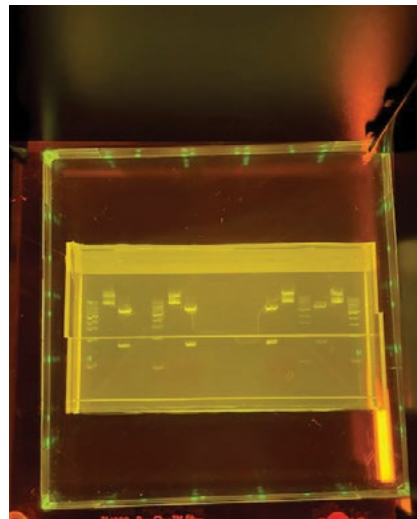
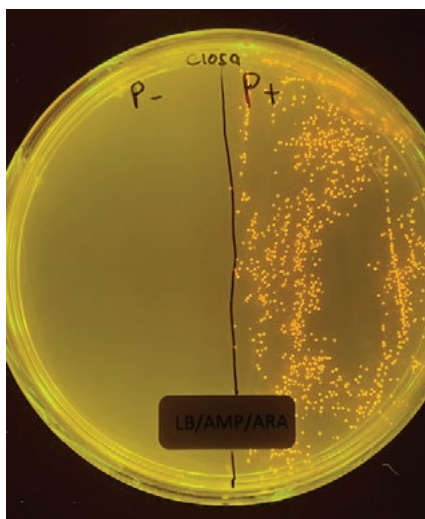
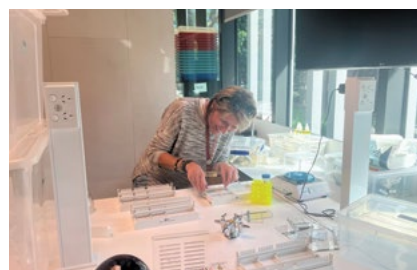
In the April school holidays, Year 12 Biology students participated in the Amgen Biotech Experience, which is a collaboration between leading global pharmaceutical company Amgen, the University of Sydney and schools. This ABE enabled girls to experience first-hand a full experimental protocol of cloning a gene and putting it into bacteria. Cloning genes is of great therapeutic benefit, for instance to make human insulin to treat diabetes. Prior to the development of this technology, insulin for therapeutic use was extracted from pigs and cows.

Although students learn the theory behind how to clone a gene as part of the Biology HSC syllabus, there is little opportunity for them to conduct the process in a high school laboratory as it involves the use of specialised equipment and reagents. Also, the biological waste generated is genetically modified so there are

also special regulations regarding the disposal of such waste.

The wonderful team at the University of Sydney made it easy for this teacher-led program to happen, preparing our kits as well as disposing of all our biological waste. The Biology teachers and Science prep staff spent several days sorting through the equipment, making gels, aliquoting reagents and keeping the competent cells alive! Such cells may be competent by being primed to take up plasmids but this is delicately balanced with their even more competent ability to die very easily.

Over two busy days, the girls made the bacteria *E. coli* fluoresce red.





How? By inserting the red fluorescent protein gene from a sea anemone into the bacterial cells. It was an excellent opportunity for the girls to undertake an authentic gene cloning protocol. They gained valuable experience in their working scientifically skills, a new appreciation for the thorough verification process in science, working with very tiny volumes, and the utmost respect for competent cells.

We felt very fortunate to be able to use our new state-of-the-art science labs to undertake these biotechnology

experiments. To have so many of our fantastic Biology students participate voluntarily, in collaboration with the Abbotsleigh staff and over their holidays, is a true reflection of their curiosity, dedication to learning and enthusiasm. A very big thank you to the ABE team and the dedicated Biology teachers and Science prep staff that made this happen.



Speaking in tongues



Languages Days are a chance for students to practise their language skills while having fun on campus, and for some, on excursions outside the School gates

Carole Helbert, Head of Languages

Learning another language gives students the opportunity to engage with the linguistic and cultural diversity of the world and its peoples. It fosters respect and understanding of other cultures and provides students with the chance to have fun and reflect on their own language, values and traditions, comparing them with those of another country or countries.

Languages Day, at the end of Term 3, gives language educators the chance to plan and organise a morning with activities we do not have time to do in a 'normal' teaching scenario.

Year 10 is a crucial year in terms of language learning. The teachers know that while some students will have decided to continue learning a language in Year 11, many others will not choose a language as one of their elective subjects. But above all, it gives us the opportunity to congratulate our language students for their four years of language learning at the Senior School and reward them with a very much anticipated lunch out at a Chinese, French or German restaurant or – for our Latin students – a lunch with a touch of Roman flavour!

Here's what some of our students had to say:

Year 8 Languages Day

China girls



The Chinese language incursion was filled with enjoyable treats and fun. We started off by watching a Chinese movie called *20 Once Again*, which was intriguing. To enhance the experience, we enjoyed a variety of food like Hi-Chew, jelly and lollipops, pancakes and a chrysanthemum drink. Afterwards, we played a quiz on Chinese culture and the winning group got Hello Panda. The incursion provided us with a greater appreciation for the language and its rich heritage.

Zihan Feng and Riya Farhan



Vive la France!

French students started off their Language Day with a game of 'French Simon Says', which was much harder it sounds. This was followed by a challenging yet fun game of trivia, where we worked with other students to put together everything we knew about France. We were lucky enough to get another insight into France's wonderful culture with the delicious chocolate croissants that we all enjoyed. However, I am pretty sure that everybody's favourite part of the day was the dancing and karaoke. We had an amazing time dancing to popular French songs and taking part in an overly competitive singing competition. Overall, Year 8 Languages Day was a wonderful time, where we could have fun yet learn a lot at the same time. Thank you so much to everybody who organised it. It was certainly a day to remember.

Dineli Jayasekara

Three French classes trickled into the gymnasium, not knowing what to expect. Our curiosity was satisfied and we started the day with a French-themed trivia quiz. After this, we all enjoyed a chocolate croissant or *un pain au chocolat* and some juice. Next, we played a game of Scattergories, known in French as *Le Baccalauréat*. Coming back from recess, we warmed up with five-minute disco dance. This was definitely a favourite! Then a fierce song battle commenced! With each of the classes competing against each other we sang our variations of 'Aux Champs-Élysées'. Overall, this experience was amazing and enabled us to immerse ourselves deeper in French culture and language. Thank you for organising this wonderful incursion for us.

Bethany Hall

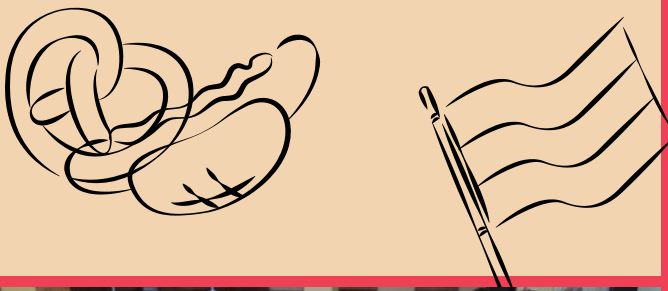




A taste of Germany

During our Language Day we immersed ourselves in many different elements of German culture. We started the day off with a traditional German breakfast (*lecker!*) of *Aufschnitt* (range of cold meats), *Brötchen* (bread rolls) and *Butterkäse* (butter cheese), as well as *Gummibärchen* (gummy bears). After a filling meal, we began an exciting scavenger hunt and deciphered clues to get the great prize of a chocolate bar. We then got in touch with our inner artist to paint German-themed tote bags, all of which were unique. To wrap up the day, we watched *Die Vorstadt Krokodile*, which we were all invested in. We were sad for the day to end but came away with lots of happy memories and a greater understanding of German culture.

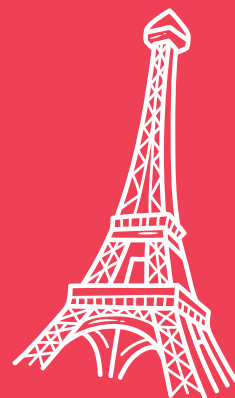
Anastasia Berenger and Nimue Davidson



Reliving the Roman Empire

The Year 8 Latin excursion that took place on Languages Day in June was a surprisingly fun and expectedly informative experience. It started with Roman trivia, in which we were quizzed on all aspects of culture, ranging from the first Roman emperor to mythological figures. We enjoyed modern adaptations of Roman cuisine, including Turkish bread, dips, crackers and pikelets. By late morning, we had travelled to Sydney Uni, the home of the Chau Chak Wing Museum that we were to visit. After exploring the campus architecture, we were able to touch ancient artefacts, some recovered from the ruins of Pompeii and others dating back to the rule of the Roman Empire. Such artefacts included a shabti (a figurine placed in Egyptian tombs to serve the deceased in the afterlife); we analysed these relics to gain understanding of their purpose and origin. Afterwards, a tour guide led us through the exhibitions, educating us on Roman emperors and the preservation of Egyptian artefacts in the museum. We explored the vast array of sculptures, Latin engravings and tombs. It was an experience that all Latin students will remember through our future years studying the language.

Olivia Lin and Olivia Robertson



Year 9 Languages Day

Chinese charades

Chinese students immersed themselves in Chinese food, language and culture. To start the day, we indulged in Chinese pancakes and lemon tea. Then we watched *20 Once Again*, a Chinese film that discusses the traditions and importance of family in China, as well as the notion of second chances. During the film, we ate a variety of Chinese snacks. Afterwards, we did a close study, answering questions about the film in small groups. Then, we played charades, using vocabulary that we have learnt this year. To conclude, we played a fun Blooket, testing our knowledge of the Ni Hao 2 textbook. Languages Day was an incredibly fun experience, which gave us a new understanding of Chinese culture.

Cate Atkinson and Tiarna Pang

German Jeopardy

German students immersed themselves in many German cultural experiences and had lots of fun doing so. We began with a traditional German breakfast, consisting of bread, cheese, and sausages, while listening to German music. After that, we played German Jeopardy and then embarked on a scavenger hunt which took us all over the campus; all the hints were written in German. Then we played Christmas music as we decorated gingerbread houses. We finished the day by cooking and eating waffles, as well as German lollies. Overall, the day was extremely enjoyable and educational; the German students had an incredible experience.

Charlotte Whyburn

Bonjour! Nous parlons français

We began with an authentic French breakfast, followed by French board games, rotating from one game to the other. Depending on the game, we played practising our speaking and listening skills, asking each other questions in French, and answering in French, or testing our knowledge of French grammar, vocabulary or cultural knowledge. For the next activity, we had to imagine we worked for a publishing company and proofread and correct a text written in English but with errors that a French-speaker or a Google translator would make when translating from French to English. We had to find the errors, correct them and explain why a French-speaking person would make this type of error. We finished the morning watching an engaging French movie that gave us more insight into the diverse cultures of different regions within France, with a focus on the daily routines and habits of people living in the north and south of the country. Overall, it was a day filled with exciting activities and learning opportunities, making it enjoyable and memorable. Thank you so much for organising the French Language Day! It was very fun.

Jessica Liu

Building on our Latin

During our Language Day we explored different architecture and its symbolism regarding Roman life. We learnt that architecture was a way for Roman people to demonstrate their power, authority and to display wealth and art. VR headsets allowed us to share our research on important Roman landmarks. Afterwards, we enjoyed watching *Spartacus* and being spoilt by the generosity of Dr McVeigh, who gave us pizza, garlic bread and mugs decorated with the Colosseum! Year 9 Latin thoroughly enjoyed Languages Day as we deepened our understanding of Roman culture and simultaneously had lots of fun!

Laura Jones, Vanessa Ton, Helen Xu and Shirley Zhang



Year 10 Languages Day

From Wahroonga to Beijing

The Year 10 Chinese excursion was one of the most enjoyable, educational experiences I've ever had. After taking the train to Town Hall, we learnt of China's gorgeous scenery and beautiful culture at the Chinese Cultural Centre and investigated Chinese Zodiacs at the Friendship Garden. The collective favourite stop of the day was definitely Beijing Impression, a North Chinese restaurant where we tried many delicious dishes including fried rice, sweet and sour fish, and Peking duck. There were so many wonderful memories and friendships created on this excursion, especially while taking creative photos in the gardens. We are so grateful to have this incredible opportunity to learn more about Chinese culture.

Ariana Sim

Une journée inoubliable!

At the end of Term 3, we enjoyed a fun day experiencing French culture. We started the day enjoying a classic French breakfast with *pain au chocolat*, followed by a photo session of us posing in front of posters depicting pictures of famous monuments in Paris.

We then watched *Les Intouchables*, a French film about a wealthy quadriplegic meeting an unlikely friend. The movie showed us another side of French culture; we discovered social issues that we rarely associate with the more usually depicted 'glamorous' France. Afterwards, we all received a certificate for our completion of four years of French at the Senior School and then took the train into the city, where we had a taste of authentic French cuisine at Le petit escargot. *Quelle journée inoubliable!*

Evelyn Liu and Jessica Li

Flavours of Germany

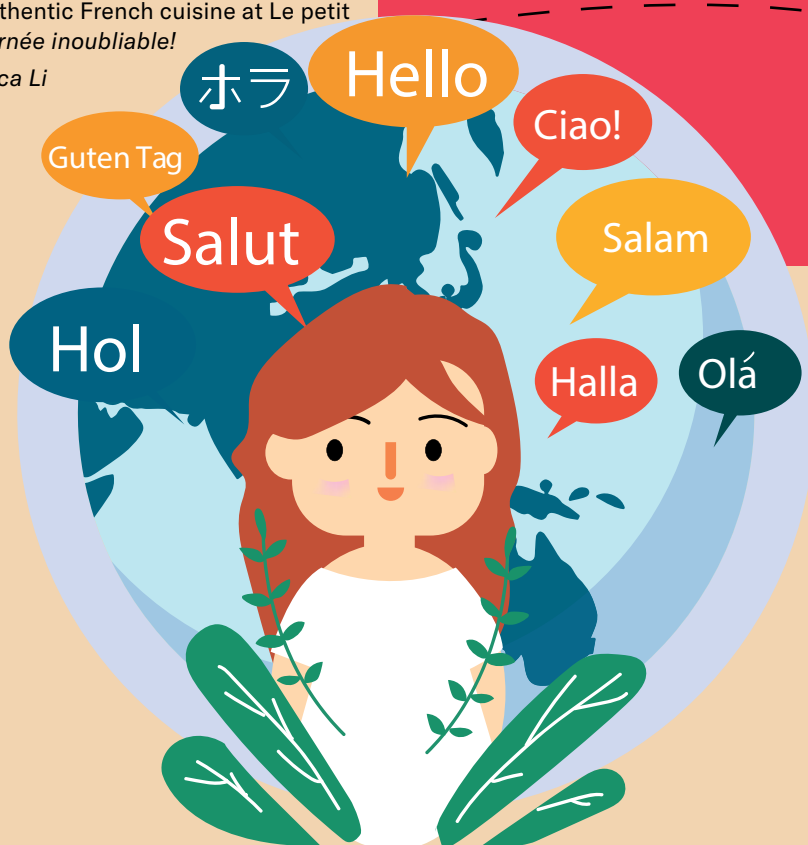
The Year 10 German Languages Day was an exciting and immersive experience. Firstly, we ate popcorn and watched *Good Bye, Lenin*, a film about the history of reunification of East and West Germany. It was very interesting and gave us further insight and understanding of the history of Germany. Then, we caught the train to The Bavarian in Chatswood. The food was delicious, with authentic German dishes like schnitzel, pretzels and *käsespätzle*. The restaurant had a great atmosphere, and there was even a table tennis table that our entire class had lots of fun playing at! Overall, this day was a great experience of German culture and history, and we were so lucky that Frau Muehlenbernd organised it for us!

Cecilia Lung

Murder mystery in ancient Rome

Year 10 Latin students participated in a thrilling Roman murder mystery dinner party. We were divided into groups and assigned a character. With new information provided to groups every round from booklets and through discussions with other teams, we had to piece together the puzzle to solve the murder of a famous Roman poet. Each team worked collaboratively to unravel the clues and announce their accusations and theories before the unveiling of the killer's identity. The delicious food, the costumes and the conversations added to the fun day, of mystery and suspicion, that none of us are sure to forget.

Victoria Marsh



Time and place

Kim Allan
Senior School Mathematics Teacher



Year 10 students studying the Mathematics 5.2 course have recently been studying data collection and analysis. Data is about more than just numbers. Data can be about language, culture, history – especially family relationships – and climate, spending, housing and stock markets and so on. The way we represent, analyse and communicate data can be ethical or biased depending on the purpose of the person or organisation collecting and using the data.

Throughout the study of this unit, students learnt about Indigenous heritage and culture. The format of the unit was based on the **8 ways learning framework**, which incorporates the knowledge of Baakindji, Ngaympaa, Yuwaalaraay, Gamilaraay, Wiradjuri, Wangkumarra and other nations from country in Western New South Wales.

Traditionally, yarns, or conversations, have been used by First Nations peoples to create and transmit knowledge. Students sat in a 'yarning circle' at the start of several lessons. In the first lesson, they shared information about themselves including favourite family stories, languages other than English spoken at home, and their cultural backgrounds. This followed an acknowledgement of country recognising the education provided by elders past and present of the Ku-ring-gai and Gadigal people.

The students discovered they came from a diverse range of cultures, including Kamilaroi. They enjoyed hearing amusing family stories and anecdotes including the contributions of Pearl Gibbs, a well-known First Nations activist related to our Kamilaroi student. In this way, they gained a deeper



insight and understanding of Indigenous history and one another.

We can learn much about data when it is presented in visual ways and this can be an excellent method for communicating a lot of information. Students learnt many ways to represent data visually. They discovered a painting by a former Yalari student, also Kamilaroi, outside the Student Administration Office, representing her story. This was used as inspiration for the learning journey for the unit – a type of mind-map of the topic.

'Sand talk' is used by First Nations peoples as a visual means of conveying knowledge and involves drawing images on the ground. Students used Indigenous symbols to represent their data, part of their journey so far or something about their family.



They used their iPhones and spreadsheets to represent and analyse the average amount of screen time they used in a week and make comparisons with their peers. Some were surprised and have re-evaluated the amount of time they are on their screens, so they have a better balance in life.

Westerners think of time as linear. To First Nations people, time is non-linear. First Nations Scholar Dr Tyson Yunkaporta writes that calling it 'non-linear' merely describes the concept as 'what it is not, rather than what it is. We don't have a word for non-linear

in our languages because nobody would consider travelling, thinking or talking in a straight line in the first place.' (Yunkaporta, 2019, p.21).

This led to an investigation of some of the ways First Nations people think about time. They collect data about seasons, finding food and water, caring for the environment, relationships, ceremonies by looking at the sky. What happens is inter-related to place, or country, the sky and the water. Students learnt about the Emu in the Sky Dreaming story from two well-known Kamilaroi astrophysicists, Karlie Noon and Peter Swanton, and were also treated to a reading of Greg Driese's *Awesome Emu*. Dhinawan- the giant Emu constellation that stretches across the Milky Way band – shows First Nations people where to find food and water. By observing Dhinawan's position in the sky from season to season, they are able to deduce information about securing food sources at relevant times of the year. Karlie and Peter also explained ways in which western and Indigenous knowledge complement and inform each another.

Students investigated climactic changes over time by comparing data from their hometowns (boarders) and their location in Sydney. They were able to find time-series graphs of rainfall, humidity, snowfall, clear days, analyse

trends and make predictions. This was a highly engaging activity and they enjoyed discovering weather patterns both local and global.

To round out the unit, a First Nations visitor spoke to the students about their culture and heritage, the impact of colonisation and how it is still affecting Indigenous Australians today. She spoke of First Nations people who have made significant contributions to the community, such as Eddie Mabo, David Unaipon and Pearl Gibbs.

Students enjoyed sharing in the learning circles and after one of the lessons one was heard to say, 'that was THE BEST Maths lesson EVER!'

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Chemistry students find the top solutions

Abbotsleigh girls participated in the annual Nitration Competition and came back with impressive results

By Sudheera Nair and Luke Taylor, Senior School Science Teachers

Each year, the Royal Australian Chemical Institute (RACI), the professional body for chemists in Australia, runs the Australian National Chemical Analysis Competition. Open to high school students, it is commonly known as the Titration Competition. Titration is an important analytical technique used by chemists to determine the concentration of an unknown solution. It requires focus, a steady hand, patience and a good eye.

‘Chemistry is like a playground for the curious mind – there’s always something new to discover.’

The RACI titration competitions are designed to encourage those students who enjoy Chemistry, particularly its

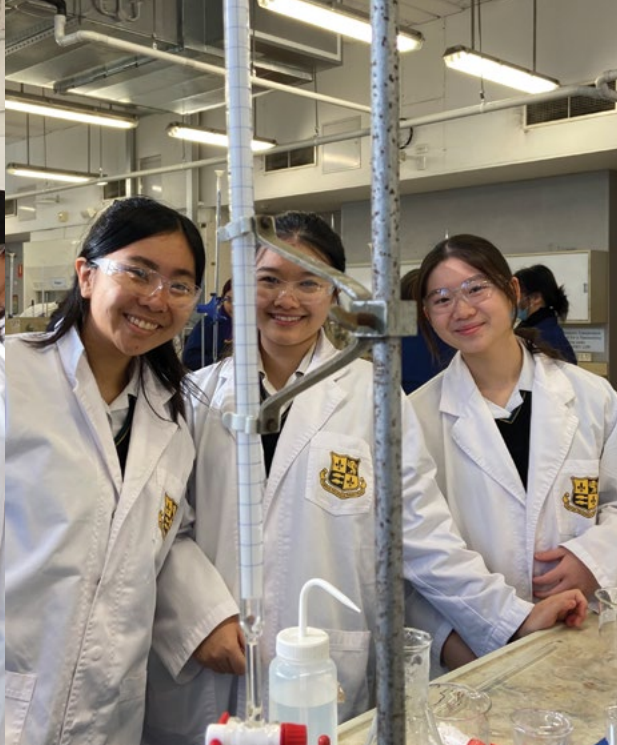
practical side, to develop their skills and to reward those who attain a high level of proficiency. Years 11 and 12 Chemistry students work in teams of three to titrate unknown solutions and determine their concentrations. The performance of a team is determined by its total score, which is a sum of the scores achieved by each of the team members. The closer a team member is to determining the correct concentration the lower the score. Thus, lower scores are better.

In June, eight teams from Abbotsleigh, comprising 24 Year 11 and 12 Chemistry students, participated in the 2023 competition that was held at the University of Sydney. The girls were given 90 minutes to determine unknown concentrations of a weak acid and were scored on their accuracy. The teams achieved some amazing results:

- Jasmine Foster (Year 12), Annie Ning (Year 12) and Zoe London (Year 11) obtained perfect scores, all receiving zeros.
- Two of the eight teams placed in the top three at the venue and in the top 50 schools in the state.
- Third place at the venue went to Annie Ning, Katherine Lau and Anisa Fok (all Year 12). First place went to Jasmine Foster, Eva Bates and Maya Khanna-Boyle (all Year 12). This team received a combined team score of just two – the best score reported at USYD for the past nine years and they also placed second overall in the state!

All our students had a fantastic day and represented Abbotsleigh very well, not only with their fine results, but with energy and grace. Subsequently, Eva Bates, Jasmin Foster and Maya Khanna-Boyle were invited to participate in the National Titration competition held at UNSW in September.





The National Titration Competition

For the national competition, the task was made more challenging. Within a timeframe of three hours, students had to first determine the concentration of a standard solution and then use the concentration to work out the concentration of an unknown sample.

Eva, Jasmin and Maya were awarded an Excellent Team certificate for their performance. They had the best team score for their analysis.

Abbotsleigh was awarded second place at the final National rankings, a remarkable achievement for the girls and a testament to their dedication, hard work and exceptional chemistry skills.

The School has been participating in the titration competitions for the past 10 years and the results from this year's competition have been the best so far. Next year's participants have big shoes to fill, but Abbotsleigh girls are amazing and we are aiming for the top prize in 2024.



Music and storytelling

The 2023 Celebration Concert explored the connections between music and narrative

Penina Stafford, Assistant Head of Music

The Celebration Concert, held in June each year, is a highlight of Abbotsleigh's musical calendar. It is a presentation of music-making by our Senior large ensembles and selected soloists, as well as our opportunity to celebrate the wonderful contributions of musicians in the Year 12 cohort.

This year's concert chose the theme 'A Celebration of Storytelling: The Musical World', reflecting the recent literary festival at Abbotsleigh, 'Celebration of Storytelling: Windows into Worlds'. Exploring the connections between music and narrative, our theme tied in neatly with the 2023 musical *Into the Woods*, Stephen Sondheim's intricate treatment of well-loved fairy tales. The Celebration Concert began and ended with music inspired by Shakespeare. It opened with two pieces from Prokofiev's music for *Romeo and Juliet*: 'Juliet as a Young Girl', performed by violist Samuela Keum; and 'Montagues and Capulets', performed by the orchestra. The rousing finish to the concert was the School Choir's performance of 'Ban Ban Caliban' by Dan Forrest, an exciting setting of a text from *The Tempest*.

In the same way that literature provides the means to explore and understand other worlds through the written word, music gives us the chance to experience other cultures, times and places. The audience was taken on an eclectic and engaging journey: from the Mexican dance rhythms of Marquez's 'Danzon No. 2', performed by the orchestra, to the 19th-century exoticism of the 'Flower Duet' from Delibes' *Lakme* (composed in France and set in India), performed by Year 12 singer Amanda Kelly and our singing teacher Miss Brereton. Symphonic Winds presented 'Letter from Sado', by Australian composer Jodie Blackshaw, inspired by the Japanese landscape and a haiku by Japanese poet Matsuo Basho.

We heard two Australian première performances: 'Sons of the Midnight Sun' by Timo Forsstrom, performed by Symphonic Winds; and 'Fantasia on Waltzing Matilda', composed by our composer-in-residence Harry Sdraulig and performed by Year 12 'cellist Emma Yap. With many budding composers across all year groups at Abbotsleigh, it is inspiring and instructive for our students to hear and perform exciting new works, particularly by Australian composers.

The evening concluded with the celebration and recognition of our Year 12 musicians, who have shown discipline in their individual musical studies over many

years and also dedication and commitment to school ensembles. Their example and leadership are greatly valued by music staff as well as by the younger girls who belong to the numerous musical ensembles at the school. Thirty-eight Year 12 students were presented with flowers and certificates by Mrs Krimmer.







The Class of 2023

Year 12 Welcome to the AOGU Lunch

In September, the Year 12 Common Room (known to many Old Girls as the 'Gymnasium' and then the 'Old Gym') was transformed for the Welcome to the AOGU Lunch for the Class of 2023. The girls enjoyed delicious wraps and sushi while AOGU President Sarah Franks (1991) spoke to them about being bold as they leave school, which aligned well with their Prefect Theme of 'Seize the Moment'. The girls competed in groups for prizes of AOGU merchandise and chocolates, answering Kahoot! questions about what it was like to be an Abbotsleigh student over the generations. They learnt what the room at the bottom of the stairs near the School Dining Room was used for in the 1960s (answer: the boarder's fruit room, where those girls whose parents paid extra could access their weekly bag of fruit) and how many Old Girls joined the AOGU in its first year of inception (answer: 145).

One of the most special parts of the lunch was when the girls received their Welcome gift bag, containing a camellia keyring, sweet treats and a handwritten card by one of the AOGU Committee. We endeavour to personalise these cards, trying to have them written by someone who was in their house or who was also a boarder. There was a lot of excitement reading the cards, and the girls passed them around to share with their friends.



Excited prize winners of the Old Girl Kahoot!



Some of the committee decorating the Common Room. From left: Carly Bull (Mansfield, 1991), Bronwyn Cooper (Ross-Jones, 1980), Sarah Franks (1991), Belinda Burton (Tjeuw, 1991) and Anthea Fagan (1989).

Sporting connections

Rhonda Kaan (Turner, 1993) talks with the 2023 Latimer Cup winner

A love for sport combined with Abbotsleigh's abundance of choices created a family legacy that came full circle during a special moment at last year's Abbotsleigh Speech Day. The Latimer Cup is awarded annually to the best all round sportsgirl in Year 12, the student who has contributed most to school sport during her last two years through performance, bearing and attitude. It was founded in 1959 by the parents of Struan Latimer (1958), a pupil from 1948-58 with a passion for sport. Last year, Struan was invited back to Abbotsleigh to present the cup to the 2023 recipient, her great-niece Abby Latimer (2023).

'It was just so beautiful,' Abby said. 'Struan's pretty amazing and we both have a really strong love for sport.'

Abby knew about the family connection to a sports cup but she thought it was a tennis trophy. 'Then I realised it was so suited to what I'm like, because I'm someone who loves playing every sport at a school level and socially. I love learning new skills. I didn't even really have to work towards it because I was going to play every sport Abbotsleigh had on offer anyway.'

Abby, who joined the School as a boarder in Year 9, thinks sport a great avenue to meet new people but admitted it had been challenging during Covid.

'In my first year there was no sport on offer, but as soon as Year 10 came around and sport was back... that's when Abbotsleigh really came alive! There was so much on offer, so many amazing facilities – you've just got to do everything!'

According to Abby, it was the morale at Abbotsleigh that made her sporting experience so special. 'The coaches put a lot of effort into making a really nice environment for everyone,' she said, remembering they value 'effort and participation rather than just higher skill'.



Abby's great aunt Struan, agrees. 'What I loved about my sport was that it wasn't terribly competitive – but it was always fun.'

Struan, who represented the school in cricket, hockey, basketball, athletics, swimming and her favourite, tennis, has continued to play sport, adding badminton, squash and golf to her sporting repertoire. 'My sport has always been a key thing: to meet people, travel and do things,' she said.

Abby, who is beginning a Bachelor of Commerce degree at Melbourne University, is excited at the prospect of college – and particularly excited that her new home is 'the AFL beating heart of Australia'.

'I'm going to play for Melbourne University women's team and maybe play in the VFL (Victorian Football League) or AFL in the future,' she said. 'I love AFL so I'm just going to see where it takes me!'

Perhaps Abby's name will soon be alongside other Latimer Cup recipients who have become noteworthy Australian sportswomen, including Australian Women's Cricketer Denise Anderson (Annetts, 1981) and three-time Winter Olympian bobsledder and former Australian national 400m hurdling champion Astrid Radjenovic (Loch-Wilkinson, 2000).



From the President of the APA

Abbotsleigh has been not only a school for our children, it has been a community for families, with like-minded people coming together to support our girls through their schooling journey. This has been my eighth year as a parent at Abbotsleigh and throughout my time I have enjoyed getting involved in various events organised by the School and the APA. It has been fulfilling to be able to give back and see the joy on the children's faces when they spot their parent or one they know.

When I was asked to take on this role, I saw it as another opportunity to give back to a community our girls spend so much time in. What I did not foresee was the wonderful camaraderie that comes with the APA. One of the things that stood out very early on was how incredibly welcoming and supportive the committee is. They made me feel like we had worked with each other for years.

One of the APA's goals is to foster a supportive and collaborative culture. We want to be aligned with the values of the School so that we communicate the same messages to our children. When a strong parent group is formed, a strong network grows. Our children benefit so much from this as we establish another community for them to grow up in.

The APA works very closely with the Development Department and continues to support the various seminars organised by our Director of Wellbeing, Liz Cannon. Each year we donate a sum that goes towards various scholarships. We run meetings each term and welcome new faces. We have enjoyed putting on our annual Twilight on the Plaza and Social Trivia Night. Much more goes on behind the scenes as we work with the APR to try and organise events through each year group.

As we bid 2023 goodbye, we look forward to all that will be in store for 2024. Thank you for all your time, suggestions, donations and efforts in making our community a great one.

If you would like more information about the APA, please email me at apapresident@abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au

Harinder Randhawa





Ten years of artistic achievement and endeavour

The Grace Cossington Smith Gallery has gone from strength to strength

Mary Faith, Grace Cossington Smith Gallery Director

The Grace Cossington Smith Gallery opened in October 2013 as a museum-quality exhibition and immersive learning space that would provide a welcoming public venue for viewing, discussing and deeply reflecting upon the art that is displayed.

The first exhibition, *Mentors – Inspirational Women*, was marked by a special Abbotsleigh assembly with Headmistress Judith Poole, the then Premier of NSW Barry O'Farrell, the Chairman of Council Rev Ian Millican, local Federal Member Paul Fletcher, Ku-ring-gai Mayor

foster a unique relationship with the School community, the global art community and the local community, creating partnerships that enrich the quality of lifelong learning experiences for all.

Meet the women behind the GCSG

Mary Faith commenced teaching in the Abbotsleigh Visual Arts Department in 1980, taking the position of Head of Department from 1993 to 2013 and again from 2018 to 2022. In 2011, Mary completed a Master of Museum Studies at Sydney University. Her vision in establishing the gallery at Abbotsleigh was to create an environment that utilises the power of art as a learning tool. Consequently, Mary (pictured below, left) has taken the roles of planner, administrator, registrar, curator, educator, and public relations manager, working collaboratively with Lisa Jones (below, right).

Lisa Jones is a practising artist. She commenced at

The GCS Gallery has passed a remarkable milestone - 10 years of artistic brilliance.

A decade of inspiring creativity. We are immensely grateful for your support and the incredible artists who have graced our walls with their work. Over the past 10 years, we have had the privilege of curating exhibitions, hosting talented artists, encouraging learning and fostering an vibrant artistic community.

As we look back on our journey, we are filled with gratitude and excitement for the future. We remain committed to promoting the arts, nurturing emerging talents, and sharing the beauty of human expression. Here's to the next decade of creativity, inspiration, and innovation!

Thank you for being a part of our artistic journey. Here's to many more years of art, culture, and inspiration.

From Mary Faith (Gallery Director) and Lisa Jones (Gallery Coordinator)



Cheryl Szatow and the gallery's director Mary Faith. The gallery was opened to the public on Saturday 12 October by Dr Gene Sherman AM. More than 350 guests attended to celebrate and to view the exhibition of works by Cressida Campbell, Elisabeth Cummings, Viola Dominello, Marian Drew, Cherry Hood, Lisa Jones, Janet Laurence, Julie Rrap, Sally Smart and Shona Wilson.

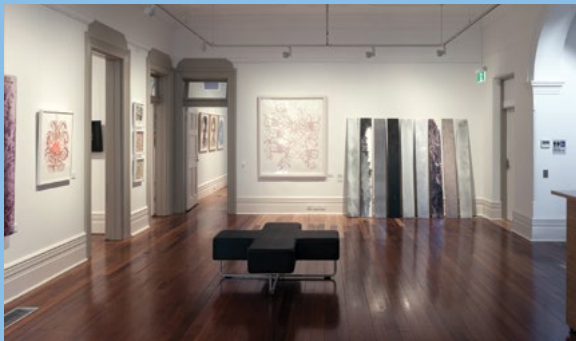
Abbotsleigh School Council and the Abbotsleigh Old Girls' Union supported the naming of the Grace Cossington Smith Gallery, one of the few buildings in the Senior School to be named in honour of an Old Girl.

This year, the gallery had another milestone to celebrate: 10 years of a decade of inspiring creativity during which time 92 exhibitions have been curated. The gallery demonstrates a sustained commitment by Abbotsleigh to

Abbotsleigh in 2008, working part time as an assistant in the Visual Arts department, and then as gallery coordinator in the GCS Gallery from 2014. Lisa studied at Goldsmiths, University of London and at Wimbledon School of Art before completing an MFA from the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne and an MVA at Sydney College of the Arts. She was co-director of an artist-run gallery in Chippendale, a sessional lecturer at the National

Art School and in 2021 was awarded a joint commission for a public art project in Orange.

In 2023, Lisa completed an artist residency at Bundanoon and at the British School in Rome and, in 2024, at the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris. Lisa has exhibited nationally and internationally in solo and collaborative shows in institutional spaces, artist-run initiatives and commercial galleries.



The first exhibition, *Mentors - Inspirational Women* commenced with a special Abbotsleigh assembly. From left: Headmistress Judith Poole, the Premier of NSW Barry O'Farrell, the Chairman of Council Rev Ian Millican, local Federal Member Paul Fletcher, Ku-ring-gai Mayor Cheryl Szatow and Mary Faith.



Grace Cossington Smith (1892-1984) *The Curve of the Bridge* (from Milsons Point), c1927-30, Abbotsleigh Collection.



Mrs Ann Mills, pictured with her brother Robert Smith, approved the naming of the gallery after her aunt, Grace Cossington Smith, an inspirational Abbotsleigh Old Girl.

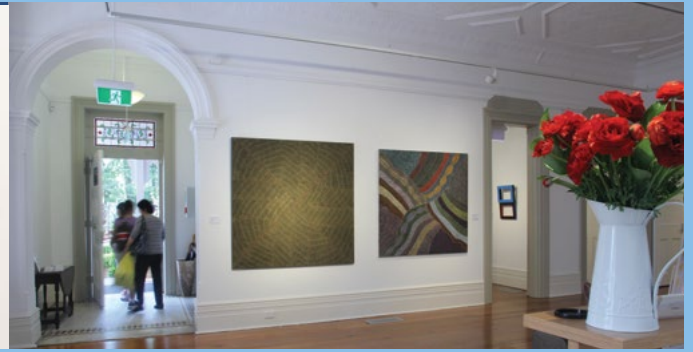


Mary Faith and Old Girl Margaret Tuckson at *Living with Art* in 2014, the first exhibition fully curated by gallery staff.



Drawn to Word was the first exhibition to coincide with the Literary Festival in 2014. From left: Richard Glover, Bronwyn Foxall, Gus Gordon and Julie Reynolds.

The Grace Cossington Smith Art Award, a national award inviting artists to respond to the theme of making connections, commenced in 2014. It was an honour that the current Head Curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Rachel Kent, agreed to judge the winner of the inaugural award.



Students in the gallery



2015 artist in residence Stephen Mushin posing questions about invention, sustainability and the future.



Photography class responding to works in *Constructed Worlds*, 2015.



Music soiree 2017 at *Seeing Science*.



Landscape as Knowledge, 2017, the collection of Geoffrey Hassall.



ART NORTH, 2021, HSC works from schools in Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai.



Young Curators from Abbotsleigh and Hornsby Girls High School with artist Alan Jones in 2023.

Parent and Old Girl events



APA Book launch with Tom and Meg Keneally, at *ART NORTH* 2019.

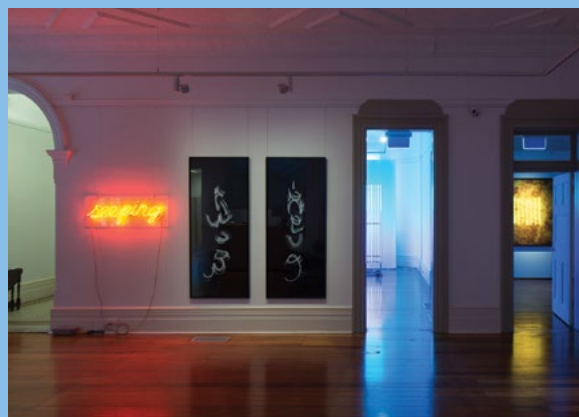


Old Girls Card Day at *The Hawkesbury*, 2019.



Bach in the Dark 2023 performance from Old Girls Rachel Scott and Maggie MacKellar at *Transformations*, 2023.

Ten years of curating exhibitions and connecting with artists



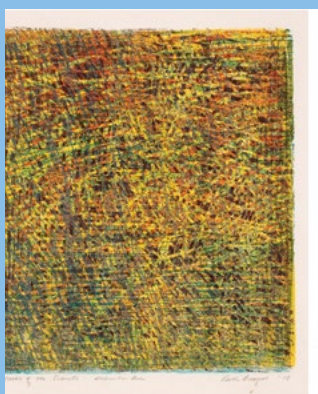
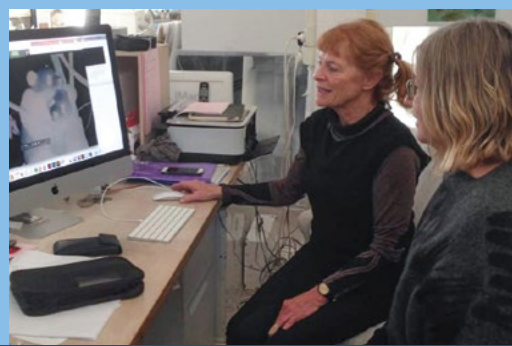
The Gallery staff curated exhibitions to connect and build Abbotsleigh events and engage content with other subjects. Above left: *Incandescence* in 2016 coinciding with GLOW Festival. Above right: *Cut Fold Shape* in 2017. Below left: 2016 *Creativity in Wartime*; below centre: former Headmistress Judith Poole and Federal Minister Paul Fletcher; Below right: *Seeing Science*, 2017.



Art works by Mona Ryder in *Connecting Thread* 2019.



Mary Faith and Lisa Jones meeting with artists to plan exhibitions.



Local artist Ruth Burgess donated a work after her exhibition *Music of the Planets* in 2020.



Artist Stephen Hall holding a painting workshop in 2015.

Grace Cossington Smith Gallery 2024 exhibition calendar

Grace Cossington Smith Art Award Exhibition of finalists	27 January to 24 February
ART NORTH HSC 2023 Visual Arts from schools in Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai	2-23 March
Landscape, Existence Inaugural exhibition of artist Julien Playoust	4-27 April
Process and Practice – A Sculptor's Eye Insight to the art of contemporary sculpture from Les Sculptures Refusées	3-25 May
Print Exchange Collaboration between Abbotsleigh and Knox Grammar School students and artists, showcasing works from Cicada Press	30 May to 12 June
Artists from Ku-ring-gai and Hornsby Local creatives in two, two-week exhibitions	26 June to 13 July 18 July to 3 August
Young Curators Young Curators and 3:33 Art Projects with artist Oliver Watts	8-22 August
HSC 2023 Showcase Abbotsleigh Year 12 Visual Arts	27-31 August
Small Matters The Australian Society of Miniature Art draws the viewer into their techniques	5-28 September
Sense of Colour The art and inspiration of Sioux Garside and Rachel Scott	5 October to 2 November
Encounter Artists expand ideas of relationships across cultures and generations	8 November to 7 December

Dates subject to change

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

Call-outs for 2025

• 2025 EXHIBITIONS

Proposals open 2 April 2024

The Grace Cossington Smith Gallery seeks proposals for solo and group exhibitions for 2025. With a focus on contemporary art practices, submissions from emerging and established artists and curators are invited.

Proposals close Saturday 17 August 2024.

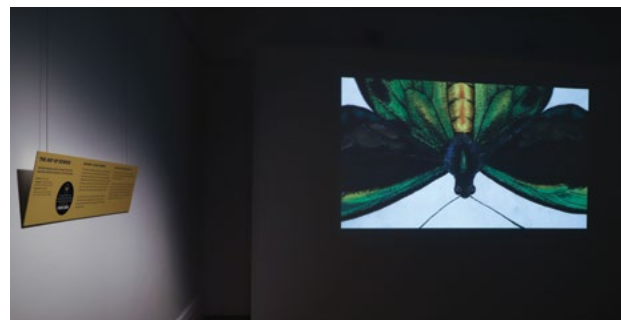
• LOCAL ARTISTS from Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai Expressions of interest open 2 May 2024

Expressions of interest are invited from local creatives to exhibit in the Grace Cossington Smith Gallery. This is an exciting opportunity for six artists to participate in one of two two-week exhibitions in one of the exhibition spaces in 2025.

Expressions of interest close Monday 2 September 2024.

The Grace Cossington Smith Gallery is committed to serving the public through free admission and a dynamic exhibition program.

The Grace Cossington Smith Gallery is a not-for-profit program run by Abbotsleigh, an Anglican Pre K-12 Day and Boarding School for Girls.



When trash becomes treasure

The enduring influence of Averil Condren (1944-2023), who was Abbotsleigh's Archivist from 1986 to 2001

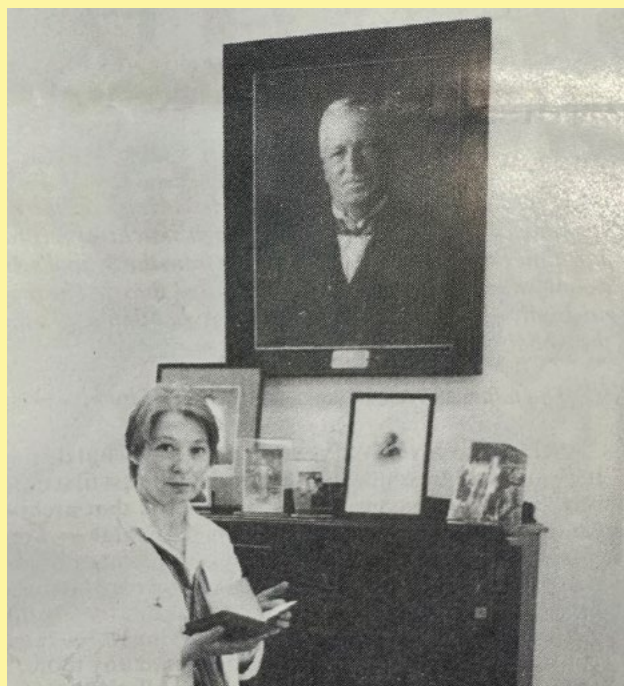
‘Your trash could be my treasure.’ Thanks to Abbotsleigh's first archivist Averil Condren, the Thurles Thomas Archives contains an extensive rare books collection, a well-documented record of the School's earliest students and a superb cataloguing scheme. According to the 2001 *Weaver* valet, Averil was ‘unflappable under stress, quick to assess a problem and find the answer’.

Averil was born in England and grew up in Africa. She and Conal married in 1967 in Harare, Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). Averil was an avid student and scholar. Before emigrating to Australia, she completed a BA (Hons) and post-graduate Certificate in Education at the University College of Rhodesia (London University) and taught English in Rhodesia and London. In Australia, she completed a Master of Arts (Hons) (her thesis was on the works of JRR Tolkien); a post-graduate Certificate in Information Management (Archives Administration); and a further Certificate of Records Management for Business Units and Small Organisations. Averil worked as a research assistant to humanities academics at the University of New South Wales and published in her own right on women's history and across the field of archiving.

While working at Abbotsleigh, Averil also established the school archives at St Catherine's School. She worked across both schools for several years, leaving St Catherine's in 1996 and Abbotsleigh in 2001. She volunteered for years afterwards at St Catherine's. Her successor there, Evangeline Galettis OAM, describes Averil as kind, intelligent, ‘an amazing archivist and an incredible lady’.

Averil was deeply involved in the production of *The Lily and the Lion: A History of Abbotsleigh* by Susan Emilsen, and in the development of the ‘new’ uniform in 2000. She edited the *Weaver*, co-ordinated school photographs, and developed strong relationships across the Abbotsleigh community from the executive and the Council to Old Girls, staff and students.

Beyond Abbotsleigh, Averil played a leading role in the Australian Society of Archivists and its School Archives Group. She volunteered in British archives for many years, including at Girton College Cambridge and in the Churchill Archives. Many people in the archives world in Australia and beyond have been influenced by her work. Averil is survived by her husband Emeritus Professor Conal Condren, their two daughters and grandchildren.



A triumph:

Abbotsleigh Foundation's 2023 Sports Lunch raises more than \$200,000



On 11 August, the Abbotsleigh community once again showcased its incredible generosity. The 2023 Foundation Sports Lunch, held against the stunning backdrop of the Sydney skyline at Dalton House, was a spectacular fundraising event, which featured a blend of fine dining, laughter and spirited auctions – and it garnered an impressive total of \$206,111 for Foundation Scholarships, including support for Yalari Scholars.

Guided by the engaging Australian and international journalist Geraldine Nordfeldt (AOG 2003), the event brought attendees together in the spirit of giving. The day's highlights included a silent and live auction, with charismatic auctioneer Duncan Schieb leading the charge. Every auction item, generously donated by the Abbotsleigh community, including past and present parents, Old Girls,

and contributions from the Wahroonga Village, added to the success of the fundraiser.

The Women in Sports Panel was hosted by parent and Foundation Board Member Joydeep Hor, who interviewed our inspiring guest speakers, including Allie Smith, national Netball Player for the NSW Swifts; Sera Naiqama, Rugby Union player for the Wallaroos and NSW Waratahs;



and Kiana Elliot (AOG 2014), who proudly represented Australia in Weightlifting at the 2022 Olympics.

We heard from one of our Yalari Scholars and Yalari Captain, Ava Seaton (Year 12, 2023), who relayed what it meant for her personally to receive a life changing Scholarship to Abbotsleigh. Her quote beautifully encapsulates the emotion of receiving a scholarship and shows how the simple act of giving creates opportunities that are life changing:

'I have been a part of the Yalari scholarship program for almost six years now and have loved every step of the way; the fact that I have been given this opportunity could not make me more grateful. I would like to acknowledge how this value of education in a less fortunate Indigenous child's life can impact the many future generations. I have never been more grateful for anything than having the opportunity to heighten my education through Abbotsleigh and this scholarship opportunity. I have no idea where I would be without it. I have been given so many opportunities that I would have never have even thought

about without Yalari and Abbotsleigh's contribution to my growth as a young adult.'

The 2023 Foundation Sports Lunch was not just an event; it was a celebration of community spirit and a resounding success in support of education and opportunity. As Headmistress Megan Krimmer, summarised:

'Your generosity means that we can continue to support young women, including Indigenous young women, whose only means of attaining an Abbotsleigh education is through our Foundation scholarship programs. I could not be more grateful, and I know that the recipients of the wonderful scholarships treasure your generosity very much indeed. These inspirational young women will most definitely continue to benefit from, and be grateful for, what you have done for them for the rest of their lives.'

We look forward to our next fundraising event in 2024. More information to come, we hope to see you there.



Save the date



Sports Lunch 2024 • Friday 16 August



Save the date — Abbotsleigh Community Events

Dubbo
Saturday 11 May

Wagga Wagga
Saturday 22 June

Tamworth
Saturday 27 July

In conjunction with the Boarding Schools Expos, Abbotsleigh will be hosting three community events in NSW regional towns. We welcome anyone from our community in the district to join us: parents – past, present and future, and Old Girls. It will be a wonderful opportunity to get together with the Headmistress and other Abbotsleigh staff members. We look forward to seeing you there.

2023 HSC Highlights

3 of the 12 girls in NSW who achieved the Top ATAR of **99.95** are Abbotsleigh Girls



Ranked 10th
in the state



21 students with ATAR of 99 or above

65%
of students received an ATAR of **90 or above**

6 students on the Top Achievers List



Median ATAR 93.5
NSW median 71.05



34 students on the All Round Achievers list



ABBOTSLEIGH

AOGU News

46,935
people
reached



Abbotsleigh
15 November 2023

ENCORE is a program of outstanding performances and compositions by students from the HSC Music examinations.

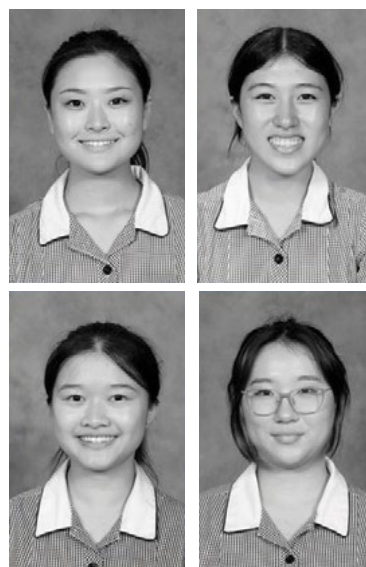
This year Abbotsleigh's history of teaching and nurturing exemplary musicians has continued, with several nominations for ENCORE.

Raina, Vera, Amanda and Josephine have been nominated for Music 1, with Samuela, Kotoko, Stephanie, Enya and Emma receiving nominations for Music 2 and Extension. Congratulations, girls!

Nominations in Music 1



Nominations in Music 2 and Extension



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A gift that transforms lives

Recipients of the Kathleen McCredie Scholarship speak about the life-changing opportunities of an Abbotsleigh education



The life-changing benefits of an Abbotsleigh education were on full display when three Kathleen McCredie Scholarship recipients recently returned in celebration of the School's annual Giving Day. All three young women said they could not be more grateful to generous donors for the gift of their Abbotsleigh education and the opportunities it has given them.

Cassandra Durnan (2013) said her scholarship had transformed her life as there were so many opportunities she would not have had back in her hometown of Wagga. 'The school was incredible,' Cassandra said. 'To any future donors, I think knowing that you are giving someone that opportunity is pretty amazing... it is life changing!'

Believing a scholarship was one of the most wonderful gifts someone can receive, Tallulah Hagen (2022) agreed. 'The donations are really what make it and they often

create this domino effect, so one donation can really benefit someone who will want to give back. I definitely feel that myself.'

Inaugural Kathleen McCredie scholar Maryanne Gold (2007) said she had always wanted to come to Abbotsleigh but without the scholarship she would not have been able to attend.

'No matter how small or large your contribution is, you are changing lives,' Maryanne said. 'Your contribution is the start of a chain reaction.'

Since 2005, the Kathleen McCredie Scholarship has provided eight girls the opportunity to have an Abbotsleigh education. In partnership with Yalari, the School also provides 13 Indigenous scholarships every year.

Year 10 student Myffanwy said she would never have had the same opportunities without her scholarship.

'They really do help a lot and they really do change people's worlds and lives,' Myffanwy said. 'It's not just your own life that has been changed; it's also your family's, your community's... everything changes!'

Speaking with authority on the benefits of an Abbotsleigh education comes easily to Miss Kathleen McCredie AM. As a pupil, past headmistress, AOGU Emeritus Life Member, donor and with family connections spanning numerous decades, Miss McCredie's experience covers almost every possible perspective. 'I have been very involved with Abbotsleigh in many ways for much of my life,' she said. 'It's a great school.'

A student here from 1940-1945, next year will mark 80 years since Miss McCredie completed her leaving certificate. At just 16 years however, like many other girls her age, she repeated her final VI Upper (Year 12 equivalent) before commencing a Bachelor of Arts and Diploma of Social Studies at the University of Sydney. 'I feel I couldn't have gone to a better school than Abbotsleigh,' Miss McCredie said. 'All of us who go there have tremendous opportunities opened to us.'

In 1970, she was the first (and, so far, only) Abbotsleigh Old Girl to return as headmistress. While she saw the school as always having had a good academic rating, history shows this wasn't enough for her. As headmistress, Miss McCredie saw school as also being all those intangibles – the search after truth, the encouragement to think, to use initiative, to develop responsible attitudes, to serve others, to discipline ourselves, to have fun, to be happy, to be enthusiastic for work, and all those activities that help girls develop spiritually, mentally, physically and socially. Her philosophy of educating 'the whole girl' closely followed that of Abbotsleigh's first headmistress, Miss Marian Clarke, and it continues today. In 1984, Miss McCredie's achievements were recognised when she was made a Member of the Order of Australia for her service to education, but it is her students who provide the true testament, often describing her as a 'well-loved headmistress' who was an 'inspiring', 'brilliant' and 'visionary' educator. 'I remember Kath telling us that we could be whatever we wanted (and worked hard) to be,' one Old Girl commented recently on the School's social media.

Miss McCredie acknowledges there has been significant change in the education of girls and women's roles in society during her lifetime. 'I think the girls' schools have made a big impact in that direction,' she said. 'We're all individuals and we all deserve the best we can get in terms of education and other things. It's very important.'

It is her continuing hope to give more girls opportunities through education that makes her so passionate about supporting the School's scholarship and award programs through her own personal donations and by leaving a gift in her will. 'I felt very honoured when the Kathleen McCredie Scholarship was initiated by a generous gift from the AOGU many years ago,' she said, adding it was important to her that the scholarship be means-tested.

'I'm very happy to help youngsters who perhaps wouldn't otherwise have the opportunity to go to a school like Abbotsleigh.'

Of girls fortunate to have had an Abbotsleigh education, Miss McCredie said, 'I hope that they want to help other girls to have the same opportunity they've had.'

The Marian Clarke Society is an initiative of the Abbotsleigh Foundation that acknowledges and celebrates, during their lifetime, the generosity of those who have notified the School that they are leaving a gift in their will to Abbotsleigh. For more information on gifts in wills, please contact Alex Lightfoot, Director of Development and Community Relations, on 9473 7737.

Around Abbotsleigh



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

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



It is always opportune to reflect as one year closes and the next one opens to every possibility. And what better way to reflect, than to use feedback from the first AOGU Member Survey conducted in more than seven years. We were delighted to receive representative responses from 530 Old Girls across

all decades, and particularly pleased that 9% of responses were from our most recent leavers. There were many parts to the survey, but three points really stood out.

From the perspective of Old Girls, Abbotsleigh's core traditions are rooted in the strengths and possibilities of women and a strong sense of social conscience. The top five traditions are to:

- empower young women to be able to do anything
- champion equality for women and girls
- educate the whole girl
- respect and include everyone; and
- instil a sense of social responsibility and service.

What is super interesting about the full results (see Figure 1) is that while Abbotsleigh may externally be seen to be a particularly academic school, that is not what is prized most by her students. Instead, it is the championing of girls, women and those less fortunate, and backing that up with service. This is certainly the 'gold' in Abbotsleigh's Black and Gold!

This is reinforced by the top values held by Old Girls, which are:

1. Integrity
2. Community
3. Respect
4. Inclusion

These four were deemed to be core values for more than 95% of our respondents; and ranked in the three most important values for more than 50%. This is hardly surprising given the high degree of social awareness and justice in an Abbotsleigh education.

The AOGU will certainly endeavour to maintain and hand on these core traditions and be guided by your top values in all we do, including in how we advocate with respect and inclusiveness on issues of importance within our Abbotsleigh community.

The core roles that you expect from the AOGU are:

- organising reunions,
- assisting Old Girls to stay connected,
- organising events; and
- encouraging connection to Abbotsleigh.

We have therefore been thinking how we can encourage a greater connection across year groups, such as through networking, as well as to draw Old Girls back to campus across the year. So please watch this space in 2024!

Thank you to the many Old Girls who completed the survey. In recognition of your time, we donated \$3,300 to the School's tax deductible funds in accordance with your nominations: 48% towards the Yalari Scholarship Fund, 42% to the Kathleen McCredie Award Fund and 10% to the

Building Fund. We were particularly delighted to see your traditions and values play out in action, to assist those who otherwise would not be able to benefit from an Abbotsleigh education. Wishing you all best as we close 2023 and venture into 2024.

*Sarah Franks (1991)
Honorary President
AOGU*

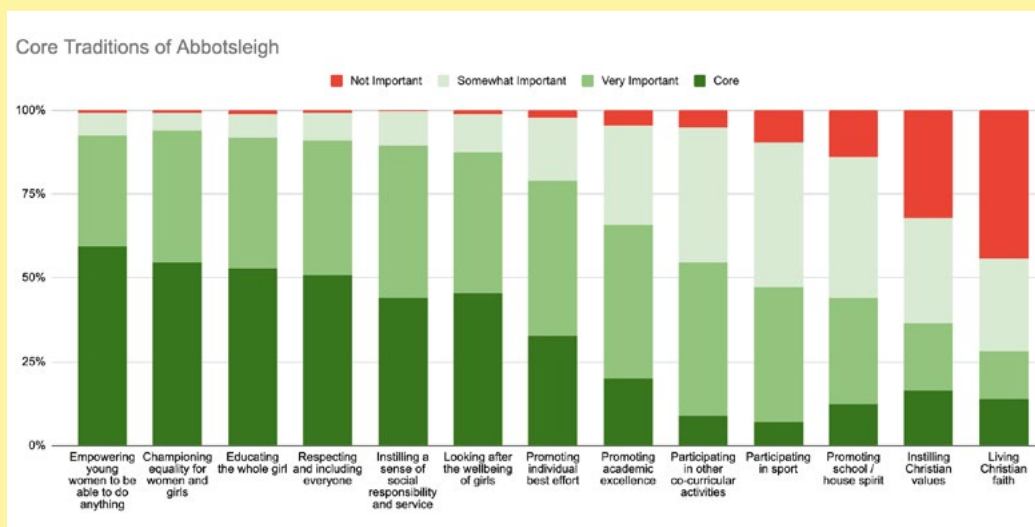


Figure 1: AOGU Members' Survey, April 2023, n=530

School's 138th Birthday Assembly and the Marian Clarke Society's Black and Gold Lunch

Headmistress Megan Krimmer welcomed Old Girls back to school for Abbotsleigh's 138th Birthday Assembly, which was attended by Old Girls ranging from 1945 to 1996.

The AOGU Centenary Scholarship was awarded to Emily Ellis, daughter of Rebecca Overton (1991). Margaret Sachs (Coburn, 1965), who was the AOGU President in 1985, when the scholarship was first awarded, gave a speech about the celebrations surrounding the centenary and the inauguration of the Centenary Scholarship.

The Birthday Assembly was followed by the Marian Clarke Society's Black and Gold Lunch, held in the Dining Room. There were 58 Old Girls in attendance, including former headmistresses, Kathleen McCredie AM and Judith Wheeldon AM. Old Girl Tara Commerford (1996) gave inspirational speeches at both the assembly and the lunch about how she organised a community-led volunteer effort in response to the Northern NSW floods.

Year 11 students with Old Girl connections spoke to the room about how much they valued their special connection to Abbotsleigh, and shared stories from their mothers and grandmothers, which included tales of climbing the water tower, shrinking chip packets on the heaters in the G and F corridors, and the School pool being turned purple twice in the 1980s!



From left: AOGU President Sarah Franks (1991) and AOGU Honorary Life Member Margaret Sachs (Coburn, 1965).



From left: Rebecca Overton (1991), AOGU Centenary Scholar Emily Ellis and Sarah Franks, (1991).



Lucy Harris (Roger, 1996), Eugenie Bestic (Austin, 1996), Selina Spanswick (1996), Kate Howitt (Griffith, 1996), Alison Gates (Holmes, 1996), Tara Commerford (Bowman, 1996), Julianne Johnston (Carroll, 1996), Elissa Coates (Hickey, 1996), Camilla Love (1996), Tilda Chiu (1996), Belinda Kan (Man 1996) and Nicola Finn (Jagger, 1996).



Year 11 students addressing the guests.

Generations Breakfast

The annual welcome back for Old Girl families with a daughter starting at Abbotsleigh was our first event of 2023, with the Generations Breakfast held in the Junior School. It was a glorious morning for the current Old Girl families to welcome the new, and with a fantastic group of Old Girl mums spanning 17 years from 1985 to 2002 and grandmums spanning 1960 to 1972. The event was held outside the stunning, recently completed Junior School Library, which was available to tour afterwards.



The Archibald Wynne and Sulman tour at the Art Gallery of NSW

The Archibald Wynne and Sulman tour at the Art Gallery of NSW was popular again with capacity attendance of 37 Old Girls and their guests in June. A gas leak across the road caused evacuation of the gallery, however the tour continued as our Old Girl guides Annabel Baxter (Marr, 1965, and AOGU Honorary Life Member) and Prue Todd (1963) took us onto the lawn of the Domain and brought the art works to life as we looked at them on our phones. We were also lucky to have with us one of the

Archibald finalists, Sally Ryan, who entertained us with behind-the-scenes insights into the process of painting her wonderful portrait of Claudia Chan Shaw, *Year of the Rabbit*. Sally has a special connection to Abbotsleigh as she is the artist who painted the School's portrait of former headmistress Judith Poole.

The Art Gallery rescheduled our tour to August and this group of 23 were led through the exhibition by Annabel Baxter without any further drama.



Belinda Burton (Tjeuw, 1991), Bronwyn Cooper (Ross-Jones, 1980), Sarah Franks (1991) and artist and Archibald finalist Sally Ryan.



Kim Boniface (Anderson, 1985) and her daughters, Juliet Boniface (2019) and Jamie Boniface (2015).



The June tour continued outside in the sunshine.



Art Gallery of NSW volunteer guide Annabel Baxter (Marr, 1965) sharing details about Archibald winner Julia Gutman's painting *Montaigne* (a portrait of the artist's friend, singer-songwriter Jessica Cerro).



Sally Ryan discussing her portrait of Claudia Chan Shaw, *Year of the Rabbit*.

Santas for Seniors

An Old Girl initiative that has brought joy to many

Spreading good cheer at Christmastime has reached new heights in the Northern Tablelands city of Armidale, thanks to an initiative started by Old Girl Anna Gayner (Ireland, 1993) eight years ago. According to Anna, the original idea behind 'Santas for Seniors' was for volunteers to provide a Christmas gift for aged-care residents who had no family or who ordinarily may not receive anything during the giving season.

'It occurred to me that a lot of charities concentrate on children at Christmas (which is fabulous) but no one seemed to be concentrating on one of the most vulnerable groups in our society – our seniors,' says Anna. 'Many of the elderly who are in care facilities either don't have any family or none living close by.'

As someone who no longer has any grandparents around, Anna thought it was a nice way to give back and stay connected with the senior community. 'I was reading about the program operating overseas and thought that it was something that the community of Armidale might get behind,' she says. And she was right!

The program commenced in 2016 with 38 residents in just one aged-care facility receiving lovingly donated gifts, but last Christmas more than 200 residents at six different facilities received presents. Now, the program accommodates anyone living in a residential care facility, not just those who might otherwise go without. The dramatic increase in numbers meant Anna has had to enlist additional 'Santa's little helpers'. They assist staff at the facilities to provide a list of residents and their Christmas wishlists.

'It is important to me that the residents receive something they actually want, not something that someone else thinks they need,' says Anna. She remembers when she received the inaugural list, she shared it on her personal Facebook page and asked friends and family if they would like to

help out. 'Now we have a public Facebook page and people add a comment on who they would like to shop for. It's a real online Christmas rush as everyone scrambles to sign up! People select a resident, and I love that people can make their own connections to a senior. Some choose based on the gift that the senior would like while for others it might be based purely on the name of the senior.' She says one resident had asked for perfume and a red lipstick and a local French teacher nominated herself to shop for them; another 'Santa' aimed to gift to a 'Peter' each year in honour of her late father.

'I also love the fact that anyone on any budget can assist,' says Anna. 'Some residents just want a packet of biscuits or a box of chocolates, while others might like an indoor plant, pyjamas or some paints and brushes.'

The program has a solid Old Girl connection, with regular 'Santas' including Anna's mother Judy Ireland (Ives, 1961), her sister Carnie Kermode (Ireland, 1987) and fellow 1993 leavers Jane Ede (Parkin) and Rhonda Kaan (Turner). 'We were shopping for an Old Girl until last year,' says Anna, 'but she has since sadly passed away.'

She believes the program is one that could easily be replicated in any aged-care facility in Australia. 'As exciting as it is to get started, you need to start small. We started with one facility and got it working properly before it organically grew to where we are now.' The community is invited to help deliver the gifts and this often involves local children. 'The residents love that!' says Anna. 'The staff really enjoy seeing the faces of the residents receiving a gift of exactly what they were wanting or who have often forgotten that they had asked for anything at all!' She says the residents genuinely can't believe that someone they have never met, has been so generous. As for Anna, she says, 'I could never have predicted the positive feedback we have received from everyone involved.'





The AOGU Speakers Breakfast

This was a Zoom event, held in May, to which Abbotsleigh parents and staff were also invited. Our 2022 AOGU 110th Anniversary Grant winner, Kirsty Mate (1979), gave a wonderful talk about her project, The ReDress Hub, which she founded to keep clothes in use longer, reducing consumption and landfill waste. Kirsty talked passionately about her 30 years of

industry and academic experience in sustainable design across architecture, interior and textile design. Abbotsleigh's Head of Design, Technology and Innovation, Claire Battikha, attended and subsequently invited Kirsty to talk to Years 10 and 12 in preparation for their units on sustainability. Please see page 58 to learn firsthand from Kirsty about The ReDress Hub.

AOGU

Speakers Breakfast

with Kirsty Mate (1979)

Driving sustainable design and the circular economy through clothing



The ReDress Hub

Kirsty Mate, recipient of the 2022 AOGU 110th Anniversary Grant, is passionate about sustainable living and has found a way to change attitudes and reduce waste in the clothing industry

In 2022, Kirsty Mate, who left Abbotsleigh in 1979, founded The ReDress Hub in Launceston, Tasmania. A social enterprise, created to keep unwanted clothing in use for longer, it reuses, repairs and remakes garments (and textiles) for resale to consumers and related businesses.

As Kirsty says, 'We are the people in the middle of the circular economy. The ReDress Hub is revolutionising retail in the clothing industry at a local and regional level by addressing the industry's accelerating environmental impacts at the point of trade to reduce the increasing pressures of consumption, waste and carbon emissions. This in turn reduces the significance of these issues at a national and even global scale.'

The ReDress Hub is based on the global doctorate research Kirsty undertook to rethink the retail space from a singular activity for trade, to a diverse, collaborative and 'circular' trading space. A research trip to investigate the changing platforms of retail across eight different countries in the US, Canada, the UK, Europe and Australia provided her with knowledge that she now applies at a local level.

'I chose clothing as the basis for The ReDress Hub because the environmental impacts of this industry are vast (for example, it accounts for 10% of global carbon emissions). We all wear clothing, we are wrapped in textiles from the

moment we are born to when we die. So we all have the capacity to make a difference and that difference is easy and cheap. The best thing we can do is stop buying new clothes, and keep the clothing we already have (personally and on the planet) in use for longer.'

Working alongside Kirsty at The ReDress Hub are passionate locals, who have skills and knowledge to share. Many are volunteers who help to keep the space alive and running, others are paid facilitators, passing on their skills and knowledge to others at workshops on various circular clothing practices. The handmade upcycled and handmade clothing for sale at The ReDress Hub is made by local designers. In addition, the hub offers 'swap and buy' services for quality second-hand clothing as well as a hire service for those evening gowns that are sometimes necessary – but rarely worn more than once or twice. Consulting services on the Circular Economy are a third revenue stream.

So how did Kirsty, who has had a varied career in architecture and interior design across both academe and industry, arrive at founding The ReDress Hub? 'Sustainable design has been a way of approaching life and my career. When I first started in this area back in the late 1980s after I completed my architecture degree, I was living in Germany and this concept was barely recognised beyond the 'hippie' culture of the 60s and 70s. However, I firmly believed that as a designer I had a huge responsibility for the decisions I was making and the effects they were having on the environment. I was working in commercial interiors at the time so when I was selecting a chair or carpet type for example, this decision was replicated many times over – hundreds of chairs and thousands of metres of carpet.

'There was a fair amount of scepticism, even anger and abuse to designers like myself working in this area [of



sustainability] but I have always taken up opportunities, even when they may have been risky, to help me towards my goal. My heart rules my decisions sometimes and for that I have been called an idealist, which perhaps I am, but I am proud of this term, as this is how change can be made.'

'I have also enjoyed the challenges and new knowledge this pathway has taken me. I have met so many amazing people across all walks of life and learnt so much more than a "traditional" career path in design would have given me.'

How has the AOGU 110th Anniversary Grant contributed to the work of The Redress Hub? 'It was extremely important in helping us to keep our doors open as we "found our feet" by paying for three months' rent. It has allowed us to keep going and supporting the local community with what we have on offer.'

Over the next three years, Kirsty's plans for The ReDress Hub include establishing a greater online presence; increasing its customer base to schools, neighbourhood centres and businesses; acquiring a felting machine to dry-needle felt textile scraps from local charity organisations into new quality textile lengths for sale; creating a clothing line using upcycled, vintage and remnant textiles and clothes; and establishing a social enterprise franchise for The ReDress Hub, initially in other regional centres in Tasmania and then across mainland Australia.

She urges us all to do what we can to reduce our levels of consumption of clothing, particularly new 'fast fashion' clothing that often ends up as landfill. 'Keep the clothes you already have in use for longer by thinking about how these garments can be repaired, refashioned, remade or swapped,' she says. 'Swapping is one of the best things you can do to change up your wardrobe without increasing its size. So hold a swap party with friends or organise a big swap party with the AOGU or at Abbotsleigh.'

'Think about whether you actually *need* a new piece of clothing or just *want* it and then how your purchase will have the least amount of impact. Buy preloved clothing, sustainable labels, and/or buy local. These clothes may be more expensive than some of the cheaper brands, but they will have been made to last using "slow" fashion processes, with less environmental impact in their

manufacture and they shouldn't have involved using underpaid workers.'

'And if you would like to support the work of The ReDress Hub more directly, put us on your itinerary next time you travel to Launceston and tell your friends to do the same! While we are not a charity organisation, we do accept donations to help us with our mission and we make sure these donations are put to good use.'

'While I am an eternal optimist, I do worry for the generations to come and the world we are leaving behind us for them to inherit and hope that our governments will commit to important major changes before there is no way back.'

Website: <https://www.facebook.com/ReDressHub/>

Instagram: [@TheRedresshub](https://www.instagram.com/TheRedresshub)

The AOGU 110th Anniversary Grant is awarded annually to support Old Girls who are giving back to their community. The AOGU is proud to support Kirsty's endeavours with The ReDress Hub.



A circular clothing economy



1963 Leavers 60 Year Reunion

On 17 June, 38 1963 leavers gathered at the Marian Clarke Reception and from there were guided along the top path beyond Vindin to view the new, aesthetically brilliant architecture of the purpose-built Science and Art Centres, echoing the tall saligna and Angophora gums nearby; then on to the Visual Arts Centre and Senior Studies Centre, where the basketball courts used to be. Mrs Megan Krimmer, 11th Headmistress of Abbotsleigh, welcomed us in the dining room and then followed much reminiscing, covering the 60 years since we left and the preceding events during our time at Abbotsleigh. To those Old Girls who were unable to attend, you were missed, but thank you for your replies and we wish you well. Special thank you to Jenny Hemming (James) and Hilary Steel for your assistance in tracking down Old Girls who'd moved recently.

Helen Muir (Hawthorne, 1963)



Standing from left: Penny King (Walker), Bronwyn Hayat (Brandt), Sue Kesterton (Cunynghame), Helen Muir (Hawthorne), Sue Brain (Budden), Gaye Doyle (Bullough), Henrietta May (Watchorn), Vicki King, Sarah Roger (Jamison), Georgina Cleaver (Hoskins), Rosemary Hoskins, Meryl Kane (Wood), Gillian Mein (Seale), Robin Henderson, Barbara Ross (Hennessy), Anne Mitchell (McFarlane), Hilary Steel, Sue Innes (Higgins), Jenny Heming (James), Julie Clark (Parkinson), Jocelyn Ibels (Hercus), Elizabeth Millard. Seated, from left: Lyn Tanner (Rowe), Jill Seddon (Ridley), Robin Hille (Richardson), Ros Skinner (Smeaton), Catherine Davies (Campbell), Ros Tindale (Spencer), Prue Todd (Henning), Marian Byrnes (Ifould).



Admiring the new Science/Art Centre - Group of 1963 Leavers at their 60th Reunion.

Class of 1968 55 Year Reunion

Almost 60 Old Girls from the class of '68 gathered for lunch at the Kirribilli Club on 11 October. It was an extremely happy – and noisy! – event, with everyone mingling enthusiastically despite it being a sit-down affair.

This time we were a bit experimental in holding our reunion mid-week, finding that, although this suited most, we need to apologise to a few girls who couldn't be there because of their work commitments. Sadly, we also acknowledged a number of girls who couldn't attend due to ill health.

The venue, however, was very popular, not only because of its central location and easy access to public transport, but also because of its position and stunning view, and its relaxed vibe. Many took advantage of being across the road from Wendy Whiteley's Secret Garden and enjoyed browsing there with friends before and after the reunion.

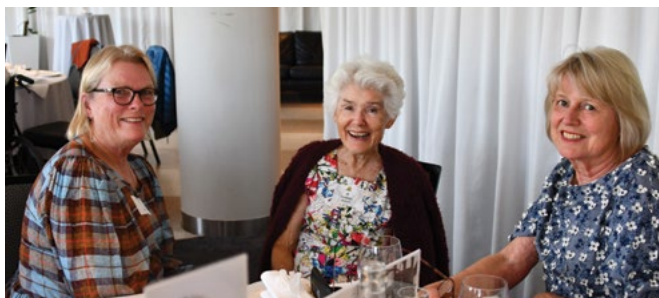
We are very grateful to the many who travelled from interstate and across NSW to attend. We had a wonderful contingent of boarders who set up base in the Noisy Corner, although there was excellent cross-pollination with the Day Girls. We thank Jan Sharp (Giblin) for stepping up to be our unofficial photographer as it's so important to document such a memorable event.

Preliminary plans for our next reunion in 2028 were already broached, with an early request going in for 'dish jobs' on the menu. We all hope that most of us will still be in fine voice and be able to celebrate together again.

Margaret Symington (Bridgman)



Jane Newsom (Garnock), Lindi Davison (Joseph), Pauline Kinsella (Leeder).



Janet Kyngdon (Lees), Jill Belford (Cameron), Sue Knox (Sproule).



Mandy Palmer (Davies), Gai Lloyd (Giblin), Annette Bowman (Londish).



Ro Higgs (Sanders), Anne Parkins (McFadyen).



Jill Allen (Stanton-Cook), Pam Black, Sally Gregerson (Cooper), Marg Symington (Bridgman), Libby Bubb (Scott).



Marg Symington (Bridgman), Sue Holmes (Cadell).



Sue McAuliffe (Dobbie), Chris Cunningham (Coburn), Jan Sharp (Giblin), Gai Lloyd (Giblin).

1973 Leavers 50 Year Reunion

Fifty years and we haven't changed a bit! A wonderful reunion of minds, experiences and relationships.

Day bugs and boarders alike, wowing each other with days at school and then another 50 years on top of that! Held in fabulous Orange, we talked and laughed at pubs, Philip Shaw's home and then our final catch-up, that lasted all day was held at the lake house (Kezz Brett's home).

Everyone left vowing to have another reunion soon as we still hadn't finished celebrating each other and shared times spent together.

Kezz Brett (Ryan)



1983 Leavers 40 Year Reunion

A large and cheerful group of 1983 leavers met at the Firehouse Hotel in North Sydney for their 40 Year Reunion on 21 October. It was a relaxed evening and everyone was so happy to see old friends again. None of us could believe that 40 years had passed since we left Abbotsleigh's gates, but all agreed that we hadn't aged a bit and still looked utterly fabulous.

Thanks to the organisers for a brilliant night.



Liz Vernon (Roberts), Kate Taylor (Whitelaw).



Lee Hribar (Thompson), Jen Douneen (Freeman), Barbara Bagot.



Caitlin Vincent (Stone), Cathie Sutherland (Reid), Megan Wingfield Digby (Baker), Lisa Higgins.



Lucy Warren, Annabel Burgess (Edwards), Jane Woods (Cornell).



Kate Gillard (Dennis), Kate Phillips (Mossop), Jenny Irving (Nicholson).



Kathy Flower (Earle), Karley Heyworth (Craswell), Narelle Fay (Armstrong).



Louise Patrick (Piper), Caroline Craig (Moore).



Sara Ferster (du Temple), Cate Burston (Cadwallader), Kylie Lloyd, Megan Wingfield Digby (Baker).



Julia Roberts, Natalie Bradekji (Chitty), Sally Basten, Alex Norton (Deane), Ann Lovett (Gilder), Sally Maher (Jones); front: Jane Garrett (Maynard).



1988 Leavers 35 Year Reunion

We held our 1988 Leavers School Reunion at the Greenwood Hotel on 20 October and it was a huge success. About 55 girls attended and there was pure joy in the room. Pure joy! It was wonderful! Not having name tags (OK, I forgot) was also a plus because it encouraged honesty and rawness only a group of friends aged 50+ could appreciate! We missed those who couldn't make it, appreciated those who travelled long distances and had a wonderful night connecting with old friends who meant and still mean so much to us all. The Greenwood Hotel looked after us so well and I would thoroughly recommend holding future reunions there.

Emma Joyce



Nikki Nankervis, Jacki Turner (Beck), Julia Davidson and Tracy Norman (Unwin).



Jenny Gregson (Harris), Justine (Fisher) Winn and Sue Feketey.



Jenny Polich, Sallie Kairaitis (Ross), Sally Green (Royle) and Amanda Flack (Witts).



Diedre Allee, Victora Vincent (Gibb), Cathy Swinton and Cindy Vermeulen (Cheung).



Katrina Gould (Lindsay), Kate Fisher (Freeman) and Diana Perche (Fitzhardinge).



Sherrie Joseph and Margie (Margaret) Denne.



Edwina Stratton (Best), Jacki Turner (Beck), Penny Giddey (Price), Nikkin Nankervis and Brooke Stuart (Boland).



Alison (Young) Langwill, Tracy Norman (Unwin), Emma Joyce (Boston) and Justine Fisher.



Sue Feketey, Justine Fisher (Winn), Karen Burns and Kim Bazeley.

1993 Leavers 30 Year Reunion

More than 70 1993 leavers gathered at the Manly Skiff Club on Saturday 18 November for a 30 Year Reunion that was enjoyed by everyone! The weather was spectacular and it really was hard to imagine a better spot for us all to catch up with each other over a long lunch.

We took the opportunity to continue our 'Soul Sister' initiative, which started at our 25 Year Reunion, where every 1993 leaver promised to make any age-relevant health check appointments with a fellow 1993 leaver (their 'Soul Sister') or to follow up and make sure the other had completed their checks. We repeated the promise this time with our resident medical experts GP Louisa Evans and paediatrician Samantha Izzard (Lade) reminding us that as we approach the big 5-0, our focus should be:

- cervical screenings (previously called pap smears), which should be done every five years (i.e. every time we have a reunion!) and there are DIY options so there is no excuse!
- mammograms are free every two years,
- FOBs (faecal occult blood) test kits are sent out to

Australians from the age of 50... we can get ready for our first one and make sure we do it!

- regular skin checks,
- schedule an osteoporosis risk assessment as risk increases from 50 years,
- cardiovascular disease is the number one cause of death in women our age in Australia so we should be having a risk assessment every two years but not forget that prevention through a healthy diet, regular exercise and weight management is key,
- if not already, perimenopause or menopause is on our radars and remember that 'knowledge is power' (websites, GPs, friends etc),
- and lastly, the importance of self-care, especially given many of us will have ageing parents and at the same time still have children and teenagers.

We remembered those Soul Sisters who we have lost too early: Tammy Ewen, Catherine McDonald and Nikki Johns.

Thank you to all the Old Girls who attended, especially to the many who travelled from overseas and interstate, as well as from across NSW and to those who sent their sincere apologies. We were thankful for nametags and Gretel's gorgeous flowers and incredibly grateful to everyone who made it such a great reunion! We can't wait for the next one!

Rhonda Kaan (Turner)



From left: Gretel Sachs, Elizabeth Walker, Pricilla Ip, Melinda Tually, Trudy Hoy (Gleeson) and Alice Fuller.



From left: Louisa Evans, Penelope Hamilton and Anna Nicholson (Owen).



From left: Amy Dawson (Whalan), Sophie Monti (Brien), Lucy Weddell (Bragg) and Sue Craigie (Hunter).



From left: Sarah Nicholas (Baxter), Rhonda Kaan (Turner) and Lucy Weddell (Bragg).



Group shot of 1993 leavers.



From left: Elizabeth Walker, Melinda Tually, Pip Kershaw (Dexter), Nicole Ward (Germaine), Jenny Byrnes (Gower), Liana Allan, Michelle Sheridan (Riley), Lucy Scotts (Nankervis), Lisa Cottingham (Hollebone), Sam Izzard (Lade) and Jessica Gault (Thomas).



From left: Sharon Yeoh (Chu), Natalie Faber, Chantelle Withford-Cave and Kate Hudspeth.

2003 Leavers 20 Year Reunion

'Growing apart doesn't change the fact that for a long time we grew side by side; our roots will always be tangled. I'm glad for that.' — Ally Condie

The Class of 2003 celebrated our 20th reunion on Saturday, 4 November. There were 59 Old Girls there, some having travelled from as far as Papua New Guinea, Adelaide and Melbourne and others from across the state to gather at the Tilbury Hotel, Woolloomooloo, for an evening of memories, enthusiastic chatter and many hugs.

Our faces may be (slightly) older, but remain immediately familiar long after the shared years spent in identical straw hats and black blazers. The volume in the room became steadily louder as our voices relayed two decades of life updates, jobs, qualifications, travels and family news. We also lamented the shared feeling of time flying, yet for one wonderful night it felt like we somehow managed to momentarily still the shuttle.

Earlier in the day a smaller group took part in a guided tour of the Abbotsleigh's grounds, marvelling at the extraordinary infrastructure changes, particularly the new library on the old carpark and the sports facility where the gully of the lower oval once was. One Old Girl later remarked how cathartic it was to return to the site of so many formative memories. It was a nourishing night, reconnecting and reminiscing.

Additional funds raised from reunion tickets were donated to our classmate Laura Kelly and her family as her son Noah continues his treatment for grade IV pineoblastoma, an aggressive brain cancer.

Please consider making a donation at <https://gofund.me/c3393ca2>

Geraldine Nordfeldt



Amy Kingon-Smith (Kington),
Georgina Rohrsheim (Miller).



Suk Yun Chun, Lexi Howard (Spies), Kathryn Aroney (Bernard),
Kate May (Alexander), Geraldine Nordfeldt, Amanda Hipsley,
Alice MacPhillamy.



Sarah Loder, Victoria Dunsford,
Rachel Wilkes (Chivas), Laura Kelly.



Louise Foster (Zerbo), Edwina Loxton,
Nicola Horton (Jensen),
Philippa Miller (Loxton), Jill Ford (Coenan).



Back from left: Sarah (Giuni) Greenwood, Lauren Knight (Radcliff),
Hayley Barnes, Louise Moore, Kate May (Alexander);
Front from left: Amy Kingon-Smith (Kington), Jen Lew, George Egan.



Jill Ford (Coenan), Fiona Collison
(Boyages), Amanda Rogers (Scranton).



Helen Ackroyd (Wilson), Renee
Gowing (Brasier), Hayley Barnes.



Sophie Wade, Geraldine Nordfeldt, Lauren Knight (Radcliff),
Fiona Macdonald.

2013 Leavers 10 Year Reunion

As the Class of 2013 gathered at Atico rooftop in Surry Hills, the general refrain was a sense of disbelief at how quickly 10 years had passed. While I would like to say this was because all attendees looked exactly the same as they did 10 years ago, it was mainly because conversation flowed with the same ease as in the Year 12 Common Room – only this time it was peppered with news of overseas moves, career changes, travel, marriages and even babies. A decade well lived! Thank you to everyone who came and made it a wonderful event to remember.

Julia MacDonald



Left to right, back then front row: back row, from left: Zara Huxley, Emily Langford, Alex Gall, Georgia Knight, Annabelle Dickson, Mel Huang, Ella James, Sophie Jobson, Imogen Beverley (Hicks), Tara Tucker (Radovic); from left, in front: Sammy Poate, Kath Evans, Kate Lorimer, Bronte John.



Left to right, back then front row: Alex Gall, Georgia Norton, Emily Langford, Georgia Knight, Madeline Wilson (Jones), Marissa You Lee, Bronte John.

2018 Leavers Five Year Reunion

The 2018 Leavers Reunion was an absolute success. Everyone had a lot of laughs, great catch-ups and a very fun night. We had a great turn out of girls from all across the country.

Alex Vincent was the organiser and we had 66 2018 leavers RSVP to attend.



2022 Leavers One Year Reunion

The AOGU supported the 2022 One Year Leavers Reunion with 25 Old Girls meeting at the Greengate Hotel on 9 September for an afternoon of fun, laughter, drinks and finger food, with lots of news to catch up on from the past year. We look forward to seeing everyone at the Five Year Reunion in 2027!



Back row, front left: Claudia Lee, Emma Purvis, Sophie Friend, Alice Lee, Samantha Seeto, Tallulah Hagen, Jennifer Riley, Georgina Williams, Sophie Twyman, Marquise Brady-Quealy.

Middle row, from left: Angelina Niu, Lindsey Kim, Michelle Lin, Jasmine Lo, Anushree Ganesh, Ashna Mali, Jasmine Burton, Emily Sun.

Bottom row, from left: Zara Vellani, Rebecca Galleano, Helena Yang, Elizabeth Barnes, Anjali Lambotharan.

Global connections – London Reunion 2023

Abbotsleigh's community continues to grow beyond the north shore of Sydney and indeed beyond the shores of Australia, forming a rich global network for girls who pursue opportunities abroad. It gave me great pleasure to join Mrs Krimmer in hosting a London Old Girls' reunion in April 2023. We had a wonderful time with Old Girls of all ages, who presently reside in the UK.

We hosted our reunion at Swan at Shakespeare's Globe, a fabulous venue for an evening catch-up with stunning views across the Thames. With record numbers in attendance, we had 65 Old Girls from 1946 leavers through to a 2024 alumna, Daisy Cumpson, who left Abbotsleigh in 2022 and moved to the UK to pursue her ballet career. Several of the girls were not aware of the network of Abbotsleigh girls in the UK, and especially London, and for them this reunion became the start of new relationships. It was a huge success, with all enjoying themselves, and Mrs Krimmer and I had the opportunity to meet new Old Girls as well as reconnect with girls we had previously taught.

It was such a joy to see Old Girls connecting with each other, sharing past and present stories, and forging new friendships. I am always struck by the incredible achievements and courage of Abbotsleigh girls, their energy and passion for all they do, and this reunion certainly revealed that.

Victoria Rennie (Gosper, 1987)
Deputy Headmistress and Head of Senior School



Congratulations



Maryanne Gold (2007) writes, 'Our daily reminder that God listens.' Samuel Bruce Gold-Leong arrived 23 August 2023 and brings great joy to parents Richard Leong and Maryanne Gold.



Dimity O'Brien (Norton, 2009) and her husband Justin are thrilled to announce the arrival of Edward Patrick O'Brien on 6 January 2024. Big sisters Primrose and Nina are both delighted with their baby brother – for now!



Martha Thomas (2012) married Daniel Morgan on 15 July 2023 at Orchardleigh Estate in Frome, Somerset, UK. They met in London while working together in 2017 and have since moved to Bristol.

Congratulations to Lynette Robinson (Walker, 1941), who celebrated her 100th birthday on 11 September 2023. She is pictured with her daughter, Barbara Harvey (Robinson, 1970) and granddaughters Elissa Coates (Hickey, 1996) and Carla Hickey (1999).





Robin Stevenson is third on the left (middle row).

Congratulations to Robin Stevenson (Royle, 1940) who celebrated her 100th birthday on 23 September 2023

Robin Royle moved from North Sydney Girls High School to Abbotsleigh in 1939 for her final two years at school. She followed in the footsteps of her older sister Mary and two aunts before that. Miss Gordon Everett was her headmistress.

School was okay, but what Robin really enjoyed was competitive sport: swimming, tennis and hockey.

The Abbotsleigh Royle Scholarship that Robin established in 2006 is a reflection of her two years at the School. The scholarship is open to girls moving into Year 10 or 11, who have an Old Girl from Abbotsleigh in the family.

Robin has an unusual early connection to Abbotsleigh. Her father, engineer John MacDiarmid Royle, designed the 250,000-gallon elevated water tank, which was built at the school after WWI and exists to this day.

Robin's father John had spent his early years as a hydraulic engineer drilling bore holes all over Queensland and NSW. Then came WWI. John volunteered and used his skills in the Battle of Messines when he was an officer with the 1st Australian

Tunnelling Company, which had the responsibility of tunnelling under German lines to mine Hill 60, near Ypres in Belgium. The success of that mission allowed the Allies to start to push back the German forces.

After the war, John acquired land in Queensland through the Returned Soldiers' Settlement scheme. The land was remote, and this was true pioneering, yet there he met Robin's mother, Eadith Stephinson, who was visiting the district. John and Eadith were married in 1921. They would have four children, of whom Robin was the second. As well as her older sister Mary, there were two younger brothers, John who died in infancy in 1926, and Paul.

John was keen to get back to what he enjoyed most, which was drilling – for water, oil or prospecting for minerals. This is why, when Robin was three years old, the family moved to an area north of Daru Island in Western Papua (now in the Western Province of PNG.) The family lived in native-built huts and Robin's mother had to feed her family with whatever was available – tree kangaroos and wild pigs, supplemented by cassava, breadfruit, coconuts, bananas and paw paws. One of Robin's earliest memories is attending church alongside neighbouring head-hunters in a thatched church.

Although John believed the drilling had promise, the investors did not back him and he had reluctantly to return to Sydney with his family a few years later. The early 1930s was a difficult time for everyone in Australia,



including Robin's family. Farmers were too poor even to need bore holes and there was little engineering work until after the Depression began to resolve and John was able to get back into engineering and start building his own business.

The family moved from Chatswood to a house on the water in Balmoral when Robin was 12. The house had a view directly out through the heads of Sydney harbour. It was an ideal spot for a family that loved the sea and especially sailing.

Robin's affection for driving premium, fast cars started when her father's Rover broke down one day. Fed up, he left it parked in the road and came home with a Series 4 Jaguar. Robin loved driving the car more than her father and would later drive it to work.

WWII broke out as Robin left school. It was an unsettling time and no one knew what to expect. Robin decided to take a business course and then took a secretarial job with a chemist in the city.

Many of her friends left to fight in Europe and the Middle East. Robin's father joined up again and served in various roles, including Chief Fire Officer for Eastern Command. He was also keen to make visiting forces feel at home. Some of the American fleet was anchored in Mosman Bay and officers from one ship were regular visitors, others were collected from servicemen's clubs and brought home for a meal.

On the last Sunday in May 1942, Robin went sailing with her father. Their yacht was moored in Mosman Bay and to get to the outer harbour they had to pass through the anti-torpedo and submarine defence net booms that spanned from Green Point in Watsons Bay to Georges Head Battery on the northern side. There were several 'gates' in the boom and the one used by small sailing vessels and fishing boats lowered the net to let them through. They sailed across the Heads to Quarantine Beach, one of their favourite spots for a

picnic lunch. They didn't want to miss the opening time of the boom gate to cross back into the main harbour on their way home. Little did they know that that afternoon three Japanese midget submarines were preparing to sneak through the boom and evade the net. Two of them managed to get through while the third became entangled in the net. Twenty-one Allied naval ratings were killed when a torpedo from one of the submarines hit the ferry *Kattabul*, which was being used as sleeping quarters for the sailors.

On another harbour sail with her father and sister Mary, their yacht capsized in a squall and they were rescued by a US Navy Destroyer. Mary and Robin were entertained in the Officers Mess while her father and the rest of the crew were invited down to the sailors' quarters.

Robin recalls that when she looked out of her window at night, she had a view out to sea beyond the Heads and sometimes saw flashes of light. She was not entirely convinced when her father told her it was just lightning storms. He, of course, knew differently, but Robin would not know until after the war that Japanese submarines operating off NSW were attacking convoys of merchant shipping moving up the coast. Those were the flashes that Robin had seen.

After the war, Robin's father's business expanded and he had drilling plants working all over NSW. Robin started working for her father and her younger brother Paul joined the family business.

The family had a holiday house at The Basin in Pittwater, an ideal place for a family of keen sailors. One of Robin's treasured pictures is of her father's yacht *Womerah*, which she skippered to victory in the 1949 Ladies Day and Nominated Skippers Race. Meanwhile, Paul crewed on some of the earliest Sydney to Hobart Races.



Robin planting a tree on Bob's nephew's farm in Crookwell.

Those years hold treasured and poignant memories for Robin. In 1953, Paul died in a car accident. The tragedy of losing Paul at the age of 27 was a terrible shock for the family, leaving a gap that could never be filled.

In 1954, Robin left Australia to go to Europe. She went by ship, visiting Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), Aden, Suez and Gibraltar,

arriving in London five weeks later. She stayed overseas for two years working, travelling to Scotland and Ireland, and looking up some of the friends she had made in wartime Sydney. She still remembers driving her favourite car, a Sunbeam Talbot, up and down the hills of Scotland and Ireland.

Robin took a job with the Council of Europe, an organisation established in the wake of WWII to uphold human rights, democracy and the rule of law in Europe. Her job took her twice to Strasbourg for conferences. Robin says she got by in Strasbourg using her schoolgirl French as English was used at work. When she came to leave and said she was going back to Australia, one of the senior staff was surprised. She'd thought Robin was French! So, she must have looked chic and had a good accent.

When Robin returned to Sydney, she started volunteering for Legacy, an organisation formed to look after the families of killed or injured servicemen and veterans. All her family were involved and she and her sister Mary helped in the library and with lunches.

Soon after this, Mary married NSW Supreme Court Judge Russell Le Gay Brereton. It was at a Legacy party that Russell introduced a friend, a lawyer called Bob Stevenson. This friend was Bob Stevenson, who would one day become an important man in Robin's life.

One day Robin got a phone call from Russell, one that would take her into a different career. He asked her to become his Judicial Associate. Robin loved the work in courts and travelled around NSW on the court circuit. They had a special carriage on the train and Russell and Robin were treated with great deference. Robin worked with Russell until his death in 1974. Afterwards, she continued working as an associate, in addition to helping her widowed sister Mary with her two young sons, Paul and John. The boys gave Robin enormous pleasure and still do. John's and Paul's daughters attended Abbotsleigh.

Robin had moved to Kirribilli with her mother after her father died in 1975, and cared for her until she died in 1988.

In 1978 Robin took up an invitation from a cousin whose husband was with the Australian Meat Board in Tehran. She took a two-week holiday and visited Isfahan and Shiraz. They were just in time, for a year later the Shah was overthrown and went into exile and Iran changed direction.

In the 1980s Bob Stevenson rekindled his friendship with Robin. They were married on Robin's birthday in 1992. Bob had retired as managing partner of a major Sydney law firm. He had also been president of the Law Society of NSW and a director of Westpac Bank.

For the next eight years, Robin and Bob travelled widely, exploring more of Australia, visiting Europe and America, as well as a cruise down the River Nile to see Egypt's antiquities.

Before Bob died in 2000, he told Robin that he wanted her to continue to travel. Robin visited England, France and Italy and took the legendary Orient Express. Nice as it was, she does not recommend it as a trip for one and wished that Bob could have been with her.

At home in Kirribilli, Robin enjoyed entertaining her grand nieces and nephews. And continued to play golf, where her competitive edge saw her bring home trophies and score a hole-in-one. With the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron Club nearby, a subscription to the Ensemble Theatre and the Hayden Orpheum Picture Palace in Cremorne, she continued to enjoy sailing, theatre and good films. Robin has been a life-long supporter of Legacy and many other charities and good causes.

She celebrated her 100th birthday with family at Kirribilli. She said it was a joy to see John and his wife Jenny drive up in her beautiful 22-year-old Mercedes. Paul and his wife Sue had celebrated her birthday early because of travel commitments.

Robin's wide experience and her positive and down-to-earth attitude to matters great and small has seen her continue to be a friend and mentor to her and Bob's families.

Gill Shaddock (cousin of Bob Stevenson)



We remember

- Betty Allerton (Buswell, 1946) Died 15 May, aged 93
- June Falkingham (Rowland-Smith, 1944) Died 26 May, aged 98
- Jean Himmelhoch (Andrew, 1944) Died 22 March 2023
- Dianne Howden (Hall, 1963) Died 4 May 2023
- Rosemary (Ro) Huff-Johnston (Fox, 1955) Died 26 August 2023
- Carmen Lyle Miller (1953) Died 15 March, aged 85
- Sue (Suzanne) Tuckwell (Brogan, 1953) Died 5 October, aged 87
- Caroline Dent Warton (Davies, 1952) Died 26 August 2023, aged 88
- Lydia Storey (Worledge, 1965) Died 18 February 2023

Judy Cameron (Stubbs, 1945)

1928 to 2023



Born in 1928 in Christchurch, New Zealand, Judy attended Aberfeldy School in Turramurra before coming to Abbotsleigh in 1940. During the war, her father, the Rev George Stubbs, was lost on the HMAS Sydney in November 1941.

Judy matriculated in 1945 and then completed a degree of Bachelor of Science in Agriculture between 1946 and 1949 at Sydney University. After graduating, she was employed by Gillespie Flour Mills as Chief Chemist from March 1950 until 1952, when she took the role of Technical Officer at CSIRO Armidale. She remained in this position until February 1954, when she left to visit Europe. She returned to CSIRO in January 1955.

In early August 1955 she began working in the Institute of Pathology at the Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children, a position she held until September 1957.

She married John Cameron in November 1957. They had two children, Stuart and Joanne. Joanne attended Abbotsleigh (1985). During this time, Judy was involved with the AOGU and other school-related organisations. Her granddaughter Georgia also attended Abbotsleigh

(2021) and her younger granddaughter Julia is presently a student at the School.

Judy was actively involved in organising various School Reunions for the 1945 leavers. She died on 31 July 2023, just one week short of her 95th birthday.



Lynette Anne Brent (Lipman, 1946)

13 August 1928 to 21 June 2023



The class of 1946. Lyn Brent is first on the left (middle row).

Lyn was born in Grafton and, following schooling in her hometown, was a boarder at Abbotsleigh from 1943 to 1945. It was said that her parents chose Abbotsleigh as it was deemed a safer location during the height of conflict during the war. The trek home to Grafton and the return each term was usually made by train, a considerable journey in those days. Lyn very much enjoyed her years at Abbotsleigh, often recounting stories of the spartan boarding conditions, the rock-hard boiled eggs, the enjoyment gained from friendships with boarders and day girls, and the idiosyncrasies of her headmistress Miss Everett, affectionately called Ev.

Some poignant memories recounted by Lyn included: the announcement from Ev that German, as a subject, was not to be taught with the statement: 'Gels, we are at war with the Germans and that subject will no longer be taught in this school'; and also the end of World War II.

On gaining her Leaving Certificate, Lyn enrolled in a Mathematics/Science degree at Sydney University. She was offered a position at the Observatory at Mt Stromlo, but female accommodation was not available and her parents apparently discouraged her from continuing this degree. Instead, she took on an administrative position with an ophthalmologist who saw her potential and recruited her into the study of orthoptics – a discipline in eye healthcare specialising in the assessment, diagnosis

and non-surgical management of eye disorders. She was accepted into the 1952 Sydney Orthoptic Training course. This was a career that highlighted Lyn's insightfulness, warmth, intelligence, capabilities, compassion and genuine empathetic love of people. She practised in Sydney, Melbourne, Grafton, Armidale, Newcastle and Nelson Bay.

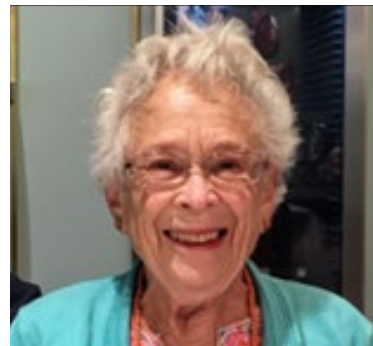
In 1954, Lyn married naval officer Peter Brent. After initially living in Sydney, they moved to Frankston and later Peter was transferred to Perth, where Lyn completed a short-term locum before giving birth to their firstborn, Michael. On early retirement from the navy, Lyn and Peter moved back to Grafton where Peter took part in a Korea-Malaya Rural Training Scheme. Two more children followed, daughter Anne and son Jeremy. In 1962, the Brents purchased a property near Armidale. Lyn soon found she was in demand to work as an orthoptist and enjoyed a successful and influential working life while balancing being an incredible provider to her family.

Retirement from the farm occurred in the late 1980s with Lyn continuing to work until a sea change to Corlette, Port Stephens. Lyn undertook part-time orthoptic work and continued to make her mark, supporting both young and old with treatments for vision problems.

After the death of her beloved husband, Lyn decided to return to Armidale to be close to her daughter, Anne Trenerry. Even in her twilight years and with the restrictions of weaker mobility and Covid, Lyn made every day a positive.

She attended Old Girls functions when she could and always enjoyed reconnecting with school friends but she also, with her friendly nature, enjoyed making acquaintances with younger Old Girls. Her friendship with school friend Elaine Denning (Loughnan, 1945) who now resides in Forbes close to her daughter, Robyn Rolfe (Denning, 1973), remained a close and special one.

Her fortitude, dedication, resourcefulness, generosity, kindness and zest for life remained with her until the end; characteristics that any Abbotsleigh girl would aspire to.



Near Uralla, in 1981.

From left: John Beynon (Miss Beynon's nephew); Miss Beynon, who was a music teacher; Barbie Beynon (she and John hosted this AOGU function at their property); Lyn Brent; Helen King; Miss Beynon's sister; Barbie Connah (nee Hodgkinson); and unidentified friend.

Helen Pickford (Charley, 1946)

Helen Jane Pickford was born on 22 July 1929 in Coimbatore, southern India, to Abbotsleigh Old Girl Jean (Lindsay, 1920) and Noel G Charley. The family returned to Sydney and Helen grew up in Wahroonga with two brothers. Attending Abbotsleigh during the war years she was a keen student, described by her teachers as 'a delightful pupil in every way'. After completing the Leaving Certificate in 1946, Helen successfully auditioned for a coveted place at the Royal Central School of Speech Training and Dramatic Art in London. During her time there she won awards for



her performances and was adjudicated in her final year by none other than Sir Laurence Olivier.

Taking the stage name Helen Lindsay, she debuted on stage in a 1952 production of *Pinocchio* at the Library Theatre in Manchester and made her screen debut a year later. Then followed a long and successful career on British stage and screen, including credits in *Great Expectations* (1959), *The Avengers* (1961), *All Creatures Great and Small* (1978) and *Mission Impossible* (1998). Helen's stage name honoured her maternal family, which included her great-uncle Norman Lindsay, the famous Australian artist. She retired from acting in 2009.

Helen was married for more than 40 years to Alan Pickford, a British art director and production designer. He died in 2002 and their son Benjamin also sadly pre-deceased her. Helen died peacefully at home in London on 15 March 2023. She is survived by family in Australia and the UK, including her younger brother, Bob Charley AO.

*Helen Charley is third from right in the back row.
(1946 Leaving Cert - LC)*



Dorothy Joan Baring Wheeler (Young, 1947)

1930 to 2023

Dorothy Young was born in Sydney in 1930, the first child of Henry Shedden Baring Young and Eva Theodora Young (née Maltby). Dorothy lived with her parents and younger brother Ernest, first in Clifton Gardens and then, after her mother's death in 1940, in Turramurra. She attended Abbotsleigh from 1941, along with a cousin, Alison Hawke (Webb, 1947), until her matriculation in 1947. This was during wartime under headmistress G Gordon Everett. Dorothy would have participated in air raid drills, marching to the shelter on the school site. She was awarded the Arthur W Crane

prize in 1945 for the student with highest marks in History in the Intermediate Certificate, and in 1947 was a member of the *Weaver* committee responsible for the School magazine.

Dorothy was a bit of a polymath, having studied mainly the Humanities at school (English, Ancient and Modern History, and French) and the sciences at university (Botany, Chemistry and Agriculture). Through her life she expanded her interests and knowledge in literature, and the Arts. Dorothy painted, wrote poetry, was an accomplished pianist and singer, and sewed her own clothes. Her Christian faith remained with her all her life and she was active in a local church wherever she lived. But her greatest love and accomplishment was for anything botanical.

After leaving Abbotsleigh, Dorothy had a year off in Sydney, then commenced her studies at the University of Sydney, living at Women's College. In 1953, she graduated with a Bachelor of Science and Agriculture (BScAg) and went on a working holiday to the United Kingdom and Europe before commencing studies at Wye College in Kent, part of the University of London, to undertake a Master of Science (Agriculture), which she completed in 1957.

While at Wye College she met John Wheeler, whom she married in 1957. In the same year they moved to Armidale, in northern NSW, where they lived until the late 1980s. Dorothy began working in the Faculty of Rural Science at the University of New England in 1958.

After the birth of three children and a sabbatical year in the UK and US, in 1967 Dorothy returned to work part-time at UNE as a botanist. She continued to work there until 1981.

Dorothy continued to study throughout her life, completing a Diploma of Education (1970), a Graduate Diploma in English as a Second Language (1988) and a Diploma of Theology (2000). In the late 1970s, she commenced work with two other botanists on the book *Grasses of NSW*. This was published in 1982 and is now in its fourth edition.

She enjoyed being able to travel and live in several places around the world with her husband and family. John was a research scientist with CSIRO and able to take sabbaticals in the US (1964/65) and Kenya (1974/75) and also work overseas. Their life also included three years in Bogor, Indonesia (1982-1984) with the Australian Government and three years in Manado, Indonesia (1989-1992) as missionaries with CMS. Throughout the six years spent in Indonesia, Dorothy continued her botanical interests by studying bamboos, developed her skills in photography, and gained a love of Indonesian textiles, especially the creation of batiks.

In the late 1980s, Dorothy and John moved to Bonville, south of Coffs Harbour, to enjoy retirement on three acres of garden and orchard. In July 1997, Dorothy

returned to Abbotsleigh for her 50 Year Reunion along with her cousin Alison and many others from her year. Dorothy and John left Bonville in 2005 and lived at Castle Hill in Sydney until their deaths, John in 2018 and Dorothy in 2023. Dorothy left a legacy of love and faith, an academic text of which she was very proud, and three children, seven grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Rosemary Sempell (Wheeler), daughter



Dorothy Young (in Abbotsleigh School uniform), her brother Ernest, Heather Giblin (family friend and housekeeper) and daughter.

Wendy Bowman OAM (Peters, 1951)

It is with deep sorrow that we note the passing in July of Mrs Wendy Bowman OAM, at the age of 89 years. After graduating in art at East Sydney Technical College, Wendy married Hunter Valley farmer Mick Bowman. When he died in 1984, she took over the farm. She had to relocate in 1988 because of open mining operations.

Wendy will be remembered as an unwavering environmentalist and farmer, who stopped a multi-million-dollar mine expansion. In 1990, she established the lobby group Mine Watch NSW to support and advise Hunter Valley communities affected by mining. In the following decades she was a significant activist for farmers and a voice for environmental concerns across the region.



In 2013, Wendy was awarded an OAM for her services to the community of the Upper Hunter. In 2017, having made headlines by refusing to sell her property to Chinese-based coal company Yancoal, she was awarded the Goldman Environmental Prize, a prestigious international accolade awarded to the likes of former Greens leader Bob Brown.

Wendy's three children, Adrienne Ranken (Bowman, 1978), Louise Campbell (Bowman, 1979) and Georgina Bowman (1989) are also Abbotsleigh Old Girls, and her granddaughter Sophie Ranken (2014) also attended the School.

Ann Corsie (Giles, 1953)

Ann Corsie passed away peacefully on 21 October 2023, aged 87 years. She lived overseas for many years, travelled the world extensively and created a loving and close family with her husband Jim (who passed away in 2013).

Up until 2018, Ann enjoyed an annual get together in the Blue Mountains with her fellow Abbotsleigh boarders. She always talked fondly of her time at school and remained very close to her class (the 1953 leavers) for the rest of her life.

Ann and James Corsie had four children: Alison Corsie (AOG 1976), Fiona Corsie, Trina Osborn (deceased) and Iain 'Jocko' Corsie (deceased); and four grandchildren James, Daniel and Luke Corsie (sons of Iain) and Samantha Ellis (daughter of Fiona).



Ann and Jim's wedding in 1959

Ann in 1957



Ann in 2022 with daughter (Fiona) and granddaughter (Samantha).

Margaret Macmillan (Stewart, 1956)

Margaret passed away on 22 February 2023. Her funeral notice aptly stated: 'A life of love, faith and dedicated Christian service in Australia and overseas.'

'As in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.'
(1 Cor.15 v. 22)

After leaving Abbotsleigh, Margaret studied for her BA at Sydney University and then taught at Moss Vale SCEGGS in the Southern Highlands while pursuing her DipEd through New England. In 1963 she returned to Sydney, where she took up a position at Epping Boys High School. In mid 1963, she married IVF staff worker, Malcolm Macmillan. On the very day of their marriage, Malcolm was offered the position of Principal of Wynberg Allen School, Mussoorie, a large Anglo-Indian boarding school in the Himalayan foothills of northern India. The Macmillans spent 12 years there and it was

where their four children were born. While in India, two archbishops of Sydney, Sir Marcus Loane and Bishop Donald Robinson, visited and the latter was very impressed when the Macmillans arranged an interview for him with the Dalai Lama.

On their return to Australia, the family faced the challenges of readjusting to life here. They had a head start when they settled in the rustic village of Arthurs Creek on the urban fringe of Melbourne. When their youngest child started school, Margaret decided to resume her teaching career at a nearby high school.

The family threw their weight behind the local Methodist (now UCA) church of which the Macmillans had been founders. They became involved in a reform movement in the UCA called the Assembly of Confessing Congregations. Margaret was a foundation

member of the ACC National Council and helped produce important statements and a magazine entitled *Catalyst*. A few weeks before her death, Malcolm and Margaret attended the funeral of Rev Professor Ian Breward, church historian and a wise leader of the ACC movement.

Margaret is survived by her husband Malcolm, four children and seven grandchildren.



Jenny White (Saunders, 1959)

4 May 1942 to 12 November 2023



Jennifer Saunders, as she was then, attended Abbotsleigh from 1950 to 1959. She had fond memories of her years there and made lifelong friendships. After leaving school, Jenny did a secretarial course at Sydney Technical College and then worked in the city for a couple of years. She met her

future husband Ken, a past Shore boy, at a barbecue and not long later she was on a flight to Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, where Ken was living and working.

During the next three years, they loved living in Moresby, returning to Sydney to get married and then back to Moresby where their daughter Fiona was born. In 1966, they came back to Sydney. The following year, Louise was born and not long afterwards the family moved to Brisbane. Soon it was back to Sydney, and then a job came up for Ken in North Queensland. Their years in Townsville, a short stint, and Cairns, for many years, were wonderful; they so loved living in the tropics.

In 1990, Ken and Jenny decided to move south again, and settled near Lismore in the Northern Rivers region. Their daughters became mums, making them grandparents, and they now have two great-granddaughters. Ken and

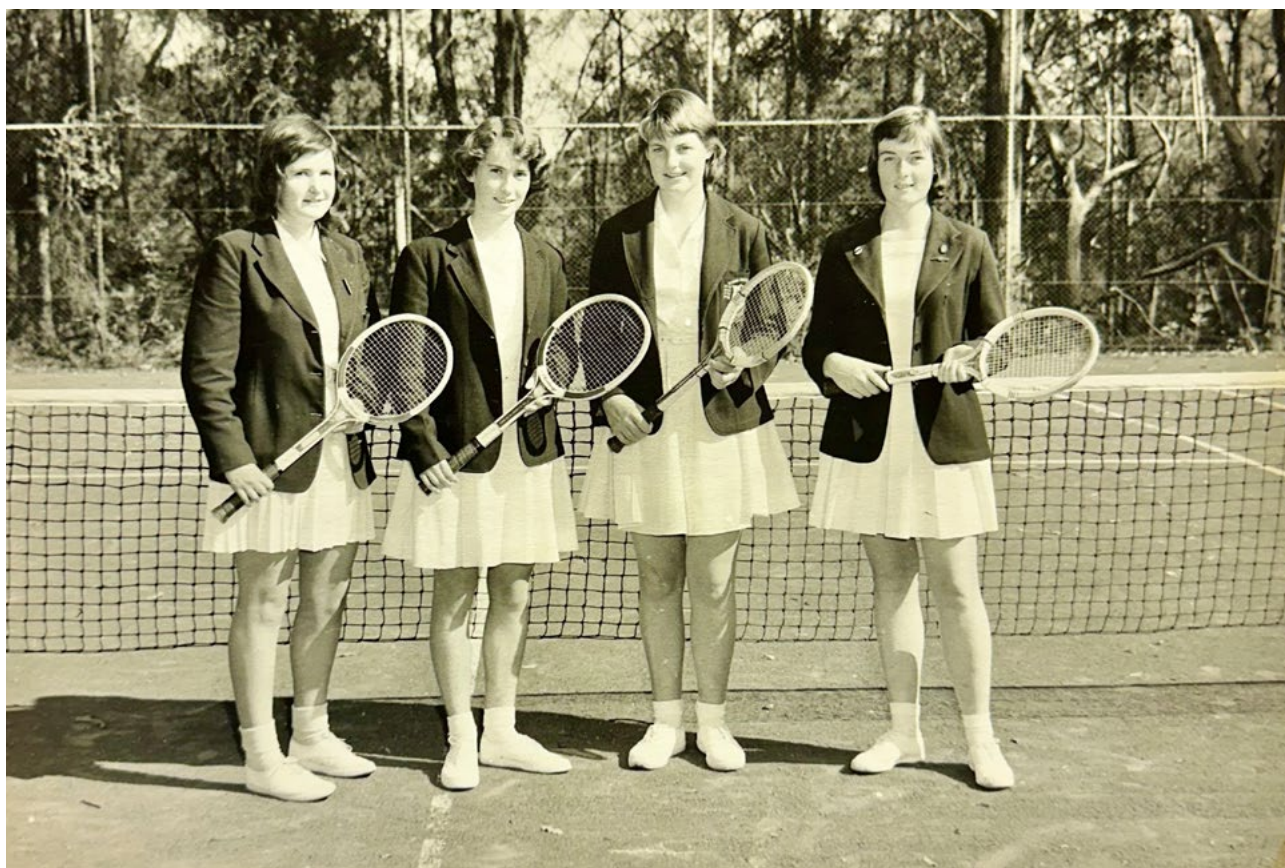
Jenny spent time travelling around Australia, the UK and New Zealand, as well as holidays in Singapore and Malaysia.

Jenny was a loving, gentle-natured lady, always concerned for others. She had many close friends and was adored by her family. She loved sport, playing tennis and lawn bowls into her seventies. She was an avid reader and a stickler for correct grammar, no doubt impressed upon her during her years at Abbotsleigh. She knew what a pronoun was, an adverb, an appositive phrase, and would often correct news readers and the like on their poor grammar. In July 2019, after reading the back of a Whitaker's chocolate packet, she was quoted as saying, 'Never end a sentence with a preposition!'

Jenny attended quite a few Abbotsleigh reunions over the years, reminiscing with school friends from the '50s, and she would have loved to have gone to this year's 1959 Leavers 65 Year Reunion. Her legacy was to 'Live life to the fullest' and to 'Always look on the bright side of life'. She was farewelled by family and close friends in the beautiful garden of their lovely home and, as per her wishes, her ashes were scattered in and around the bird bath, to fertilise the soil and to be spread around the universe.

RIP darling Mum.

Louise Burke



Match fit: Jenny White, far right, enjoyed tennis

HAPPY DAYS

When Jenny White (Saunders) was in her early sixties, she wrote her recollections as 'Now we are sixty', a play on AA Milne's Winnie the Pooh book *Now We Are Six*. This excerpt details her memories of Abbotsleigh

In February 1950, I continued my schooling at Abbotsleigh. I was a day pupil and friendships were formed which remain today. Mrs Lawson taught Second Form and I remember her writing 'Arithmetic' on the blackboard. Everyone wrote it down except me. So, with the help of a copybook, I learnt 'running writing' (each desk had an inkwell into which we dipped our nibbed pens and from which we later filled our fountain pens – no biros in those days) and at the end of the first term my Report Card noted 'Jennifer's writing is an achievement'. Sadly, it has deteriorated with the passing of time.

In Fourth Form Miss MacLean taught Geography by way of recounting her travels on board ship, escorting British children to Australia during World War II. We learnt about the early Australian explorers in History lessons. Fees for day pupils were seven guineas a term.

Miss Gordon G Everett, known as Ev, was from New Zealand and had been headmistress since 1931. She was one of the 'old guard' – a disciplinarian, strict but

fair and well respected. She called us 'gels'. The Senior Mistress, Miss Mary Allan, was of the same ilk, respected but also feared. Class sizes numbered fewer than thirty and it was the norm to learn such things as multiplication tables and French nouns whose plurals ended in 'oux' in 'parrot fashion'. All teachers wore black cassocks and mortarboards – unheard of today.

To balance academic, sporting and artistic abilities, the girls were divided into houses – Macquarie to which I belonged, Sturt and Wentworth – their respective colours being red, yellow and purple. These houses were retained for the Junior School but in 1958 four new houses were founded for the Senior School – Gordon, Patterson, Kendall and Lawson, to which I belonged and its colour was white. Each year the Malloch Shield, named after the father of a prefect, was awarded to the champion house.

Sport played a large part in many Abbotsleigh girls' lives – tennis, basketball, hockey, fencing, swimming and

cricket. The annual Sports Day was a big event with egg and spoon, sack, orange and three-legged races, sprints, relays and ball games. Another big event was Speech Day, held under a marquee on the Top Oval at the end of the year when prizes – books and trophies – were awarded for academic and sporting success.

Two teachers in the Senior School stand out in my memory. Miss Meakins, known as Milly Molly Meakins, taught General Maths and had no idea how to control a class. On the other hand, Miss Dorothy Hughesdon who taught Modern History covering the period from 1066 to 1936 in Europe, which included the British Isles, had our full attention. She made the subject come alive – a feat not many History teachers achieve. She became Senior Mistress when Miss Allan retired and her untimely death from cancer was a great blow to all who had the privilege of knowing her.

Apart from the usual academic subjects, lessons such as Divinity (the Reverend Donald Begbie threw chalk at us when he lost the plot – not very Christian-like!), Art, Music, Sewing (at Miss Watt's class I took a year to hem a hanky) and Singing were taught. At the latter we learnt from Miss Beynon, 'Nymphs and shepherds come away, come away (repeated), come, come, come, co-ome a-away' for reasons best known to herself. Drama was also encouraged and one year my class staged Gilbert and Sullivan's *Trial by Jury* and another year Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of being Earnest*. One memorable afternoon the school was shown the film of Margaret Mitchell's book *Gone with the Wind*.

In 1958, Miss Helen Elizabeth Archdale, known as Arch, became headmistress, a position she held until 1970. She had captained the English Women's Cricket team on its victorious tour of Australia and New Zealand in 1934-35. Later she would become principal of the Women's College at Sydney University. As headmistress, Betty Archdale was considered 'progressive', which did not sit well with some of the teachers and parents but to the girls she was a wonderful breath of fresh air – particularly to the boarders to whom she gave more freedom than they'd experienced before. Her study door was always open. Years before her death, Betty Archdale became one of Australia's Living Treasures.

When I first went to Abbotsleigh we walked in 'crocodile fashion' to and from the railway station and it was compulsory to wear hats and gloves with our school uniform. These rules were relaxed in later years. We often saw Knox boys waiting on the platform for the train – they called us 'grasshoppers' because of our green uniforms and we called them 'bluebottles' because of their blue uniforms.

The Government provided free milk to schoolchildren in those times and one revolting memory is having to drink this when it was warm and sour, as it had been left in a crate in the sun. For lunch, most of us ate Vegemite and

peanut butter sandwiches from a paper bag but one girl brought her lunch in a suitcase and we forced her to exchange such delicacies as chicken legs and pickled cucumbers for our less interesting fare.

Some of my school friends had nicknames – mine was Perl, bestowed on me by Susan Bevan. Hers was Sos and we still call each other by these nicknames, their origins best forgotten. At the end of each term (three in a year) the station master refunded our train tickets for a shilling, with which I bought a Curl (caramel and chocolate bar), a Bobbie (peppermint and chocolate bar), a rainbow ball and a sherbet from the milk bar towards the top of Victoria Avenue in Chatswood.

Carole McCoombe and I were in the school tennis team that competed against other girls' private schools for the Tildesley Shield held at White City in the eastern suburbs. For practice one year, a team from Shore came to our school and Carole and I played two sets against John Newcombe and Geoff Pollard, losing both 6-1, 6-1. 'Newk' went on to win many titles in singles and in doubles with Tony Roche, with whom he captained and coached Australia's Davis Cup team from 1994 to 2000. Geoff later became manager of Tennis Australia. I'd had tennis lessons when about ten and I was also fortunate in having swimming lessons from Miss Thomas with Carole and two other schoolfriends, Gail Williams and Glenn Fry, at North Sydney Olympic Pool.

At the end of 1959 I sat for my final exams, missing an overall pass by a few marks. I rectified this the following year by attending night school at Chatswood Public School, where I had first begun my schooling. Abbotsleigh's motto was *Tempus celerius radio fugit* – Time flies faster than a weaver's shuttle – and it certainly had.



Jenny, pictured in Sydney in 1947.



Daughters, Fiona and Louise, with Jenny in Brisbane, 1970.



Ken and Jenny White, Sydney, April 1964.



Four generations at home, May 2022.



With Santa, Borobi (2018 Commonwealth Games Mascot) and the family, Gold Coast, 2018.

Catherine (Kay) Hamilton Scott (Thomas, 1964)



Kay Scott (Thomas)
from the 1964 Leaving
Certificate photo.

Kay passed away after a long illness in July 2023 at the age of 75, just six weeks short of her 76th birthday. She was born on 26 August 1947 at Maitland Hospital and grew up in the Clarence town and Seaham districts, where her parents had dairy properties.

Kay attended Seaham Public School from 1954 to 1959, and then Abbotsleigh as a boarder from 1960 to 1964. After training as a stenographer at Maitland Technical College, she worked for various legal firms.

Kay married Gordon Scott in 1972 and a year later moved to PNG, where Gordon worked as a pilot. They returned to Australia in 1974 and lived in the Lake Macquarie district.

Their two daughters, Edwina and Sally, were born in 1975 and 1976 respectively. The family moved to Cairns in 1991. Kay became a grandmother in 2012 and again in 2016.

Sally Scott

Robyn Walsh (1964)

21 August 1947 to 1 March 2023

Robyn died peacefully on 1 March at the age of 75. She was initially diagnosed with Stage 3 cancer of the oesophagus in late 2021. She underwent a gruelling operation which successfully removed the tumour but sadly the cancer had already spread to her brain.

Robyn received treatment to slow the inevitable growth of the brain metastases but was admitted to hospital just before Christmas following a series of falls and then transferred to the beautiful RFB Benhome Masonic Village in Maitland, where she was visited by family and friends including a number of Old Girls. She still looked a million dollars every day with polished nails, pink lip, gold earrings and styled hair. Pixie and Zeena (poodles) were able to visit her and she was kept up to date with Fudge and Maggie's adventures (horses).



Robyn finally slipped into a very deep sleep and faded away a little more each day. In typical Robyn fashion she left this world only once she had decided that she was 'done' and not when anyone else expected her to. Her family was grateful that she had a natural death without medical intervention or complications and that she had compassionate and supportive care in a peaceful environment from a very caring team in her final days.

Robyn was remembered at her Memorial Service as being an independent woman who had a larger-than-life personality and who created a wonderful life for herself on her own terms. She went after all the things she wanted to achieve, and rarely, if ever, accepted the word 'no'. She was also always right! ALWAYS! She never doubted herself. She was admired for her courage, fortitude, straight-up approach and her loving connections to her animals. Robyn had a rare determination about her. She never talked about limits or time remaining, and she will remain in the memory of many who feel an enduring friendship was cut short by fate.

Prudence Barron (Evans, 1968)

12 April 1950 to 30 March 2023

Prue was born in Brisbane on 12 April 1950 to parents Bill and Pat and was the younger sister of Timothy.

She began her schooling at Wahroonga Public School and later moved to Abbotsleigh, where she excelled in swimming, athletics and hockey. She represented the School in all sports multiple years in a row; she also became a House Captain and Prefect.

In her final years at Abbotsleigh, she met David, the man who was to become her husband of 50 years. After a long courtship, they married on 22 September 1973, with the reception held in the beautiful gardens of Prue's family home in Wahroonga.

Upon completion of a medical records course, Prue worked at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Prince of Wales

and, later on, at Hornsby Hospital. She then worked alongside Sydney-based colorectal surgeon Mark Killingback, co-publishing many papers in international medical journals and co-authoring a book. She loved her time with Mark and developed life-long friendships during her time at the surgery.

She also established firm friendships through her other passion, golf. Always the sportswoman, she joined Asquith Golf Club and after a few years of service to the club was elected captain and president. She also



served as president of the AOGU for a number of years while her daughter Jane attended Abbotsleigh.

Prue and David moved from Sydney to Narooma in 2016, where Prue joined the Narooma Golf Club and the Narooma Dragon Boating team.

She is survived by her husband David, daughter Jane, son Alex, grandchildren Scarlett, Jasper, Rafferty and Finley. She was known by all as 'Grandie' – the fabulous matriarch of the Barron clan and is remembered as strong, stubborn, generous and quick-witted.

She taught Jasper how to play golf; Scarlett how to drive a car; and filled every room with her presence, whether she was in it or not.

Prue and David are one of the great love stories. She was determined to reach both her 74th birthday on 12 April and also to make their 50th wedding anniversary on 22 September 2023. Unfortunately, her disease had other plans and, although gracious, stoic and strong until the end, this was an argument she could not win.

David, Jane and Alex extend their thanks to the wonderful nurses at the oncology ward at Moruya Hospital and also to the local palliative care team.

Prue's legacy will live on in those she left behind.



After a Beatles concert: Denise Murray, Anne Stratton and Prue Evans (lucky them).



Linda Karen Hanrahan (Freckler, 1968)



Linda passed away peacefully at Clare Holland House in Canberra on 14 February 2023, after a long illness. She was 72 years old.

Linda was the second sister of four Freckers at Abbotsleigh: Rachel (1965), Linda (1968), Toni (1974) and Tracey (1977). She retained a life-long love of hockey, which she first played at school in the 1960s. She represented NSW as a Junior, and ACT as a Senior in 1971. She passed on her love of hockey to her daughter Clare, who has represented ACT in field hockey and indoor hockey.

In addition to Clare, Linda has two sons: Scott born in 1975, and Ross born 1978; and three grandchildren, Xavier, Ivy and Zac.

Linda worked in several Federal Government departments in Canberra, initially in HR and later in IT positions.

She married Patrick in 1973. In addition to their work life in Canberra, Linda and Patrick spent a lot of holiday time at Mollymook, where they built a family getaway in 1980.

From her early years on a farm near Young, Linda formed a strong love of animals and had many pets throughout her adult life. She is sorely missed by her family and friends.



From *The Weaver* 1969.

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