

The Shuttle

Time flies faster than a weaver's shuttle.

'Bee Connected' to champion and accelerate women's equality. International Women's Day, 2025

Mrs Megan Krimmer
Headmistress

Our signature statement, 'Empowering Young Women Since 1885', demonstrates the commitment Abbotsleigh has had, from its very first day, to the equality of girls and women.

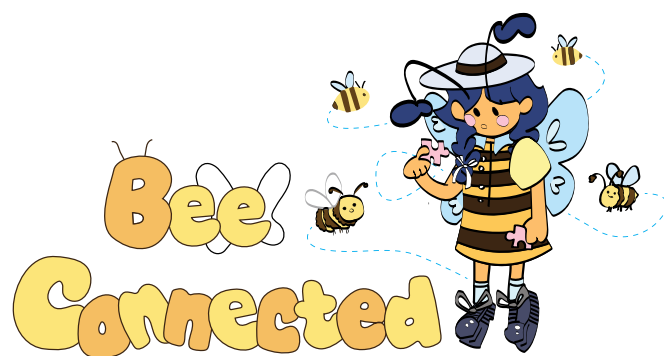
Each year, we commemorate International Women's Day as it is so important for our girls to see how much progress has been made in our recent history and how much more still needs to be done.

This year, we were privileged to have our Chair of Council, Ms Linda Ellis (AOG, 1990), address our Senior School girls in our International Women's Day Assembly. Ms Ellis' speech is both inspirational and aspirational and I know that she ignited passion in our girls to continue to work for this important cause – after all, as Ms Ellis noted, true equality benefits all of society – significantly.

As Audrey Tang and Angeline Lam (Year 11, Zonta) also said in our International Day Assembly:

'This Saturday is significant, as it is International Women's Day. Each year, on 8 March, groups around the world, including Zonta, engage in and hold events that celebrate the social, cultural and political achievements of women. It is a day all about uplifting women and boosting the visibility of our achievements. We strongly encourage you to reflect on these incredible things that we, as a demographic, have been able to achieve even in the face of adversity.

'This year's campaign theme is 'Accelerate Action'. What does this mean? Well, according to data from the World



Economic Forum – "At the current rate of progress, it will take until 2158, which is roughly five generations from now, to reach full gender parity." By focusing on the need to 'Accelerate Action', it is crucial that we take steps towards not only holding awareness about the issues that women face but create tangible change to support women and close the gap of gender inequality.'

I warmly commend Ms Ellis' speech to you. I am sure that by reading it, you will be equally as inspired as your daughters.

Happy International Women's Day.



Abbotsleigh International Women's Day Assembly Speech

Ms Linda Ellis
Chair of Abbotsleigh Council

Good afternoon everybody.

I'm excited to speak to you today on the eve of International Women's Day.

I want to talk about the progress of women's representation in the senior leadership teams in Australia's top companies and encourage you to aim high, collaborate and really lean in to the upper echelons of leadership when you leave school. I'm going to identify the problem, explain why it matters, then talk about the solution and practical ways you can lean in to your careers after school.

I am a member of Chief Executive Women, an organisation whose shared purpose is one of collaboration: 'women leaders empowering all women'. It's a powerful organisation and helps to remove the barriers to women's progression and ensure equal opportunity for prosperity.

CEW has more than 1200 members representing Australia's most senior and distinguished women leaders across business, academia, government, sport, the arts and not-for-profit sectors. Its president is an Abbotsleigh Old Girl, Susan Lloyd-Hurwitz (Turner, 1993). I challenge you to have a look at the criteria for membership and strive to meet them. When you do, get in contact with me and I'll propose you for membership.

First, the problem: Incremental change in women's representation in senior leadership teams in Australia's top companies has come to a halt. In some cases, gender equality is beginning to slide backwards for the first time since the pandemic.

Here are some key statistics for you:

There are 25 women CEOs in the ASX300 Australian companies, down from 26 a year ago:

- 91% of CEOs are still men;
- 20 ASX300 companies have no women in their executive teams;
- Only 27% of ASX300 companies have gender-balanced executive leadership teams;

70% of executive leadership roles are still held by men. Australia is actually a poor performer compared to our global peers. Women's representation on boards is 34% – below New Zealand at 42% and Sweden at 38%.

Unfortunately, there has also been a global trend of backlash against equality and diversity initiatives. Gender-based violence has increased by nearly 30% as harmful gender norms remain deeply embedded in our society.

It is all a pretty sober picture.

Second, why it matters: The glacial progress of women in the upper echelons of corporate leadership has negative consequences for Australian business and the economy. Deloitte, a consultancy, found that dismantling prescriptive gender norms and prioritising gender equality could boost Australian GDP by \$128 billion. Closing the gender gap could make the global economy richer by 26%.

This has important real life consequences – fewer women in their 50s and 60s sleeping on the street, young women in Africa having the dignity and self-determination that comes from having a job that pays a fair wage, you girls coming back from maternity leave at the same level of seniority and pay as when you left.

Research conducted by BankWest demonstrates that increasing representation of women across each of the key leadership roles in an organisation added market value of between \$52m and \$70m for an average-sized organisation. Having a female CEO leads to a 5% increase in market capitalisation and on average this is worth \$79.6m.

Finally, the solution: Happily, much can be done and progress will be made. Girls, at this stage of your lives, you are ideally positioned to benefit, be the emerging leaders and change Australia for the better.

The evidence is clear: visionary leadership, systemic change and top-level commitments are equality accelerators.

How do you position yourself for the upper echelons of leadership?

- **Be the best:** Be a high-potential woman. The best way to prepare yourself for that now is to work hard at school and take all the opportunities you have to excel, in the classroom, on the sporting field, in drama, music and debating. Get involved and push yourself.
- **Believe in yourself and have a go.** This is absolutely critical. You must let people know that you have ambition. Put your hand up for more responsibilities and that new job.

- **Hard work is crucial.** As Taylor Swift said: 'Just focus on the work.' You need structure, you need discipline. Happily, and as Margaret Thatcher said, '[Hard work] is the high road to pride, self-esteem and personal satisfaction.'
- **Avoid working part-time:** Choose a flexible workplace instead. At every age, less than 50% of women are working full-time and typically make significant and long-term adjustments to their roles. After the age of 35, women are more than twice as likely to be working part-time or casually. Stay full-time, girls, and demand flexibility to cater to your needs and those of your family.
- **Take a CEO pipeline role,** a profit and loss role: There are a lot of women in human resources and law. These roles aren't usually a road to the top. Think about roles where you manage something that makes money for a business, such as business lending in a bank, growing subscribers in a telco or managing complex engineering projects.
- **Get a sponsor:** High-potential women who are sponsored by a senior leader are 20% more likely to be promoted. Find one as soon as you enter the workforce and keep developing your sponsors. Start at university! Start now! Ask your family friends or an Abbotsleigh parent for advice. Get them interested in your career. One of my sponsors has been championing me since I was 26 and he just came through for me again late last week.
- **Vote with your feet:** Work in inclusive, flexible and respectful workplaces. If your workplace is not, move on.
- **Build the right support in your home life:** This is really important. Marry the right person, someone who will help you and prioritise your career as much as his. My husband and I made the school lunches for the week ahead together on Sundays after we got home from church. My sons do their own

laundry (and still got great ATARs, so you can help at home and still do well!).

- **Collaborate with other women:** Most of my jobs came through my friends, many of them Abbotsleigh Old Girls. One of my first part-time jobs at university was working in the legal department of a large bank. One of my Abbotsleigh friends got me that job, and I got us our next one. In the same way that you help each other now, you will help each other throughout life. I have been helped on many occasions throughout my life by Abbotsleigh Old Girls. There are some lovely stories for another time. I try to give back, too: a young Abbotsleigh Old Girl called me a few years ago and asked my advice as to whether she should accept an offer to study at Oxford. There is only one answer to that question! Then she needed a job to pay for it and I was able to help.

Girls, it is such a delight to see you again. I plan to be here in a few weeks at CRU group and there are lots of exciting events throughout the year that I will be attending. Please come and say hello and tell me what you are enjoying about school.

Girls, lean in, collaborate and change the world!

Note: This speech (including the statistics quoted) draws heavily upon Chief Executive Women publication: Senior Executive Census 2024: Keeping Score of a Losing Game.



**With education,
women can do, or be,
anything.**

Miss Betty Archdale, Headmistress 1958-70

Chaplain

Jesus and the Samaritan woman

Rev Sarah Hobba
Senior Chaplain and Head of Christian Studies

As we celebrate International Women's Day, we are reminded of the transformative power of Christ's love and the call to honour and uplift women in all spheres of life. A very powerful interaction of Jesus with the Samaritan woman can be found in John 4. Despite cultural and societal norms that marginalised women and Samaritans, Jesus engages her in a meaningful conversation. She is the first person to whom he reveals His identity as the Messiah, and he offers her the living water of eternal life. This encounter underscores the dignity and worth of every individual, regardless of gender or background. Other accounts of Jesus' interactions with women, and the breaking down of barriers through the gospel, encourage us to advocate for justice and equality in His name.

John 4:39-42

³⁹ Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me everything I ever did.' ⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. ⁴¹ And because of his words many more became believers. ⁴² They said to the woman, 'We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Saviour of the world.'

Upcoming events

WHOLE SCHOOL

Good of the Hive art installation	Until end March	Senior School campus
ART NORTH HSC 2024 Visual Arts from schools in Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai	Saturday 1 to Saturday 22 March	Grace Cossington Smith Gallery
Free parent webinar with Justin Coulson: Emotional regulation	Wednesday 12 March (Term 1) Details will be emailed	Webinar
Free parent webinar with Justin Coulson: Building boundaries with your children (save the date)	Wednesday 18 June (Term 2) Details will be emailed	Webinar
Free parent webinar with Justin Coulson: Navigating anxiety (save the date)	Wednesday 20 August (Term 3) Details will be emailed	Webinar

Free parent webinar with Justin Coulson : Raising responsible, respectful children (save the date)	Wednesday 5 November (Term 4) Details will be emailed	Webinar
International Day of Happiness	Thursday 20 March	
Harmony Day	Friday 21 March	
SchoolTV program – student wellbeing resouces	Available to all parents on the Parent Portal	Click here to watch

JUNIOR SCHOOL

NO IPSHA Saturday Sport		
Year 6 Parents Morning Tea	Monday 10 March 8-9.30 am	Bundarra Lawn
Year 5 Cyber Safety with Brainstorm Productions	Monday 10 March 2-3 pm	Everett Hall
ELC and Transition ACEE incursion	Tuesday 11 March 8.30 am-2.30 pm	Abbotsleigh Centre for Environmental Education
K-12 Snowsports Parent Information Evening	Tuesday 11 March 7-8 pm	Junior School Auditorium
Year 3 and Year 5 NAPLAN	Wednesday 12 March	
Year 3 and Year 5 NAPLAN	Thursday 13 March	
Year 6 Adobe Bootcamp	Thursday 13 March 2-3 pm	Junior School Auditorium
Year 3 and Year 5 NAPLAN	Friday 14 March	
Year 6 ISDA Debating Round 5	Friday 14 March 4-9 pm	GLC
ELC Family Picnic - Junior School Oval	Saturday 15 March 9-11 am	Junior School Oval
Year 3 and Year 5 NAPLAN	Monday 17 March	
U R Strong Parent Information evening	Monday 17 March 6-8 pm	Junior School Auditorium
Year 3 and Year 5 NAPLAN	Tuesday 18 March	
K-Year 2 Josephine Wants to Dance	11 am-2.30 pm	Glen Street Theatre
Year 3 and Year 5 NAPLAN	Wednesday 19 March	
Year 4 Backflips Against Bullying	Wednesday 19 March 9-10.30 am	Junior School
Year 6 Backflips Against Bullying	Wednesday 19 March 10.20 am-12.20 pm	Junior School

Year 3 and Year 5 NAPLAN	Thursday 20 March	
Year 6 CRUFIT Excursion	Thursday 20 March 9-10 am	
Year 4 Father Daughter Dinner	Thursday 20 March 6-8.30 pm	Junior School
K-Year 6 National Ride to School Day	Friday 21 March	
ISDA Debating Round 6	Friday 21 March 4-9 pm	Redlands

SENIOR SCHOOL

Saturday sport	Saturday 8 March	Click here for times and venues
FIRST Robotics Southern Cross Regionals	Friday 7 to Sunday 9 March	Penrith Valley Regional Sports Centre
Year 7 DigiEd Claymation incursion	Monday 10 March 9 am-3 pm	Senior School
Year 11 Car Maintenance Program	Monday 10 March 8.20 am-3.25 pm	Senior School
Year 11 Study Skills session	Monday 10 March 2-3.25 pm	Senior School
Year 7 DigiEd Claymation incursion	Tuesday 11 March 9 am-3 pm	Senior School
Year 9 Inquisitive Minds incursion	Tuesday 11 March 9.30 am-3.30 pm	Senior School
Year 10 Canberra excursion	Tuesday 11 to Thursday 13 March	Canberra, ACT
Year 11 RYDA excursion	Tuesday 11 March 8.25 am-3.20 pm	Honda Australia Roadcraft Training Centre, St Ives
Year 11 Urban Challenge	Wednesday 12 to Friday 14 March	Sydney, various locations
UN Youth NSW State Conference	Friday 14 to Sunday 16 March	Collaroy Centre
IGSA Swimming and Diving Carnival (Year 8 to attend)	Friday 14 March 8 am-3.30 pm	SOPAC
Year 10 All My Own Work incursion	Friday 14 March 8.20 am-1.15 pm	Senior School
ISDA Debating Round 5	Friday 14 March 4-9 pm	Senior School
Saturday Sport	Saturday 15 March	
Year 10 Red Earth Parent Information Session	Tuesday 18 March 6-7 pm	Senior School
Years 7-12 Tildesley Shield Tennis Tournament	Wednesday 19 to Friday 21 March	Pennant Hills Park
Years 10 and 12 UTS Big Day in IT/STEM Careers Conference	Wednesday 19 March 8.20 am-3.25 pm	UTS



Year 12 Elective Music Workhop	Wednesday 19 March 8.20 am-3.20 pm	PDCH
Year 12 Agriculture Excursion	Wednesday 19 to Friday 21 March	Quirindi
Years 7- 12 100th Anniversary Shakespeare Festival	Wednesday 19 March 6.30-9 pm	Peter Duly Concert Hall
ISDA Debating Round 6	Friday 21 March 4-9 pm	Redlands

