Brisbane Girls Grammar School’s ambition to guide young women in developing their greatest abilities and fostering their potential to succeed in their future endeavours is a sincere aspiration. An educational pioneer, our School has throughout its history provided young women with inspirational learning experiences through the depth and breadth of its curricular and co-curricular programmes.

Encouraging community involvement goes hand-in-hand with guiding our students’ potential to contribute to their world. With our revolutionary Cherrell Hirst Creative Learning Centre, the ground-breaking Centre for Professional Practice and the new Centre for Science Research, the School is continuing its tradition of promoting original thinking and collaborative learning. Most importantly, however, these Centres facilitate the formation of multi-layered links between students, teachers and the wider education sector.

While academic endeavour remains at the forefront of our work, reinforcing the need for our students to become responsible and engaged global citizens is an integral part of our philosophy. The emphasis our staff place on empathy, community awareness and service activities, both locally and globally, are of immense personal value to the young women who are educated here. Students have the opportunity to not only involve themselves with School-based and local charity groups, but to travel internationally to perform valuable, challenging activities in third-world communities. Service within the School and the wider community not only helps to strengthen students’ awareness of the world beyond their daily scope, but also encourages an improved understanding of the human condition and a greater tolerance of difference.

Our progressive educational objectives are reflected in this Annual Report which focuses on the highlights and substance of the past year’s enterprises. 2008 was a year of diverse individual and collective accomplishment for both our students and staff, and this almanac is testimony to our scholastic leadership and capacity to develop the very best in our young women and ourselves.

Ms Amanda Bell
Principal

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Under the Act, the Board is made up of seven trustees, appointed every four years (most recently in November 2006) by the Governor in Council, and comprising:

- three trustees elected from and by the Roll of Electors; and
- four ministerial nominees.

The Board elects its own chair and deputy chair from among its own number and they serve in those offices while they continue on the Board for the four-year term. A board secretary, employed by the School, provides support to the Board in carrying out its governance functions.


The present Board was installed in November 2006 with three new members and four continuing from the previous board. The seven trustees for the current four-year term expiring in November 2010 are:

- **Ms Elizabeth Jameson**, Chair, a past student, corporate/commercial lawyer and governance consultant, and company director
- **Prof Mary Mahoney AO**, Deputy Chair, a past parent of the School, and daughter of past Chair of Trustees, Dr Conrad Hirschfeld
- **Mr Tony Young**, Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee, a past parent, accountant and partner of a prominent Australian accounting firm
- **Ms Else Shepherd AM**, a past student and parent, electrical engineer and company director
- **Mr David Vann OAM**, a past parent, business owner/operator and company director
- **Prof John Hay AC**, immediate past Vice-Chancellor of The University of Queensland
- **Ms Sally Pitkin**, current parent, corporate lawyer, consultant to a major Australian law firm and company director.

Further details of the trustees’ professional backgrounds and interests are available on the School’s web site: www.bggs.qld.edu.au. This demonstrates that the Board comprises a balance of diverse backgrounds and relevant experiences that are frequently called upon for the benefit of the continual improvement of the School’s operations, activities and performance.
Governance Philosophy

The Board believes that it best serves the School’s present and future life by operating as a true ‘governing’ board (as distinct from a ‘management’ board or committee). This means that the day-to-day operations of the School are delegated to the Principal and, through her, to key members of staff. The Board, under its agreed charter, therefore takes a strong leading role in supporting the Principal, and monitoring her leadership of the School’s performance.

The Board discharges its role primarily through the conduct of its regular meetings at least ten times a year, and through the regular meetings of the Board’s Finance and Audit Committee, with additional meetings of the Board for specific purposes, such as strategy development, as necessary.

Just some of the key matters addressed in the Board’s charter are:

• the Board’s commitment to governing with a clear focus on the School’s principal priority, namely providing an excellent, balanced, liberal education to our girls which equips them to face, and to contribute positively to, the world in which they live
• the Board’s commitment to a governance philosophy which encourages open and robust discussion of issues within the boardroom for the good of the School
• an awareness of responsibility for the transparent and appropriate management of trustee conflicts of interest
• the Board’s key functions, which include our accountability to the School’s broad community of stakeholders, setting the strategic direction, ensuring appropriate risk and compliance controls are in place, and monitoring the financial management and the performance of the School generally, fundamentally through its strong relationship with the Principal.
Chair

Ms Elizabeth Jameson  BA, LLB(Hons I), LSDA
Ms Jameson is a corporate/commercial lawyer and governance consultant, consulting to the boards of both for-profit and non-profit organisations. In this work she combines twenty years of legal experience with more than fifteen years’ experience as a member of a large number of boards. This has included Qantm, Independent Schools Queensland and the University of the Sunshine Coast. It also includes present roles as chair of the Queensland Music Festival Pty Ltd and as director of Tarong Energy Ltd, RACQ Ltd and MAP Funds Management Ltd.

Deputy Chair

Adjunct Professor Mary Mahoney  AO, MBBS, GDipClinEd, HonMD,Qld, FRACGP, MRACMA, FAIM, FAMA
Professor Mahoney is a general practitioner and was Director of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners Training Program for twenty-five years. She is a member of The University of Queensland Senate, and was The University of Queensland’s first woman Deputy Chancellor. Professor Mahoney has had extensive experience in governance issues and long involvement in national and state educational and advisory bodies and boards.

Treasurer

Mr Tony Young  BBus, FCA, CPA, FTIA
Mr Young is a partner with BDO Kendalls, one of the largest professional services firms in Queensland, specialising in providing expert business and accountancy advice. He has more than twenty-nine years’ experience as a chartered accountant. He has experience in providing taxation and commercial advice to a diverse selection of clients with a focus on significant family owned enterprises across a range of industries.
Prof John Hay  AC, BA(Hons), MA, PhD, HonLittD, HonDLitt, HonLID, HonDU, FAHA, FACE, FAIM, FQA

Professor Hay was Vice-Chancellor of The University of Queensland from 1996 to 2007. He chairs the Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching, the L H Martin Institute and the Board of the Queensland Art Gallery. He is a member of the Board of the National Library of Australia and various other boards.

Ms Sally Pitkin  LLB, LLM

Ms Pitkin was a corporate lawyer with Clayton Utz for over twenty years, ten of those as a partner. She has held non-executive directorships across a range of industries including energy and water, technology and gaming and leisure. Ms Pitkin was the 1999 Australian Winner (Private Sector Category) in the Telstra Business Women’s Awards. In addition to her current directorships, she is also a member of ASIC’s Regional Liaison Committee and the Company Law Committee of the Queensland Law Society.

Ms Else Shepherd  AM, FTSE, HonFIEAust, CPEng, FAICD, BE(HonsElec), GradDipMus(QCM), AMusA

Ms Shepherd, an electrical engineer, has worked in the sugar, electricity and telecommunications industries. She is an Honorary Fellow of Engineers Australia and a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering. She is Chairman of Powerlink Queensland and holds directorships with the National Electricity Market Management Company, Mosaic Information Technology Pty Ltd, and International River Foundation and is on several advisory boards.

Mr David Vann OAM

Mr Vann has had a lifetime career in manufacturing industries. He serves on the boards of the Uniting Church Foundation as Chairman, the Sir Henry Royce Foundation (based in Melbourne) as Chairman, is a Past President of Queensland Chamber of Commerce and Industry and also Past Chairman of Queensland Apprenticeship Services Pty Ltd. He is currently Chairman of Vanguard Blinds and the Vann group of companies.

Secretary to the Board

Ms Colette Pretorius  BCom(Hons), CA, CIA, CCSA

Before joining Brisbane Girls Grammar School as Business Manager in June 2008 Ms Pretorius was a Director with one of the largest global professional services firms. Ms Pretorius has specialised in corporate governance, risk management, business process improvement, accounting and business continuity management. She has more than 14 years’ experience as a chartered accountant and has served both public and private sector companies as well as government owned commercial companies and departments.
In Australia, throughout 2008, federal and state governments have focused considerable attention on educational matters; policies and concerns have been extensively reported in the media. Behind the scenes, teaching professionals have been contributing time and expertise to a range of projects which will impact on future directions in schools—especially the development of a national curriculum.

There have been a number of attempts to achieve this goal across the last forty years which have perished on the shoals of states’ rights. With the political alignment of state and federal governments, however, and the employment of consultation and consensus by the Minister for Education and Deputy Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, a National Curriculum Board has been established. This agency is working to achieve an ‘education revolution’ by providing, ‘… clear and explicit agreement on the content and achievement standards for the specified key learning areas that all young Australians should have access to.’ While this intent has practical appeal, there is some concern that,

**GENERAL REPORT**

Introduction

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A society’s school curriculum is, after all, a reflection of what is valued in that society, and of what that society wants to become. It’s only once such questions about values and direction are widely and inclusively discussed and agreed upon that it is possible to identify the knowledge skills and understandings that our young people will need if they are to contribute productively to their society in the future. … Instead of starting with considerations about what curriculum content and organisation might be consistent with an agreed rationale … key decisions appear to have been made in advance. (Reid, 2008, p. 10)
Subsequent to the formation of the National Curriculum Board and the decision that four subject areas should be developed—English, Mathematics, Science and History—the country’s Education Ministers did issue the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* that set two educational objectives for the next ten years, that:

- Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence
- All young Australians become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens.

There was also acknowledgement in this document of the global, technological and socio-economic challenges to fulfilling these aspirations. As well, specific areas for performance improvement were identified: indigenous education, underachievement in low socio-economic backgrounds, the rate of completion of Year 12, literacy and numeracy standards. The aim was also expressed that, ‘a school’s legacy to young people should include national values of democracy, equity and justice and personal values and attributes such as honesty, resilience and respect for others.’ (MCEETYA, 2008, p. 5)
A number of our own teaching staff has been involved in assisting in the shaping of the national curriculum—a task for which the Queensland system of internal assessment in upper secondary education has honed high quality skills. It has yet to be seen, however, whether the aims of the Melbourne Declaration can be translated into reality through the agency of a national curriculum that is based upon what are, essentially, nineteenth-century subject offerings.

Will the goals of the ‘education revolution’ answer the challenges of the post-Information age, some have termed the ‘Conceptual Age’? Engendered by the digital revolution, the dominance of the internet and the accessibility of information, a new educational paradigm very different from the model spawned by the Industrial Age is emerging. Pink claims that,

> The last few decades have belonged to a certain kind of person with a certain kind of mind—computer programmers who could crank code, lawyers who could crunch numbers. But the keys of the kingdom are changing hands. The future belongs to a very different kind of person with a very different kind of mind—creators and empathisers, pattern recognizers and meaning makers. These people—artists, inventors, designers, storytellers, caregivers, consolers, big picture thinkers—will reap society’s richest rewards and share its greatest joys. (Pink, as cited in Treadwell, 2008, p. 20)

Certainly, as Brisbane Girls Grammar School has worked to elaborate its strategic priorities, academic staff are keenly aware of the opportunities and challenges that the digital revolution poses within contemporary pedagogy. Professional development in the School, whether it is internal (visiting experts, the annual Learning Innovation Group, training and acting as mentors, the Pathways and Provocations lecture series) or external (conferences and workshops), has focused on encouraging greater innovation and creativity in all our classrooms.

It is widely recognised that teacher quality has a direct relationship to the performance of students and the Queensland College of Teachers—the professional registration authority—has published a set of Professional Standards in December 2006 as well as a Code of Ethics which identifies core values that should underpin the teaching profession—Integrity, Dignity, Responsibility, Respect, Justice and Care. Across the past decade, biennial staff appraisals carried out within this School have served to reinforce ethical principles, ensure teacher accountability, encourage innovative pedagogy and commit staff to reflective practice and ongoing professional renewal—in fact fulfilling the designated ‘Standards’.

Through its academic, co-curricular and student care programmes the School maintains an optimistic, growth-promoting, future-oriented culture that challenges both students and staff to do their best.

The values, beliefs and norms that underpin the life of the school are the keys to successful student development, and success is not just quantitative (results, outcomes, products); the qualitative (emotional, ethical, social) development of young people is equally important, and is inextricably linked with their academic performance. (Hunter, 2008, p. 6)

Based as they are on a multiplicity of variables and intangibles, successful schools are like highly powerful art forms that have the potential to engage and excite the creators and enthral audiences.
Artistry aside, our motto Nil Sine Labore encapsulates the work-ethic that prevails in our School and the performance of any Year 12 cohort in the Qld Core Skills Test and the achievement of QSA Overall Positions (OPs) reflects intelligent and purposeful academic endeavour by both teachers and students. The School is pleased to record the achievements of our 2008 Year 12 students.

Educational debates across the nation have mainly focused on specific objectives – testing, strategies for accountability, literacy, numeracy, benchmarking and curriculum content. What is missing is sustained reflection on more visionary planning – how to strengthen reasoning, responsibility, resilience and rigour across primary and secondary education. How can schools engender creativity, innovation, cultural empathy and civic virtue? Brisbane Girls Grammar School values a broad-based liberal education - using many of the clever digital enhancements available and unashamedly pursues excellence in all its operations. After all, the School is educating tomorrow’s thinkers and leaders.

Miss Felicity Williams
Deputy Principal

References
In 2006, Chief Justice Martin Spigelman of the NSW Supreme Court drew attention to the decline in good manners as well as some peculiarly modern kinds of boorishness such as ‘ugly parent syndrome’. He argued: ‘in a complex society such as ours, relationships of civility, tolerance and trust cannot be established or maintained only on the basis of interpersonal relationships. They must be institutionalised.’ (Pearson, 2006). He also lamented ‘the virtual disappearance of words such as please, thank you and sorry’ and noted that many parents ‘tend to see their little noble savages as beyond the need for stiff conventions and best left untamed.’ We believe that Justice Spigelman was right in arguing that we do no favours to children by letting them grow up without the (formerly) ordinary graces. Relying on instinct, ego, whatever feels good at the time or whatever they think they can get away with is no substitute for cultivating a personal-cum-social ethic of good conduct. Instituting civility—teaching it, insisting on it—is part of the raison d’être of public education and always has been. In addition to our focus on academic excellence, ‘Courtesy, Respect and Responsibility’ actuated our desire to institutionalise civility on Justice Spigelman’s lines.

To implement our theme for 2008 we started with the expectation and insistence on basic good manners, the foundation of civil society. The simple courtesies depend on and encourage empathy—the willingness to think about and imagine ourselves in another’s shoes. This meant that we had to consciously resist the urge to be entirely caught up in the important business of academic pursuits and remind our students—and ourselves—of the overarching value of those simple courtesies. Our students have grown up

STUDENT MATTERS

In 2006, Chief Justice Martin Spigelman of the NSW Supreme Court drew attention to the decline in good manners as well as some peculiarly modern kinds of boorishness such as ‘ugly parent syndrome’. He argued: ‘in a complex society such as ours, relationships of civility, tolerance and trust cannot be established or maintained only on the basis of interpersonal relationships. They must be institutionalised.’ (Pearson, 2006). He also lamented ‘the virtual disappearance of words such as please, thank you and sorry’ and noted that many parents ‘tend to see their little noble savages as beyond the need for stiff conventions and best left untamed.’ We believe that Justice Spigelman was right in arguing that we do no favours to children by letting them grow up without the (formerly) ordinary graces. Relying on instinct, ego, whatever feels good at the time or whatever they think they can get away with is no substitute for cultivating a personal-cum-social ethic of good conduct. Instituting civility—teaching it, insisting on it—is part of the raison d’être of public education and always has been. In addition to our focus on academic excellence, ‘Courtesy, Respect and Responsibility’ actuated our desire to institutionalise civility on Justice Spigelman’s lines.

To implement our theme for 2008 we started with the expectation and insistence on basic good manners, the foundation of civil society. The simple courtesies depend on and encourage empathy—the willingness to think about and imagine ourselves in another’s shoes. This meant that we had to consciously resist the urge to be entirely caught up in the important business of academic pursuits and remind our students—and ourselves—of the overarching value of those simple courtesies. Our students have grown up
continually exposed to images and reports of high flyers and celebrities who make incivility seem not only fashionable but necessary indeed, to get and stay ahead. According to Marion von Adlerstein, we are becoming more and more concerned with ourselves and our own entitlements than anything else. As the song says: *What About Me?* Increasingly, people see humility, kindness, generosity of spirit and self-effacement as unfashionable signs of low self-regard or inadequate ambition. From Channel Ten’s ‘Big Brother’ to magazine articles and popular music, people—and the impressionable young in particular—are actively encouraged to answer back, to have the last say, to put others down, to escalate banal tussles into masterpieces of ego-driven invective. In a word, they are actively encouraged to win, usually at the psychic expense of someone else. We see this in such phenomena as road rage, phone rage and even shopping trolley rage! These behaviours resemble the tantrums of small children who at least have the excuse of not possessing the developmental facility to control emotions and consider others.

Adolescents are not toddlers but they too are often consumed with self and overwhelmed by confusing emotions and concerns about their place in the wider world. More than any other group in society, they need family and school to care enough to ‘train’ them how to behave well. School is an especially efficacious behavioural gymnasium when it provides as many experiences as possible to strengthen their mastery of self in relation to others. The objective is not only to teach students to consider and respect their peers, but—beyond this—empathise with them as well. We want our students to understand, as George Washington once insisted, that ‘every action done in company ought to be with some sign of respect
to those that are present’ (Gare 2006). Moving from the elegance of Mount Vernon to a more contemporary jargon, we also want to facilitate the development of the neural pathways in the brain that help human beings tune in with each other’s feelings, to connect emotionally—yes, that word again—to *empathise*. As educators we understand that between the age of ten and puberty, the human brain destroys its weakest connections and maintains only those synapses shown to be useful. So we know, and have communicated this to parents, that we must act at this time of adolescent brain restructuring to consolidate those neural pathways required for empathy. In classrooms, knowing that adolescents’ thinking is now becoming more nuanced, we challenge them to take positions contrary to their own and they are encouraged to look at issues from different points of view and understand that many varying factors determine a person’s motivation and action.

For Generation Y, the self has become a very public spectacle. The metaphorical footprints and fingerprints of these young people are to be found across a wider spectrum of allegedly interactive media—Facebook, MySpace, blogs, the ubiquitous phone—than has ever existed before. Such ‘relationship’ sites and devices allow them to construct a very visible but often shallow version of themselves. Increasingly, every small act and event has to be photographed, ‘published’ and ‘shared’. It is almost as though everyday life is only rendered real when filmed or uploaded. But does the copiousness of a Google return or the number of Facebook ‘friends’ tell young people anything truly worthwhile about who they are and what community means? Does this culture of conspicuous ego—characterised by a predominantly trivial, visual aesthetic—inculcate any profound sense of right and wrong? When shaped
by the mere gaze of others, is the sense of self that emerges at all positive? From the world of adults, the increasingly tyrannical cult of work understood in utilitarian terms doesn’t always ameliorate or offset the problem. Work, when decoupled from an insistence on the dignity of the person, can lead to a socially legitimated form of self-centredness as we pursue careers with something resembling pious indifference to other human beings. Are we, then, culturally complicit with the same grace-marginalising, community-repudiating world of adolescents—the one whose traits we frequently lament? By any historical standards our society is marked by a radical individualism obsessed with the self—a very particular self—a self on display and measured by appearance in the pursuit of success and material prosperity. When that trumps care and respect for others and the maturising sanctuary of a substantive inner life, then we all have a problem and must all share the blame.

Manners and courtesy—far from being optional antiquities—help create the sense of behaving for and being watched by someone more important than the impetuous wielders of gadgetry. Call that someone God, a rightly formed conscious or the better denizens of the agora—take your pick according to your religio-philosophical disposition. The development of that inner life, that authorial standard-bearer that judges, sees life both from the outside (the community) and more deeply from the inside, is a supremely important work. The task is to understand feelings and, with an increasingly refined knowledge of their meaning and implications for action, to fulfil one’s destiny in the midst of and fruitfully in relation to others.

Dr Andrew Fuller, a clinical psychologist specialising in the wellbeing of young people and their families, visited the School in July this year with a presentation specifically tailored to address issues of interest and concern to us. Acknowledging our theme of ‘Courtesy, Respect and Responsibility’, he encouraged staff to engage with our own passion and values in order to enable a spiritual transformation of the entire School community by encouraging behaviour that lauds and promotes the development of virtues such as empathy, nobility and good spirit. Dr Fuller explored the neuroanatomy of learning with an emphasis on how girls learn and he also spoke on the neurochemistry of student engagement. Perhaps most memorable, however, was his reminder that in every interaction we have with the adolescents in our lives, we are part of the process of shaping an emerging person.

To Dr Fuller and to the staff at Brisbane Girls Grammar School, the central message about how to learn and grow well is not one centred on ‘me’ but rather ‘us’. We consider it our duty to counteract the prevailing cult of self, self-promotion, ‘Look At Me’ shallowness and ‘Because you’re worth it!’ advertising so as to articulate the importance—indeed the sanctity—of the gestures, small and large, visible and invisible of one human being to another. George Eliot’s famous finale to Middlemarch, on the way Dorothea lives her life, is more resounding now than ever: ‘...the growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been, is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs.’

References:
The School’s financial resources were utilised as an enabler to achieve our aspiration “to be respected internationally as a leader in education of young women and professional teaching practices”. To follow is a brief summary of the financial results within each of the key financial categories.

**Operational Expenses**

The School’s operating expenses illustrated in Graph A were geared towards improving the delivery of the School’s curriculum. The core operating expenses have been highlighted below:

- **Staff costs**—staff costs comprise 62 per cent of the School’s total operational expenses and ensure that the School maintains its record for consistently employing highly qualified and dedicated staff.
- **Information Technology**—through a well developed ICT programme the School is demonstrating that it is a leader in the application and use of technology for the benefit of our students. The investment in ICT provides our students with an interactive learning experience and enhanced applications. Some of the initiatives in 2008 included:
  - increasing the number of computers in 2008 by 30 per cent
  - expanding of the wireless network
  - implementing various curriculum related software packages including a learning management tool that streamlines the distribution of learning materials
  - upgrading to Microsoft Office 2007
  - upgrading to the School’s internet and intranet sites.

- **Tuition Costs**—this expense funds the day to day student activities within and outside of the classroom and includes approved activities such as camps, excursions and visiting speakers.

- **Repairs and Maintenance**—the School is very proud of its beautifully maintained campuses and has a rotational maintenance programme in place. The key projects performed in 2008 included:
  - maintaining the fire panels and security systems
  - painting various buildings
  - cleaning internal high walls, ceiling and beams in the Sports Centre
  - resurfacing the two multi-purpose courts and installing new basketball posts and backboards
  - expert removal of asbestos cement sheeting (roofs, eaves and soffits) from a number of buildings and areas.
  - replacing guttering and downpipes and external painting of the Bain Centre.

**Capital Expenditure**

In the past twelve months the School successfully delivered on the following capital projects all funded through internal budgets:

- **Bain Centre**—refurbishment of staff areas for Mathematics, Science and Social and Environmental Studies Faculties
- **refurbishment of the former kitchen in the Main Building as new offices for the Department of Communications and Community Relations and incorporating two new general meeting rooms**
- **installation of data projectors and electronic white boards in class-rooms**
- **installation of fire detection systems in the Gehrmann Theatre, G Block, Bain Staff Centre and Western Wing. All buildings in the School are now protected**
- **installation of new shade umbrellas around the campus**
- **the first phase of the swimming pool project that included the schematic design and design development of the pool. Development Approval was obtained in December 2008.**

The School’s spirit and pride is reflected in its campus and has always ensured that capital developments are completed in a manner that is testament to our pursuit of excellence. This has been clearly indicated with The Cherrell Hirst Creative Learning Centre completed in 2007.
Income

Graph B demonstrates that government grants represent 20 per cent of the School’s revenue. Of this, twelve per cent comes from the federal government. Unfortunately, based on current funding formulas, the School will not be entitled to any increase in federal or state funding in 2009.

The largest portion of the School’s income is derived from tuition fees. Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) data indicates that there has been a 20.9 per cent increase in secondary student numbers for independent schools from 2002 to 2008. In the last year, from 2007 to 2008, the independent school sector grew by 4.2 per cent. The School currently has healthy enrolment lists that will sustain the current income levels in the coming years.

Government Assistance

The School would like to acknowledge the generous contributions made by the state and commonwealth governments in the form of grant payments. The grants received in 2008 included:

- recurrent state and commonwealth government grants.
- various literacy and numeracy grants, including an ESL grant
- funding from the Queensland Government for VET Coordination and Career Enhancement
- IOSP small project grants. The following three projects were made possible through the support of the Australian Government: shade umbrellas, a digital camera for Science and additional student lockers
- the asbestos removal programme over the December school holidays was made possible through the generous funding supplied by the Queensland Government’s Tomorrow’s Schools Infrastructure project.

Risk Management and Compliance

The School has a well-developed risk management and compliance programme. Effective risk management is a key factor in sustainably safeguarding of the School’s students, assets and staff, as well as its reputation.

The effective management of risks is an integral part of the day-to-day operations at the School, without being risk averse. The elements of the risk management at the School include:

- a risk management framework approved by the Board of Trustees
- fortnightly review of key risks by senior management
- annual review of risk registers
- annual self-assessment of compliance with key controls in place to manage risks
- rotational external compliance reviews for high-rated risks.

The School also implemented an electronic risk management tool in 2008 that assists with the online monitoring and review of risks and compliance.

In addition, the School is in the process of implementing a business continuity plan. The objectives of this plan are:

- to ensure that maximum possible service levels are consistently maintained
- to ensure that we recover from unforeseen interruptions to education and business delivery as quickly as possible
- to minimise the likelihood and impact (risk) of interruptions.

These are economically turbulent times. The School has a long and continuous history of organisational resilience in the face of external pressures beyond its control. We are prepared to meet the challenges we now face, we are committed to ensuring that Brisbane Girls Grammar School’s needs are met and we will continue to excel at delivering a world-class education to our students.
Brisbane Girls Grammar School was named the top girls’ school in Queensland based on the previous three years’ Overall Position (OP) results. These results reflect the students’ individual and collective talents and the dedication and commitment of our talented teachers.

For outstanding school leadership and for making a difference to young people through educational leadership, Principal Ms Amanda Bell received a Highly Commended National Achievement Award for Excellence by a Principal.

The pioneering Brisbane Girls Grammar School Centre for Science Research was opened by Queensland’s Chief Scientist, Professor Peter Andrews. The Centre aims to provide a collaborative environment in which students and teachers from a variety of schools can engage in authentic science research.

For flexible, inclusive and progressive staff policies, Brisbane Girls Grammar School was recognised with a national Employer of Choice for Women Award for the third consecutive year.

The multi-award winning Cherrell Hirst Creative Learning Centre claimed Australia’s top national architecture prize — The Sir Zelman Cowen Award for Public Architecture.

milestones
A leader in women’s sport, Brisbane Girls Grammar School was acknowledged by Queensland Girls’ Secondary School Sporting Association during the Association’s centenary celebrations as a founding member and an innovative influence on women’s sport.

The honour of Music Teacher of the Year was given to Director of Choral Music. Awarded by 4MBS Classic FM Radio, this award is generated by students nominating their teacher to show their appreciation and support.

Five teachers were recognised in the Brisbane Electorate Awards for their contributions to school and community sport.


The twelfth Gala Concert ‘All You Need Is Love’ which engaged, entertained, and captivated the audience, provided over three hundred young musicians and performers with a variety of opportunities to explore a wide range of feelings and emotions.

A team of three Year 12 physics students defeated the all-boy US champion team to win the United States Invitational Young Physicists’ Tournament—this was the first time a foreign team had been invited to enter the US competition.
Microsoft Corporation featured a case study highlighting the School’s exceptionally responsive IT infrastructure.

The Café series grew with the addition of Environment Café. The Café concept originates from the Café Philosophique movement, started in France in 1992 by the philosopher Marc Sautet. Girls Grammar was the first secondary school in Australia to establish its own Cafés.

The English Faculty initiated a targeted programme of one-on-one tutelage to support learning for Year 12 students.

next practice
During the International Year of Languages, the School held a special programme to emphasise the importance of studying languages other than English to encourage deeper understanding and tolerance of other cultures.

Students’ fundraising efforts reached a collective total of $82,409.09 for a variety of charities.

The most outstanding team in the Brisbane region was awarded to the School in the finals of the Bond University Mooting Competition; in addition two team members received individual Advocacy Merit Awards.

Three of our debaters won Brisbane Girls Grammar the annual University of Queensland Vice Chancellor’s Schools Debating Championship for the first time.

Author, musician and international speaker, Ruth Bonetti, worked with students on developing professional techniques for preventing performance anxiety, handling constructive criticism and reducing tension.

Over twenty professionals representing industries as diverse as aviation, engineering and performing arts were present at the Careers Mentoring Breakfast held for senior students.

Miriam Lyons from the Centre for Policy Development was the inaugural Visiting Scholar for the Social and Environmental Studies Faculty.

A trendsetter in innovative and technology-based practices, the Beanland Memorial Library celebrated its 50th anniversary. Brisbane Girls Grammar School was one of the first schools to have a dedicated library building.

Top honours were taken out by girls in Years 8 and 9 in the Girls Solving IT for Themselves competition – a major competition that celebrates National Numeracy Week.

Individual learning programmes were created for students undertaking tertiary studies concurrent with their senior certificate.
Seventy-two girls dedicated themselves to the Antipodean challenge in Tanzania performing valuable community service, challenging themselves, seeking adventure and giving something back to make a difference in the lives of others.

Masterclasses were conducted with internationally renowned soprano Lisa Gasteen and music extension students performed with one of Australia’s leading new music ensembles, Topology, at the Brisbane Powerhouse.

Our students were active in international social and political events, attending conferences including the United Nations State Youth Conference, Amnesty International, the Queensland Youth Parliament, and the Youth Peace Parliament.

Our Opti-MINDS team took out first place in state finals.

Five Grammar girls comprised the Australian IYPT team and represented their school and country at the World finals held in Croatia.
A Girls Grammar student was selected for the State Debating Team.

Thirteen financially savvy Year 10 Enterprise Management students won all categories in the Queensland Office of Fair Trading Buy Smart competition.

Students launched a Grammar Goes Green environmental initiative and helped in the revegetation of sections of Enoggera and Ithaca Creeks.

Two students won bronze medals at the International Junior Science Olympiad in Korea.

One student won a prestigious Goethe Institute Scholarship which enabled her to travel to Germany.

A Year 11 student beat senior students from around Australia in the esteemed 39th Australian National Final Japanese Language Speech Contest where she demonstrated excellence in both language skills and public speaking. The same student also won the prestigious Japanese Speech Award Video Speech Contest.
By inviting students from Brisbane Girls Grammar School and the best students from other schools to use the Centre’s facilities, the Centre for Science Research is educating young scientists in the value of scientific discovery through collaboration.

The Centre for Science Research is a facility designed to create a synergy between young scientists, science educators, professional scientists, technicians, physical resources and infrastructure to foster a passion for scientific research among all students during their school years, regardless of academic achievement. This is vital step in encouraging high-quality, original, open-ended research by the scientific leaders of tomorrow.

The Centre allows students to practise science as professionals do in real-world situations, providing them with opportunities to position themselves amongst the best young scientists worldwide.

Through cooperation between the Centre for Science Research, the Queensland Government and scientists in the United States, Brisbane Girls Grammar School students are gaining future opportunities for international research collaboration at the Seattle Biomedical Research Institute.

A strong link between the curriculum and the co-curriculum areas of the School is fostered by the Centre, enabling students to engage in science training beyond the timetabled day. Students use the facilities to prepare for national and international competitions such as the Physics, Biology and Chemistry Olympiads, International Young Physicists’ Tournament and the International Junior Science Olympiad.

The major objective of the Centre for Science Research is to combat the global trend of declining numbers of science students and therefore future scientists.

RECOGNISING THAT EXCELLENCE IN SCIENCE CANNOT BE ACHIEVED IN ISOLATION, THE BRISBANE GIRLS GRAMMAR SCHOOL CENTRE FOR SCIENCE RESEARCH WAS OPENED BY QUEENSLAND CHIEF SCIENTIST PROFESSOR PETER ANDREWS IN 2008, AND IS A PIONEERING EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVE WHICH AIMS TO ENCOURAGE STUDENTS FROM AROUND AUSTRALIA TO ENJOY SCIENCE AND DISCOVER NEW SCIENTIFIC OPPORTUNITIES.

Centre for SCIENCE RESEARCH
breath-taking
WINNING A HOST OF HONOURS, THE CHERRELL HIRST CREATIVE LEARNING CENTRE HAS BEEN NATIONALLY LAUDED AS A BOLD FEAT OF BOTH EDUCATIONAL AND ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN.

The Cherrell Hirst CREATIVE LEARNING CENTRE

In being awarded Australia’s highest architectural accolade, the Sir Zelman Cowen Award for Public Buildings, from the Australian Institute of Architects, the judges commented that the building is “a bold and purposeful architecture that is heartening to contemplate when considering the education of young women.” Alec Tzannes, chair of the national awards jury said, “it’s an outstanding, world-leading facility for the learning experience, and equivalently for architecture and architects … It’s a brilliant resolution of the context—it took our breath away.”
This landmark building has been embraced by the whole School community and the public at large. A member of the general public—unattached to the School or the architectural community—wrote: “I really do think it is an impressive structure—congratulations on the recognition from the award.”

In providing high-quality facilities with a significant focus on the changing needs of students, staff and the School community, The Cherrell Hirst Creative Learning Centre has exceeded expectations as a world-class learning environment. The Centre further enhances the School’s commitment to providing both thoughtful and experiential educational contexts.

The Centre has provided a practical, spacious and ingenious solution to the learning needs of Grammar girls. The new building has over 8,900 square metres of space and has increased teaching capacity by forty-four per cent and overall campus space by sixty-five per cent.
AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

The Australian Institute of Architects' Sir Zelman Cowen Award for Public Buildings. This is widely recognised as Australia's leading award for public buildings.

The Australian Institute of Architects’ Queensland Architecture Awards—High Commendation for Interior Architecture

The Australian Institute of Architects’ Queensland Architecture Awards—FDG Stanley Award for Public Architecture

The Australian Institute of Architects’ Queensland Regional Awards—Commendation for Interior Architecture and Public Buildings

The Australian Institute of Building National and Queensland Professional Excellence Award for Commercial Construction $10m to $50m

The Master Builders Association Queensland and Brisbane Housing and Construction Award for Education Facilities over $12 Million. MBA Awards recognise those at the forefront of building innovation excellence in the housing and construction industry.

Engineers Australia’s Engineering Excellence Awards High Commendation for Buildings and Structures.

Association of Consulting Engineers Australia Awards of Excellence—Silver Award for Building Services

Association of Consulting Engineers Australia Awards of Excellence—Silver Award for Building

Australian Institute of Refrigeration, Air Conditioning and Heating Awards of Excellence 2008—Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning category winner

Featured in GoMA exhibition Place Makers: Contemporary Queensland Architects

Voted Top Building by The Architects programme from a highly creditable field of national and international nominations

Poetry certainly does matter at our School, and is accorded a place of prominence in our English programmes. By studying poetry, ‘the language of metaphor’, we acquire a deep analytical ability. This ability is not merely academic; it makes us not just clever, but wise too. Poetry also empowers its practitioners and readers by providing a model of lexical economy and precision. If we read it widely and often enough… verse can teach us to use the right words in the right combinations.

MR STEPHEN WOODS, DIRECTOR ENGLISH FACULTY

Literacy represents opportunities and choice, the ability to interact, function and contribute to a wider society. The power of books to elevate, entertain and challenge must never be underestimated.

MRS KRISTINE COOKE, DIRECTOR INFORMATION STUDIES FACULTY

To me the development of problem solving skills is a way in which to provide our students with the skill sets needed to confront the challenges of change. Our young people must become adept at the skills associated with complex problem solving in order to re-create the fundamentals of global symbiosis. Problem solving skills are not only required in the mathematics classroom they are also needed in fields as diverse as engineering, agriculture and biotechnologies, through to business administration.

MR GARY BROMILEY, DIRECTOR MATHEMATICS FACULTY

The strong relationship between misconceptions and the acquisition of scientific knowledge provided the impetus for the design of our Junior Science units. They are largely activity-based, compelling students to foreground their misconceptions and struggle with cognitive dissonance until they achieve an enduring, coherent scientific understanding. This approach is clearly beneficial to those pursuing science in the senior school and beyond, but this is also the key to improving the general population’s understanding of science.

DR SALLY STEPHENS, DIRECTOR SCIENCE FACULTY

Adventurous activities at Marrapatta are approached with a ‘challenge by choice’ philosophy. Students are encouraged to participate – but not forced or coerced. The greater the challenge — the more reason to tackle it. One of the many challenges of raising and educating young women is finding ways to teach them how to capitalise on these events. If we create the spaces for girls to think and develop effective habits, we have helped to provide a pathway they can explore and, ultimately own.

MR JAMES McINTOSH, DIRECTOR MARRAPATTA MEMORIAL OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTRE

How timely that in the UN designated International Year of Languages the Australian government should revisit the debate on Language Learning with renewed vigour. In the face of the dismal figures on students who graduate high school with a language, Federal Education Minister Julia Gillard has now indicated that her government will work towards putting in place actions to significantly increase the number of students who acquire language skills.

MS LORRAINE THORNQUIST, DIRECTOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES FACULTY

It is our hope that we act as role models for our students and that we give them a thirst for ideas even when these ideas are complex, controversial or confusing. It is our hope that we present the many sides of issues we teach, that we identify our bias and that in turn we challenge our students to think about theirs. It is our hope that we model fairness and concern for our fellow citizens and that when we fail we acknowledge this failure to them so that they may do the same. It is our hope that we work with the families to reinforce the values of the home and we hope that we do this with an open integrity that helps to make our society more tolerant of difference. This is how we, as teachers of the social sciences, conceive our curriculum and value education.

MR BRUCE ADDISON, DIRECTOR SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES FACULTY
2008 was The Year of Physical Activity, and the Health Studies Faculty continues to encourage girls to appreciate both the intellectual and performance elements of physical activity and sport. The Faculty aims to promote an understanding of the necessity for lifelong involvement in physical activity. The philosophy of inclusive physical education has always been an integral part of every girl’s education at Girls Grammar. As a place of learning, we succeed when we produce health-literate, physically active girls who continue to embrace these ideals long after they have left the School, because in many ways the future of our country will be determined by the health and wellbeing of its citizens.

MR STEPHEN FOGARTY, DIRECTOR HEALTH STUDIES

When Visual Art, Music and Drama students become critically, sensitively, technically and aesthetically engaged in the arts they connect through these experiences. They learn to negotiate, and understand more deeply their own relationships and interrelationships as they affect themselves but also as they affect those outside of themselves, the other, in a potent and transformative way. In so doing they have the potential to become the inventors of the new cultural patterns and social philosophies of tomorrow.

MRS J COLWILL, DIRECTOR CREATIVE ARTS FACULTY

Flow is achieved when musicians are able to retrieve information, access ideas, apply practised technical skills, compare sounds, and make choices. When performing, our young musicians search for musical meaning and that special moment that sends a thrill through the audience. The hope is that their hard work and practice will converge to reach a state of flow—the source of powerful and lasting personal experience.

MR MARK SULLIVAN, DIRECTOR OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

I believe passionately that you have to provide teachers and students with flexible, imaginative learning spaces if they are going to be able to change and grow towards their potential. Changing spaces to enable changed learning meant the rooms on CLC level 5 are as different from traditional classrooms as we were game to make them. For example, two staff can work together with two classes in the double space with one conferencing with a group of students, the other working with individual students, and computer screens full of wonderful creative ideas operating just as we have envisaged.

DR ANN FARLEY, TECHNOLOGY STUDIES FACULTY

The prime motivator for Grammar girls to play sport is that it is consistently fun. However, the traditional values of sport—those of fairness, honesty, discipline, character building and team spirit—are ones that this School holds dear.

MRS CHRIS MOORE, DIRECTOR OF SPORT

Within our Teacher Talk Provocations Series organised through the School’s Centre for Professional Practice, guest lecturers from our Griffith University partners acquainted staff with implications for learning from new technologies. User-created content, social networking sites, collaborative knowledge-building, mobile learning and virtual worlds were explored and subsequent staff discussions investigated their implications for teaching and learning opportunities.

DR KAY KIMBER, DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRE FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE
We witnessed great and powerful bankers to the ‘global village’ teeter and crash, shattering like the proverbial Humpty without a prospect of shell-repair. And, consistent with the old adage, ‘the US sneezes and the rest of the world catches a cold’, right across the globe now we have all begun to experience one of the most rapid and acute periods of economic decline in many decades.

We transited through a change of federal government in Australia bringing with it the historic Sorry Day. We were proud to have the former official visitor to Brisbane Girls Grammar School, the Governor of Queensland, Quentin Bryce AC, appointed as the first female Governor-General of Australia, and then, only this past month, we saw history made with the election of the first African-American President of the United States of America.

I have also noticed this past year a distinct shift in the deftness with which we have all begun to use expressions like ‘climate change’ and ‘carbon footprint’, albeit with far greater unease as to what that might really mean to our futures.

And whether or not it is climate change, we have this year experienced the savageness of the wild swings of Dorothea Mackellar’s ‘land of drought and flooding rains’ between last November, when we were caught directly in the grip of the most acute drought in almost a century, and this week with its literal flooding rains, which have directly affected our community, including some of our own Grammar families to whom our thoughts go out. And speaking of families to whom our thoughts are directed at this time, I would make special mention of the Churchie families affected by yesterday’s terrible accident. Our thoughts are strongly with them as their sons, like our daughters, finish school today.

It is this world, with all of its highs and lows, its triumphs and disasters into which we send our finishing Year 12s armed, we trust, with the integrity, confidence and wisdom, as Rudyard Kipling would have said, ‘to meet with triumph and disaster’ and ‘treat those two imposters just the same’.

Ms Elizabeth Nosworthy, AO, Ms Amanda Bell, Principal of Brisbane Girls Grammar School, distinguished guests one and all—parents, staff, supporters, friends, students, but particularly today our prize winners and our Year 12 students—on behalf of the Board of Trustees of our much–loved School, I am pleased to welcome you to the Annual Speech Day and Distribution of Prizes in the 133rd year of the life of the School.

I can scarcely believe that it is twelve months since we gathered here for this most important ceremony in the annual life of the School. But when one stops to scan the catalogue of events of this past year, it is perhaps more surprising that it has only been twelve months since we met, for in that time:

We thrilled at the spectacle of the Beijing Olympics, met at once with both universal outrage at media censorship of certain political issues and views, and with universal acclaim at some of the most stunning sporting (and architectural!) achievements in recent history.

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It is this world, with all of its highs and lows, its triumphs and disasters into which we send our finishing Year 12s armed, we trust, with the integrity, confidence and wisdom, as Rudyard Kipling would have said, ‘to meet with triumph and disaster’ and ‘treat those two imposters just the same’.
I sometimes think that our world is so obsessed with celebrating the highs and hand-wringing at the lows, that we forget the real value of experiencing both the highs and the lows. For as the old adage goes, ‘the only true mistakes are those you don’t learn from.’ And yet we continue to focus on the black and white artificial divides that we so like to create as humans; things are ‘good or bad’—it’s ‘black or white’—as distinct from appreciating that there is almost no strength that is not at once a weakness, no opportunity that is not also a threat, nothing that is not generally both good and bad. And it is the fixation with these artificial divides that brings me to this year’s Chair of Trustees Annual Book Club Review book!

You may recall that last year my then current favourite book was the Wisdom of Crowds,3 a book which sought to prove empirically the old truism “that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts”; that any diverse group of individuals given the right environment will always perform overall better than any of its individuals, including the very best and brightest amongst them. Hence my thesis last year was that the students of Brisbane Girls Grammar School prove this theory over and over, making the experience for the whole group overall vastly better than it could be for any one of them individually.

Well, this year’s imagination-catcher for me is a recently released book called The Age of Wonder by Richard Holmes.4 Thus a world of wisdom in 2007 begets a world of wonder in 2008.

The Age of Wonder, explores a marvellous time in history, the Romantic period of the late eighteenth century. A time before the artificial divide had taken hold between science and poetry (or more broadly science and art). Holmes tells stories of Romantic science, including some deep and unlikely personal friendships between great scientists and great poets of the time. This was a time when the author says ‘the notion of wonder seems to be something that united5 these two forces, poetry and science. As one reviewer put it, both poets and scientists ‘faced infinity equally with ‘feelings of awe and terror’.

Holmes’ stories can’t help but encourage the reader to think about the infinite possibilities of life with, as Holmes puts it, that ‘childlike, but infinitely complex word wonder’ rather than within the constraints of such rigid disciplines as art OR science or anything else for that matter.

So, as your imaginations run riot with the wonders of the great Romantic period of history, you must surely be wondering, then, what matters of high philosophy, science and art have occupied the minds of your Board of Trustees this past year?

1 D Mackellar, My Country, 1906
2 R Kipling, If, 1910
3 J Surowiecki, Wisdom of Crowds, Doubleday, 2004
6 S Carroll, The Age, October 13, 2008
Wondering about the Board?

Well, for a start the Board has continued to face our own special infinity (with both awe and terror at times!) through the constant and endless balancing act of meeting the vast array of competing resourcing needs within the School. This requires that we consider carefully the equally important, or at least equally compelling, needs, wants, demands and desires of our diverse School community, none of which flag in spite of difficult financial times. In balancing these competing demands, we strive to ensure that our Principal and her staff are properly resourced to deliver the quality secondary education for girls that has been the mark of this School for 133 years.

In face of these challenges, I would like to pay tribute to the members of the Board, all of whom are incredibly dedicated to the interests of this School. All give freely, voluntarily to the School, of their time and their broad range of valuable skills and experiences for the good governance of the School. On behalf of the School community I would like to thank all of them for that: Dr Mary Mahoney, Deputy Chair of the Board; Mr Tony Young, Chairman of the Board’s Finance and Audit Committee; Ms Sally Pitkin, also a member of the Finance and Audit Committee; Ms Else Shepherd; Mr David Vann; and Professor John Hay.

The Wonder of our Strategy

As foreshadowed last year, the Board reviewed the School’s strategy at our Board retreat in February. Incorporating a session with representatives of each of the main School support groups—OGA, P&F, Mothers, Fathers and Music support groups—that review resulted in a reaffirmation by your Board of our commitment to continue with our present course—our strategy of being a dedicated secondary school for girls in the true Grammar School tradition. I remind you that this is the tradition of the Grammar School which springs from the origins of the concept in a now long past era when the study of Latin grammar was finally made accessible to children of middle-class families, who would not be able to access a university education without such an education, which was previously solely the domain of the elite wealthy classes.

In reaffirming our strategy, the wonder of our School’s success is that it is a formula that is remarkably simple. For we are simply committed to continuing to do what we do extremely well, educating teenaged secondary school girls, in the Grammar School tradition of opening the gate to a higher education for those who want to take that path.

Indeed it was our commitment to providing a high-quality secondary education for girls which was the driver behind the decision several years ago to work towards the introduction of Year 7 to Brisbane Girls Grammar School in 2015. That decision, interestingly, appears to have been borne out by recent statements by the Minister for Education in Queensland that suggest that the years of schooling may be reorganised in the state system such that our proposed Year 7 entry level is expected to align with the commencement of secondary school in the state system in or around 2015.

Truly an Age of Wonder: continuing to conquer our site

This past year has seen the Board engaged in ongoing decisions around the next stage of the development of our site, announced here last year in the fledgling concept stage. That was, of course, the development of the new swimming pool on the Gregory Terrace site. As always, our difficult land-locked site has presented significant challenges for this development. Whilst this has resulted in a longer process than we had initially hoped, it is the Board’s united view that the only acceptable outcome is a pool which amounts to the best possible on-site option enabling our superb and dedicated sports staff to deliver curriculum water sports and life-saving to the highest standards. The Board has thus taken the time to consider fully all possible options, choosing to sacrifice the preferred speed of the pool’s development in favour of the greater good of delivering the best possible option.

And speaking of our site, I could hardly let this occasion pass without mentioning the recent national Sir Zelman Cowan Award for Public Architecture, which was conferred on The Cherrell Hirst Creative Learning Centre against an enormously impressive field of public buildings from right across the country.

Principal and Staff: little Wonder our girls succeed

As always we are unable to achieve our strategy without the efforts of our talented and dedicated group of teaching and administrative staff. It is with a sense of true wonder that the Board witnesses the range of state, national and international forums in which members of our staff are recognised for leading professional practice across a range of academic and other pursuits. It is a matter of great pride that our staff do not just achieve benchmarks set for them, but that they set them for others.
Which brings us to the Principal. This year saw Ms Bell recognised in the National Achievement Awards for Excellence by a Principal, appointed to the Board of the Queensland Art Gallery, and successfully complete her PhD in the non-existent spare-time that her 24/7 role as Principal of this fine School leaves her. Once again, Amanda, we are grateful for the exceptional professionalism, dynamism and vision, and concern for our students with which you continue to lead Brisbane Girls Grammar School.

Our Wonderful Parents

Sometimes being a part of the busy interconnected community of this School makes me feel like little more than an ant in the ever-frenetic ant mound of A Bug’s Life fame (which thanks to my five year old niece is still getting regular re-runs in the broader Jameson family homes). Parents, what has this to do with you? I won’t torture the analogy in fear of being forced to answer obvious questions, such as ‘who plays the role of Ant Queen in this mound?’ and ‘Who are the nasty grasshoppers?’. But let me explain what I mean.

In this ant mound, as our girls busily scale the heights of wonder in their various fields of endeavour—metaphorically lifting many times their own weight in typical ant-like behaviour—way down below the ant mound there are myriad committed (and frazzled) parents rushing about storing up the winter supplies. I would like to recognise your efforts. The Board’s sincere thanks, in particular, go to the dedicated members of the various parent support groups, who so effectively enhance the social (and indeed financial) fabric of our busy ant mound.

The Wonder of our Students

2008 has most assuredly been yet another Age of Wonder in the life of the School, balancing in equal parts wonderful achievements in not only the arts and sciences but of course the other important dimension so obviously enjoyed by so many of our high-achieving students—sport—with a large number of firsts and personal bests for our students across an amazing array of activities in all of these fields. It is in this regard that the spirit of the Age of Wonder is perhaps best exemplified, as our girls do not allow narrow-minded divisions between arts, sciences, sport or any other endeavour they pursue to restrict their thinking or their ambition.

To those of you, and you are many, who have achieved personal bests this year, broken records, and brought honours to yourself, your family, our School, go our heartfelt congratulations. To those of you who have cheered them on, the significance of their efforts are doubled because of that spirit of celebration which you have shared with them. And, moreover, that shared celebration will serve to strengthen your celebration when you achieve your own personal bests—in whatever field or walk of life that may occur—as you will undoubtedly do.

And on the matter of personal bests, this year has seen one of our most deserving past students, Caitlin Goss (Dux of School in 2001), achieve the highly coveted Rhodes Scholarship. Caitlin is the third Rhodes Scholar within the alumni of our School that, interestingly, produced the first Queensland woman to receive the scholarship in 1977.

To the seniors of 2008 in particular, under the mature and assured leadership of Avi and Cassie, you have clearly ‘Made your Mark’ in 2008, and on this most significant day we celebrate with you the excitement of once again confronting what probably seems, yet again, like infinity stretching before you, although hopefully now with much more awe and just a little less terror than when you first passed in through the School gates as a fresh-faced Year 8 girl. Indeed, Year 12s, my wish for you is that we are sending you out into the world with every bit of wisdom and wonder that you can muster.

We wish each of you well as you go forth knowing that your own personal Age of Wonder, begun five years ago at Brisbane Girls Grammar School, is not over but only just beginning.

Or, as the great philosopher, Buzz Lightyear, would have said,—‘To Infinity and Beyond’.
This year has not been without its media excesses focussing on events such as the Beijing Olympics, Barack Obama as the President–elect of the United States of America, the execution of the Bali bombers and the global financial crisis.

The financial breakdown that began in the US sub-prime mortgage market in early 2007 has grown and metastasised over the subsequent 18 months, until suddenly emerging as a full-scale crisis. Every few months, it seemed, announcements were made reporting that the problem had been contained, only for it to re-emerge in some new and previously unaffected part of the financial sector.

(Quiggin, 2008)

Our tendency in these times of de-stabilisation is to turn to history, not only to try to understand the ‘hows’ and ‘whys’, but to draw comfort from history merely repeating itself and thereby seek lessons and predict how the latest manifestation might run its course.

[Historically] In the spring of 1837, a great depression afflicted the northern United States … Of the 850 banks in the US, nearly half closed or partly failed … The similarities between the crashes of 1837 and 1929 are evident again today (Bloom, 2008)

Panic underpinned these and the latest world crisis. Predictions of high unemployment, high inflation, high interest rates and high anxiety cause high tendencies to apportion blame. We seem to live in a culture of blame, reluctant to individually and collectively take responsibility for our own actions and lives. Our society seeks compensation first as a desired way to ameliorate misfortune. If we are teaching our children and our students to be responsible members of the community, what lessons do we want them to extract from the latest global economic dilemma— surely blame as redress is not one of them?
The problem with the sub-prime crisis is that there seems to be more than enough blame to go around. Home buyers were gullible and greedy, happily signing their names to bogus claims about their income and assets in the hope of riches from capital gains. Bankers made [housing] loans to people with no prospect of repaying them, knowing they could sell them. Financial markets used the alchemy of securitisation to turn these junk assets into AAA-rated [products] … and the regulators looked over the entire process and pronounced it good. (Quiggin, 2008)

So perhaps the mess all stems from poor individual choice and decision-making, a lack of commonsense and an inability to take responsibility for one’s own affairs. A good lesson in what not to do. It is interesting to note that the word ‘mortgage’ is derived from the French and translates as ‘dead pledge’. Given most Australian families’ major debt would be a mortgage facility for their home, this derivation is a sobering thought. Fundamental issues surrounding mortgages and debt have escalated the recent crisis from one of personal poor decision–making, to one of structural and corporate failing.

Debt is an intriguing human invention. An obligation in services, money, or goods owed by one party, the debtor, to another, the creditor. In some ancient cultures, such as Rome and Mesopotamia, debt was associated with slavery because the insolvent debtor and his household were in many cases turned over to the creditor to perform compulsory services. The Greek debtors who defaulted forfeited their citizenship. Ancient Egyptians pledged the body of their nearest deceased relative to be a slave in the afterlife (my personal favourite). In Palestine, every fiftieth year Jewish debtors were freed and their obligations were cancelled. Some cultures argue against debt as an instrument and institution, on a personal, family, social, corporate and governmental level—not a bad idea. The Catholic Church only allowed it from 1822 onwards, Islam forbids lending with interest even today, and the Jewish Torah states that all debts should be erased every seven years and every fifty years. (Dictionary.com, Atwood, 2008)

The modern-day vehicle of bankruptcy enables the erasure of personal debt to facilitate a clean start. However, corporate debt and subsequent failure of corporate viability and responsibility (a number of which the world and Australia have witnessed in recent times), inevitably results in significant impact upon individual investors, creditors and employees. These corporate ramifications cannot be so easily erased.

The condition of being ‘in debt’ is like being in some strange limbo land with its presence never far from consciousness. A land of betwixt and between, which Dr Seuss describes as ‘The Waiting Place’ (1990). A holding pattern, where, depending upon the level of obligation, the burden of carriage can be oppressive and lengthy. A place no-one wants to be and from which a timely and quick acquittal brings commensurate relief.

Demographer Bernard Salt said an economic downturn will prove a turning point for those aged between 15 and 30 … “In some respects the looming recession in 2009 will abruptly end the long Indian summer of generation Y’s youth”, he said. Joshua Williamson believes this could be a defining moment for young people accustomed to using credit [or their parents] to fuel high levels of discretionary spending during a period of cheap debt and good liquidity. (McKenny, 2008)

While such prophecies bring a sense of doom and gloom, they equally do not give credit to a generation which is globally connected, technologically savvy and not necessarily aspiring to goals that previous generations have; for example, a job for life and ownership of a family home. I would like to think that Grammar girls are thoughtful problem solvers, resilient, confident in their commonsense and capable of assessing situations and making decisions with considered reference to all available information. Salt supports my more optimistic view by noting that, ‘… young people today are better equipped to handle a recession than previous generations—and might even turn out to be more resilient for the experience. Generation Y is the most educated in history. They’re articulate, they’re confident, they’re well-travelled, they’re knowledgeable … good with relationships and identifying opportunities.’ (McKenny, 2008)

Therefore, young people should think carefully about their economic capacity as they approach adult independence. Credit is seductive and the debt insidious. Instant material gratification based on a credit and debt equation is perhaps better avoided until personal financial circumstances are secure.

Margaret Atwood, in an essay titled The Debtor’s Prism, sagely points out that ‘without memory there is no debt’ (2008). Similarly, the adage ‘neither a borrower nor a lender be’ and the home grown advice ‘only lend money if you are prepared to give it’ provides us with wise counsel. While we can all recognise the commonsense underpinning these sayings, we live in a society heavily reliant on debt, and the notion of combining debt and giving in the same breath seems contradictory. Atwood uses the unpalatable Dickensian example of the niggard Ebenezer Scrooge to illustrate how an uncharitable usurer can eventually effect good
deeds owing to his previous self-serving spirit. Scrooge is a miser who lives an abstemious and mirthless existence collecting and hoarding money.

‘Scrooge’s sin was to freeze his money’ (Atwood, 2008). Currency has no value unless it flows; in other words it needs to circulate between people to have purpose and power. Hoarding money without investment makes it worthless. At the end of A Christmas Carol, Scrooge sees the light, and discovers great personal happiness and satisfaction from bringing relief and joy to others. Therefore, Scrooge repays a personal debt of mean spiritedness. His newly found largesse is not dissimilar to the path followed by some of our modern day philanthropists.

Not all debt is currency-based. A debt of gratitude or a debt to society is often more difficult to articulate, quantify and repay.

At this juncture, I would like to acknowledge my debt of gratitude to the Chair, Ms Elizabeth Jameson and the Trustees for their generous support and guidance this year; for their genuine interest in, and advocacy of, the School’s myriad activities and initiatives; for their pride in the students; for their active engagement with our community, and for their personal investment of time and expertise to ensure we continue to thrive as a leading school for young women. To the dedicated staff, who approach each day with care, professionalism and enthusiasm—my personal thanks for generating such a creative teaching and learning environment for the students and each other. In concert with the Board and staff is our vibrant community of alumni, support groups and parents, who collectively enrich our School’s intent. We are all deeply appreciative of their contributions and assistance.
Most of us would acknowledge a debt of gratitude to our parents for obvious reasons; hopefully most of us would also acknowledge a debt of gratitude to our teachers, for without a good education our future independence can be jeopardised. How to acknowledge and requite such intangible debts is an individual matter, but the personal benefit of recognising our responsibilities in this regard is important. Dyan Sublett noted that, ‘…the responsibility for family and community that has historically belonged to women, [and] the responsibility to give is a characteristic that cannot be underestimated in understanding women’s philanthropic behaviour.’ (Sublett, 1993)

She also found that ‘the passing on of philanthropic behaviour to the next generation’ was a consistent theme in her discussions with girls and women. Her research highlighted major characteristics that define women’s philanthropic behaviour. Firstly, that there is a personal motive to give and become involved owing to a moral belief in an organisation or issue that galvanises their emotional commitment. Secondly, there is a family tradition of parental giving, particularly by the mother. Thirdly, there is the desire to make a difference, to know that they are effecting change and giving something back to the community through their contributions—repaying a debt to society.

Year 12, you have ‘made your mark’ this year—one which leaves a legacy to this School and the young women and girls following behind. You leave Girls Grammar on an optimistic note—one which you should remember with affection and pride. Feel justifiably pleased with your endeavours and the generous way in which you have thought about and supported others. You now bequeath your leadership to the next generation of Grammar girls. I thank you and wish you all good fortune and contentment for the future.

I will leave you with the words of the nineteenth-century American writer, Ralph Waldo Emerson. Apparently Emerson was ‘electrified by financial storms’ and their capacity to invoke a new and clearer sense of self-reliance and reflection on the important things in life, rather than economic misfortune’s impact on materialism and personal gain. The 1837 depression inspired Emerson’s Harvard oration The American Scholar (Bloom, 2008), in which he summarised the important considerations which should take precedence over the then economic crisis; conditions which should enrich our thoughts about others rather than ourselves. Emerson said that the topics in these times should be ‘the literature of the poor, the feelings of the child, the philosophy of the street, and the meaning of household life.’

Ms Amanda Bell

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EVERY GENERATION HAS ITS CHALLENGES TO CONFRONT. MY PARENTS HAD TO DEAL WITH THE SECOND WORLD WAR AND ITS AFTERMATH, THE COLD WAR. MY GENERATION HAS CONFRONTED SUBSTANTIAL SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CHANGE, THE VIETNAM WAR, MORE RECENTLY THE RISE OF GLOBAL TERRORISM AND CURRENTLY A GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS.

Introduction

Elizabeth Nosworthy AO is Chair of the Queensland Water Commission and an Adjunct Professor of Law at The University of Queensland. She has a BA, LLB and LLD (Hons) from The University of Queensland, an LLM from the London School of Economics. She is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Before pursuing a career as a full-time non-executive director, she was a partner of a national legal firm, and has had more than twenty years’ experience as a commercial lawyer specialising in infrastructure projects.

Ms Nosworthy has extensive experience in business, public administration and public policy development. She has held a range of directorships in both the private and public sectors; for example Telstra, David Jones, Brisbane Airport, the Australian National University and the National Gallery of Australia. She is a past President of the Queensland Law Society.

Ms Nosworthy was the winner of the AICD (Qld Division) 2001 Gold Medal Award for Outstanding Director.

In 2003 she was awarded a Centenary Medal for service to Australian society in business leadership. In the same year, she also received the Queensland Law Society President’s Award for a personal outstanding contribution to the advancement of law and justice.

In 2005 Ms Nosworthy was made an Officer in the Order of Australia.

Perhaps most importantly for us today is that Ms Nosworthy was educated at Brisbane Girls Grammar School.

Ms Amanda Bell
Principal
Today I want to talk to you about the biggest challenge that will face your generation—a challenge that has the potential to change the face of the planet and to radically change the way you will live.

Of course I’m talking about climate change.

There will likely be no bigger challenge that any of you will face during your lifetimes. It will affect the way you live your lives day to day, the way you work and many different aspects of the world around you, both big and small.

When most people think about climate change they focus primarily on how they can change their own behaviour—switch off the lights, turn off the taps, and so on.

But, in fact, as climate change progressively changes the face of the planet, it will require all of you to adapt and respond in myriad ways. Therefore it’s important that you start thinking about this now, because the world of today is not necessarily the world you will inherit.

So let’s talk about some of the changes that will come and what it will mean to Australia and to you.

We have already seen some of the impacts of climate change on our surroundings—more extreme weather events such as long droughts, cyclones and damaging storms, and floods. As time goes on we will see more of these events, and also permanent changes in the weather of some regions of the country. The south–eastern part of Australia will become much dryer, northern Australia will become much wetter and South–East Queensland may see more extreme storms coupled with more droughts. All of Australia will become warmer and the seas around us will also warm up. We can expect to see very significant changes in the Great Barrier Reef and some, or all of the Reef, may die off by the middle of the century. We have already seen the possibly irreversible damage to the Murray Darling River—our greatest inland river system.

So how will this affect all of you?

Well firstly, you will have to live much more sustainable lives than your parents have done. Everyone will have to focus every day on saving electricity, using water efficiently, doing less harm to the environment and improving their individual carbon footprints. But this is the easy part.

The real challenge is that many of the changes that have already begun in our climate are either irreversible or not reversible for many decades—so you will have to adapt.

Let’s look at some examples of the different climate change challenges that your different careers will encompass in coming decades.

As northern Australia gets hotter and wetter, new pests and diseases will arrive on our shores. We will see more mosquitoes and more tropical bugs and parasites. Doctors and nurses will treat more malaria, dengue fever, Ross River fever and similar tropical diseases spread from Asia and Papua New Guinea. Many of these problems will spread down into South–East Queensland as the state gets warmer. So, tropical medicine will become a very popular and important speciality—and we will need many new medical researchers investigating these new diseases and how they affect Australians.

Companies will face huge challenges in adapting their businesses to be carbon neutral and sustainable; government authorities will require extensive and complex reporting and measurement of carbon usage; businesses will have to find ways to adapt to these new requirements whilst still remaining profitable. Business graduates, lawyers and accountants will be at the forefront of assisting businesses with these issues.

We will need scientists of every discipline—environmental scientists to help us measure and respond to the new climate; agricultural scientists who will help our farmers develop new drought tolerant crops; and crops resistant to new tropical bugs and pests. We will also need vaccines and cures for new diseases in cattle and sheep spread by new insects.
We will need marine biologists and other marine scientists to help us save our reefs. As seas get warmer, our current fishing grounds will disappear and new ones will develop elsewhere. Our fishing industry will need the help of marine scientists to change and adapt.

For those of you who want to live and work in rural and regional Australia, do not assume that the stock, crops, vegetables etcetera that are currently grazed or farmed in your region will remain in the future. Graziers and farmers will have to adapt to new ways of sustainability, and grazing and farming will become even more high-tech and require an even more professional approach than today. Many areas of rural Australia that are today successful farming and grazing areas may not be workable within your lifetimes—other areas may open up and offer different crops and opportunities.

As our climate changes we will need new and more sustainable housing and other buildings. In some parts of the country we will also need buildings that are specifically designed to be cyclone proof. So we will need new and better designs and ideas from our architects, engineers, town planners, interior designers and builders.

We will need to be smarter about designing our cities. The population will continue to grow. In South–East Queensland for example, we will have an extra million people by 2026—that’s approximately 600,000 new homes to be built by then. You will have to design sustainable new suburbs and new satellite cities to cope with all this growth, and you will have to re-design our current cities and inner suburbs to be more efficient and higher density.

We all enjoy the Australian outdoor lifestyle and part of that lifestyle is enjoying our gardens, our parks and our beaches—all of these will be under threat from extreme weather events and pollution. Your challenge will be how to protect and maintain these areas that are so critical to our lifestyle and how to motivate all of the population to join in this task with you.

We are already losing many important animals, fish and plants due to pollution, change of habitat and urban encroachment. These trends will continue and magnify with climate change. For example, as our sea water warms up, we will see the destruction of important freshwater coastal wetlands by encroaching mangroves, and we will see many of our native animals moving to cooler, higher territory. It will be your role to save these species.
One of the big challenges we face in today’s world is building all the infrastructure we need to support our communities and our businesses. Roads, rail, airports, seaports, electricity grids, telephone grids and so on. These are all massive pieces of infrastructure and very costly to build and maintain. As the likelihood of extreme weather events increases, you will need to find ways of re-designing and re-building much of this infrastructure so that communities can count on having reliable infrastructure, whatever the weather. This week in Brisbane has given us all a taste of the future.

Particularly in Queensland, we need to keep the tourists coming to support our economy—but what will you do if the Great Barrier Reef disappears? Or if more and more of our beautiful beaches are washed away? We will need smart people to help preserve what we have and also to develop new and different tourism opportunities—so ecotourism will be the way of the future.

You will also have to think about how climate change at a global level will impact on Australia. It could cause some profound changes.

Some of our neighbouring countries—in particular some Pacific Island nations—may be gradually swamped by rising sea water. Australia may be confronted by a new type of eco-refugee—people who have lost their country or their livelihood through climate change. You will have to decide how to respond to this challenge with compassion and with practicality. At the very least, many of these countries will need a great deal of help to adapt to the same climate change challenges as Australia will experience. There will be many jobs for Australian diplomats, government officials and aid workers in these countries.

Ironically, while Australia is one of the countries that stand to lose a great deal from climate change, it may be a great blessing to some other countries. Large parts of northern Russia, for example, may look forward to a much milder and warmer climate—opening up opportunities for growing all kinds of crops and mining all kinds of minerals that are currently not dreamt of. This will be good for Russia but may make life very difficult for our farmers and our miners who want to export to the world. So you will need smart climatologists and meteorologists and agrarian economists to work out what the future is likely to hold overseas and to prepare for impacts on our export industries back home.

Finally, in terms of your day-to-day lives, you will need to develop new and smarter ways of living and working sustainably; new and less polluting materials; new chemicals and pesticides that are less toxic to the environment; clothing and work gear that provides better protection from tropical insects and parasites; better warning systems to alert the community to adverse weather events; and smarter financial and insurance products that will help you protect your families and your possessions. I could go on, but really the list is endless.

As you can clearly see, wherever you work and live and however you work and live, these challenges will be present.

It’s a whole new world beginning in this century.

It’s your world—so be prepared for it!
SPEECH DAY IS AN OCCASION THAT CELEBRATES SUCCESS, ACHIEVEMENTS, AND A MOMENT OF TRANSITION.

SPEECH DAY ADDRESS Avi Kaye and Cassandra Jeavons

HEAD GIRLS

FRIDAY 21 NOVEMBER 2008

Good afternoon Ms Nosworthy, Ms Jameson, Ms Bell, staff, parents, friends and girls.

It is such an honour today to have Ms Nosworthy give the address and present awards to Year 12. It is so inspiring to see an old girl of the School become such an accomplished and successful business woman—it certainly fills me with encouragement and awe. On behalf of Brisbane Girls Grammar School, and particularly the graduates of 2008, we thank you sincerely for sharing your experiences of Grammar life and the endless possibilities of life after Grammar. Please accept this small token of our appreciation.

Speech Day is an occasion that celebrates success, achievements, and a moment of transition. How does it make you feel—seeing girl upon girl walk across this stage in recognition of extraordinary achievements? Watching girls build their futures, seeing the fruition of hard work, determination and dedication. For us, it fills us with pride.

Avi and I stand before you today for the last time as Head Girls for 2008, reflecting upon such an incredible year, where many invaluable lessons have been learnt and goals have been realised, as individuals and as part of the Grammar community. In this Olympic year, every girl has in some way striven to emulate the athletes at the Olympic Games. Athletes work as a team, they have clear goals, they train hard, stay focussed and motivated for that wonderful, hard-won moment when they reach the finish line, and make real something that was before only a dream. Girls—we are a team of athletes.

At our induction, we began the year of 2008 with Greg Hickman’s words—‘it is time to break through the barriers that have held you back and held you down … it is time to reach out and indelibly etch your place in history’ (Khurana, 2008). Girls, we have certainly emulated Hickman’s message throughout our journey this year.

We challenged each Grammar girl to ‘Make your Mark’—to make their mark in their own life, make their mark in the School and make their mark in the community. The Student Council set the School three goals: firstly, to enhance environmental awareness; secondly,
to create a greater sense of spirit through increased involvement in school activities and fundraisers; and thirdly to raise $55,000 for charities. We have achieved all three. With support from the Student Council, the Service Captains orchestrated a new Grammar Goes Green initiative. Interhouse swimming, athletics and Open Day saw the greatest attendance and spirit in many years. And our $55,000 charity goal? Well, we have far surpassed our expectations and have raised a record breaking $80,000! Girls, you have made 2008 a year to remember—the School has never seen greater verve, enthusiasm and energy behind the white picket fence.

On Wednesday at lunchtime, we made Grammar history, creating a whole-school human chain around the School campus, celebrating all that had been achieved this year. The human chain symbolised the culmination of the year. It symbolised the realisation that we have achieved our goals; we have stepped over that line and now are reaping the rewards of an incredible year. No, we do not have a gold medal to show for our achievements, but we have that same sensation those athletes feel, knowing we have given it our all this year.

At the end of this life chapter it is also time to reflect on what Grammar has given us as individuals, and the valuable life lessons that we have learnt. The public image of the School is not only one of consistently outstanding academic achievement but also of high achievement in every field. You have all witnessed the countless prestigious awards being accepted by girls for so many diverse achievements, but at Grammar, it has always been emphasised that Grammar girls are much more than their visible achievements. The kind of person that a Grammar girl is cannot just be put down to statistics or an OP, because we are so much more. Grammar has taught us to be active members of our community, empathetic toward all, to be gracious and humble and also to prepare to be the next generation of philanthropists. We take comfort in the knowledge that the cohort of 2008 and Grammar girls to follow will achieve great things, but more importantly, will be great people. However, let us not forget that athletes cannot achieve their goals without a support team. For us girls, our support team is all staff, teachers, our parents and our Principal—without their support and encouragement we wouldn’t be the young, ambitious women we are today. To our support team goes our heartfelt thanks.

Finally, to the Year 12 graduates of 2008—we feel so privileged to be a part of such a wonderful, talented and lively cohort. We hope we have helped make this year as special for you as you have made it for us. Every step of the way you have been enthusiastic and supportive of us and the Student Council, making this year even more memorable, and for that we thank you sincerely.

Leaving this hall today will mark the transition from secondary school into myriad adventures through which we will continue to weave our rich tapestry of life. Throughout this final year, we have all consolidated our places within the cohort and within the School. However, it is time for a new beginning in another competitive world, where we will have to get out there and show our talents and passions. However, let us remember at times when we may be afraid to grab that opportunity, Helen Keller’s inspiring words. ‘I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do something that I can do.’ (Brainyquote, 2008).

Perhaps this is a time to remember some words from our first address at the start of Year 8—we are once again the little fish in the big pond. The difference now is that we have a greater sense of identity. We are aware of our strengths and weaknesses, and we are developing our passions. We know that finding where we fit into society, and really understanding who we are, will not happen overnight. As we have often been told by Mr Seaha, we will no longer be told what to do, which path we have to take to guarantee us the best possible outcome. We must make the decisions for ourselves. Leaving this hall, we become, or ostensibly become, responsible global citizens. We are responsible for making our own lives! However, whether you aspire to be high-profile doctors, lawyers, actresses, teachers, plumbers, parents—be the best you can be and be happy! True success is really measured by whether or not you have achieved happiness in life. Over these recent months many of us, I am sure, will be dreaming of adventures and ambitions we hope for. No—one can make these dreams happen, but you! So girls, make of your life as you wish, but, never lose sight of those dreams you have today. And, when we reflect on our lives in years to come, let us be able to look back and say, ‘Yes, I really have achieved something great.’

References:
now is testament to its significance. As such, it is an enormous privilege for me to be with you today to celebrate the culmination of your schooling years and the passage into whatever may lie ahead in your wonderfully bright futures.

Parents—I am a mum. I go to lots of things where I am Sam’s and Ted’s mum and other than that, no one really cares about who I am or what I do. After having children, there are times when you seem to lose your sense of self and become an accessory of your kids. This evening is also a celebration for you as a parent.
While it is your daughter’s name on her graduation certificate, you are an integral part of getting her to this point, so I offer you my heartfelt congratulations on what a wonderful job you have done to date.

When asked to speak at the Valedictory Dinner I spent a great deal of time reflecting on how my experience at Girls Grammar helped to shape my character, and how the characteristics I developed during my time at the School have been part of my past, my present, and no-doubt my future. Each girl who attends the School is unique, and perhaps one of the most difficult challenges in secondary education is to facilitate the development of different characteristics in each unique individual. While exams and grades have certainly been a key focus of your time at Grammar, you will find upon reflection, perhaps years from now, that being a Grammar girl goes way beyond grades and qualifications. It is part of your being and is embedded in all of the decisions that you make. When you finally walk through those school gates for the last time as a student on Friday, you will always still be a Grammar girl.

Let me share with you now a few of the key characteristics that I had the opportunity to develop whilst at Grammar. Some of you may relate to these specific anecdotes, but regardless I’m sure that all of you can think of examples of how your experiences as a Grammar girl have shaped who you are today and where you might be heading from here. The list of characteristics I came up with was quite lengthy, so in order to spare you my rambling, I have consolidated a few characteristics and narrowed it down to my top five to share with you tonight.

**PROBLEM SOLVING AND LEADERSHIP**

When I was in Year 12, I raised with the Principal, Mrs Hancock, that at QGSSSA sporting events there were lots of girls who weren’t physically participating in the event, but who were keen to be more involved in the day. While we had good numbers in attendance and School spirit was high, I couldn’t help thinking that by providing some co-ordination and leadership, a cheer-squad could help the rest of the School more actively support our athletes. I talked to a number of the Year 12s and they were enthusiastic as they saw it as an opportunity to participate on the day, even if they weren’t the athletic type. After all, if you get dragged all the way out to ANZ Stadium to watch a full day of athletics and you don’t run or throw something, you could be a part of the cheer-squad and have an integral part in the success of the team.

Mrs Hancock’s response was that I should do something about it. She didn’t tell me what I should do, but she provided encouragement and support. In my Senior year I, supported by my mother of course, formed the Brisbane Girls Grammar School Cheer-squad. We managed to raise enough money to buy megaphones and to buy the materials to hand-make a large number of raffia pom-poms that would last for years. We hand-made a banner which could be easily modified by future Year 12 groups to meet their needs. From memory, the banner proudly stated “Grammar shines in 89”—corny, but come on … it was the 80s. We had t-shirts printed, we distributed war-cries, and at sporting events we organised the School into a co-ordinated cheering machine. At Girls Grammar, the attitude was never prescriptive, but always supportive. Grammar girls were challenged to come up with a solution and do something about it.

For the past four years, I have been working as a project manager rolling out IT infrastructure solutions to global mining companies. I have a degree in physiotherapy, which hardly qualifies me to talk about anything technical in the world of IT, but what I do have, and it is something that was inspired way back in my days at Girls Grammar, is an ability to look at the problem, seek expert opinions, come up with a plan to tackle the problem and then motivate and lead people to deliver the solution. If you look within yourselves I’m sure that you can all relate to these characteristics in some shape or form, and it will stand you in good stead no matter what challenges you pursue for the rest of your lives.
DISCIPLINE

During my five years at Girls Grammar, I was involved in a wide variety of co-curricular activities. I played Netball, Softball, participated in Ball Games and Athletics. I played the violin in a variety of Orchestras and occasionally even turned up to choir practice. This meant that I spent the five years of my Grammar life getting to sports training and music rehearsals almost every morning at 7.00 am followed by further training or rehearsals until 5.00 pm each evening. On top of this, I had club and representative sporting commitments to attend in the evenings. So, although I’m sure that my parents can take some of the credit for prodding me every now and then, Grammar was a pretty integral part of me taking responsibility to manage my time appropriately.

In the last few months of my schooling life, along with the inevitable focus on exams and getting into university, I was looking forward to spending time with my friends at Schoolies Week on the Gold Coast. We had booked accommodation, arranged our week’s activities and were generally looking forward to it.

About two or three weeks before we were due to go, I was asked to go to the Australian Institute of Sport for a week to trial for a scholarship position for the next year’s intake of Netball scholarship holders. The week that I had to go was the same week as Schoolies. My friends initially couldn’t believe that I was to go as the same week as Schoolies. We had booked accommodation, arranged our week’s activities and were generally looking forward to it.

While it’s a little scary moving out of your comfort zone, it’s certainly a really quick way of proving to yourself how capable you are, and your schooling has been the first step in that process.

Maturity

When I walked out of the Grammar gates for the last time I was sixteen years old. Two months later, I had relocated to Canberra to live in the Australian Institute of Sport Residences on a Netball scholarship. I knew one other person in Canberra. While I lived in a residential facility where meals were provided, that was pretty much it. I was responsible for everything else. I studied part-time, I trained full-time, I did my own washing, I made sure that I turned up to everything on time and pretty much got on with looking after myself. And, strangely enough, it really wasn’t that hard.

Throughout my schooling life, I had been encouraged to be independent and look after myself, culminating in a variety of leadership positions in Year 12 where I not only had to look after myself, but a number of other people. In Year 12 I was the Softball Captain and Netball Captain—both of these positions required me to coach one of the Year 8 teams independently, with minimal outside influence. I wrote their training programmes, coached all of their training sessions and determined who played what games. Looking after myself really wasn’t that hard in comparison—there was only ONE of me.

Some of you may have the luxury of remaining at home next year, but many of you may move away to study, or perhaps to travel for an extended period. Parents, you can relax a little with the knowledge that your little girls have become mature young women who are more than capable of looking after themselves.
Just to get this far, and reach the standards that you have in your schooling, is testament to this. I’m sure that you will all agree that the teachers and staff you have worked with over the past five years have pushed you in an effort to harness the determination that each of you possesses. You may not have appreciated it at the time, but even the teacher that you clashed with the most may become one of your fondest (and perhaps funniest) memories.

COMMUNICATION

I have minimal formal skills or qualifications to do what I do for a living—although I’m in the process of getting the formal bit now—I ended up there a bit by accident. I have a first class Honours degree in Physiotherapy and while I am still a registered physiotherapist, I do not treat any patients. What I do have is the ability to communicate with people from a variety of backgrounds in a variety of ways. In my current role, I manage projects for global mining companies. I do not work in the same office as any of my resources and I regularly run projects with resources in multiple Australian states, India and the US—a communication nightmare when you consider the different languages, cultures and time zones.

When I was in Year 12, I had to speak at assembly every week in my capacity as Sports Captain or as Music Captain. We were taught to take responsibility to communicate to the School community what our groups were doing. Having the confidence to get up in front of people and speak is a skill that speaks volumes to employers. I don’t mean that you have to be brilliant at speaking in front of a large crowd, because I am telling you from where I am standing right now, that is an extremely daunting task. However, having well-developed communication skills is one of the first things on which a potential employer will judge you. As Grammar girls, you have nothing to worry about as it is the very nature of the education that you receive to be a good communicator.

Never underestimate the power of good communication skills. I am one of the few Grammar girls throughout history who lived through the atrocity of electric blue cotton hats. These hats were introduced when I started Year 8 in 1985 and even twenty-four years later I cringe when I think of them. Love and respect your beautiful felt hats, for alas, I never owned one. When I was in Year 12, at the annual speech competition, EVERY SINGLE contestant spoke about the electric blue cotton creation and how it was the bane of every Grammar girls’ existence. The concerted attack on the ugly hat was not planned, merely a very timely coincidence. Needless to say, a few weeks later it was announced that the felt hats would make a return the next year as an optional accessory, the year after I left. I didn’t say that you would always benefit personally from your great communication skills, but you can certainly make a difference.

In this day, communication skills go well beyond the spoken word. Email and other forms of electronic communication have become the norm and are integral to every form of occupation. You are very privileged to have been educated in a school that has recognised the importance of technology, and is familiar with these tools. When I started my first job in IT I had never used email and I basically had to teach myself how to use a whole range of applications that are now second nature to you as you use them every day at school. Your exposure to such a wide variety of IT applications, and the ability to use these as an integral part of your study, should give you great confidence in your ability to communicate in our increasingly global environment. Even if you don’t have to use electronic communication in your career of choice, it’s a great way to stay in touch with friends.

On this very special day, I wish each of you all the very best as you take the next step forward. I hope that tonight I have been able to show that just by making it through your five years at Grammar you have already developed characteristics that will stand you in good stead for whatever it is that you choose to pursue. And if, like me, somewhere down the track the path that you took doesn’t seem to be leading where you need it to go, then you have the skills and the ability to change tack and go in a different direction. You probably all feel at this moment that you have been a Grammar girl forever and you are looking forward to moving forward to other challenges. In the scope of the rest of your life, your Grammar years are like a couple of heart beats, but they are vital heart beats as they form part of the core of your being and have helped define who you are both on this day and in the future.
STAFF LIST

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Gibson Mrs Hazel Boltman, HDE(Physical Science)
Griffith Ms Jan O’Sullivan, BA, DipEd, MACE
Hirschfeld Mrs Ann Stubbington, BEd(Hons)Sussex, CertT, GradDipRes/SupTeach, MACE
Lilley Mr Sybil Edwards, BA, DipT
Mackay Mrs Kim Cohen, BSc, HDipEd (PG)
O’Connor Miss Alison Dare, BA(Hons), DipEd, MA
Woolcock Mrs Samantha Bolton, BA, DipEd, ATCC
Mrs Violet Ross, BSc(Hons), GradDipT (Acting Semester 2) & Head of Japanese

HEADS OF DEPARTMENT & OTHER POSITIONS OF ADDED RESPONSIBILITY

Accounting Mrs Philippa Greig, BBus, BEd, DipT (Sec), AssocDipSecStudies
Biology Ms Tracey Montefelt, BSc(Hons), DipEd
Chemistry Mrs Jacqueline Ross, BSc(Hons), GradDipT
Chinese Mr Gideon Huppert, BA, DipEd, MEd (TESOL)
Drama Mr David Armstrong BEd, DipT
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German Mrs Debra Barker, BA, DipEd, BEdSt, MEd (TESOL)
History Mrs Julie Hennessey BA MEd DipEd
Information Technology Systems Mr Brendan Thomas, CertFineArts, BEd
Latin Mrs Marion Bryant, BA, DipEd
Mathematics – Senior Mrs Jennifer Charles-Edwards, MSc, GradDipAPhys, GradDipT, MACE (Terms I–III)
Music Mr Andrew Pennay, BA, BEd
Physics Mr Alan Allinson, BSc(Hons), PostGradCertEd
Social & Environmental Studies (Year 8) Mr Paul Martineau, BA, BEd
Student Credentials Mrs Sandra Bailey, BSc, DipT, MACE (Semester 1)
Mr Peter Creese BA, BEd (Semester 2)
Visual Art Mr Donald Pincott, BEdSt, BA, MEd, MACE
Ms Bronwyn McKean, BE, DipEd, CertFineArts (Acting Term III)

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MARRAPATTA - MEMORIAL OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTRE

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Teacher Mr Michael Ramsay, BTeach, GradDipOutEd
Teacher * Mrs Carol McIntosh, BEd, GradDipOutEd, MA

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School Psychologist Mrs Jody Forbes, BA(Hons)
Health Care Co-ordinator Mrs Carolyn Hann, SRN

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Cello, Co-ordinator of Chamber Music * Mrs Helen Sharp, BMus
Brass & Co-ordinator of Band Programme (Semester 2) Mr Paul Kucharski, BA, MMus, GDLT
Co-ordinator of Band Programme & Saxaphone Mrs Craig Dabelstein, BAMus, BMus, GradCertEdPub, Grad DipL&T (Semester 1)
Double Bass * Mrs Angela Mackenzie
Clarinet * Mrs Catherine Simmers, BMus, DipEd
Electric Guitar/Bass * Mr Ian Weston, BJS, MMusSt
Strings * Mrs Andrea Messenger BMus, GradDipMus
Percussion * Mr Brett Carvolth, BMus
Bassoon * Mrs Leesa Dean, BMus
Flute * Mrs Anne MacAskill Auld, BMus(MusEd)
Saxaphone * Ms Samantha Sleep, BAMus, GradDipEd
Accompanist/Piano * Ms Ann-Marie Eyles, GradDipEd(Primary), BMus, A.Mus.A
Accompanist/Piano * Ms Sherelle Eyles, BMus(Hons), MMus(Lon), ARCM(PG), LMusA, AMusA (Sem II)
Voice * Ms Alicia Lee, BMus(Hons)

LANGUAGE TUTORS
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French * Ziad Fallah, Remi Gerriet, Simon Girard
German * Mr Richard Hamernik, BEd(Sec)
Japanese * Ms Akiko Hansen

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                      Ms Susan Pola  (Semester 2)
Administrative Assistant  * Mrs Letitia Dwan (Semester 1)
Administrative Assistant  * Mrs Sue Martin
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BRISBANE GIRLS GRAMMAR SCHOOL HAS WONDERFUL PLANS FOR THE FUTURE WITH EXPERIENCED, TALENTED PROFESSIONALS FOCUSED ON PRODUCING THE VERY BEST EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT FOR OUR YOUNG WOMEN. WE ARE ALL BENEFICIARIES OF THE PRO-ACTIVE THOUGHTFULNESS OF PREVIOUS GENERATIONS, WHO UNDERSTAND THE VALUES OF THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO FUTURE YOUNG WOMEN AND TO SOCIETY GENERALLY. THEY PROVIDE US WITH AN EXAMPLE OF HOW PHILANTHROPIC BEHAVIOUR INFLUENCES BOTH IMMEDIATE AND LONG TERM PERSONAL AND COMMUNITY CHANGE. HOPEFULLY, OUR CONTEMPORARY ROLE-MODELLING WILL FORM A SIMILAR EXEMPLAR FOR PHILANTHROPISTS OF THE FUTURE.

Ms Amanda Bell

PHILANTHROPIC PROGRAMMES

The growth of the School’s 2005 Philanthropic Programmes initiative was evidenced in 2008 when $2 124 828.74 was received from benefactors for a variety of projects. A bequest from a past student was a significant component of this figure as was the contribution of the Parents & Friends’ Association. More than 600 gifts were made to the School in the year, reflecting the diversity of its donors—parents, alumni, staff, grandparents and friends—and the diversity of their interests.

Girls Grammar is currently raising funds for the realisation of a new 25 metre suspended heated pool, the innovative design of which will also result in a covered multi-purpose activities area. The fundraising target for this $6.85m project is $1m and more than $460 000 has been pledged to date.

The School sincerely appreciates the generosity and dedication of the members of its community who, through their gifts, endorse its vision of providing the very best in educational environments for the young women of Brisbane Girls Grammar School. In recognition of their support, we record the names of benefactors in 2008 and gratefully acknowledge their invaluable contribution:
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