114th Annual General Meeting, 29th March, 2014

Agenda Item 6. President’s Report for 2013

1. New Appointments
The OGA has been pleased to welcome Lea Walker, Director, Alumni & Development, to the School in 2013. There are two components to the new position, alumni and development, addressing community engagement and philanthropy. Alumni is being defined in its broadest sense to include anyone who wishes to stay connected to the School (including both genders). Development addresses the philanthropic programs that will enable the School to continue its growth into the future, particularly with the introduction of Grade 7 and the purchase of the Fig Tree Pocket site. A slogan is being used to promote its activities ‘I’ve benefitted from the shade of trees planted by others, now it’s time for me to plant some trees.’ Perhaps the differentiation between alumni and development is that the former is about friendraising and the latter with fundraising.

In January 2014, Claire Corones was appointed as Old Girls/Alumni Officer, responsible for the coordination of the School’s Old Girls and Alumni programmes. Her duties encompass event planning and management, including reunions, and administrative support to the OGA Management Committee. Claire reports to the Director, Alumni & Development.

The OGA has been pleased to work with Lea and Claire in exploring their roles within the School, acknowledges with gratitude the support they have thus far provided, appreciates the emphasis being given by the School these activities and looks forward to further collaboration.

2. Support of School Events
The BGGS OGA continued to support and participate in various School activities. These included:

- Open Day on 2nd August in the Annie Mackay room. Members of the Management Committee greeted visitors including prospective and enrolled students, encouraged old girls visiting the School to become members of the OGA, sold memorabilia and displayed photographs and pictorial reminders of the school, seeking identification of unknown personalities in the photographs. The winner of the identification game was Board Chair Elizabeth Jameson who was able to name every girl in one photograph. The Open Day appeared to be extremely successful. There was a great atmosphere and excellent attendance. Thanks as always to Pauline Harvey-Short who helped everything come together for the OGA on the day.
• Year 12 Assembly. A panel of old girls told their stories and ensured the continuation of the traditions of the School. The OGA participation was much appreciated by the girls in attendance.

• The seventeenth annual Gala Concert was held at the UQ Centre at the University of Queensland on 19th October and delighted all present with its professional production and presentation, and the exuberance, enthusiasm and excellence of the girls and their teachers. The evening featured soundtracks from over twenty classical and popular Hollywood films. The programme focused on the brightest and best composers, from Leonard Bernstein to Giuseppe Verdi. Their music has brought to life the action on the screen of many movies from Mission Impossible to Mary Poppins. The OGA team led by Diana Wood and assisted by Service Girls from the School ensured that drinks and refreshments were available during the interval and raised $1300. Additional helpers from the wider ranks of the OGA would be most welcome next year. As Mark Sullivan commented himself in an issue of BGGS News

The overwhelming joy experienced at the Gala Concert, as well as the genuine engagement and respect shown to each other at the farewell function, are the corollaries of intrinsically motivated students.

• The OGA was privileged to be represented at the 2013 Valedictory Dinner at the Brisbane Convention Centre on 11th November. Melinda Taylor presented a thoughtful and witty address, proving herself an outstanding role model. She began by talking about her own excitement and anticipation on leaving Grammar with insatiable curiosity, a desire to be Prime Minister, a stubborn streak and no clear plan. Melinda spoke of her detention in Libya when she was attempting to defend her client Saif al-Islam Gaddafi. She survived her 26 days in detention through learning to control her reactions to events over which she had no control, focusing her anger and frustration on the defence of her client – and watching the Arabic version of The Bold and the Beautiful! Melinda learned to appreciate the importance of her support network of friends, family and colleagues. No man is an island, entire of itself.

• Representatives of the OGA attended the Speech Day and Volunteers Cocktail Party and enjoyed the sense of collegiality and the warmth of the occasions.

• A letter was sent to each Year 12 girl encouraging membership of the Old Girls Association.

• The OGA was represented at the Welcome to New Parents in 2014 and took the opportunity to meet as many Old Girls who are also new mothers at the School.

• The OGA Management Committee was pleased to be invited to the recent assembly celebrating the School’s 139th birthday. Lorraine Thornquist, a senior member of staff at the school as well as an old girl, gave a splendid address reflecting on her experiences at the School. The OGA looks forward to events next year associated with the 140th birthday celebrations.

3. OGA Events

• Service in our DNA. This event has become an annual event in the calendar as a combined event of the National Council of Women Queensland and the BGGS OGA. Ably chaired by Steph Carter, the forum held on 15th May, 2014, at the BGGS OGA Annual General Meeting, showcased the experiences of four young women on working with, and giving to, the community. Emma Burrell, Service Captain of Girls Grammar in 2006, played a key role in paving the way for future generations of service captains and told of the establishment of service traditions, including the Pink Day. Rotem Nusem described her involvement with the OatTree Foundation Seed Group and her involvement in the Kampuchean Action for Primary Education program in an overseas volunteer expedition. Clare North spoke about rising above significant personal challenges through a focus on service and a subsequent gap year
in Brazil, inspiring others with her experience. Kirsty Wright as the fourth speaker deals with real DNA as a forensic biologist and discussed her work in analysing skeletal remains in disasters like the Bali bombings and the invaluable support she is able to provide for victims. All who attended the forum left feeling uplifted and inspired by the commitment of young women.

- **Everything Old is New Again.** On 5th June, 2013, fifty Old Girls with daughters currently at the School (representing almost all years from 1972 to 1994) attended a cocktail party in the Annie Mackay Room. Twinkling fairy lights on the front veranda and current Year 11 Service Captains welcomed guests back to the School. A Year 10 string trio played for the early part of the evening, setting the scene for a convivial and relaxing gathering. Standing in an elegant space charged with memories of school assemblies or school dinners, old girls renewed their relationship to the School and to each other, meeting and making new friends. Sallann Powell and Grainia Schmelzer ably organized the event. All participants were encouraged to reflect on their experiences with the School and enjoy the display of School Magazines, photos and collage banners spanning the eras of the attendees. Pauline Harvey-Short, Associate Dean and Staff Liaison for the OGA, compered “a trip down memory lane” in the form of a fashion parade of Brisbane Girls Grammar School sporting and music group uniforms from the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. Ten current students from Years 8, 9 and 11 modelled the uniforms with great sophistication to a very appreciative audience. The highlight was the 1970s mini skirt! A steady flow of chilled champagne and delicious nibbles combined with shared memories and laughter ensured *everything old was new again*. It will be an annual event in the School’s First Term calendar.

- On 19th March, 2014, *Everything Old is New Again* was held for the 2014 year. Again approximately 50 people who are current mothers again enjoyed a festive occasion, at a splendid event attended by Principal Jacinda Euler and Board Chair, Elizabeth Jameson. A terrific time was held by all. Pauline Harvey-Short introduced on this occasion a fashion parade of girls modelling formal frocks – a glamorous occasion indeed. Some photographs showed the original owners wearing the frocks at their School formals.

- **Quilts Exhibition.** The OGA organized a group to attend the very popular Quilts Exhibition at the Art Gallery of Queensland on 12th August, 2013. The exhibition came from one of the world’s most important and loved collections of textiles and decorative arts – the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, and provided an unprecedented opportunity to see over 50 quilted and patchworked bed covers, hangings and accessories created over two and a half centuries. The OGA is extremely grateful to Lorraine Thornquist who conducted the tour as an Art Gallery guide, a teacher at the school, and an old girl.
4. Reunions
The School has decided to schedule all Reunions on one weekend to provide for a sharing of special displays and exhibitions at the School. The Reunion in 2013 was held 14th – 16th June and went extremely well. Events were organized by the various years e.g. 20, 30, 50 years at varying times across the weekend, commencing with the Friday evening. The School was decorated for the weekend and tours and special activities were held in association with the various reunions. The OGA was present at each of the reunions and sold memorabilia. The Recollections afternoon tea on the Sunday afternoon was very successful. It focused on Old Girls 70 years + and several attendees had not previously returned to the School. Three generations of Grammar girls were present and all present enjoyed meeting the new Principal, who graciously attended each reunion and mingled with the guests as well as presenting a short report on School activities. The special cake at the Recollections afternoon tea was cut by the oldest Old Girl (94) present. All enjoyed sharing memories, reflecting on the past, and looking to the future of the school.

The 40 year reunion was held separately at the School on 24th August and the OGA was present. The OGA believes the annual event to be an effective use of resources for the weekend but considers the timing could be better with its scheduling later in the year. The OGA is also investigating pre-ordering by the various reunion groups of memorabilia to enable improved handling of sales.

5. Newsletter
Three issues were produced during the year in July and November in 2014 and February 2014. Tremendous thanks to Jenny Gray who took over editing the newsletter, to Sue Meeking for distribution, to members of the Committee and the School who contributed content, and of course the Service girls who helped with the mailing.

6. Involvement with other Groups
The BGGS OGA continued to be a member of the NCWQ (National Council of Women Queensland) and was represented at its various events.

The BGGS OGA continued to send a representative to each meeting of the Parents and Friends, either the President, or Diana Wood, and found this a useful means of involvement in current School activities. The P and F shop’s sales of OGA memorabilia has enhanced sales considerably and the OGA is extremely grateful to the P and F for its support of the OGA.
7. Memorabilia
A range of memorabilia continued to be provided. Items available included key rings, badges, mugs, glass paperweights, pens, cards, tea towels, wine glasses, teaspoons, coasters and tumblers. A bracelet was added to the products available. As already indicated, the rearrangement with the P and F Shop for the sale of OGA memorabilia has worked extremely well. Salliann Powell enhanced the OGA offerings through developing for the OGA a range of products associated with the School’s war cry and these have proved extremely popular, particularly the sling bag.

8. Events for 2014
- The 70+ and Recollections Event will be held as part of the School’s weekend of reunions on the afternoon of Sunday 15th June.
- The NCWQ/OGA event, Service in our DNA, will be held on May 14th, from 4 pm to 6pm at the School.
- An Alumni event is being held in Sydney on May 29th, 2014, with the invitation issued by the Principal and the President of the OGA. Brisbane Grammar School Old Boys will join the event.
- Further Women of Grammar/Grammar Women events are planned for later this year.

9. Other Business
There has been concern for some time about the relationship of the OGA and the Alumni within the School. The OGA is keen to harmonize the two groups and is actively working with the School on a number of initiatives. A background paper has been prepared and discussed by the Management Committee and discussions will continue during 2014. The OGA is pleased to see use of the OGA logo and the School’s logo on various documentation.

10. Committee members for 2013
- Janine Schmidt (Hogg ‘64) President
- Jenny Gray (Vallis ’69) Vice President
- Dorothy Bourguignon (Scotney ’56) Minutes Secretary
- Sue Meeking (O’Brien ’65) Secretary/Treasurer
- Sue Jordan (Squire ’67) Assistant Treasurer
- Pauline Harvey-Short (School representative, Harvey ’71)
- Ann Caston (Pressland ’56)
- Diana Wood (Thacker ‘75)
- Jean Vallis (Genn ‘42)
• Sylvia Pegg (Gaulton ’65)
• Grainia Schmelzer (King ’81)
• Salliann Powell (Johnson ’86)