113th Annual General Meeting, 15th May, 2013

Agenda Item 6. President’s Report for 2012/13

Preliminary Remarks

This is my first year as President. I thank all the members of the Management Committee for their contributions to the BGGS OGA and for their support for me during a steep learning curve. In particular, I would like to thank Past President, Christine Purvis for providing considerable information and assistance in making the transition, as well as all her work over the years for the OGA, Sue Meeking, the Secretary/Treasurer whose considerable energy ensures the success of many activities of the OGA, ranging from database maintenance to production of the Newsletter, Jenny Gray the Deputy President and Dorothy Bourguignon who does outstanding service with the Minutes of meetings. The members of the Committee do a great deal to ensure the OGA remains a vital part of the School’s outreach. I extend my special thanks to Pauline Harvey-Short who as the School Representative on the Committee has played a vital role in ensuring the success of the functions and activities of the OGA.

I would also like to thank all the Service girls who participated in OGA activities, contributing to their success. It is a great tradition to see current girls involved in such activities.

Our thanks are also extended to the staff of the School, including the past Principal, Amanda Bell and the Acting Principal, Marise McConaghy, as well as Teva Smith, Communications and Events Manager, who has unstintingly supported the activities of the OGA.

Farewell to Amanda Bell

The Principal of the School, Dr Amanda Bell, concluded an eventful and successful chapter with the School, going on to become the Principal of Women’s College at the University of Sydney. Her outstanding contributions were recognized at the volunteers cocktail party in November, the Speech Day, and a dinner, with the OGA represented at all events. The Speech Day was a splendid event at which Elizabeth Jameson paid tribute to Dr Bell’s leadership, diligence, dedication and personal warmth, using Abba as her theme. A heart-warming and highly entertaining video produced by the School provided insight into Amanda’s many achievements and personal style. The OGA also gave a lunch for Dr Bell to pay testimony to her time at the School and participated with the P and F in the gift of a beautiful brooch based on the Recollections sculpture. The BGGS OGA would like to place on record their sincere thanks to Dr Bell for all her support of the OGA during her time at the School, and wish her all the very best in the future.
Support of School Events

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

- **Open Day on 3rd August**, where the OGA was present encouraging new members and providing memorabilia for sale in the Annie Mackay room. A presentation on the history and activities of the OGA was made available on a computer screen.

- **Year 12 Assembly.** The event held on 17th September celebrated 100 years of Life Saving. Christine Purvis encouraged the girls to consider membership of the OGA and a panel of old girls involved with lifesaving, including Barbara Alexander and Margaret Huth, ensured a splendid presentation memorable to the girls who participated.

- **Music Gala on 27th October,** where the OGA under the excellent leadership of Diana Wood once again organised and provided intermission refreshments, at the same time enjoying a splendid concert. This is a fundraising activity for the OGA and it is a valued contribution to the School.

- **Valedictory Dinner,** attended by Christine Purvis on behalf of the OGA. Julie McKay, Executive Director UN Women Australia (alumna 2000) gave the Valedictory Address, and eloquently encouraged the girls to reflect on four primary values of the School - leadership, courage, a passion for learning and kindness.

- **Representatives of the OGA attended the Speech Day and Volunteers Cocktail Party.**

- **The OGA was also represented at the Welcome to New Parents in 2013 and took the opportunity to meet as many Old Girls as possible.**

- **A group of Old Girls recently participated in classes with Year 8 girls and provided insights into the history of their experiences at the School, describing the School’s values which they had used in their lives, emphasizing that once a Grammar girl, always a Grammar girl, at the same time demonstrating great pride in the School. This will probably become an annual event.**

OGA Events

- **The Joint Young Women’s Forum of the National Council of Women of Qld (NCWQ) and BGGS Old Girls Association (BGGSOGA) was held on Saturday 19th May 2012,** ably planned by Christine Purvis of the BGGS OGA and Noela O’Donnell from NCWQ. The event was facilitated by Steph Carter, a member of NCWQ and an old Girl of the School (2007). Four speakers made polished and professional presentations which inspired all present as they shared their contributions to community service both at school and subsequently. Two service captains for 2010, Ruby Chang and Priya Sekar described their experiences. Ruby shared Winston Churchill’s quotation *We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give,* and the description of her activities ably demonstrated that she was practising what she was preaching. Priya described how *Grammar really instilled a value of …giving up your time and skills to help those in need,* describing her participation in such events as the Forty Hour Famine, the Ecumenical Coffee Brigade providing food and beverages to the homeless and marginalised people of Brisbane and the Wonderfactory at the Royal Children’s Hospital. Vision Queensland Youth Ambassador for 2012, Brittney...
Mackenzie (not an old girl) spoke compellingly about her experience as a 17 year old in Ethiopia, describing the work of Dr Catherine Hamlin and the Fistula Hospital. Sarah Cowley focused on her work with the International Day of Peace Alliance and the coordination of the Origami Peace Doves Project.

- **Countdown to London 2012, Inspiring a Generation**, was another inspirational event held on June 2nd when Women of Grammar came together to celebrate the Olympic Countdown at a cocktail reception where Olympians Ricky McMillan, Suzie Fraser and Barbara Wilson (nee Jordan) related their Olympian experiences, ably coordinated by Olympian Naomi McCarthy (nee Castle). Following introductory drinks and hors d’oeuvres, Naomi, a gold medal winner for Australia in women’s water polo at Sydney 2000, posed questions to the panel who represented a cross-section of sports and ages. Ricky from an equestrian perspective, Suzie with her water polo experiences, and Barbara from her standpoint as an athlete, described the highlights of their sporting and professional careers. Attending Grammar had provided the impetus for the development of their interests in sport and their sporting involvements had prepared them for life and its vicissitudes. The pressure of training, early starts to the day, and the discipline of teamwork had all stood them in good stead for later life experiences. Sports teachers and coaches at Grammar had encouraged all of them to achieve their goals in sport and life. Several continued in administrative roles in their chosen sports and attended the games in London which began on July 27th. The speakers brought home to all present that the Olympian ideals of positive attitudes, sportsmanship, pride in representation, individual responsibility, respect for others, and performing to the best of one’s ability are values which are essential components of Grammar’s ideals and values.

**Reunions**

- The OGA continued to participate in School Reunions as required, providing mementos for sale as needed, and working with the School on alumni functions.
- The 70 Year+ Reunion and Recollections Afternoon Tea hosted by the OGA on 1st September was extremely successful. Some archival material was received as a result of the afternoon and a good time was had by all.
- From 2013, the School is planning to have one weekend for all reunions, so that energy and effort can be concentrated. It will be held on 14th – 16th June. Various activities will be scheduled in relation to each reunion e.g. 20th, 30th etc. and a general program provided as well.

**Newsletter**

- Three issues were produced during the year. Tremendous thanks are due to Sue Meeking for all her work, and other members of the Committee and the School who contributed – and of course the Service girls who helped with the mailing.

**Involvement with other Groups**

- The BGGS OGA continued to be a member of the NCWQ and was represented at its annual fundraising morning tea, Christmas function and President’s Dinner.
• The BGGS OGA sent a representative to each meeting of the P and F and found this a useful means of involvement in current School activities.
• The BGGS OGA was pleased to be represented at the School’s table celebrating International Women’s Day.

Mementos

• A range of mementos continued to be provided. Items available include key rings, badges, mugs, glass paper weights, pens, cards, tea towels, wine glasses, teaspoons, coasters and tumblers. In March 2013, an arrangement was made with the P and F for items to be sold through the School Shop and it is hoped that through this means that a greater number of items will be sold in the future. The OGA is looking at new items to add to its range of offerings.

Events for 2013

• Service in our DNA. The NCWQ/OGA Young Women’s Forum is being held on 15th May, 2013, at 4.30 pm. Steph Carter will again chair the event and representatives from both BGGS and the NCWQ will talk about their commitment to service in the community.
• A cocktail reception Everything Old is New Again is being held on June 5th in the Annie Mackay room for current mothers who are also old girls. This event is being organized by Committee members Grainia Schmelzer and Salliann Powell and it is hoped it will be an annual event for new mothers at the School as a way of involving mothers who are also Old Girls in the life of the School, reconnecting them in some instances with the OGA.
• The 70+ and Recollections Event will be held as part of the School’s weekend of reunions on the afternoon of Sunday 16th June.
• A further Women of Grammar event is being planned for later in the year.

Committee members for 2012

• Janine Schmidt (Hogg ‘64) President
• Jenny Gray (Vallis ’69) Vice President
• Dorothy Bourguignon (Scotney ’56) Secretary
• Sue Meeking (O’Brien ’65) Treasurer
• Sue Jordan (Squire ’67) Assistant Treasurer
• Christine Purvis (Steindl ’65) Immediate Past President
• Pauline Harvey-Short (School representative)
• Ann Caston (Pressland ’56)
• Diana Wood (Thacker ’75)
• Jean Vallis (Genn ’42)
• Sylvia Pegg (Gaulton ’65)
• Margaret Dearlove (Lee ’54)
• Grainia Schmelzer (from February 2013 – to be reconfirmed at AGM)
• Salliann Powell (from February 2013 – to be reconfirmed at AGM)