



OLD GIRLS ASSOCIATION
INC.

116th Annual General Meeting, 12th April, 2016

Opening Remarks and Agenda Item 6. President's Report for 2015

Opening Remarks

Welcome to the 116th Annual General Meeting of the Old Girls Association of the Brisbane Girls Grammar School. Last year was particularly busy with the events celebrating the 140th anniversary of the School and this year is proving full of action and experiences.

I welcome the Principal, Jacinda Euler, and thank her for all her support during the year. I also welcome the Deputy Chair of the Board, Mary Mahoney, and thank her very much for her attendance. It is also my pleasure to welcome the Director of Development and Alumni, Lea Walker, and the Manager, Old Girls, Antonia (Toni) Swindells (Butnoris 1996). I extend a particularly warm welcome to Toni who is attending her first meeting in her new capacity. We look forward to working with Toni. She comes to us with a strong background and experience as an events manager – and a Girls Grammar education.

President's Report for 2015

1. The Management Committee

The Management Committee met nine times during the year. The meetings were held on different days of the week and at different times as a trial to facilitate attendance of members with varying demands on their time. Meetings were held on 12th February, 20th March, 11th May, 17th June, 14th July, 27th August, 16th September, 30th October and 9th November. A Christmas celebration lunch for the Committee and key personnel from the School was held in December at the home of the President.

The Management Committee for 2015 comprised:

Janine Schmidt (Hogg 1964) President
Jenny Gray (Vallis 1969) Vice-President
Leigh Fielding (Gow 1984) Secretary
Ann Stubbs (Westaway 1982) Treasurer
Dorothy Bourguignon (Scotney 1956)
Sue Jordan (Squire 1967) Assistant Treasurer

Ann Caston (Pressland 1958)
Pauline Harvey-Short (Harvey 1971) School Representative
Sylvia Pegg (Gaulton 1965)
Salliann Powell (Johnson 1986)
Grainia Schmelzer (King 1981)
Donna Scott-Young (Houghton 1985)
Jean Vallis (Genn 1942)
Kirsten Whip (Macalister 1981)
Diana Wood (Thacker 1975)

Julie Caton (Cleghorn 1981) was seconded to the Management Committee during the year.

I extend my thanks to each and every member of the Committee for service to the OGA and the School. Leigh Fielding and Annie Stubbs took on the roles of Secretary and Treasurer from previous long-standing position holders, Dorothy Bourguignon and Sue Meeking. Leigh and Annie have been on steep learning curves and their commitment and hard work have been extremely valuable and much appreciated. Thank you to Dorothy and Sue for smoothing the way.

Ann Caston continued her work with memorabilia, managing ordering, stock control and supply. Her contribution is truly appreciated. Kirsten Whip took on the organisation of the provision of refreshments at the Gala Concert. Diana Wood has coordinated this activity for many years. Her outstanding role in ensuring the smooth flow of the event has been exemplary and she has now passed on the torch to others. We thank her for her energy and commitment. Diana is leaving the Committee after many years of dedicated work and the OGA extends its particular thanks to her for combining her contribution with a busy work schedule. Jenny Gray continued her role as Deputy President and Editor of the Newsletter. Thank you to Jenny. Jenny is standing down from her role as Deputy President and I thank her for all her work over the time she has held this role. She has provided excellent support and leadership to the OGA. Salliann Powell took the lead in ensuring *Everything Old is New Again* ran superbly and continued the development of the war-cry memorabilia. Her hard work is much appreciated. I extend a big thank you to Grainia Schmelzer, Sue Jordan, Leigh Fielding, Donna Scott-Young, Jean Vallis, Dorothy Bourguignon, Julie Caton and Sylvia Pegg who have provided great support through their membership of the Committee and their involvement in events. Jean Vallis has indicated this evening that she will not be continuing with the Management Committee. Jean's involvement has extended over fifty years, including Presidency of the OGA. We thank Jean for her outstanding service over the years and shall pay tribute to her work in an appropriate manner in the near future.

Pauline Harvey-Short continued to work seemingly effortlessly. Her constant facilitation and commitment ensure the smooth functioning of the OGA and a seamless interface to the School. I cannot thank her enough.

2. Membership

The membership numbers are:

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| Honorary | 21 |
| Life | 616 |
| Annual | 275 |
| Total | 912 |

3. The School Support

The Principal, Jacinda Euler, continued her vital support during the year, as did Lea Walker, Director, Development and Alumni, and we express our gratitude to each of them. Claire Tynan (Corones, 2002) was appointed as the first Old Girls/Alumni Officer in 2014. She worked tirelessly to establish the position and was of considerable assistance to the OGA. We were sorry to see her leave in early 2015 pending the birth of her baby and thank her for all the support she provided to the activities of the OGA, particularly for the work on the database and the reunions. Congratulations to Claire and husband George on the birth of their son.

The Board has also been very supportive, and we are particularly grateful for the formation of the Board Working Party examining the future of the OGA in relation to the Alumni of the School. My special thanks go to the Chair, Elizabeth Jameson.

The Service Girls ably coordinated by Pauline Harvey-Short attended and assisted at all our events and helped with mail-outs and many other activities. We truly thank them. They constantly reflect the values of the School in their work for others.

Lynne Mungomery was of great assistance in securing speakers for the *Service in our DNA* event and again I extend my thanks. There are many others behind the scenes in Communications, Facilities and elsewhere in the School who contributed to the activities of the OGA. Jenny Davis, Librarian-Special Collections, provided considerable assistance to our work. Our gratitude goes to all staff from the School who have always been there to help. We also work with other support groups within the School like the P and F and appreciated their involvement in the life of the School.

The School provided refreshments for the meetings of the OGA and I extend my thanks for the much-appreciated sustenance during meetings.

4. OGA Involvement in School Events

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

- Many activities associated with the 140th year celebrations. Many Old Girls attended the Ball marking the 140th anniversary of the School and danced the night away.



- Open Days at Fig Tree Pocket, Gregory Terrace and Marrapatta. The Fig Tree Pocket campus was renamed Rangakarra on 23rd May. The OGA presented the School with new gates for the campus, a symbolic offering on behalf of the School's 22,000 old girls/alumni/alumnae/past students over the past 140 years who truly have been the guardians of the gate.



A very special part of the day's celebrations was the ceremonial planting linked to the 200th anniversary of World War 1 of four wattles and a Lone Pine from a seed of the tree at the Australian War Memorial whose origins hark back to Gallipoli. Past Presidents of the Old Girls, Paula Airton, Daphne Fancutt, Christine Purvis and Jean Vallis, participated with the current President, Janine Schmidt, to plant the trees and pay cognisance to the first Anzac Grove located at the Spring Hill campus.



The highlight of the day was Daphne Pirie (Welch, 1949) who inspired all with her dynamism and vitality during her address marking the naming of the Daphne Welch Oval.

The OGA provided a stall at Open Day at Gregory Terrace on 31st July and welcomed Old Girls back to the School, some returning with daughters and grand-daughters as prospective and current students. At the Open Day, several girls dressed in former uniforms and paraded through the School inviting Old Girls who are mothers of current girls to visit the stall, catch up with people and attend the annual function *Everything Old is New Again* to be held in first term.



- The annual event, the OGA Panel, designed to introduce the outgoing Year 12s to life after Grammar and to the Old Girls Association was held on 17th September. This year, the OGA President introduced the Johnson triplets, Rachel, Anne and Fiona, and younger sister, Kathryn. These old girls shared their post Grammar journey and spoke about their new business, Tapfit.
- A very special Gala Concert was held on 24th October, *As Time Goes By*, celebrating 140 years of music at BGGGS. Over the years, the emphasis has extended from individual tuition and choral work to bands, orchestras and group instrumental tuition with a dynamic and diverse programme offering opportunities for all girls, maintaining the vision of excellence and high standards. The OGA team led by Kirsten Whip and assisted by Service Girls from the School ensured that drinks and refreshments were available during the interval, raising much-needed funds for the OGA. The contribution of Diana Wood in coordinating this event for over 10 years has already been acknowledged and again I thank her for her commitment and energy.
- The OGA was again privileged to be represented at the 2014 Valedictory Dinner. Kate Watson (1986), peripatetic sports physiotherapist with the Women's Tennis Association and Cricket

Australia, university lecturer, wife and mother of three inspired all at the 2015 Valedictory Dinner with five life lessons she learned at Brisbane Girls Grammar School, lessons which have taken her way beyond the classroom walls, *Having a go – throwing yourself into everything; Nil sine labore- following your passions requires resilience and hard work; Keep learning – it keeps life interesting; Girls Grammar gives you a voice – use it!; and Be thankful.*

- Representatives of the OGA attended the Speech Day and enjoyed the collegiality and warmth of the occasion.
- The OGA was represented at the Welcome to New Parents in 2016.

5. Communication

- The OGA was pleased to present a column in each issue of the School's Gazette under the banner Old Girls/Alumni.
- Further work was done on updating the website and the OGA looks forward to future improvements to be provided by the School. OGA annual reports and other documents are retained on the website.
- The world has become virtual and the OGA has moved to the wider use of email for its communication and the use of social media. The School's help was invaluable in this regard. The use of print was maintained for those members who do not have easy access to information technology or who prefer communication in print.
- The annual letter sent by the President at the end of 2014 to each Year 12 girl encouraging membership of the Old Girls Association together with persuasion from the Dean of School, Pauline Harvey-Short resulted in an additional number of life memberships for the OGA.
- Members of the OGA Management Committee received the School's weekly online newsletter and were delighted to obtain knowledge of the School's developments in this way.
- Communication between the OGA and the School early in the year included a meeting between representatives of the OGA with the Principal and the Chair of the Board. Towards the end of 2015, following a letter to the Board from the OGA, a Working Party of the Board was formed and commenced discussions on resolving issues which have arisen in relation to the use of the Alumni appellation and the OGA.

6. Board OGA Working Party

The Working Party comprising representatives of the Board, the School and the OGA has met several times since late last year and will continue during 2016. Members are the Chair of the Board, Elizabeth Jameson, Board members, Ann Harrap and Diana Lohrish (all Old Girls of the School), Principal, Jacinda Euler, Director, Development & Alumni, Lea Walker, Dean of the School, Pauline Harvey-Short, the President of the OGA, Janine Schmidt, and the Treasurer, Ann Stubbs. Claire Tynan attended the earlier meetings and will presumably be replaced by Toni Swindells. The aim of the discussions is the examination of the relationship of the OGA and the existing alumni group. The desired outcome is the retention of the prestige, tradition and approach of the OGA, combining these values with the School's capacity to provide the professional support and underpinning required by organisations today for their effective operation. All events being held are badged with both the School and the OGA logos.

Wherever possible, the term Grammar Women will be used to incorporate Old Girls, Alumni and Past Students. In general, the term "alumni" will no longer be used actively. The Board Working Party and the OGA Management Committee have agreed to the following statement:



Grammar Women

Incorporating the Old Girls Association est. 1899

Role and Purpose

- "Friendraising" for the School and enhancing its reputation
- Supporting School events and activities
- Sponsoring and assisting with organizing functions and events, particularly reunions, to forge links among Grammar Women and Old Girls and strengthen connections with the School
- Maintaining the School's traditions and championing the School's strategic directions
- Passing on the School culture and its spirit to new generations of Grammar Girls and Women
- Forming networks for mentoring and career/life skills development

7. Events

The OGA has decided to hold regular events throughout its calendar for the year. They are:

- *Everything Old is New Again*, which celebrates the involvement of Old Girls in the School as mothers, and is held in the first term
- *Service in our DNA*, a combined inspirational event held with the National Council of Women Queensland which highlights service achievements of Queensland young women, with two representatives from the NCWQ and two from BGGs. This event is held in the second term.
- *Generational Grammar Women and 70+ Reunion*. This event is held in third term and celebrates the Grammar family, involving current girls and their mothers, aunts, grandmothers and other family.

The OGA has worked with the School and co-hosted reunions and the *Grammar Women* series which is held approximately three times per year, focusing on achievements of past Grammar girls in particular professional areas or addressing particular topics.

- *Everything Old is New Again*

On 23rd March, 2016, the *Everything Old is New Again* event was held for the fourth time. Old Girls who are current mothers of girls at the School came together to meet up with old friends and acquaintances, make new friends and share experiences both as mothers and Old Girls. Several teachers who are Old Girls were also present at the event. Service girls from Year 11 continued the Grammar tradition of assisting with serving food and guiding guests through the Learning and Resources Centre, wearing sports uniforms from various years. Kate Watson (1986) shared her reflections on returning to the School as a mother, reminding us that it is important to slow down, to think about the “little moments” years ago at School which contributed to the women that Grammar girls later become. Old Girls choose to send their daughters to Grammar because the School has shown over time exceptional leadership, vision and a moral compass to steer girls through their precious teenage years to become strong, confident, independent young women with a real sense of community.



- *Service in our DNA.*

The combined NCWQ/BGGS OGA event *Service in our DNA* on 13th May, was honoured by the presence of politicians Grace Grace (member for Brisbane Central) and Tracey Davis (member for Aspley), and attracted a large group of attendees who were impressed by the community service young women continued to provide once they had left school. Speakers recalled their service experiences at School and described their ongoing activities with service to others embedded in their lives. Elise Stephenson introduced the speakers: Alexandra Phillips, Rachel McLean, Chloe Yap and Stephanie Carter who gave inspiring talks on their activities working in areas as diverse as disabilities and social media. Ali Phillips runs Bust a Move Dance, <http://bustamovedance.com.au/> a specialised program encouraging adults and young people through creative activity.. Chloe is a mentor in the science program at UQ. Rachel described herself as a Gen Y social media strategist <http://www.mcleansocialmedia.com/#!portfolio/cngp> and while working with organisations commercially she was also providing pro bono services to groups like the homeless. Steph Carter described her work as the Senior Project Officer, Scholarships, for Australia Awards (Africa) at GRM International. <http://www.grminternational.com/>. The event was well attended and the presentations with their sincerity and commitment struck a chord with all present.

- *OGA Recollections Afternoon Tea and the 60 plus Reunion*

This event was held on Saturday 5th September 2015 from 2 pm to 4 pm. Generations of Grammar Girls were encouraged to attend and renewed old friendships and made new acquaintances. They learned about what the School was doing in its 140th year and tours were provided.

- *Grammar Women events*

OGA and the School have been working together to co-host *Grammar Women* events, with the School and the OGA logos heading up invitations and activities. The OGA was pleased to be associated with the Grammar Women events including:

- *Grammar Women in Art*, 15th October, 2015. Members of the panel included : Dr Susan Byth (1970), a medical doctor and artist taking inspiration from her medical practice to fuel her passion for painting; Jan Jorgensen (Goeldner, 1960), a cityscape artist focusing on the human and architectural faces of inner-city Brisbane; Susan Rado (Van Kempen, 1979) an award-winning photographer exploring emotional and visual differences in contrasting surroundings; Kylie Elkington (1983) a Melbourne-based contemporary artist specialising in abstract landscape paintings; and Davida Allen, an Archibald Prize-winning painter, accomplished writer and film-maker.
- *Grammar Women Contributing Confidently*, 14th March, 2016. Aply chaired by the Principal, Jacinda Euler, Ann Harrap (Head Girl, 1984 and current member of the Board of Trustees), and Julie McKay (2000) shared their secrets of success. Ann was formerly the first female Australian High Commissioner to South Africa and n experienced diplomat with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for twenty years. Julie McKay is a passionate advocate for gender equality and services as the Executive Director of the Australian National Committee for UN Women and the inaugural Gender Advisor to the Chief of the Australian Defence Force.



8. Reunions

The School discontinued the practice of scheduling all Reunions for one weekend and various reunions were held throughout the year. The classes of 2010 (5 year) 2005 (10 year), 1995 (20 year), 1985 (30 year), 1975 (40 year), 1965 (50 year), and the 60 year plus and OGA Recollections celebrations were held at varying times throughout the year. Reunions were also held in Sydney (15th May) and Melbourne (3rd September), and a gathering was also held in New York. Further reunions elsewhere internationally are planned for 2016. The OGA sold memorabilia at most of the reunions.

9. Involvement with other Groups

The BGGGS OGA continued to be a member of the NCWQ (National Council of Women Queensland) and was represented at its various events. The BGGGS OGA continued to have ex-officio membership of the Parents and Friends and the President attended meetings throughout the year. The P and F shop continued to sell OGA memorabilia, thereby providing a much-valued service to the OGA and ultimately to the School. The OGA thanks the P and F for this vital contribution to their work.

10. 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. Popular items included the pearl bracelet and the School war cry bags, proudly being carried by current girls at the School. The work of Ann Caston in leading work with memorabilia has been much appreciated, along with the commitment of Salliann Powell to the warcry memorabilia.

11. Concluding Remarks

It has been pleasing to see the progress on harmonisation of the OGA and the Alumni groups within the School. As already noted, the Board Working Party's work has been extremely useful and it is hoped that future discussions during the remainder of 2016 will resolve matters of concern and lay the basis for the future effectiveness of the OGA in achieving its objectives and serving its role and purpose. The progress on joint sponsorship of events under the Grammar Women banner has been effective. I shall attend an afternoon tea with the Board in the near future. The OGA was pleased to be represented at the Board's Strategic Planning day on 12th March 2016 and Ann Stubbs and Grainia Schmelzer represented the OGA with other groups within the School as they viewed the future of the School and considered what would constitute a Grammar education in 2026.

Again, I thank the Principal, Jacinda Euler, for her support and assistance during the year, and Lea Walker, the Director of Development & Alumni. The OGA is in a stage of transition and it is vital that we preserve our traditions and find new directions. I thank the Committee and all members for their contributions.

Janine Schmidt AM,
President, BGGGS OGA
12th April, 2016