



Grammar Women

Incorporating the OGA est. 1899



119th Annual General Meeting

19th March 2019

Opening Remarks

Welcome to the 119th Annual General Meeting of the Old Girls Association of Brisbane Girls Grammar School in the association's 120th year. It is with much pleasure that I introduce the Principal, Jacinda Euler, the dedicated ladies of the Management Committee, Antonia Swindells (Butnoris, 1996), Alumnae Relations Manager and Old Girl, and Ellena Papas (1990), Dean of Co-Curriculum and also Old Girl. A warm welcome is extended to other Grammar Women in attendance this evening. It is heartening to see Old Girls staying connected and interested in the direction of the OGA. Special mention goes to Christine Purvis (Steindl, 1965). Christine was President of the OGA from 1996 to 2011.

Since our AGM in March, 2018, the OGA Management Committee has been very active in its role of maintaining School traditions, supporting School events and activities, forging links between Grammar Women and actively connecting with Grammar Girls and Grammar Women.

President's Report for 2019

1. Management Committee

The Management Committee met twice each term during 2018. The meetings were held on Tuesday evenings. In 2019, our meetings are scheduled for Wednesday evenings to accommodate members of the Committee.

Meetings were held on February 6, March 13, April 17, June 12, July 17, August 21, October 9 and November 11 in 2018, and February 13 and March 13 in 2019. Committee members and key personnel from the school were invited to attend a Christmas Dinner at the home of the President on December 1.

The Management Committee for 2018 comprised:

Julie Caton (Cleghorn 1981) President
Grainia Schmelzer (King 1981) Vice-President
Leigh Fielding (Gow 1984) Treasurer
Susan Wilson (1981) Secretary
Dorothy Bourguignon (Scotney 1956)
Jenny Gray (Vallis 1969)
Sue Jordan (Squire 1967)
Ann Caston (Pressland 1958)
Sylvia Pegg (Gaulton 1965)
Kim Morgan-Short (Skuce 1981)
Michelle Tully (Oswin 1981)

I would like to acknowledge and sincerely thank the Management Committee for their ongoing support for me personally and also the BGGs OGA as a whole. Each Committee member is devoted to upholding the aims and aspirations of the OGA and I am very appreciative of the valuable input given by each and every Grammar Woman. It is important that we maintain representation across the decades and encourage growth to ensure the longevity of the Association. I encourage all Grammar Women to support the OGA as it provides a vital link to the School and assists in keeping connections meaningful and relevant. With this need to encourage connection in mind, the Management Committee decided upon the motto, 'Connections for Life', to embrace what the Association represents.

Thank-you in particular to the Executive. Grainia has continued to be a very supportive Vice-President and I thank her for assisting me in my role. Leigh has been instrumental as Treasurer in keeping our finances up-to-date and ensuring the online banking process operates smoothly. It takes considerable time to do what appears to be a straight-forward job. Thank-you, Leigh, especially for ensuring everything is up-to-date for this evening's proceedings. Sue Wilson sends out Meeting Minutes efficiently and concisely, allowing all Committee members the opportunity to reflect on discussions and proposals. We all lead busy lives and I thank these ladies for allowing time to undertake these roles so capably. Grainia is now stepping down from the OGA Committee. All of us on the Committee sincerely thank her for her dedication towards fulfilling her OGA duties and for the warmth and passion she has shared over the years of representation.

1. Support from the School

The OGA would not be able to achieve all that it has over the past year without the unwavering support of the School. I have very much enjoyed meeting with Principal, Jacinda Euler, on a regular basis to seek her opinion, advice and endorsement for OGA projects. Thank-you, Jacinda, for your continued support of the Committee. You have assisted us in particular in raising the profile of the OGA within the current School community and that in itself will help to ensure Grammar Girls shall stay connected as Grammar Women.

I also thank and acknowledge key personnel who support me personally and the OGA as a whole. Thank-you in particular to Antonia (Toni) Swindells for always endeavouring to keep the OGA profile at the forefront and ensuring every event is meaningful and enjoyable. Your dedication to the OGA is

recognised and very much appreciated. Thank-you to Ellena Papas for your support in the role as School Liaison to the OGA. Your enthusiasm for all things 'blue' is an asset to both the OGA and the wider School community. I also thank Belinda Burns (Director of Communications and Engagement), Georgina Anthonisz (Director of Development), Jenny Davis (Librarian, Special Collections) and Sodexo staff for always being receptive to contact and requests by the OGA. Knowing there are capable and supportive people at hand certainly assists in making the Committee's job much easier and more productive.

The BGGs Board of Trustees has always been a proud supporter of the OGA. Chair, Elizabeth Jameson, herself an old girl, has always been in attendance when able. The Management Committee warmly thanks Elizabeth for her friendship and support during her time on the BGGs Board. The Committee recognised Elizabeth's contribution and commitment at a gathering at the President's home in December. We wish her all the very best for the future and look forward to staying connected with her at OGA-led, Grammar Women and other various School events. As a 1982 graduate, Elizabeth was in the year below me at School. Sharing the same time frame has provided many opportunities for reflection and a shared passion for BGGs. I personally thank Elizabeth for her friendship and guidance during my time as President. The OGA warmly welcomes Julie McKay, a 2000 graduate, to the role of Chair of the Board of Trustees and looks forward to working with her and supporting her as she leads a passionate group dedicated to the ongoing development and provision of an exceptional education at BGGs.

Throughout 2018, I very much enjoyed attending P&F meetings chaired by President, Fiona Harden. Along with P&F Executive and Committee members, she always recognised the vital role of the OGA and encouraged integration across all Support Groups. I acknowledge and thank outgoing Executive, Fiona Harden, Christine Palm, David Ruddell and Dominique Carroll for their active support of both the School and OGA over the time their daughters have been Grammar Girls. The OGA Management Committee welcomes the new Executive, chaired by Susan Playford, and looks forward to further integration by the OGA with Support Groups.

In 2018, we introduced sashes and badges for the Year 11 Service girls to wear at Alumnae events. These most certainly helped in allowing OGA Committee members to know which Grammar Girls were there to support the OGA, especially in a 'sea of blue and white'. Thank-you to Ruth Jans for not only co-ordinating the students and ensuring they were always well prepared and ready for events as required, but for often being there herself to assist as well. We welcome the 17 enthusiastic Year 11 Service girls for 2019 and look forward to their attendance at key events.

2. Representation at School Events

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

- *Marrapatta Open Day – 17 June 2018.* OGA Committee members joined with me at the School's Memorial Outdoor Education Centre for the official unveiling of the OGA-donated Panels. These stunning panels have pride of place at the entrance to Marrapatta where the students first alight the buses. The wrought iron panels are replicas of the OGA-donated gates

at Rangakarra Recreational and Environment Centre. Our thanks to the staff at Marrapatta and the Fathers Support Group for ensuring the installation was completed and landscaped so beautifully in preparation for the Open Day celebrations.

- *Open Day – 28 July 2018.* Members of the Committee provided complimentary tea, coffee and hot chocolate in the Annie Mackay Room. We also staffed a separate display on the pool lawn next to other Support Groups where we engaged with past students, eager Year 6 students and offered limited memorabilia for sale. This provided the opportunity to promote the OGA's presence within the School community.
- *OGA Presentation to Year 12 and Panel – 18 September 2018.* Ann Caston, Grainia Schmelzer and I represented the OGA at this special assembly. I addressed the Year 12 cohort with a focus on 'Happiness'. I then introduced Lavinia Codd (1986), Andrea Codd (1984) and Lavinia's daughter, Zoe Codd (2015), to discuss their personal journeys since leaving School and offer 'real world' advice to the Year 12 cohort. This event helps to promote the OGA to the soon-to-be-graduating Grammar Girls.
- *Gala Celebration of Music Evening – 20 October 2018.* This was once again an extraordinary event showcasing the skills of both students and the passionate staff who inspire them. The OGA Committee have traditionally overseen catering for families immediately before the concert and again at interval. This year we trialled serving champagne and beer, as well as soft drinks and water. We also served some more substantial food such as freshly-packaged sushi and antipasto platters. All of the changes were positively embraced. I am very grateful to Committee members, husbands, daughters and friends who, along with the Year 11 Service Girls and BGGs staff, volunteered their time to ensuring the success of this event. It is the intention of the Committee to extend this service in 2019 to meet the needs of guests within the boundaries of the UQ Function Centre.
- *Year 12 Assembly – 13 November 2018.* Grainia Schmelzer and I had the honour of presenting each Year 12 Grammar Girl with an OGA badge at this assembly. Attached to blue ribbon, these were proudly worn at both Valedictory Dinner and Speech Day. In its second year, this now established tradition provides a tangible link for the Grammar Girls to have as they leave the School as Grammar Women.
- *Valedictory Dinner – 14 November 2018.* Dr Bethany Holt delivered an engaging Address. I very much enjoyed sitting next to the Head Girls Elect, Jessica McLeod and Martina Marrama.
- *Speech Day – 15 November 2018.* The Address, delivered by outgoing Chair of the Board of Trustees, Elizabeth Jameson, will long be remembered for its warmth, passion and humour.
- *Leader Induction Assembly – 6 February 2019.* The OGA Committee continued the now established tradition of making a presentation to the two Head Girls for the coming year. I presented Martina Marrama and Jessica McLeod each with an OGA pendant in acknowledgement of the esteemed position each of them will hold throughout 2019.

- *Foundation Day Assembly – 13 March 2019.* Ann Caston, Dorothy Bourguignon, Sylvia Pegg, Kim Morgan-Short and I very much enjoyed an Address by Angie Milliken (1981 Head Girl). Angie masterfully captured the essence of what it means to be a ‘Grammar Girl’ and also paid tribute to those who lost their lives in the Christmas Creek bus tragedy of 1979.

3. OGA Led Events

- *‘Roll Call’ at Clovelly Estate Cellar Door – 27 March 2018 and 31 January 2019.* This event, previously named ‘Everything Old is New Again’ has a new home at Clovelly Estate Cellar Door at Red Hill. The event, hosted by the OGA Management Committee, invites current mothers of the School who are also old girls themselves to join in reconnecting with Grammar Women across the years. It has proven to be a very successful event, with attendees thanking us for the opportunity to speak to other Grammar Women about the School in relation to when they were students and also how they are now ‘re-cast’ as Grammar mothers. At each event, a guest speaker chatted informally with the President about topics ranging from time management to changes since their attendance as students. Thank-you to old girls, Karalyn Shaw and Andrea Codd, for being present at these functions.
- *QBI Event – 20 November 2018.* The OGA Management Committee were welcomed by Dr Lavinia Codd to the Queensland Brain Institute at the University of Queensland for a private tour of the laboratories and presentations from three leading researchers, one an old girl herself. The Committee has formed a strong bond with Lavinia and the QBI and looks forward to continuing to support this amazing Institute, especially with the focus on Science being at the forefront with the construction of the new Science building on Campus.
- *2000s Alumnae Event – 21 November 2018.* The OGA Committee welcomed graduates from the 2000s to join them in reconnecting with Grammar Women at Jade Buddha in Brisbane City. This was the first such function organised by the current Committee with a purpose to actively engage with old girls and rekindle interest not just for the School itself, but for the OGA as well. This event provided opportunities to network with other ladies, irrespective of the year of graduation.
- *1990s Alumnae Event – 7 March 2019.* As a follow-up to the Alumnae event at the end of 2018, this event specifically targeted 1990s and 2000 graduates. The event, held at Stokehouse Q, proved to be very well received, with connections again being made across the years. Feedback for events such as these has been extremely positive. This event in particular was timed to coincide with the AGM to attract new Committee members who are interested in being more active within the OGA network. Another event will be held in September.

4. OGA Supported Events – Grammar Women

The OGA and the School continued 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 Grammar Women events including:

- ‘Grammar Women in Medical Research’, held at the Queensland Brain Institute. Guest speakers Lavinia Codd (1986) (Advancement and Scientific Manager at QBI) and Emily Granger (1991) (Cardiothoracic/Heart and Lung Transplant Surgeon) were interviewed by Deputy Principal, Anna Owen. The stories from both guests were inspirational and entertaining as they shared their journeys with honesty and laughter.
- ‘Alondra de la Parra in Conversation with Jacinda Euler’. Held at the Queensland Symphony Orchestra Studio, Principal, Jacinda Euler, interviewed QSO guest conductor, Alondra, in front of a large group of attendees to hear about Alondra’s experiences as a musician and that of her time working in conjunction with BGGGS musicians. A very entertaining discussion was enjoyed before listening to a talented BGGGS Strings group perform.

5. Reunions

- *12 August 2018* - Grammar Women residing in Sydney and surrounds were invited to reconnect with Alumnae at the NSW Art Gallery for a luncheon within the Gallery followed by a private tour of the Archibald finalists.
- *4 August 2018* – 10, 20 and 30 year Reunions were held at the School. Many Reunion groups are now starting with Year 11 Service Girls-led tours of the School, followed by drinks and canapes onsite before moving on to a different venue offsite for dinner.
- *8 September 2018* – 40 and 50 year Reunions.
- *27 October 2018* – 60 year Reunion.
- *20 January 2019* – Grammar Women residing in Melbourne and surrounds were invited to the National Gallery of Victoria for a private address by a Museum volunteer and then viewing of a feature exhibit, ‘Designing Women’. A luncheon was later enjoyed at the Gallery’s restaurant.
- *13 March 2019* – 60 year+ Reunion. This was the first time we held this very special Reunion on Foundation Day. We had hoped this would be more meaningful to the attendees and provide an opportunity to visit the Campus with the students in attendance to get a better sense of the Girls Grammar of 2019. Year 11 Service Girls joined 50 Grammar Women after school. It is always a highlight to hear past stories and recollections of days gone by. It also provides an opportunity for the OGA and the School Community to recognise these remarkable Grammar Women.

6. Memorabilia

Sales of OGA Memorabilia throughout 2018 were primarily made through the P&F Shop. The Management Committee sincerely thanks the P&F and Shop staff for making this possible. At the end of 2018, a pendant was commissioned to be designed and crafted exclusively on behalf of the OGA by world renowned jeweller, Bruce Tully. Featuring a striking blue opal, the sterling silver pendant has distinctive engravings that mirror the same design seen in the Rangakarra gates and Marrapatta panels. The opal, sourced from Quilpie, has long been seen by traditional Aboriginal women of the area to be a source of empowerment. How fitting it is that we have this unique piece of jewellery available to be purchased by Grammar Girls and Grammar Women through the OGA. This signature piece, commissioned to commemorate the 120 year anniversary of the BGGGS OGA, is already being admired and is sure to become a special graduation gift for parents to give their daughters.

Thank-you to Ann Caston for overseeing memorabilia stock and ensuring items are available as needed.

7. Concluding Remarks

It has most certainly been a busy and eventful past year for the BGGGS OGA Committee. Changes have been instigated to encourage reconnection by Grammar Women with the School and OGA. We have also actively engaged with graduates to join us on the Management Committee to ensure the OGA remains a valued and recognised entity of the BGGGS Community.

Looking forward to what lies ahead for the OGA Committee, I see continued interaction within the current School community, opportunities for Grammar Women to stay connected throughout Australia and overseas through specific functions and an OGA Ball, and the development of a Grammar Women network online. The OGA Committee has pledged a donation to the School towards the new Science building. This is anticipated to be the naming of a student collaboration space with the intention of old girls who have benefitted from Science subjects and also those who have forged careers in Science being recognised and celebrated.

In this, the 120th year anniversary of the establishment of the BGGGS OGA, it is timely to remember those Grammar Women who had the foresight to identify the importance of maintaining connections to Brisbane Girls Grammar long after their time as a student finished. I have considered what they might say of where the OGA is today in the year 2019. I would very much hope they would recognise the emphasis we place on history and traditions, as well as the need to be inclusive with the BGGGS community. I conclude by thanking and recognising those women who were, in their establishment of the BGGGS OGA, displaying the qualities of being forward-thinking, service-driven and passionate Grammar Women.

Julie Caton (Cleghorn 1981)
President, BGGGS OGA