



Grammar Women

Incorporating the OGA est. 1899



120th Annual General Meeting

25th March 2020

Opening Remarks

It is with much pleasure that I submit my President's Report. Recent weeks have seen us face many challenges on a personal scale due to the outbreak of COVID-19. To comply with the OGA Constitution, this meeting is being held in a space that has been cleaned in preparation and with all available Committee members in attendance. We do not, at this stage, know how long these restrictions will be in effect or to what degree functions and gatherings will be impacted for the remainder of the year. One certainty is we can all be very proud of all that has been achieved throughout 2019/20 and I thank most sincerely the wonderful group of dedicated Committee ladies, supported by Principal, Jacinda Euler, Toni Swindells and Ellena Papas. It has once again been a joy and honour to volunteer alongside of you and represent the OGA at varied opportunities.

President's Report for 2020

1. Management Committee

The Management Committee met twice each term during 2019. The meetings were held on Wednesday evenings.

Meetings were held on February 13, March 13, May 8, June 5, July 31, September 4, October 9 and November 6 in 2019, and February 18 and March 11 in 2020. Committee members and key personnel from the school were invited to attend a Christmas Dinner at the home of the President on December 7.

The Management Committee for 2019 comprised:

- Julie Caton (Cleghorn 1981) President
- Leigh Fielding (Gow 1984) Treasurer
- Susan Wilson (1981) Secretary
- Samantha Caton (2016) Assistant 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)

Andrea Connolly (Peake 1981)

Ally Ball (2018)

I have been asked by friends what is the purpose of the OGA and why is it important to even have such a group. It is sometimes challenging to express the emotions of loyalty, history, friendship, shared journeys and above all, sisterhood. Our motto, 'Connections for Life', is an apt description. Once connected, always connected. Like all friendships, there is the opportunity for connections to weaken over time if there is not someone who actively keeps the spirit alive. That 'someone' for Grammar Women is the OGA. As a Committee, we dedicate ourselves to maintaining connections. I personally have been committed to strengthening the connection to Grammar Girls from the moment they first step foot on Grammar grounds. I believe that if we connect successfully and purposefully from the start, then our role in keeping Grammar Women connected after graduation is all the more productive.

As President of the OGA, I cannot fulfil this vision without the support of a dedicated Committee. One of the things I most admire about this group of wonderful ladies is that each of us respects what the other brings to the table. We don't always agree with one another, but discussions are always honest and productive. Representation across the decades is vital to ensure we are meeting the needs of all Grammar Women.

Thank-you in particular to the Executive. We would all be floundering without Leigh, OGA Treasurer. She has worked tirelessly over the last year to overhaul the financial records and ensure we always have an up-to-date record of income and spending. Thank-you, Leigh. Tonight's detailed report is another example of your efficiency. Sue Wilson and Samantha Caton have ensured Meeting Minutes are accurate and detailed. It certainly assists the Committee as a whole to have a concrete record of discussions and decisions. There was not a nomination for Vice-President at the previous AGM. It is important to have an immediate 'back-up' and I encourage nominations for this role in 2020. In saying that, I thank all Committee members for being my 'back-ups' when needed. Sue Wilson is stepping down from the Committee at this point, but will still remain actively involved with the BGGs community and at OGA events. On behalf of the Committee, I sincerely thank her for friendship, valued contributions and effective Minute keeping.

1. OGA Connections with the School

The profile of the OGA has gone from strength to strength. To hear current students refer to themselves as 'Grammar Girls' and have graduates recognise themselves as 'Grammar Women' would not be possible without the support of the whole School community. This starts first and foremost with Principal, Jacinda Euler. Every time I listen to her or a colleague address the students, they use these terms, and do so with warmth and sincerity. Thank-you for supporting us as you do and openly recognising the role of the OGA within the School community. It is very much appreciated.

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 as both an employee and also a Grammar Woman is recognised and very much appreciated. The connections made between the OGA and Grammar Women are all the more stronger as a direct result of your efforts. Thank-you to Ellena Pappas for your support in the role as School Liaison to the OGA. Having another Grammar Woman on board again strengthens our connections. 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.

The BGGGS Board of Trustees, led by Chair, Julie McKay (2000), recognise the role of the OGA in the bigger picture and always ensure we are embraced and supported. I thank them most sincerely for taking time to acknowledge each of the Committee members when possible. This was most apparent at the Volunteers' Reception at the end of 2019. Their collected vision for the School moving forward, whilst also respecting the past, is, I am sure, an often arduous journey. I recognise and thank them for the work they do to keep the spirit and passion of BGGGS ignited.

Throughout 2019, I very much enjoyed attending P&F meetings chaired by President, Susan Playford. Along with P&F Executive and Committee members, she always recognised the vital role of the OGA and encouraged integration across all Support Groups. Although the OGA is not technically a Support Group under the P&F umbrella, this group of active parents embraces all things OGA and offers their support whenever possible. The connections between all groups within the School is noticeably stronger. I acknowledge and thank outgoing Executive, Sophie Ward, Bonita Corry and Mumtaz Saleem for their active support of both the School and OGA over the time their daughters have been Grammar Girls.

Thank-you to Ruth Jans who was present on weekends at Reunions and functions, as well as meeting with the Year 11 Service Girls to ensure they were well prepared for all OGA events. She ensured the group of students for this role were capable, committed and enthusiastic ambassadors.

2. OGA Representation at School Events

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

- *Naming of the Elizabeth Jameson Research Learning Centre – 30 April 2019.* I was very grateful to be in attendance at this event where Elizabeth's long and dedicated association with BGGGS was recognised. The speeches delivered by Jacinda Euler, Julie McKay and Elizabeth herself all reflected the very special association Grammar Women have with BGGGS. The OGA congratulates Grammar Woman, Elizabeth, on this well-deserved recognition.
- *Open Day – 2 August 2019.* Members of the Committee again provided complimentary tea, coffee and hot chocolate in the Annie Mackay Room. For the first time, we were included on incoming Year 7 students' and families' journeys. This proved to be a resounding success, with incoming families being introduced to the OGA by our Year 11 Service girls and Committee members. Our memorabilia merchandise was warmly received, with sales of \$1,265.
- *OGA Presentation to Year 12 and Panel – 17 October 2019.* Ann Caston, Sylvia Pegg and I represented the OGA at this special assembly. I addressed the Year 12 cohort with a focus on facing challenges and adversity. I then introduced Sue Jeavons and her daughter, Cassie Jeavons, 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. At the end of the event, each Year 12 Grammar Girl was presented with an OGA badge pinned to 'Grammar blue' ribbon. This symbol is in recognition of the Grammar

Women they become after graduation. It was wonderful to see so many of them proudly wearing this badge at both Valedictory and Speech Day.

- *Gala Celebration of Music Evening – 19 October 2019.* The OGA Committee, along with partners, P&F volunteers, Antonia Swindells, Ruth Jans and the Year 11 Service girls, worked tirelessly to ensure another catering success for attendees. Our service was extended to providing more choices both before the performances and again at interval. I am extremely grateful to everyone for ensuring this was a wonderful success and strongly supported by the BGGs community. The record profit of \$3,001 allows the Committee to buy OGA badges for Year 12 students and host Brisbane-based Alumnae events. The event itself was another visual and musical success. I congratulate staff, students and members of the BGGs Music Support Group for the staging of this highly-anticipated and warmly received display of the musical talent at BGGs.
- *Valedictory Dinner – 13 November 2019.* Ms Sarah Tesar (2004) delivered an engaging Address. I very much enjoyed sitting next to the Head Girls Elect, Abbey Grice (2109 OGA Service volunteer) and Arwen Dias-Jayasinha.
- *Speech Day – 14 November 2019.*
- *Leader Induction Assembly – 6 February 2019.* The OGA Committee continued the established tradition of making a presentation to the two Head Girls for the coming year. I presented Abbey Grice and Arwen Dias-Jayasinha each with an OGA pendant in acknowledgement of the esteemed position each of them will hold throughout 2020.
- *Foundation Day Assembly and Afternoon Tea – 11 March 2020.* Ann Caston, Sylvia Pegg, Jenny Gray and I very much enjoyed an Address by Elizabeth (Beth) Woods (1972). Beth was the first Rhodes Scholar from BGGs, awarded this prestigious accolade in 1977. As a Year 8 student at the time, I very clearly remember Beth attending an assembly at School, although I must admit to not being very aware of the great honour that is a Rhodes Scholarship. It was very interesting to connect with her again and hear of all that she has achieved over these past years. In the afternoon, the Committee welcomed back 85 Grammar Women to an afternoon tea. This event incorporated the 60+ Reunion ladies with Grammar 'Grandmothers' who have grand-daughters currently enrolled. The Year 11 Service girls and the grand-daughters themselves joined the festivities after school. It was a wonderful multi-generational and also multi-graduation year event.

3. OGA Led Events

- *Morning Tea and Lunch for Year 11 OGA Service Girls –* In March, a 'welcome' morning tea was provided for the Year 11 Service Girls to introduce the OGA and explain their role in supporting Grammar Women. We met again in November for a 'thank-you' luncheon for their very valued and enthusiastic contributions throughout the year. I sincerely thank Ruth Jans for overseeing these girls and preparing them so well for their duties. One student admitted to me at the luncheon that initially she wasn't sure about taking on this role, but that it had

proven to be a highlight of Year 11. I cannot speak highly enough of this beautiful and engaging group. I look forward to seeing them grow as Year 12 leaders.

- *'Roll Call' at Clovelly Estate Cellar Door – 30 January 2020.* We welcomed Grammar Women who are also mothers of current Grammar Girls to connect and celebrate past memories whilst also building new ones with their own daughters. It is a timely function to welcome back 'new' mothers to the School and share the OGA presence and offers of support for the years ahead.
- *'Stokehouse Q' for Brisbane Alumnae – 19 September 2019 and 27 February 2020.* These events aim to embrace Brisbane-based Grammar Women to reconnect with the OGA and other local Grammar Women. It has been decided by the OGA Committee to continue holding one of these events each semester to provide regular opportunities for interested past students to engage in an informal manner. They are purposeful opportunities to maintain contact with Grammar Women who are interested in joining the Committee.

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 invitations and activities. The OGA was pleased to be associated with Grammar Women events including:

- *NSW Archibald Alumnae Event – 2 June 2019.* This now yearly event has proven to be very popular with those Grammar Women residing in Sydney and surrounds. After a delicious lunch, attendees were provided with a guided tour of the Archibald finalists. Some Grammar Women come every year and this in itself means there is an ongoing purposeful opportunity provided by the School and OGA together to recognise Grammar Women of all ages and celebrate the sisterhood.
- *Brisbane GOMA Alumnae Event – 22 June 2019.* We welcomed an enthusiastic group of Grammar Women to GOMA for the Margaret Olley exhibition, 'A Generous Life'. After a delicious lunch at the restaurant, Gallery educator and past student (and teacher), Lorraine Thornquist (1967) provided valuable insights and a fascinating commentary throughout the exhibition.
- *'Event Leaders and Game Changers' – 28 August 2019.* Principal, Jacinda Euler, led conversations with past students Dr Alison Todd and Ms Manuri Gunawardena. Held at QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute, attendees were invited to a 'behind the scenes' tour before the presentation. Embraced by the wider BGGGS community, events such as these provide valuable opportunities to network and engage.
- *Victoria Parkside Winery Estate – 19 January 2020.* The new year kicked off to a wonderful start with Grammar Women connecting at Jenny Ward's (Claringbould, 1981) and husband Darryl's estate just outside of Melbourne. The wine tasting was divine in the converted old

horse's stable and delicious food to follow made the event a memorable one. In attendance were Grammar Women from Melbourne and surrounds.

5. Reunions

- *10 August 2019* – 20, 30 and 40 year Reunions were held at the School. Reunion events commence 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.
- *14 September 2019* – 5, 10, 50 and 60 year Reunions.
- *11 March 2020* – 60 year+ Reunion. OGA Committee ladies welcomed 85 Grammar Women to an afternoon tea on Foundation Day. As well as the 60+ ladies, current Grandmothers of the School (who were younger than this age bracket) were also welcomed. This provided a wonderful opportunity for Grammar Women to connect across the years, as well as being at time surprised by the attendance of someone else from their year. Grand-daughters and Year 11 Service Girls joined the gathering at the end of the school day, bringing an air of youth and exuberance to the room. The success of this day would not have been possible without the tireless preparations of Antonia Swindells and also Jenny Davis, whose display of items from years gone by provided lively conversation and much reminiscing.

6. Memorabilia

OGA Memorabilia sales were primarily made through the P&F Shop. The Committee sincerely thanks the P&F, along with Shop personnel, for supporting us. No new items were introduced this year. We decided to concentrate on promoting the items we already have in stock and moving some on that have not been as well received. The laptop pouch is one such item. The P&F Committee have agreed that we can 'gift' one to each incoming student when she comes to the Shop for her uniform fitting. Inside will be a letter of welcome to BGGs, including a brief outline of the OGA and the terms 'Grammar Girl' and Grammar Woman'. In this way, we will start connecting with students from the beginning of their Grammar journey and stay with them throughout and beyond their years at the School. The Shop staff have worked tirelessly to get their products online for purchase. The OGA is very grateful to have our items included and hope this will lead to sales growth moving forward.

The stunning blue opal pendant was formally launched to commemorate the 120th year anniversary of the BGGs OGA.

Thank-you to Ann Caston for overseeing memorabilia stock and ensuring items are available as needed. Ann has overseen this for many years now. Her wisdom and historical knowledge are very much appreciated attributes.

7. Concluding Remarks

As President of the BGGs OGA, I am very proud to report on all that has been achieved over the past 12 months. I believe that as a Committee, we have successfully promoted and achieved in keeping the connection alive.

This year will again provide milestones and times of celebration in the School's 145th year. One of these will be the opening of the new Science building at the Spring Hill campus. I am very much looking

forward to being there, along with other Grammar Women, to see the learning space named in honour of the OGA. Our donation was done so to acknowledge all past, current and future students who undertake studies in the Sciences, and to have the opportunity to feature Grammar Women who have achieved success in their scientific careers after graduation. This pledge now completes a trio of OGA donations at all three campuses. The naming of the learning space will join the other donations of gates at Rangakarra and panels at Marrapatta. The donations help to enhance the various campuses, but also ultimately pay homage to all Grammar Women who have had the privilege of being educated behind the picket fence.

It has been a honour to serve as OGA President for this term and I sincerely wish the incoming Committee every blessing for the year ahead.

Julie Caton (Cleghorn 1981)
President, BGGGS OGA