



Grammar Women
Incorporating the OGA est. 1899



123rd Annual General Meeting

26th April 2023

Opening Remarks

In 2022, the OGA Committee comprised of 17 ladies, ranging in graduation years from 1958 to 2016. I am sure there are not many committees who can say they represent such a diverse range of members. This, I believe, is one of the strengths of the OGA Committee. I am always amazed by the interactions at Grammar Women events, where ladies who graduated in vastly different years are able to speak of BGGGS as a shared experience. Those of past years share images that recent graduates find fascinating. Younger ones inform them of changes, and sometimes find that some things remain just the same. To see the sisterhood in this way is a special experience. I warmly welcome everyone here this evening as we share the sisterhood of BGGGS at the OGA AGM.

President's Report for 2022

1. Management Committee

Committee Meetings were held throughout the year as required.

After the AGM on 20 April 2022, Committee Meetings were held on 8 June, 12 July, 24 August, 11 October and 9 November in 2022, and 8 February and 8 March in 2023. Committee members and key personnel from the school were invited to attend a Christmas Dinner at the home of the President on 17 December.

The Management Committee for 2022 comprised:

Julie Caton (Cleghorn 1981) President
Kim Morgan-Short (Skuce 1981) Senior Vice-President
Kate SweteKelly (McAdam 1981) Junior Vice-President
Leigh Fielding (Gow 1984) Treasurer
Samantha Caton (2016) Secretary
Andrea Connolly (Peake 1981) Assistant Secretary
Dorothy Bourguignon (Scotney 1958)
Jenny Gray (Vallis 1969)
Sue Jordan (Squire 1967)
Ann Caston (Pressland 1958)
Sylvia Pegg (Gaulton 1965)
Michelle Tully (Oswin 1981)

Carolyn Dimento (de Hayr 1981)
Tori Cardell-Ree (1991)
Susan Walker (1995)
Nikki Lambert (Pantges 1985)
Katie Allan (1988)

Thank-you especially to Leigh for undertaking the role of Treasurer and Samantha as Secretary. You both make my role so much easier by supporting me with all that you do. To all of the Committee, I thank you most sincerely for your sustained involvement with the OGA. We cover a wide range of graduation years, yet we all collaborate and support each other with honesty and respect. I truly look forward to our meetings where we come together in friendship, with the common goal of ensuring our relevance within the BGGs community.

2. OGA Connections with the School

The Parents and Friends Association continues to be a valued supporter of the OGA. I thank Cate Campbell for her friendship and collaboration throughout her term as President.

The Board of Trustees, chaired by old girl, Julie McKay, is preparing to share their revised visions and expectations with the BGGs community. I thank Julie, in particular, for acknowledging and paying respect to the OGA and Grammar Women as a whole. The OGA Committee has informed Julie of our desire to have a physical component included in the Master Plan that will be a commemoration of the OGA's 125th year in 2024.

Antonia Swindells has continued to spearhead the voice of the OGA in numerous ways. I congratulate her for the well-received editions of the Bishbar Blue. This initiative has helped to keep Grammar Women connected. At every function, it is Toni who has worked tirelessly to make everything look easy and well-run. She somehow remembers everyone's names and histories; something I can only aspire to. From Reunions, to guest speakers and interstate functions, Grammar Women are more connected now than ever and the profile of the OGA continues to rise. I would also like to recognise the attendance of Deputy Principal, Anne Ingram, at Reunions and Grammar Women events.

The support of our Principal, Jacinda Euler Welsh, and the BGGs staff as a whole, ensures the OGA remains a relevant voice within the School community. Thank-you, Jacinda, for being open to our visions and supportive of our activities.

3. Giving Back

The OGA Committee proudly supported the School's second Giving Day, donating a further \$5,000 to the Bursary Fund. This brings our donation to a total of \$10,000 towards this initiative. The Committee were unanimous in wanting to ensure more girls would have the benefit of an education at BGGs.

We have continued to seek connections alive and relevant for those girls graduating and those girls just starting their Grammar journey. In 2022, incoming students were gifted a royal blue bag tag, with a welcome note from the OGA included. The now established tradition of presenting graduating girls

with an OGA badge at the Valedictory dinner provides a meaningful opportunity to welcome them to the vast sisterhood of Grammar Women.

4. Memorabilia

OGA Memorabilia sales were primarily made through the P&F Shop and at the end of the year as graduation gifts. The Committee sincerely thanks the P&F, along with Shop personnel, for supporting us. At the end of 2022, a silver signet ring was introduced. A revised navy blue linen 'war cry' tea towel is soon to be launched. The sale of book bags remains our primary source of income.

5. Concluding Remarks

With exception of Open Day, 2022 marked a return to the staging of Reunions and Grammar Women events. We are all grateful that we can again connect in person and continue to fly the OGA flag. There are some current Committee members who have served for decades within the OGA. It is to these women I want to pay my special respect. Whilst everyone brings something different to the table, it is Dorothy, Ann, Jenny, Sue and Sylvia who hold the history of the OGA closest to their hearts. Most have fulfilled different roles over the years and I understand their desire to ensure the Committee members of the present build upon the OGA legacy in a meaningful and respectful manner. I sincerely thank these ladies, along with all Committee members, for their friendship, suggestions and support.

I was first elected President in 2018. At that time, I had 3 primary goals – to further promote engagement with past graduates, to increase connection with current students, and to promote the titles of 'Grammar girl' and 'Grammar woman'. Our engagement with Grammar Women has never been as active. I suggested we hold informal receptions in Brisbane to reconnect with old girls. In 2018, there were 11 OGA Committee members. The OGA catchphrase, 'Connections for Life', was adopted and started to be promoted. I thought it imperative that we attract more ladies to join the Committee, with the intention of covering more decades of graduating years. The receptions were particularly targeted to attract ladies from the 1990s and 2000s. This would be necessary for the Committee to remain purposeful, current and ongoing. By 2022, this was achieved, with a Committee of 17.

For graduating students to remain connected, we need to have a profile that starts at the very beginning of their Girls Grammar journey. 2017 graduating students were gifted an OGA badge to signify the first group of students who would automatically become members of the OGA as a result of the MOU between the OGA and the School. This was intended to be a 'one off' event. However, the badge was accepted with such enthusiasm that we, as a Committee, decided to retain this act and make it a graduation tradition. Every Year 12 Grammar girl is now presented with an OGA badge, pinned to Grammar blue ribbon, at the Valedictory Dinner. Parents are encouraged to pin it to their daughter's blazers. Jacinda has kindly agreed for me to speak at the Valedictory Dinner this year so that I can speak on behalf of the OGA, reinforcing to the girls the themes of connections and sisterhood.

As we had some memorabilia stock that was not selling, I suggested we gifted items to incoming students. In 2020, incoming students received laptop pouches and cooler bags, along with a letter explaining the OGA and its relevance. This has progressed to the gifting of a bag tag.

Other initiatives of which I am proud to be associated with are –

- Consistent attendance at P&F meetings to remain connected with the parent body
- Changing Committee meetings to evenings to allow for more engagement with Grammar Women
- Catering at Gala concerts for OGA revenue

- Development of the book bag so that it is now a quality product carried with pride
- Sashes for Year 11 representatives to assist with identification
- OGA Facebook page
- \$50,000 donation to the Science Building, with the naming of the OGA Co-Lab
- \$41,000 donation to the School Bursary Fund
- Expansion of OGA memorabilia to include opal pendant, silver bracelet, silver necklace and silver signet ring
- Engagement with Year 12 parents so they can purchase memorabilia as graduation gifts
- Gifting of an OGA pendant to each of the Head Girls

We will be needing a blend of the 'new' and 'more mature' to ensure 2023 is a year of connections and celebration of the sisterhood, as well as preparation for the 125th anniversary year of the OGA in 2024. The words 'sisterhood' and 'connections' remain at the forefront as we continue to respect those before us, connect with current Grammar girls, and welcome those Grammar Women who are just beginning on their post school journey.

Julie Caton (Cleghorn 1981)
President, BGGs OGA