



ABBOTSLEIGH

# Around Abbotsleigh





**Sweet success:** Our cover shows the winning entries of the competition to design a cake to celebrate the Junior School's 70th birthday. Well done to the finalists: Isla Behrens; Sophia Chiha and Amara Khiroya; and Phoebe Wu. Pictured, helping to cut the cakes, are Callie Ma and Elizabeth Osman, the youngest and oldest daughters of an Abbotsleigh Old Girl, and Junior School Captains Heidi Chan and Zoe Durbidge.



Abbotsleigh acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land and acknowledges and pays respect to Elders past and present.

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# A wonderful semester of celebration, learning, and enriching experiences

Megan Krimmer, Headmistress



**R**eading through this superb edition of *Around Abbotsleigh*, the famous quote by William Butler Yeats – ‘*Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire*’ – became a recurring mantra in my mind as the vibrancy, richness, depth of

learning and fantastic experiences of our girls, their teachers, our parents and our Old Girls seemed to just leap off every page.

It has been a very big year in the Junior School where the girls and staff have celebrated in style 70 years of being on their current campus. Indeed, the history Junior School has seen shows:

- 70 years of inspirational and visionary leadership
- 70 years of outstanding teaching
- 70 years of great learning
- 70 years of fun
- 70 years in which lifelong friendships have been formed
- 70 years of curiosity, exploration, discovery about our world, of learning to read and escaping into the wonderful world of books, of learning to count, compute and solve the most complex of problems
- 70 years of looking out for others and wanting to make a very positive difference in our world, and
- 70 years of rich blessings from the Lord our God.

The history of the Junior School on its current site began with the visionary leadership of Miss G Gordon Everett who, in 1952, seeing the incredible possibilities of creating a separate Junior School in the leafy surrounds of Wahroonga, purchased the property where the Junior School

stands today. Just prior to her retirement, Miss Everett saw the fulfilment of that dream with the Junior School’s official opening in 1954 by Lieutenant General Sir John Northcott, who was not only the first Australian-born Governor of NSW but also the grandfather of AOG Margaret Sachs (Coburn, 1965), who attended the Junior School as soon as she was old enough to do so. The rest, of course, is history, and a very rich history at that!

Fast-forward to 2024 where the celebration of that history exploded with a fantastic Colour Run at the end of Term 1 and a great Birthday Assembly and party in Term 2. Birthdays are traditionally associated with gifts and this was certainly the case for our Junior School’s birthday. Many girls kindly donated books to the library, which will benefit so many girls. We were also incredibly touched by two very generous gifts given to the whole Junior School: the first was from Mrs Margaret Sachs who gave the School a most beautiful Lionel Lindsay etching that had belonged to her grandfather; the second, a gorgeous bronze statue of a young schoolgirl, was from the Abbotsleigh Old Girls’ Union. These special gifts will inspire and be treasured by our girls for generations to come, and we are very grateful indeed for the generosity of Mrs Sachs and the AOGU.

There are a number of themes that run through this vibrant and exciting edition of *Around Abbotsleigh*. These include the theme of curiosity and incredible learning – from thinking and learning about endangered species in Year 2 to developing a robotic hand in the new Senior School subject, iSTEM, and so much more across the whole school. Creativity, drama, performances and serving others by raising funds and awareness, as well as looking after the environment, including through the revitalisation of the Abbotsleigh Centre for Environmental Education, are also featured.

Friendships and connections are dominant themes as well. Beginning with the beautiful recollections of the Abbotsleigh Old Girls Year 3 ‘Famous Five’, who have remained friends for almost 70 years,



to the wonderful friendships and support found in our boarding community, both for girls and their parents, to the connections fostered between our Senior girls and the ELC children, to the goals of the Abbotsleigh Old Girls' Union to foster community and connections – all these positive relationships and special friendships are very much a part of belonging to our wonderful Abbotsleigh community.

This publication also features the end of an era with the retirement of our much-loved former Careers Adviser who has served literally thousands of girls and their parents for almost 40 years.

Mrs Margaret Selby's incredible service was honoured by our current girls and staff as well as by our Old Girls. The AOGU's Strategic Purpose: 'Connection through Community', as well as

their gratitude for all that Mrs Selby has done, were beautifully demonstrated by giving her the incredible honour of being invited to be an honorary member of the Abbotsleigh Old Girls' Union. Mrs Selby was very chuffed indeed.

News of Old Girls, including Old Girls who have represented their country as Olympians, as well as the great contribution our Old Girls continue to make in so many areas, are also highlighted.

This edition of *Around Abbotsleigh* continues its great tradition of providing us with a taste of the vibrant, exciting and very enriching experiences that life at Abbotsleigh brings to all members of its vast community. I hope you gain as much enjoyment from reading *Around Abbotsleigh* as I have done.

# What a birthday party! Celebrating 70 years of our Junior School

Sally Ruston AM, Head of Junior School



**W**hat we value we mark and celebrate. Thus it was that the entire Junior School community celebrated 70 years of educating young minds on the Junior School campus on 10 May 2024 with a fabulous assembly and party. We celebrated the wonderful legacy created by Miss G Gordon Everett, who acted with such vision and strategic intent in selecting the new site in 1952 and then opened a purpose-built Junior School in 1954.

Equally we celebrated the fabulous traditions, values and innovations created by the girls and staff here on this campus during the past 70 years. The Junior School has always been a nurturing space where our girls are viewed as curious, capable and engaged learners filled with wonder, excitement and a delightful sense of fun. Whether building cubbies throughout the decades or riding skateboards and scooters today, our girls have been adventurous problem-solvers who have embraced learning opportunities and modelled a keen desire to make difference in their world.

It isn't a birthday party without gifts and cakes. Thus it was that we launched the student-designed 70th birthday badge that the girls are wearing on blazers with great pride this year. The design competition was enormously popular with nearly 300 entries. We congratulate Megan Ng in Year 5 for her winning entry (pictured above). Each girl was also given a commemorative bookmark holstering a pencil and a sachet of Everlasting Daisy seeds. The bookmark symbolises our love of reading, the pencil our love of learning and the Australian native seeds represent the enduring joy we have benefited from on this campus. During the day the girls created year group artworks resplendent with their unique handprints and these are now displayed on the Rainbow Walk.

This Birthday Assembly was also a time of giving back. Delightfully, our Abbotsleigh Old Girls' Union gave the current girls a most impressive bronze statue of a girl in a reflective pose, potentially considering her bountiful options in the years ahead. The statue – yet to be named – will take pride of place in the Primary Courtyard.

The girls were also engaged in 'giving back' through the donation of a legacy book. Each Junior School girl had the opportunity to donate a book to the new Library and Innovation Centre. We now have more than 1000 new titles available for borrowing, with each book inscribed with the donor's name, and we are thrilled by the enthusiasm and generosity of our girls and families.

The assembly itself featured a Q & A session led by the Junior School Captains where one of our Abbotsleigh Old Girls – Mrs Margaret Sachs (Coburn, 1965) – spoke fittingly of her recollection of her grandfather, His Excellency Lieutenant General Sir John Northcott, opening the then newly built Junior School campus in 1954. Mrs Sachs was also generous in giving to the School a Lionel Lindsay (brother of Norman Lindsay) etching.

Our Junior School Concert Band played, the girls sang 'Marvellous Things', and the assembly concluded with 'Happy Birthday' and the cutting of three magnificent cakes generously produced by Year 6 girls.

After the assembly, while current girls enjoyed eating their cakes, Old Girls toured the school. It was a fitting end to a wonderful day of celebrations.





1956



c.1970



1987



'Five Fingers of the Helping Hand': firm school friends since they commenced 3rd grade together in the Junior School. Clockwise from top left, Caroline (Candy) Thomson (Reynolds, 1964), Elizabeth (Libby) Madsen (Brennan, 1964), Linda Gray (Phillips, 1964) and Elizabeth Pogson (Godfrey, 1964). Inset: Christina Pender (Fincham, 1964).

# Memories of Junior School days

**L**oosely based on Enid Blyton's 'Famous Five', a friendship formed between five third graders almost 70 years ago in the Abbotsleigh Junior School is just as strong today as it was back then.

'We called ourselves "the Five Fingers of the Helping Hand" and our intention was to raise money for charity,' said member Linda Gray (Phillips, 1964). 'Today the emphasis is more on reminiscing and helping each other with our various age-related challenges.'

For four of the five members, the recent 70th birthday celebrations in the Junior School provided the perfect opportunity to take a trip down memory lane. (Linda said their fifth member, Christina Pender (Fincham, 1964), was unfortunately unable to attend as she is managing 'one such [age-related] challenge' with encouragement from the others).

Many friendships may well have been forged in the crocodile lines in which they all remember walking to and from Wahroonga Station and the Junior School.

'We travelled by train, immaculately dressed in our green and fawn uniforms,' Linda said. 'We were well behaved, although a little overawed by the older girls.'

Elizabeth Pogson (Godfrey, 1964) recalls her Junior School days being filled with games of statues, chasings and hopscotch and a regular sports class that often involved a vaulting horse.

'Tunnel ball and corkscrew are other organised activities I remember,' she said. 'We did do sewing classes and the basics I learnt have been useful!'

All members of the group remember recess and having to drink the obligatory small bottle of milk 'that was usually rather warm!'

Elizabeth Madsen (Brennan, 1964) thinks school back then was 'quite basic' compared to today's schooling. 'We did a lot of rote learning, especially times tables, which were recited each day,' she said. 'Our desks were in lines and there was absolutely no talking.'

She remembers there being a couple of boarders from country NSW in her Year 3 class and the canteen being situated under Poole House.

'Our parents never drove us to school,' continued Elizabeth. 'A teacher would walk us in a crocodile line to the station each afternoon. We all enjoyed our train travel and that is where a lot of our friendships formed.'

Caroline (Candy) Thomson (Reynolds, 1964) said the school was hardly recognisable today, although the Assembly Hall was very familiar as well as some of the large trees.

'I can still smell the honeysuckle flowers that were on the walk from the station to school and we used to suck them!' Candy said. 'Our education was very relaxed... I loved every day at school and the friendships made have been lasting and are treasured.'



# Many happy returns from the AOGU

It was a highlight for many to listen to Mrs Margaret Sachs (Coburn, 1965), who has been an instrumental figure within the AOGU and the Junior School over the years. The Junior School girls learnt that not only was Margaret the first of three generations at the School, and an influential member of the Old Girls' Union since she was 22, but that it was Margaret's grandfather, the first Australian-born Governor of NSW, Sir John Northcott who opened Abbotsleigh Junior School in 1954. Margaret generously gave the Junior School an etching from another famous Abbotsleigh grandfather, Lionel Lindsay, a treasured piece given to her grandfather.

Another highlight for the girls was the presentation of the Abbotsleigh Old Girls' Union gift by Sarah Franks (1991), President of the AOGU. The bronze sculpture of a schoolgirl in thought will remind girls to never stop dreaming and to keep reaching for the stars. The girls gasped when she was revealed so we are confident that she will be a sought-after hit in the playground.

It was very special to have Robyn Claydon attend. Many Old Girls know Robyn as a long-standing former deputy headmistress of the Senior School. Few would know that she was one of the first teachers at the Junior School – the then Miss Hickin taught in 1954 and 1955 while completing her teacher training!

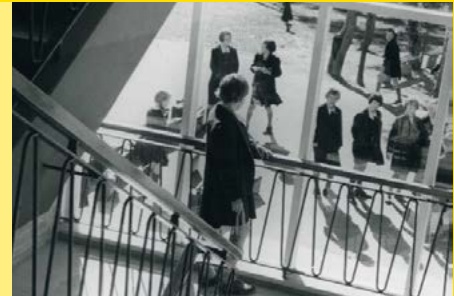
Happy Birthday Abbotsleigh Junior School!



Kim Boniface (Anderson, 1985), AOGU President Sarah Franks (1991), Rebecca Baillie (1989), former deputy headmistress Robyn Claydon, Fiona Hobill Cole (Armstrong, 1981) and Belinda Burton (Tjeuw, 1991).



1954



1954



c.1954



Old Girl Q & As: Questions for Margaret Sachs (Coburn, 1965) from Junior School Captain Zoe Durbidge and Vice Captain Heidi Chan.



Pictured, centre right, is Margaret Sachs (Coburn, 1965) with her daughter Gretel Osman (Sachs, 1993) and granddaughter Elizabeth Osman (Year 6). Margaret's grandfather, Lieutenant General Sir John Northcott, officially opened the Junior School in 1954.

# National Boarding Week

One week was not enough for our boarders to share their marvellous insights about life at Abbotsleigh. They had much to tell us



**N**ational Boarding Week provided a wonderful opportunity to celebrate all things boarding at Abbotsleigh with a long list of activities spanning more than two weeks in Term 2.

These included fiercely contested day girl versus boarders sporting matches; an array of community events, including the inaugural Abbotsleigh Boarding Parents' Association (ABPA) Regional Showcase Dinner; a great Old Girl, past, present and prospective parent community dinner at Dubbo as a culmination of the Dubbo Boarding Expo; tours and afternoon tea in the boarding houses for the day girls; boarder games; fundraisers for our boarders' nominated charity, the Royal Flying Doctor Service; cross-school boarder leadership events and a sensational Senior School Boarders Assembly run entirely by our boarders.

To kick off the celebrations, the ABPA proudly hosted a fabulous dinner for the whole School community. ABPA Co-Presidents Kylie Wood and Katrina Cogan were delighted with the inaugural event and hope next year's will be even bigger and better! 'It is a fantastic opportunity to work collaboratively with the School to provide an event that celebrates the importance of boarding within the fabric of the School,' Kylie said.

'Our boarders are very proud of the regions they come from, and it was fantastic to share some of the finest produce available in Australia with the whole Abbotsleigh community.'

The Boarding Prefects, led by Head Boarder Nanetta Washaya, hosted a special Boarders Assembly featuring some behind-the-scenes videos that gave wonderful insight into their life at Abbotsleigh and back home. The assembly also included interviews with some of the students who take part in the School's Big Sister, Little Sister program. 'Boarding at Abbotsleigh is not only an extension of the day school, it also provides an

immersive environment where strong friendships are formed, diversity is embraced and personal growth throughout Years 7-12 is nurtured,' Nanetta said. 'Each of us sitting here, whether student or staff, contributes to the rich experiences that makes our boarding life so special.'

Vice Head Boarder Prefect Sophia Darney spoke about the continuing official and long-standing affiliation Abbotsleigh boarders have with the Royal Flying Doctor Service. 'Many of our boarders come from rural and remote areas, so it is important as a school to help a foundation that has personal meaning to several individuals across our broader community,' Sophia said.

To wrap-up a fun-filled two weeks of activities, our youngest boarders hosted friends from the day school and took part in Abbotsleigh's version of the Amazing Race. In a heart-pounding spectacle of fun and critical thinking, boarders and day girls combined for an incredible experience. The girls, with slime-covered hands, unicorn love, mermaid magic and DIY creations, tackled puzzles with creativity and flair. The teams journeyed through the boarding houses, racing to complete all 17 challenges and come in first. It was a wonderful opportunity for our boarders and day girls to bond and get to learn more about what makes boarding tick at Abbotsleigh.





## Our sisterhood

Year 11 girls Willa McKay and Demelza Lee spoke to Big Sisters Charlotte Pullen, Myffy Wilson and Nell Owen alongside their Little Sisters Mia Perrin, Rita Tyrrel and Annie Knight.

### Mia and Charlie

**Mia (Year 8, comes from Bondi) and Charlie (Year 12, is from Avalon)**

**‘Mia, can you share a time when you felt disconnected or homesick from your family while boarding and how did you overcome those feelings?’**

*‘At the end of my first term at Abbotsleigh, my mum moved to New York and it was a big change for me. I really missed my family and Charlie was really supportive of me. She’s always been very approachable and has really made me feel at home every single day of school.’*

**‘Charlie, how has being a Big Sister impacted your Senior years?’**

*‘Being a Big Sister to Mia since the start of last year has made me feel more a part of the boarding community and I feel like I have really helped her adjust to boarding life.’*

### Annie and Nell

**Annie (Year 7, from Cootamundra) and Nell (Year 11, from the Snowy Mountains)**

**‘Annie, what has your Big Sister done to support you through your first chapters of high school and boarding school?’**

*‘Nell has taken me down the street and she’s very kind to me. She always asks if I need anything and offers to help me whether it be with schoolwork or adjusting to being away from my family.’*

**‘Nell, what are the benefits of being a Big Sister?’**

*‘Being Annie’s Big Sister, I get to be a part of her life. I love just going and talking to her, taking her to the village and helping her with anything she needs. I’m so excited to get to spend the next year and a half spending time with Annie.’*

### Rita and Myffy

**Rita (Year 7, from Cairns) and Myffy (Year 11, from Moree)**

**‘Rita, what’s your favourite experience with your Big Sister?’**

*‘On the way back from Raging Waters, Myffy made sure I was fitting in well to Abbotsleigh being a boarder. She told me things I would need to know before coming to school and told me some of her favourite parts of boarding.’*

**‘Myffy, what are some activities you do as a Big Sister?’**

*‘To start off our year we are put in groups with our buddies for the Boarder Fun Day, and then we have dinners with our Little Sisters throughout the year. We play games and celebrate different holidays like Valentine’s Day and Christmas. We make each other presents and write notes to each other. We also visit the Year 7 boarding house and hang out with everyone there.’*



# Our continuing journey towards reconciliation

Shane Hamilton, Coordinator of First Nations Students and Programs

**T**his semester, the First Nations girls at Abbotsleigh have been involved in activities to strengthen their connection to culture and bring it into the life of our school. These talented young women have learnt cultural dances from Wiradjuri woman Jo Clancy, which they subsequently performed during the Reconciliation Week Assembly. The assembly served as a platform for reflection and understanding. We were privileged to have guest speaker, Wiradjuri woman Emma Griggs, tell the story of her own reconciliation after the damage done to her family from Stolen Generations policies.

In Emma's words, 'Just as my people before me have pursued reconciliation, I share my personal journey of reconciliation with you today. I want to share with you the importance of staying strong, seeking support, the importance of picking yourself up when you are down, never letting go of your dreams; the importance of family and community and the importance of education, and where it has led me to today.'

Also this semester, the girls attended the RSL Indigenous Veterans Commemoration Service. This poignant ceremony at the Hyde Park Anzac Memorial honoured the service of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander veterans since the Boer War and acknowledged the pain of discriminatory policies in the past that denied them rightful recognition.

Our student-led lunchtime club, Mana Allawah, seeks to 'educate our community about Indigenous culture based on respect, and form deeper understandings in a spirit of reconciliation'. President of the club, Gamilaroi woman Olivia Holz, has brought new awareness of Indigenous musicians and bands, and the group has been learning a new Dharug word each meeting. A highlight of Term 2 was welcoming Adam Byrne (Garigal/Gadigal) from Bush to Bowl back to the Indigenous foods garden in the ACEE and yarning with him around the campfire.



# Walking with purpose

How our girls present a positive demeanour and model independence

Sally Ruston AM, Head of Junior School

**W**alking with purpose has many safety and wellbeing benefits as shared with the girls in assembly this term. Walking quickly, purposefully and directly to one's destination demonstrates to onlookers that we are confident, know what we are about and not to be 'messed with'. We maximise time, present a positive demeanour and model independence. Equally we are well placed to survey the landscape and make early and pre-emptive decisions to keep ourselves safe.

Our peers, and really everyone in our community, are drawn to people who are confident, positive and energised. While we recognise that we don't always feel confident in unknown circumstances, the reality is that if we act in an assured, purposeful way then we start to feel the same and our demeanour communicates this. When our girls are informed of the skills, strategies and behaviours that promote friendship and positive peer connections, they are well placed to adopt these and be successful in their social interactions.

For parents who don't know this Abbotsleigh term, walking with purpose means:

- keeping your head held high and being aware of your surroundings;
- walking quickly and directly to your destinations; this is especially important before and after co-curricular activities in the early mornings and late afternoons;
- moving to and from the station in small groups;
- being especially alert to cars when approaching and on crossings;
- keeping distracting technology devices packed away and earbuds out of ears;
- avoiding a situation that gives you any reason for concern by changing your route to a safe option.

These behaviours keep our girls safe and connected here at School and in our community more broadly. We need to walk with purpose as this enables us to engage with confidence and safety in our ever-changing and intriguing world.



# All living things

Nature's push and pull forces exercised Year 2's critical thinking skills and put a focus on Australia's endangered animals, writes Science Teacher Sophie Burnett



**T**hroughout Semester 1, Year 2 students combined an exploration of living things and an understanding of the physical world. With a focus on critical thinking, the students investigated how endangered Australian animals used push-and-pull forces to survive and thrive.

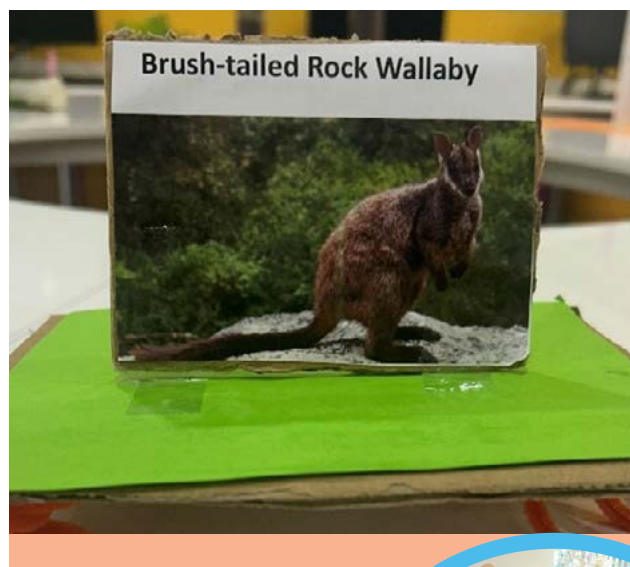
To develop their understanding, each lesson focused on a different push or pull force, as shown by an animal that uses this force to help in its everyday lives. For example: creating a balloon rocket to demonstrate the way a Southern Greater Glider moves from one tree to another. In another experiment, the girls made catapults to understand the way a frog uses its powerful legs to jump; and in another, by using a cup and string, they modelled a Mallee Fowl moving around soil.

The Year 2 students worked through a range of lessons where they planned and conducted their own experiments, based on what they had learnt in previous lessons. They labelled diagrams and recorded data with a key focus on their critical thinking skills; reflected on their work and evaluated their ideas.

Developing these critical thinking skills became particularly important for their next challenge: design and make a toy that uses push-and-pull force inspired by an Australian endangered animal.

The students thrived when given agency to develop their own ideas. They needed to consider who the toy was for, the materials it would be made from, how it worked and what it would look like. Peer feedback was key in sharing ideas and planning for the making component.

The creativity showcased in these designs and Year 2's ability to incorporate their understanding of living things was interesting and exciting. All students thought carefully about their animal and showcasing the forces they had learnt about.



# Year 3's Friendship Day

Building strong, supportive relationships is key to this important initiative, writes Year 3 Coordinator Dani Salt



The highly anticipated Friendship Day is an initiative for Year 3 students that plays a crucial role in preparing the girls for their upcoming Camp Week, ensuring they are well connected and comfortable with their peers. This year, the day began with breakfast with treats and lively conversation. As each student arrived at our 'café', they were encouraged to take a random table number, sparking new connections and ensuring an exciting start to the day. Favourite soft toys were brought to school, further breaking the ice and creating a warm, inviting atmosphere.

The morning's activities included anecdotes from Year 4 students, who shared their fondest memories and highlights from their own Year 3 experiences to provide valuable insights and encouragement to the younger students. Prior to the day, Abbotsleigh staff had been asked to share their heartfelt thoughts on friendship, which evoked squeals of delight as the girls were encouraged with messages like 'Friendship is like a gigantic coffee on a gloomy day', 'Friendship is a precious gift' and 'Being a good friend is one of the best things anyone can be'. These entertaining reflections highlighted the importance of building strong, supportive relationships.

The students then moved to the Library Plaza where, in the spirit of creativity and camaraderie, they decorated the area with vibrant, friendship-focused chalk art. Their masterpieces conveyed powerful messages such as 'Kindness is the key' and 'Make horseshoes rather than circles', emphasising the importance of inclusivity and welcoming others.

Following this collective session, students participated in a variety of team-building activities, the first being a Scavenger Hunt to assist new students in familiarising themselves with the School environment and to foster a sense of belonging. Other highlights included the Science of Friendship with Mrs Burnett; role playing with Mrs George; the Hula Hoop Challenge with Miss Salt; and decorating paper doll friendship chains with Mrs Lim.

Year 3 Friendship Day was a resounding success, leaving the students excited for their future adventures together and reinforcing the School's commitment to fostering a caring and inclusive community.



# The power of performance

How reading plays and active participation in drama enhance reading skills

Sarah Vincent, Year 4 Coordinator, and Ronelle Tang, Literacy Specialist

**'In the same way that actors rehearse a script to make a meaningful and authentic performance, readers read deeply to make a meaningful performance for themselves.'**

– *Timothy Rasinski*

**T**he integration of theatrical performances into the Year 4 curriculum has had a profound effect on the students' literacy development. The use of drama and active participation in plays written by Ms Darcy Tindale have not only enhanced the girls' reading comprehension and fluency but also fostered a deeper connection with literature.

By embodying various roles and rehearsing lines, students have improved their expression and pacing, critical components of reading fluency.

The collaborative nature of bringing a script to life has also cultivated essential skills such as teamwork, empathy and critical thinking. These skills are invaluable and contribute to a well-rounded educational experience.

We had the additional joy of a 'Meet the Playwright' morning, when students spent time listening to and working with Darcy. She shared her backstory of becoming a playwright and author, and spoke about her passions and motivations in writing and creating plays, short stories and novels. This was such a vibrant and engaging time for Year 4. Darcy even gave her time to help individual groups with their performances of the play *The Royals Are Crackers*.

Reading plays has allowed the students to become risk-takers and collaborative learners because performance relies on a team effort where every role matters and every voice belongs. This holistic approach to literacy development, in addition to enhancing comprehension and fluency, has fostered a joy and purposeful connection with literature.





# Jumping for joy, and healthy bodies

Jump Rope for Heart is not only a leap towards healthier generations, it also raises money for the Heart Foundation

Luke Harris, PDHPE Teacher



For more than four decades, Jump Rope for Heart has been a cornerstone of Australian schools, engaging more than 10 million children in active lifestyle pursuits while supporting vital heart research. Powered by the Heart Foundation, this initiative not only promotes physical health among youth but also contributes to the fight against Australia's leading cause of death: heart disease.

At Abbotsleigh Junior School, students skip for 10 minutes twice a week after lunch, honing their skills in both long rope and individual skipping. The benefits are profound: cardiovascular health, endurance, coordination and agility improve significantly. Remarkably, just 10 minutes of skipping equals a 30-minute jog.

The program also incorporates a digital aspect; students log progress and seek donations through a secure online portal, which culminates in a school-wide 'Jump Off Day'. Abbotsleigh Junior School's participation has raised an impressive \$13,847 (10th highest in the state), underscoring commitment to heart health and research.

Furthermore, the prizes collected for raising funds will be donated to Toys 'n' Tucker Anglicare Sydney, providing a way to share the joy of Christmas.



# The great outdoors

Outdoor education is not just challenging and fun, but an essential component of holistic learning

Clare Haymen, Dean of Middle School



The benefits of outdoor education have been well documented. Studies show spending time in nature supports improved physical, cognitive and mental health<sup>1</sup>. Specifically, it can reduce anxiety, increase overall sense of wellbeing and self-esteem, and has the potential to improve learning retention<sup>2</sup>. With this in mind, it is imperative we provide outdoor learning opportunities for our students to thrive.

The Middle School Outdoor Education program is inextricably linked to Abbotsleigh's Deep Learning and Wellbeing Frameworks, where students further develop the skills of interdependence, resilience and self-regulation outside of the classroom. It enables students in Years 7, 8 and 9 to strengthen existing relationships and create new connections, while challenging themselves through participation in experiential learning activities.

The program builds on skills developed through Junior School camps. As Sally Ruston, Head of Junior School, has explained, 'While the experiences themselves are designed to be engaging, challenging and a great deal of fun, it is the success had in surmounting fears, overcoming obstacles, learning the art of collaboration and growing independence that will ultimately stand the girls in great stead well beyond the week.'

Students are provided opportunities to reflect on transferable skills so vital for their future beyond the school gates, including group cohesion, communication competencies, creating a better social climate and overcoming life's challenges.<sup>3</sup>

At the end of Term 1, our Year 7 cohort enjoyed three nights at the CRU facility in Lake Macquarie. With a variety of land-based and water activities, including sailing and fishing, our girls challenged themselves to learn new skills and embrace the outdoors. Cohesion among the year group was strengthened and new bonds formed.

Years 8 and 9 participated in programs conducted by Southbound Adventures in Terms 1 and 2 respectively. Groups took part in mountain biking, rock-climbing, hiking and canoeing. They developed important skills in the preparation and cooking of their own meals each night and worked collaboratively to problem-solve in a variety of team challenges. They also benefited from an Indigenous presentation from NSW Parks and Wildlife. An immersive experience, students gained an understanding of the land on which they camped, as well as learning to weave and use ochre as face paint.

An important component of our programs is personal reflection, and students were given time daily to consider their challenges and accomplishments. The break from their digital realm promoted mindfulness and an appreciation of nature. This year's Prefect theme 'Brave the Waves' was also beautifully incorporated throughout the camps. The girls were reminded that in overcoming challenges, true character and resilience are formed.

Thanks to the Year Coordinators for their organisation and dedication, and to all the accompanying staff members. The care and support they showed the girls was exemplary and contributed to the positive and rewarding experience had by so many. Just as is the case in our Junior School, our students created thank you cards for their accompanying teachers as a way of expressing gratitude and appreciation for their efforts. No doubt many special memories and lasting connections were formed throughout the programs.



References

<sup>1</sup> Ayotte-Beaudet, J.P & Berrigan, F. (2022). 'Outdoor education has psychological, cognitive and physical health benefits for children.' <https://theconversation.com/outdoor-education-has-psychological-cognitive-and-physical-health-benefits-for-children-183763>

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And Mutz, M., & Müller, J. (2016). Mental health benefits of outdoor adventures: Results from two pilot studies. *Journal of adolescence*, 49, 105-114.

A synthesized research review of 96 empirical studies investigating the effects of OEPs on participants' psychosocial development (Hattie et al., 1997) reported that OEPs not only facilitated participants' self-concept but also enhanced their interpersonal skills, personality development, and leadership.

# Our innovative helping hand

A new Stage 5 elective, named iSTEM, is challenging our students to find solutions to real-world problems

Michelle Gouveia, Science Teacher



**W**ithin the Science department, a new Stage 5 elective has taken root: iSTEM (Integrated Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics). This isn't your typical classroom fare – it's a dynamic journey where students grapple with real-world problems, honing essential 21st-century skills along the way.

At its core, iSTEM encourages students to be active problem-solvers. Rather than passively absorbing information, they engage in hands-on, enquiry-based learning. Their journey begins with identifying authentic problems, issues that resonate with their communities or the wider world. These problems serve as the driving force behind their exploration.

## The MedTech topic

Students delved into MedTech to explore medical technology advancements and apply biomimicry principles. Here's how it unfolded:

**Researching MedTech** Students studied cutting-edge medical innovations. From AI-assisted diagnostics to wearable health monitors, they immersed themselves in the field.

**Biomimicry exploration** Inspired by nature, students looked at how animals and plants solve problems. Could a gecko's adhesive feet improve prosthetics? Could a hummingbird's wing motion enhance robotic limbs?

## The Robotic Hand Project

Within the MedTech topic, students embarked on a remarkable iSTEM project centred around prosthetic development. Their mission? To create a sensor glove that communicated with a robotic hand via micro:bit technology. Here's how they navigated the challenges:

**Curiosity and exploration** Armed with curiosity, students delved into the intricacies of prosthetics. They researched existing solutions and explored cutting-edge technologies. Their questions fuelled their learning journey.

**Collaboration** iSTEM thrives on collaboration. Students formed interdisciplinary teams, combining expertise in science, engineering and programming. They brainstormed ideas, debated design choices and pooled their knowledge.

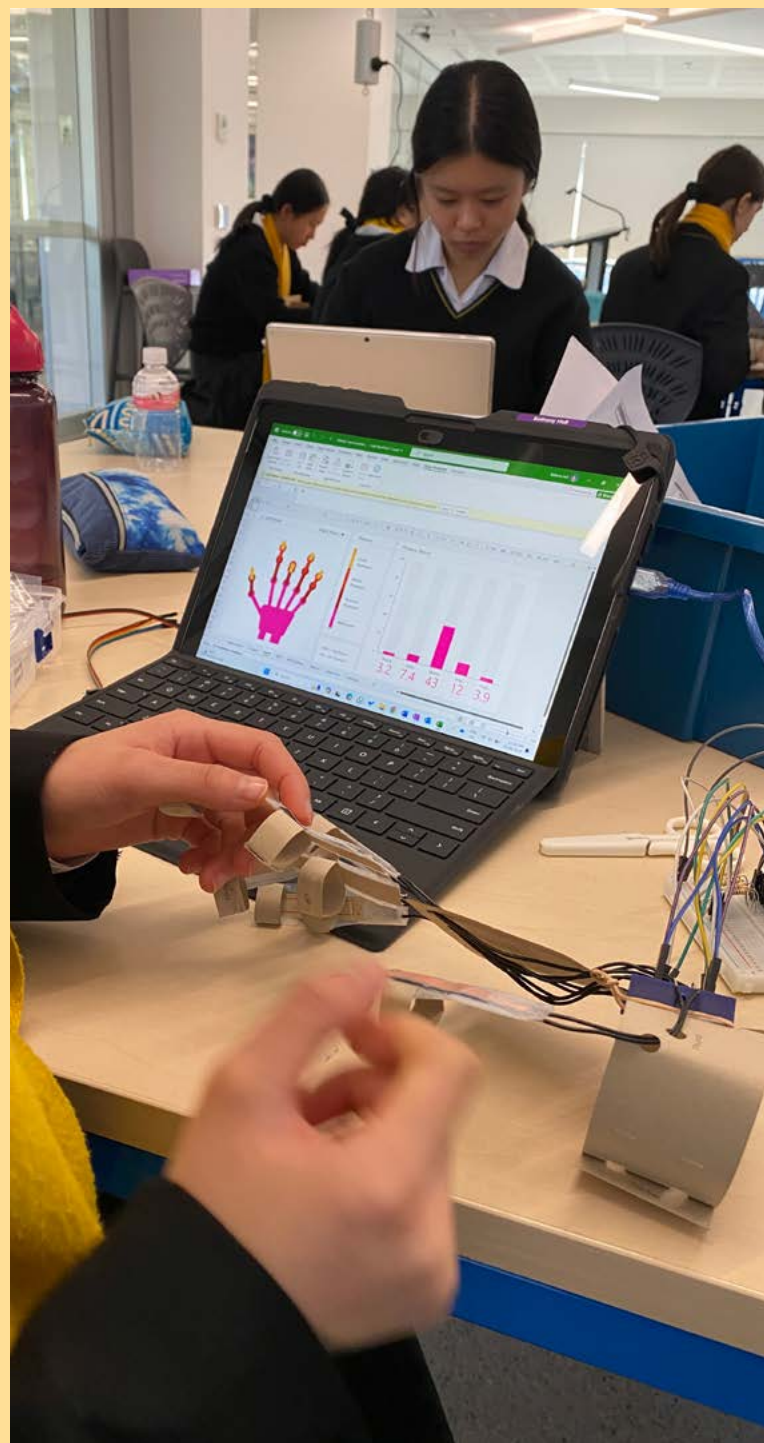
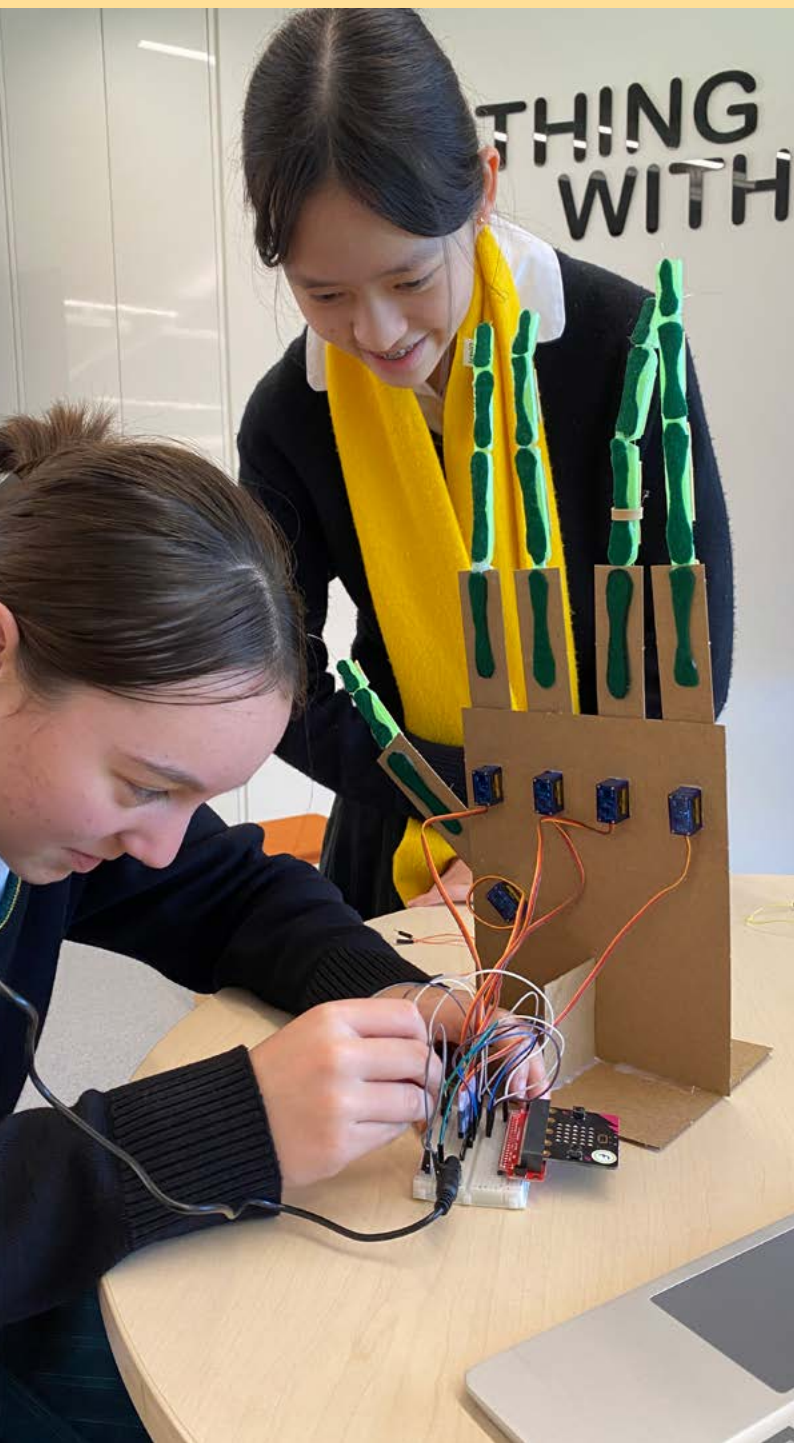
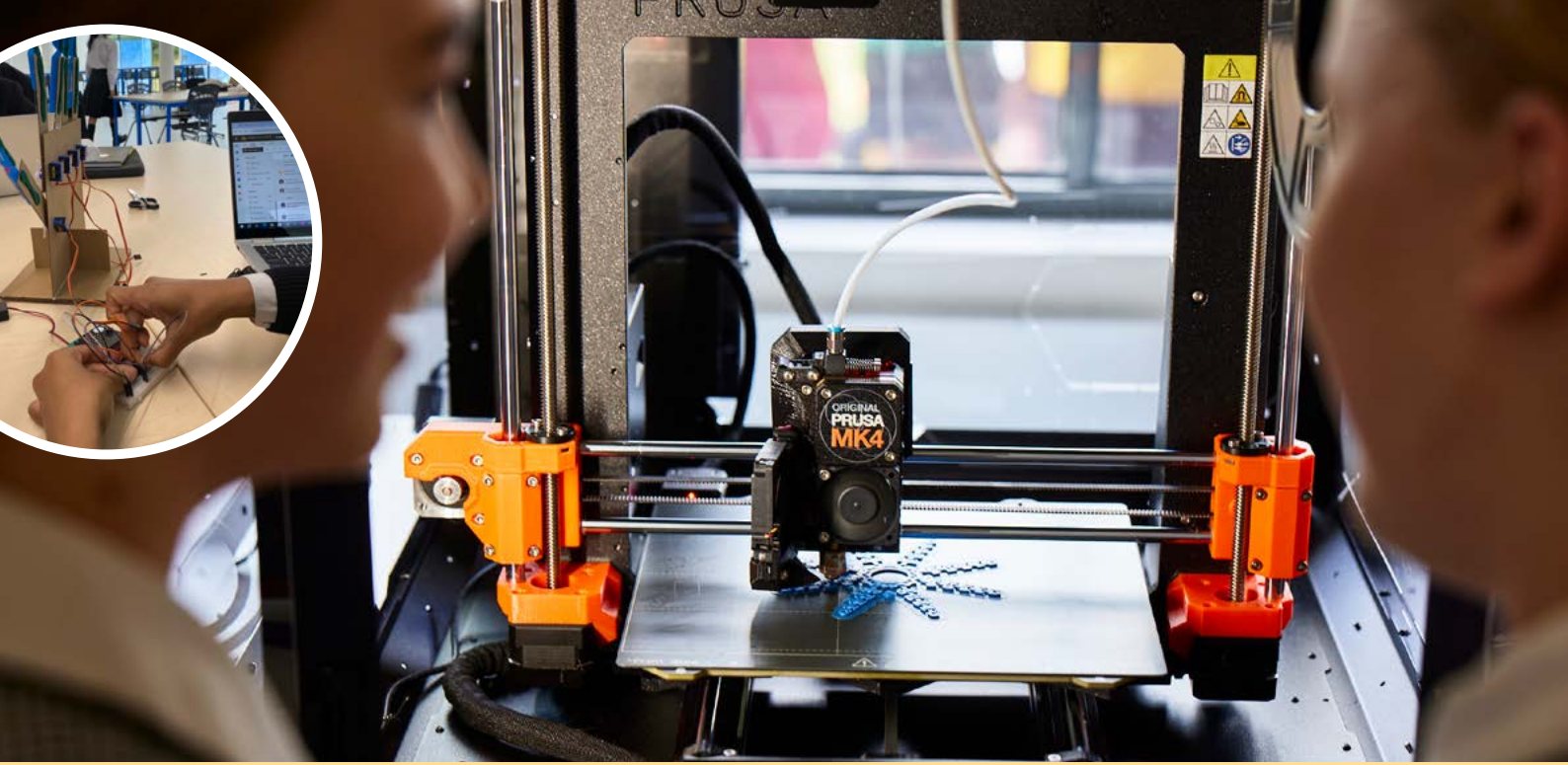
**Critical thinking** The road to a functional robotic hand was riddled with obstacles. Components malfunctioned, codes glitched and deadlines loomed. Students analysed problems, iterated designs and refined their approach. Failure became a stepping stone, not a setback.

**Communication** Effective communication was paramount. Students documented their progress, presented findings and sought feedback. They learned to articulate complex concepts to peers and teachers.

**Resilience** When setbacks occurred, such as a misaligned micro:bit and an overheated servo motor, they didn't falter. Instead, they embraced resilience. They debugged, recalibrated and persevered. Their determination fuelled progress.

## Looking ahead

As we entered Term 3, the students remained undeterred. They are fine-tuning their creation, working towards that moment when everything works seamlessly and fingers flex, grip and release – a testament to their determination and resilience. iSTEM isn't just a subject, it's a journey. These young innovators will shape our future, armed with curiosity, collaboration and the ability to overcome any challenge.



# Creative and cultural partnerships



By working with industry professionals, students move from passive receivers to active creators empowering agency in their learning

Annabel Armstrong and Lauren Barlow, Visual Arts

**T**he Visual Arts department has been involved in building partnerships between Abbotsleigh and the cultural sector. We have sought opportunities for our students, both in and out of the classroom, to connect with professional artists and the artworld, to exhibit their work to a wider public audience and to foster notions of community.

In the classroom there has been a series of incursions with practising professional artists. Year 10 Visual Arts students spent a day with painter Ashley Frost learning about plein air practice and painterly approaches to printmaking. Local artist Stephen Hall spoke to Year 9 VA students about the fundamentals of portraiture and narrative; and Year 9 Photography and Digital Media students learnt the foundations of studio lighting and fashion photography from photographer Angelo Boutsalis, as well as creating their own fashion editorial.

Beyond the classroom we have fostered three rewarding creative and cultural partnerships. The Abbotsleigh Knox Print Exchange is a two-year artistic collaboration between Knox and Abbotsleigh students, meeting weekly to engage in printmaking workshops. This has seen a sharing of resources, knowledge and expertise between the two schools. The collaboration resulted in an exhibition in the Grace Cossington Smith Gallery in May this year where students exhibited alongside the professional printmakers who had mentored them. Sales of student work raised money for Abbox, the annual four-day residential holiday camp for children with special needs that is co-hosted by both schools in partnership with the Sony Foundation.

**'This program provided an incredible opportunity for collaboration between Knox and Abbotsleigh,' said Fiona Yan and Isabella Apostolou (Year 11). 'Our weekly**

**meetings created a space for sharing ideas, skill development and the formation of new connections. It was a privilege to exhibit next to our artist mentors and to be part of such an exciting initiative, as well as immensely rewarding to be able to give back to the community.'**

In an ongoing partnership with 3:33 Project, a small team of Abbotsleigh and Hornsby Girls High School students curated a solo exhibition with leading Australian visual artist Oliver Watts. The Young Curators program is a dynamic opportunity for students to experience an alternative career path in the arts. In a six-month commitment, the students work collectively as a curatorial team to research, develop and select, stage and host an exhibition that contributes to both the artist's career and the wider Australian arts' discourse. Through this partnership, our students have the exposure to work with a leading corporate curatorial company to connect with real-world roles, responsibilities and stakeholders in the arts industry. They are required to work to a professional standard with an established artist and collaborate with other students both within and outside their school context.

**'Young Curators has challenged my creativity and I have collaborated with my peers to do things I've never done before,' said Meera Nirmalendran (Year 11). 'I have learnt so much from this new experience and have had the opportunity to peek into the curating world.'**

Students worked with Watts and visited his studio to view his works; engaged in a Q&A tour with his gallerist at Chalk Horse Gallery; and worked collaboratively with Grace Cossington Smith Gallery staff to explore how the project would come to fruition as a public exhibition. The 2024 Young Curators exhibition, titled *me in*



*place and the place in me*, opened on 8 August and invited its audience to experience Watts' practice through the relationship of the human condition and Australian landscape. Through their exhibition, the girls' aim was to discuss Watts' rich practice, which draws on pop culture, arts genres and poetry through a selection of paintings that use compelling allusions to stage reenactments of literature and art history.

The First Nations Artists' Exchange is a new initiative that aims to foster connection and mentorship between Abbotsleigh's First Nations girls and leading Indigenous voices in the wider arts community. The year-long program is driven by ongoing experiences that promote the exchange of ideas and the importance of sharing a voice. With First Nations' culture so richly connected to storytelling and visual expression, the program uses the possibilities and limitless potential of art to encourage students to connect with their culture and gain a sense of community while away from home.

This year's First Nations Artists' Exchange partners with emerging contemporary Indigenous artist Tiarna Herczeg. She is a First Nations and Hungarian artist living on Gadigal lands and identifies as Kuku Yalanji/Kuku Nyungkul Warra woman (Far North Queensland). As a young woman and proud First Nations person, Herczeg has formed an inspiring and meaningful relationship with the students through moments of discussion and the intuitive action of artmaking. The collaboration began with the design of an Indigenous jersey for the Abbotsleigh sports community. Led by Herczeg, an afternoon of creative brainstorming and workshoping led to exchanged ideas about cultural symbolism and how to respectfully represent culture through a contemporary and graphic object such as a jersey.

In June, Tiarna invited the First Nations students to the opening night of her solo exhibition *Through coloured glass* at Curatorial+Co in Woolloomooloo. The students were welcomed with a gallery tour and sneak preview of Herczeg's show. They participated in an artist floor talk with gallery staff, where Herczeg spoke to her personal practice. The overarching message of this experience was the idea of voice and the importance of storytelling through one's own personal perspectives and experiences.

Cultural and creative partnerships enrich education by developing a network of sustainable relationships between students and industry professionals. In Visual Arts at Abbotsleigh we have approached partnerships with an intentional interest in the notion of 'exchange', ensuring our opportunities are mutually beneficial for all stakeholders. In such partnerships we aim to strengthen our students' learning and further their cultural experience through connection, creativity and innovative thinking. Cultural and creative partnerships move students from passive receivers to active creators, empowering agency in their learning. Through these platforms we encourage our students to acknowledge their role in the wider arts ecology, extend their individual and collective voice and demonstrate the multiple pathways to their success.



# ‘Unpath’d waters’ to ‘undream’d shores’

Drama students have braved many waves this semester, learning from Euripides all the way through to contemporary playwrights, as well as bringing Shakespeare’s timeless works to life

Angela Morosin, Head of Drama



The first half of this year has seen our Drama students bravely commit to travel ‘unpath’d waters’ in search of ‘undream’d shores’. Shakespeare’s work has featured heavily, with our Year 10 students bringing the Bard’s best bits to life in class performances and then taking to the stage in the Shakespeare Festival and Shakespeare Carnival. Meanwhile, Year 11 students understood how continued striving towards the ‘undreamed shores’ of equality shaped the lives of many when they saw Suzie Miller’s acclaimed *RBG: Of Many, One* at the Opera House. Year 9 travelled to Parramatta Riverside Theatres, leaving transfixed by the tragedy of *Medea* and inspired by how relevant Euripides’ ancient Greek tale remains today.

Three of our Year 11 students were lucky enough to be selected for Griffin Ambassadors, Griffin Theatre’s ‘annual access-all-areas’ program for Years 10, 11 and 12 students. The program provides participants with workshops, performances and access to industry professionals, all geared to support the next generation of theatregoers and theatremakers. The girls saw a range of shows, met the creatives behind the productions and mingled with likeminded students from across Sydney. Their passion and expertise have flowed into their Student Directed Production, the Shakespeare Festival and the upcoming Senior School production.

Our jam-packed journey began in Term 4 last year when incoming Drama Prefect Kate Matthews began work on the Student Directed Production of Tom Stoppard’s *The Real Inspector Hound*. Kate steered this production with skill and confidence; the comedy was on point; and outstanding performances kept students, parents and teachers laughing out loud at the on-stage antics.

Before we had time to surface from this production, girls were preparing for our annual Shakespeare Festival. Featuring duologues, ensemble scenes and group-devised performances, film and musical compositions inspired by Shakespeare’s works, our girls were sparkling with life and energy. Each group competed for the privilege of representing Abbotsleigh at the Sport for Jove regional Shakespeare Carnival. Emerging victorious at the festival, a film based on Shakespeare’s *Much Ado About Nothing* received excellent feedback from judges for its use of special effects, creative shots and careful framing. Our group-devised performers brought modern sass to *The Taming of the Shrew*, while our duologue performers were heartbreakingly beautiful in their interpretation of Emilia and Desdemona’s scene from *Othello*, earning them a place at the State Finals of the Shakespeare Carnival.

For the first time in almost 20 years, Abbotsleigh submitted an entry in Music Composition. ‘Into the Woods’, composed by an outstanding Year 7 student, was beautifully brought to life by a talented ensemble of Years 7 and 8 students. They competed at the State Finals of the Shakespeare Carnival against students twice their age and were excited to be nominated Runner-Up in the Music category.

Years 7 and 8 students have also thrown themselves into preparations for the annual AbbLib Theatre sports competition. This year marks the inauguration of the AbbLib Shield, an annual trophy to be awarded to the team who outwits, outplays and outperforms all others in a series of improvised games. The competition takes place at the end of Term 3 and already the energy and excitement are high. We have many new teams eager to take out the title and it has







been wonderful to feel the buzz around the Drama areas at lunch and recess as teams rehearse.

A special mention to our Years 10 and 11 mentors. It is wonderful to see so many students volunteering to share their skills, expertise and creativity with their teams and we are beyond impressed by their passion and dedication.

Rehearsals have been sailing along for the Senior production, *Shakespeare in Love*, directed by David Owens. This hilarious show is based on the screenplay by Marc Norman and Tom Stoppard and revolves around the trials and tribulations of one William Shakespeare as he searches desperately to overcome writer's block. Girls have been working since the end of Term 4 last year to bring this complex tale to life. I thank Ernesto Mina Ovalle from Maintenance for his ability to transform anything into a brilliant set and Vicky Staas for her tireless work in bringing the costuming of this production to life in all its period glory.

Thank you to everyone who has braved the waves, taken on new challenges, embraced creativity and had fun with us in Drama this semester.



# Work experience: a stepping stone to success

Vivienne Gilkes, Head of Career Education and Post-School Opportunities



**T**he Work Experience Program for Year 10 students is a pivotal step towards realising their potential in the workplace. It provides them with hands-on work that unveils the realities of a profession, transforming abstract concepts into tangible understanding.

In Week 5, Year 10 students embarked on this journey of discovery, not within the confines of a classroom but in the heart of industry. For one transformative week, these young women stepped into the shoes of professionals across a spectrum of vocations. Placements included the Sydney Swans, FUJIFILM Business Innovation Australia, the Tasmanian Land Conservatory, Commonwealth Bank, Harry Seidler and Associates, Woolworths Group, Clayton Utz, Lendlease and Macquarie University.

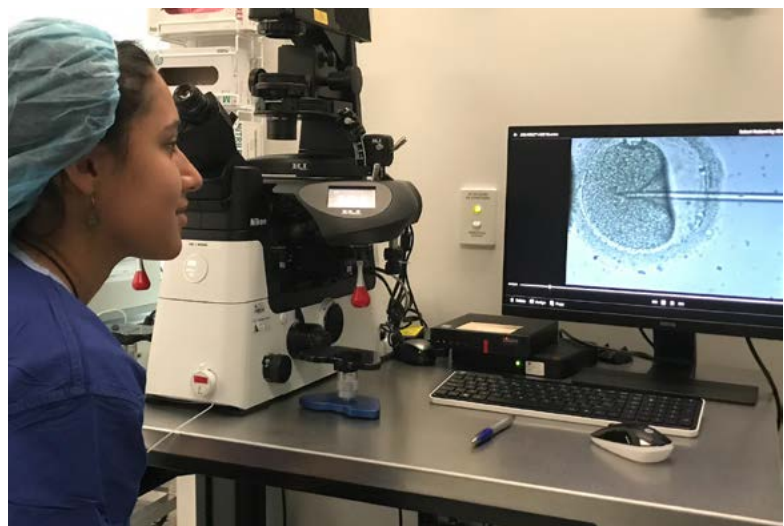
As the students navigated through their placements, they engaged with seasoned professionals and encountered the realities of the working world, gaining invaluable insights and enabling them to reassess their career aspirations. This was not just about observing; it was about growing in confidence, initiative and self-awareness. The Work Experience Program underscores the importance of employability skills: communication, teamwork, problem-solving and adaptability. These are the tools that will set our students apart in a competitive job market. Work experience is not just a line on a resume; it's a testament to a student's ability to apply knowledge in real-world scenarios.

Through this program, students have begun to weave their professional networks, connecting with mentors and peers alike. Returning to school, they carried a renewed sense of purpose, a clearer vision of their future and a drive to pursue their dreams with informed passion. They were awarded a Work Experience digital badge for reflecting on the learning dispositions demonstrated at their

work experience placements within their digital portfolios.

The experiences of Week 5 will serve as a guiding light, illuminating the path to success in whatever career they choose to pursue.

*For more information about the Year 10 Work Experience Program, please contact Vivienne Gilkes, Head of Career Education & Post-School Opportunities: [gilkesv@abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au](mailto:gilkesv@abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au)*



# Pride and pastries: a Regency high tea

Although alive to some breaches of etiquette, Year 10 English Teachers enjoyed watching the young ladies take a turn around the room



It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single Year 10 student in possession of a fine bone-china cup (thank you, mums, who kindly entrusted their heirlooms to their daughters) and a copy of *Pride and Prejudice* (some looking more well-read than others), must be in want of a cup of tea and a macaroon (or two).

However little known the feeling of such a student may be on first entering the Dining Hall, this truth is so fixed in the minds of the surrounding English teachers (decked out in mop hats), that in May the year group enjoyed a Regency High Tea amid speed dating, letter writing and some very impressive flirting behind black lace fans (we are sure it was Caroline Bingley sitting next to Mr Darcy). We regretted that inclement weather meant dancing was not on the cards but are sure that in November at the Year 10 Formal the young ladies will rectify this.

Girls came in character from Jane Austen's novel and interviewed other characters to get to know them better. We are shocked to report there was some intermingling of the Regency gentry with members of the servant class and, despite being in role, many of the Year 10s kept thanking the mop-capped servants for the afternoon tea. Amid the yellow tulips, and tables groaning with sweets, food, savouries and fruit that the girls had brought in to share, there was much laughter, chatting and perhaps even a little bit of getting to know the novel, its characters and the era better.

Thank you to Hendri and his fantastic team for the hot drinks; and to Ms Weathersten and Mrs Dunnett, who first conceived this idea that has now become a yearly tradition. Apologies to the soccer staff for those girls a little too full of hot chocolate to train well. We trust that the novels may be more well-loved when we see the girls again!



# Year 10 PASS classes

Sasha Seeto and Selena Gao (Year 10) reflect on their ELC coaching and training session



**T**he Year 10 PASS classes were given the wonderful opportunity to visit the Early Learning Centre, where we created and conducted a training session focused on coaching fundamental sports skills to young children. It was a truly remarkable experience and incredibly enriching. We gained valuable insights into handling unexpected situations and learnt essential techniques for effectively engaging with young children. As a result, our patience, adaptability and empathy have significantly improved.

One of the most enjoyable aspects of the experience was interacting with the lively, young children. It provided us with an opportunity to adapt our teaching methods based on their ages, from three to five, and their individual needs. This practical knowledge will undoubtedly enhance our future classes.

Throughout this unit, we have been developing our communication and leadership skills and our experience at the ELC helped us put our skills into practice. By preparing our lesson plans independently within our groups, our classes were able to collaborate on ideas and work with others effectively. Our ELC journey certainly helped us develop interpersonal skills.

Reflecting on the session, our classes gained valuable insight and feedback on how to better coach and effectively get across a message to our players or participants. Year 10 PASS classes and the ELC children had a collaborative experience, which allowed for hands-on learning and further growth.

The children's enthusiasm and appreciation were evident. One exclaimed: 'This was the best day of my life!'



# News from the ACEE

The reinvigoration of this special learning space has led to exciting new projects, says Alison Gates, Director of Research, Learning Engagement and Partnerships



**T**he Abbotsleigh Centre for Environmental Education is a very special learning space that was opened in 2011. The site includes a remnant patch of Blue Gum High Forest, a food forest, an Indigenous garden and yarning circle, a farm plot, an adventure playground and an apothecary garden. There are four big themes that drive teaching and learning in the ACEE space: Indigenous, Agricultural, Environmental and Sustainability Education.

Our reinvigoration of the ACEE began with some exciting projects to build an outdoor classroom, improved wifi connection, Vegepod raised gardens for plant trials, improved seating and a beautiful mud kitchen milled from a tree that fell in Junior School. Our snow-pea teepee is an exciting project that has emerged from student interest in growing edibles in small spaces.



## ELC and Transition visits

The ELC and Transition classes visit the ACEE every fortnight on an alternating basis as part of their program. The classes have enjoyed winter planting and at the end of Term 2 we had a special celebration bringing both groups together and sharing hot chocolate and marshmallows around the firepit. Careful modifications to the ACEE are enabling outdoor learning, discovery and play.

## Bush to Bowl partnership

One of the most exciting parts of our redevelopment has been the partnership with an Indigenous Social Enterprise called Bush to Bowl. Students have enjoyed several collaborations with Adam Byrne, who is a Gadigal man passionate about education around caring for country and with exemplary knowledge about First Nations plants, food and medicines. Adam led an immersion week





program to plant out one section of our garden, which now flourishes with river mint, warrigal greens, salt bushes and a number of myrtles. We have harvested Davidson Plums from trees growing on the School campus as part of this ongoing partnership.

Earlier in the year we were thrilled to host an AIS Waratah Project meeting in the ACEE. We made aniseed myrtle tea from a tree that is growing in the rainforest garden and served it to our guests.

## Agriculture and the animal program

This year Abbotsleigh offered the Year 11 Agriculture course for the first time. Our inaugural class has 16 students, who come from a diverse range of agricultural backgrounds and experiences, and they are loving learning in this new subject. The course has a mandatory 30% practical requirement and so relies on the ACEE. Excursions to large scale enterprises at Leppington and Quirindi have added further enriching experiences. As a result of the return to keeping animals on site, some significant works were undertaken to fencing, yards and biosecurity. These are all important aspects of the ACEE that further student learning and maintain animal welfare.

## Chickens and calves

Following our excursion to the Leppington Pastoral Company, we were grateful to borrow three bull calves, affectionately named Tim (Tam), Oreo and Monte (Carlo). For three weeks the calves were bottle-fed twice daily by various classes, and by staff and their families over the weekend. The calves were a lovely addition to our school community and a particular favourite for

the boarders who enjoyed the morning mooing as the calves awaited their bottles!

In Term 2, the Agriculture class embarked on their first animal growth trial, carefully measuring the growth of two breeds of laying chickens that were incubated and hatched at school. The chickens provided much joy and conversation for students in the Agriculture class and Agriculture Club.

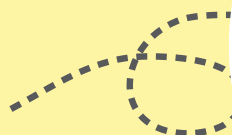
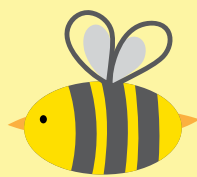
## Agriculture Club

Agriculture Club occurs on a Wednesday lunchtime with Mrs Dallen and Dr Gates. Students love to eat their lunch in the garden and then participate in a range of garden projects. We have been learning about pests and diseases, pruning and weeding, and enjoyed watching the chickens grow. We are currently collecting bottle tops to work on a collaborative mosaic project for the garden.





# Hopelessly devoted...



Students, teachers, Old Girls and two past headmistresses gathered to say a very fond farewell to Margaret Selby, who has left Abbotsleigh after four decades of 'service, loyalty and dedication'



**F**or more than one reason, 'Hopelessly Devoted to You', performed by Year 11 student Jazarah Tambyrajah, was the perfect song choice at the special assembly held last term to farewell long-term staff member Mrs Margaret Selby.

Firstly, it would have been a popular tune on the airwaves when Mrs Selby first joined Abbotsleigh in 1976 and secondly, after nearly four decades of service later, there are few who can claim to have been as 'devoted' to Abbotsleigh as Margaret Selby.

During her speech, Head Prefect Lily Thornthwaite said Mrs Selby had left Abbotsleigh 'a terrific legacy: a legacy that no one person can truly comprehend.'

'Your beautiful work has impacted generations of girls at Abbotsleigh and our community thanks you for your many years of service, loyalty and dedication to the School,' Lily said. 'Beyond your structured work, it is your beautiful, caring, kind and supportive nature that we truly cherish. You provide a light and warmth to Abbotsleigh that will be greatly missed.'

Describing Mrs Selby as 'the epitome of a servant leader', Headmistress Mrs Megan Krimmer added 'everything you have done has always been for the benefit of our girls, our parents, our Old Girls and our staff. You have given unstintingly of your time.'

'Nothing has ever been too much trouble and your wisdom, guidance, care, knowledge of all things careers, exchanges and, of course, knowledge of each and every girl, Old Girl, parents and members of staff is second to none; all of which demonstrates your care and concern for every human being.'

Numerous Old Girls and staff attended the assembly, including two past headmistresses, Mrs Judith Wheeldon and Miss Kathleen McCredie.

Tributes to Mrs Selby appeared on screen during the musical items, and Old Girl and current parent Georgia O'Hara (Buchanan, 1999) spoke about the effect that Mrs Selby had on her life as well as many other Old Girls.

'There are some people whose impact on you is lasting and you continue to think about them and the role that they have played in your life for years to come,' Mrs O'Hara said. 'Mrs Selby, you are not just a special teacher or special human, you are an absolute treasure and will go down in Abbotsleigh history.'

During the assembly, Mrs Selby was welcomed as an Honorary Life Member of the Abbotsleigh Old Girls' Union by President Sarah Franks (1991) on behalf of all AOGU members.

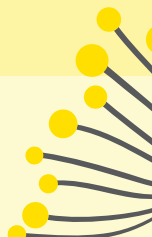
'Membership without being a student of Abbotsleigh is a rare honour and one very fittingly bestowed on Mrs Selby,' Ms Franks said.

It was particularly special, she continued, that Mrs Selby's daughters, Jennifer Selby (2000) and Sally Olsen (Selby, 1998), were present to welcome their mum to the AOGU 'as usually it is the other way around'.

Ms Franks said Mrs Selby's Honorary Membership was to thank her for her years of service to Abbotsleigh. 'For close to four decades she has been a much-loved confidante to generations of Abbotsleigh girls and had an impact on the lives of more than 5,000 Old Girls.'

'Marg ensured that she knew every girl well and was genuinely available and connected with each one,' Ms Franks said. 'This connection did not stop when the girls left school.'

'She has remained close to so many Old Girls, who have kept her updated of their study and work adventures, with many coming back for Careers Night because Marg asked them. Her contribution





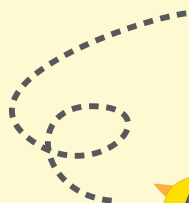


to the fabric of Abbotsleigh in empowering generations of Abbotsleigh students cannot be compared.'

As part of other gifts from the AOGU, Mrs Selby was donned with an iconic 'Old Girl' apron to the amusement and delight of the girls.

Speaking on behalf of current and former staff, Director of Wellbeing and Counselling Mrs Liz Cannon said: 'Mrs Selby has had the ability to undertake multiple responsibilities over four decades –from being an exemplary educator, brilliant Ancient History teacher, Boarding Resident, Year Coordinator, Careers Adviser, Exchanges Coordinator as well as an integral part of Abbox and a Speech Day prizes guru.

'All of this speaks volumes about her commitment, service and passion for the education of young women. Mrs Selby,' Mrs Cannon continued, 'on behalf of all the staff at Abbotsleigh, current and former and future, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your collegiality, commitment, care and for the positive impact you have had on so many lives. We are so grateful to have worked with you. You will be greatly missed, by staff and students alike but your legacy will continue through the many students and colleagues whose lives you have so positively influenced over your many years of service to Abbotsleigh.'



## In response, Marg Selby had this parting advice:

‘Thank you for everything that has been done today to make it such a special day for me and for all the kind words and thoughtfulness. I am most appreciative of the time and effort that has gone into organising this farewell. I want to keep my remarks brief and will just touch on why I chose to become a teacher and why it has been a lifetime’s occupation for me. Then I have a couple of pieces of advice to offer.

‘Why did I become a teacher? It was something that I always wanted to do from the age of about four. Firstly, my goal was a pre-school teacher, then a primary one and, eventually, I settled on secondary teaching. Teaching offered me positivity and assured that I would face new challenges every day – and my career has certainly justified my thinking and I have never regretted the decision I made.

‘Why did I stay so long? It is true to say that not every day has been perfect and there have been some challenging times and experiences from time to time. However, on balance, things have been just what I had hoped for when I first decided to enter the teaching profession. I have been surrounded by the lively, interesting people I had expected to find as a teacher, both among staff and students. I have always been privileged to work with so many vibrant, energetic individuals. I have never been bored and every day is full of innovative ideas and experiences. Teaching has perfectly fitted with the idiom my quirky Grade 6 teacher left with me when I finished primary school. She told us that we should aim to learn something new every day and then our day would not have been wasted. I always felt that at Abbotsleigh I was doing just that – learning something new every day from some part of the Abbotsleigh community, whether it was from my peers, the girls, their parents, or my own research stimulated by questions asked by students.

‘Thus, my role has been invigorating and fulfilling and has always kept me on my toes. I have interacted in diverse ways with students, in the classroom, through teaching history, co-ordinating several year groups and, in more recent times, careers advising. No day has ever been the same and I have had no trouble in learning something new every day. Thank you for making my dream come true and for providing me with so much encouragement in my work.

‘Now I would like to close with three pieces of advice, which relate to the various roles I have occupied.

‘As a teacher, I would suggest that you consider the wisdom of Albert Einstein when he said: “Everybody is a genius. However, if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing it is stupid.” Thus, I encourage you to develop self-awareness and to work with your strengths. Do not try to be something that you are not. When things do not go right the first time, you should adopt the positivity of the inventor Thomas Edison. When things did not always go according to plan, Edison famously said: “I have not failed. I have just found 1,000 ways that do not work.” And then he kept going, just like we encourage you to do when you hit a setback.

‘My second piece of advice is given as a careers adviser. I suggest that when looking at suitable career paths, you reflect closely on *who* you want to be, rather than *what* you want to be. Be aware of who you are and know that challenging work will place you in a position where good luck will find you. You need to make the future happen and not just wait for things to fall into place. Knowing the sort of person that you want to be will assist you to find the right path. Your character will be the most important part of your life, so do not get tied up worrying about trying to be perfect – if you do not make mistakes, it only shows that you have never tried to do anything new.

‘My third piece of advice is general but is salient and an important life skill that should assist you to live in harmony with others. A wise ancient Greek philosopher said, “You have two ears and one mouth, so you should use them both in those proportions.” Listening, rather than talking or gossiping, will ensure that you are an effective communicator, and we all know that effective communication is the key to success in every aspect of our daily life.

‘On that note, I farewell you all and thank you for your kindness to me. I am truly humbled and embarrassed by all the attention today but, nonetheless, I am sure that it will leave me with many happy memories of my time here. Thank you and adieu. Adieu means “until we meet again” and not goodbye, so if our paths cross, please introduce yourself to me, as you might have changed in the intervening years, and once you are out of school uniform, you are harder to recognise!’





# Our very own Olympians

Did you know Abbotsleigh girls have competed in Olympic Games? Abbotsleigh Archivist Jennifer McLaren reprises the successes of six of our sportiest Old Girls



**A**bbotsleigh Old Girls have represented Australia at six Olympic Games across five different sports: swimming, weightlifting, gymnastics, bobsleigh, luge and equestrian. Old Girls of the 1960s will remember teenage swimming sensation Gillian Chapman (de Greenlaw, 1968). Gillian earned her place in the Australian swim team for the 1964 Tokyo Olympics at the age of 13 after breaking records at the Australian Swimming Championships. As there was only one heated pool in Sydney at the time, Gillian recalls training with the swim team in Townsville and missing three months of school. She swam the heats of the 100m Butterfly in Tokyo and achieved sixth place in her heat.

Artistic Gymnast Lisa Barnes (Read, 1991) represented Australia in four events, in both compulsory and optional routines. From these rounds she was selected to compete in the finals and came 30th overall at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics. The team finished seventh overall. The Olympics were her second major international competition. While still at school, Lisa competed in the 1990 Auckland Commonwealth Games as part of the silver-medal winning team.

Winter Olympians Hannah Campbell-Pegg (2000) and Astrid Loch-Wilkinson (2000) made history in their winter sports of luge and bobsleigh respectively. Hannah was Australia's third-ever athlete to compete in the luge at an Olympic Games when she represented Australia at the 2006 Torino Winter Olympics. She made history four years later at the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics as Australia's first luge dual-Olympian.

Astrid piloted the first Australian Olympic Women's bobsleigh at the 2006 Torino Games and finished in 14th place. At the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games she finished 19th. Her final

Olympics campaign was at the 2014 Sochi Winter Games, where she again placed 14th.

Kiana Elliott (2014) took up weightlifting in 2013 and rapidly worked her way up the ranks in the sport, breaking state, national and regional records. Kiana competed at the 2014 Youth Olympic Games during Year 12, placing seventh overall, and is the lightest woman in Australia/Oceania to snatch over 100kg, securing a personal best at the rescheduled 2020 Olympic Games held in Tokyo in 2021 with a 101kg snatch. This secured her 11th place and a new Oceania and Australian record.

An Abbotsleigh Old Girl also played an important role at the 1988 Winter Olympic Games in Calgary. Margaret Joynton-Smith (Hoban, 1940) was an accomplished ice skater whose dreams of competing internationally were dashed by the onset of World War II. She was, however, a lifelong contributor to the sport. Her career highlight was her appointment as captain of the Australian ice skating team at Calgary. Margaret died in 2018 but her legacy to ice skating lives on.

## Where are they now?

Gillian is now retired, having followed her interest in mental and physical wellness through two careers: first as a lawyer with an interest in mediation, and then in the field of holistic medicine. Gillian enjoys a full and busy retirement with family and continues playing a range of sports and activities.

Lisa retired from gymnastics after the Barcelona Olympics. She taught PDHPE and coached gymnastics for many years. She now practises as a remedial massage therapist, supporting two



children through university, and continues a very active lifestyle.

Hannah is working on a PhD at the University of Canberra, exploring the impact of climate change on winter sports. She works in sports integrity and sustainability and remains involved in luge as president of the Australian Luge Federation and chair of the Sports Integrity Committee for the International Federation. She is mum to two young children.

Astrid works as a vet in Queensland and has opened her own practice. She enjoys aquatic medicine, working with rescue sea turtles and other species. She has two young children, Henrik (8) and Mikkeline, who was born this year.

Kiana still competes and trains in her chosen sport of weightlifting. She continues to inspire Abbotsleigh students and has been a regular speaker at School events.



### And now to Paris 2024...

Hilary Scott (2005) represented Australia in the Equestrian Individual and Team and Jumping events at the Paris Olympics, riding her mare Oaks Milky Way. Hilary, who grew up on a farm in Moree, has specialised in showjumping from the age of 12. She competes regularly from her base in Europe and, in 2022, represented Australia at the World Championships in Herning, Denmark. As well as making an impression in Paris as an equestrian and horse-breeder - Hilary bred Milky Way on her property in Moree in 2007 - she made history as a member of Australia's first-ever all-female Jumping team. Hilary is sincerely grateful for the support she received from the Abbotsleigh community during her Olympic outing.

Photo credit: Digishots



# From the President of the APA



**W**ithin Abbotsleigh we have a school where girls have such a passion to learn, immerse themselves in sport, develop their curious and creative minds, build lifelong friendships and be presented with opportunities no matter what their interests are. To add to that, we have a school where there is a connected and strong parent group who form the APA Committee.

The Abbotsleigh Parents Association is a Committee run by parents who volunteer their time. Together they share their ideas and collaborate with the School to ensure key events are delivered, benefiting the students and overall community.

Twilight Under The Stars, the annual social Trivia Night, the various seminars, running a meeting each term, the barbecues the students so enjoy – these name only some of the activities the APA is proud to consistently support.

The opportunity to be involved in the APA allows parents to build a strong partnership across various areas within Abbotsleigh. The association is very proud to donate a sum each year to Giving Day and to continue sponsoring the Instrumental Bursary, which allows students to learn an unusual instrument for one year.

It has been so rewarding being part of the APA, engaging in another community within the School and fostering new friendships while meeting parents across both Junior and Senior campuses. Whatever your reasons may be for wanting to join the APA, whether it be to give back to our school community or partaking in the organisation of the many fun events run, I encourage you to take the first step of reaching out and having a conversation.

*Harinder Randhawa, President*

*If you would like more information about the APA, please email me at [apapresident@abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au](mailto:apapresident@abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au)*



# From the Presidents of the ABPA



The Abbotsleigh boarding community is made up of 121 girls and 105 families. The Abbotsleigh Boarder Parents' Association (ABPA) is proud to be the link between these families and the School, while building connections and friendships within the boarding community.

The ABPA is made up of parent representatives. It is largely for the betterment of the boarding community and, with support from the School, to enrich the girls' lives in their home away from home.

At their annual Boarder Parent Round Up early this year, where more than 80 guests were in attendance, families mingled, laughed and danced the night away cruising on Sydney Harbour.

In May, the ABPA enjoyed hosting an Inaugural Produce Dinner to launch National Boarding Week. At this free event, it was wonderful for girls and families to catch up for a casual dinner showcasing delicious regional produce from the areas our boarders call home.

The ABPA would like to say a big thank you to the Abbotsleigh day families. We are incredibly grateful to all those families who have driven our boarders to sport or had them visit their home. It is lovely to know that, while the girls are so far from home, they are being supported by the wonderful day families.

The ABPA holds Zoom meetings once a term and all boarder parents are encouraged to join. We were excited to see so many boarder parents join our last meeting. These meetings are a great way to hear from the School, discuss relevant topics and build connections.

*Katrina Cogan and Kylie Wood*  
ABPA Co-Presidents

*If you would like more information about the ABPA, please email*  
**[abpa.president@abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au](mailto:abpa.president@abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au)**





## Scholarships

Each year the Foundation supports means-tested scholarships for students. These scholarships provide an opportunity to girls who, without this scholarship, would not be able to attend Abbotsleigh.

**\$295,295** | **13**

INDIGENOUS  
SCHOLARSHIPS

**\$212,700** | **6**

BETTY ARCHDALE  
SCHOLARSHIPS

**\$108,590** | **6**

FOUNDATION  
SCHOLARSHIPS

**\$71,940** | **2**

KATHLEEN McCREDIE  
AWARDS

**\$54,635** | **4**

ROYLE  
SCHOLARSHIPS

**\$106,350** | **3**

MOLLIE AND NANCY DOUGLAS  
SCHOLARSHIPS

**\$17,645** | **2**

EVERETT  
SCHOLARSHIPS

**\$867,155** | **36**

TOTAL SCHOLARSHIPS  
FUNDED

## Additional Support

Donors to the Foundation can make a gift to the fund of their choice to support an area of the School about which they are passionate. Together as a community we can continue to build on our strong foundations and create greater opportunity in girls' education.

**\$250,000**



STATE-OF-THE-ART FACILITIES

Such as:

- School Library
- Senior School Art and Science Building



**\$46,800**

FAMILIES  
EXPERIENCING HARDSHIP



**\$9,957**

SPORTS, MUSIC AND ACADEMIC  
PRIZES

**\$1,173,912**

TOTAL FUNDS  
DISTRIBUTED

**Funds raised  
2023 Giving Day**

Our Abbotsleigh community contributed  
an extraordinary amount of

**\$335,300\***

\* funds raised are included in other items

The Foundation could not have raised these funds without the very generous Abbotsleigh Community of current parents, past parents, Old Girls and staff.

This support makes a very real difference to our students' learning every day. We look forward to working with our donors to grow the impact of the Foundation in 2024 and beyond.



# Abbotsleigh Scholars



## Olivia Oakeshott

### Indigenous Scholarship

*"From the beginning of Year 7, I felt nothing short of blessed to be able to receive an education as phenomenal as the one I received from Abbotsleigh. It is not every girl who gets an opportunity like the one I received, and my experience was nothing short of exceptional. Abbotsleigh allowed me to develop my passions and explore my love for community and helping those around me. This has fostered my tertiary studies of Medicine at the University of New South Wales, which I attribute to the scholarship pathway and the opportunity that I was given."*

**Olivia is currently studying Medicine at the University of New South Wales**



## Hollie Copeland

### Betty Archdale Scholarship

*"I am very honoured to have received the Betty Archdale Scholarship which enabled me to attend Abbotsleigh as a boarder throughout my high school years. My time at Abbotsleigh holds some of my fondest memories and helped me to develop a positive attitude and strong work ethic which have been crucial in my first few months out of school. Through receiving my scholarship, I was able to push myself academically in pursuit of my interests in business and economics, in addition to participating in a variety of different sports that were not accessible in my home town. I am very grateful to have received this scholarship and hope that future girls receive the same benefit and opportunities that I received."*

**Hollie is on a gap year, working on an agricultural property in central Queensland and plans to study a Bachelor of Business and Commerce.**



## Ava Buffner

### Kathleen McCredie Award

*"Abbotsleigh has provided me with an outstanding education and I feel incredibly grateful to have received the Kathleen McCredie Scholarship. The opportunities that this scholarship gave me were fantastic. I especially enjoyed discovering my passion for music through choir, vocal and piano lessons, as well as participating in a number of sports such as netball, soccer and AFL. This experience of a rich and well rounded education, I know, will put me in great stead for my future beyond school. For this I would like to thank the donors, as well as my wonderful teachers and the Abbotsleigh boarding community for their endless support."*

**Ava is currently studying a Bachelor of Arts (Music) and a Bachelor of Advanced Studies (Media and Communications) at the University of Sydney, where she is a resident at The Women's College.**



## Kotoko Takehara

### Mollie and Nancy Douglas Scholarship

*"Throughout the six years I spent at Abbotsleigh, I was provided with countless opportunities, from music to sport to academics, that I wouldn't have had if I had not been awarded the Mollie and Nancy Douglas Scholarship. The support that I had from the teachers meant I had a great environment to learn and grow in. I discovered new passions, met some of my closest friends, and my Abbotsleigh education set me up for a wonderful university experience. To be a scholarship recipient was an incredible privilege and I hope that others will be able to have the same opportunities that I received."*

**Kotoko is currently studying a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Advanced Studies, majoring in Criminology and International Relations.**

# Where there's a will, there's a way

There is no time like the present to think about bequests to  
Abbotsleigh, Old Girl Elizabeth Tomlinson tells Rhonda Kaan

**B**elieving *now* is a great time to 'give back' in whatever ways she can is the motivation behind Old Girl Elizabeth Tomlinson (Mills, 1960) leaving a bequest to Abbotsleigh. 'When you are writing your will you should think about the things that matter to you in life and, to my mind, nothing matters more than the education of young women,' she said. 'At Abbotsleigh we have the benefit of the wisdom and guidance of superb teachers in very privileged surroundings. To be able to pass that on is surely one of the best things of life and you know you are doing exactly that in the form of a bequest.'

Elizabeth's family's involvement with Abbotsleigh is generational, beginning with her mother Marjorie Mills (Messmer, 1934), then herself, her daughter Dr Susan Tomlinson (1992) and now her granddaughter Zoe Pemberton, who is in the Junior School.

After leaving Abbotsleigh in 1960, Elizabeth joined the ABC as a cadet film trainee before completing a law degree and practising as a solicitor in Sydney and Melbourne. She joined the Law Society of NSW and practised in both the Ethics Department and the Professional Standards Department. She then joined the Federal Court of Australia and, as a judicial registrar and specialising in Industrial Relations, was able to travel widely interstate.

'This proved to be a wonderful experience,' Elizabeth said, 'providing insight into the Australian workplace generally, its difficulties and its achievements.'

In 2006, Elizabeth founded Pointsbuild Pty Ltd, a training and education website for the building and construction industry. More recently, she has been involved with the design and development of physical aids for people with disabilities and has been part of the Fledge group of innovation startup companies at the CSIRO at Lindfield. At present, Elizabeth is a consultant to a Canberra law firm.

'The effect of an Abbotsleigh education is not confined just to that particular pupil,' Elizabeth said. 'The influence of the School on society goes well beyond that one person and their profession.'

With her legal background, Elizabeth has a unique perspective when it comes to supporting one's

passions through wills but, unfortunately, she said, throughout her professional life she has seen many wills fail due to lack of clarity.

'I think today it is very important for financially savvy people to organise their affairs and even if they just put a small amount into their will, they can always revisit and increase or decrease it later,' she said. 'They should just be business-like about it.'



Elizabeth during her time as president of the AOGU.



Abbotsleigh girls crossing the road, circa 1950s, when Elizabeth attended the School.



Old Girl Elizabeth Tomlinson (Mills, 1960) and granddaughter Zoe Pemberton (Year 5) at Grandparents' Day earlier this year in the Junior School.

## Bequests to Abbotsleigh

# A woman's will is a powerful thing

She chooses how she leaves her money; who it goes to and how it's best used.

A bequest to Abbotsleigh is an investment in independent young women.

## Your will, your way

You can speak confidentially to us about how you create a will, what kinds of gifts you can leave, and if you'd like them to go towards a specific cause such as Indigenous or needs-based scholarships, a prize, or school improvements.



**No matter the size  
of your gift,  
Abbotsleigh is deeply  
appreciative  
of bequests from  
members of our  
school community.**



Further information about gifts in wills can be found at:

[www.abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au/giving/gifts-in-wills](http://www.abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au/giving/gifts-in-wills)

Alternatively, you may contact

the Fundraising Manager, Jo Ingwell, for a confidential chat by phone on

**02 9473 7774** or by email at [ingwellj@abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au](mailto:ingwellj@abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au)

# From the President of the AOGU



Over recent years, there has been increased research into the importance of meaningful connections on a well-lived life, with both psychological and physical benefits. We hope all in the Abbotsleigh community experience a strong sense of belonging, security and support in their lives.

For many Old Girls, part of that sense of belonging comes from being closely connected to their school friends and/or from being part of the broader Abbotsleigh community. Indeed, 87% of Old Girls feel a connection to their year group, and more than two-thirds to both Old Girls in general and to the School. Virtually all Old Girls recognise the AOGU's role in assisting them to remain connected with each other and to Abbotsleigh; for 75% and 64% respectively, these are core roles for the AOGU. We have used feedback from our recent survey to guide our focus to support our members.

Earlier this year, the AOGU defined its two-year strategic purpose as **Connection Through Community** and, to that end, we seek to foster Old Girls' connection to each other, and Old Girls' connection to the School.

Putting aside the survey results, fostering these connections feels right. It feels right when having morning tea with three Leavers spanning 1944 to 1963 talking about teachers in common, what lessons were like and the Abbotsleigh families they knew; it feels right in talking to two 2018 Leavers about how a certain teacher encouraged them to apply for a scholarship in a field they hadn't heard of and which has now become their career; and it feels right when hearing comments about changes to the menu and Dining Room from a 1989 Leaver

returning to the School for the first time. Buildings change, teachers retire or move to another school, students graduate, but the common thread tying together all Abbotsleigh girls remains. A thread of empowering young women to do anything, championing equality, being inclusive of everyone, and educating the whole girl.

What does **Connection Through Community** look like in reality?

AOGU activities are focused on two practical areas, firstly opportunities to gather together and, secondly professional opportunities.

### Gatherings

Not only through year and regional reunions and AOGU events such as the Speakers Morning Tea, but also ensuring you are aware of school events at which Old Girls are welcome, such as the Junior School's 70th birthday celebrations, exhibitions at the Grace Cossington Smith Gallery or student concerts.

### Professional opportunities

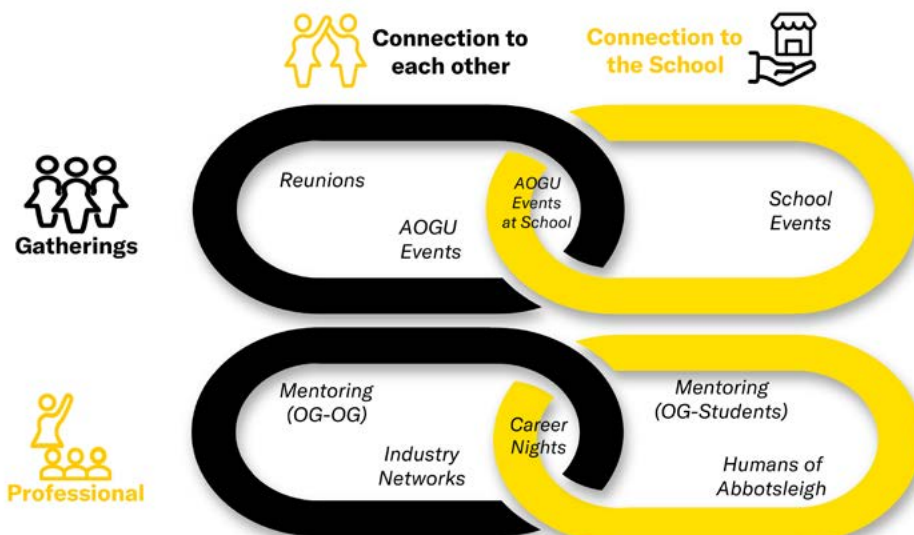
We want to bring together Old Girls in a professional capacity; industry events and mentoring will be launched later this year. In addition, we want to ensure you know about ways you can contribute to current students.

I hope that you take a moment to review our quarterly *Loom* when it next arrives in your inbox, and come to one of your Old Girl events in the second half of 2024 – whether it be Golf Day, the Old Girl vs Current Girl Debate, the HSC Showcase, a reunion, or one of our professional events. It will be special to connect with you when you do.

Sarah Franks (1991)  
Honorary President

## AOGU 2024-2025 Strategy

### Connection Through Community



# Speakers Morning Tea

with Karen Hamilton, recipient of the 2023 AOGU 110th Anniversary Grant

**T**his year's AOGU Speakers event was a morning tea held in the Abbotsleigh Dining Room on 31 May. There were around 20 Old Girl and current parent in-person attendees, as well as about the same number on Zoom, all keen to hear about the work of Karen Hamilton (Bootle, 1988). Karen, better known as Kaz, uses mindfulness and meditation techniques to help cancer patients in western NSW.

Karen spoke about the need for all women (and men) to take time for themselves, listen to their bodies and recognise when they are stressed or anxious. She also said that the best gift we can give our children is for them to see us take that time out for ourselves and not to feel guilty for doing so.

Karen guided us through a Sound Bowl Meditation, such as she uses in her program.

Karen is a breast cancer survivor who experienced the benefits of relaxation techniques while recovering in Sydney, surrounded by her Abbotsleigh friends. She believed she could make a difference to rural NSW communities by making a similar program available. Karen received the

2023 AOGU 110th Anniversary Grant to fund the development and delivery of an inaugural six-week program for patients at the Western Cancer Centre in Dubbo. This program was delivered at no-cost to participants and feedback highlighted the difference that mindfulness and meditation can make, such as the story of an attendee who could barely walk feeling such relief from the sessions.

When Belinda Burton (Tjeuw, 1991), the Chair of the Grant Sub-Committee, announced last year's award she said: 'We very much hope that by supporting this initial program, Karen will be able to demonstrate the importance and benefits of meditation and mindfulness treatment that will be the catalyst to an ongoing offering to cancer patients in the Central West NSW area.' It is so exciting to see that the grant has become the catalyst for more investment in alternative services in the region.

The 2024 AOGU 110th Anniversary Grant will shortly open for applications and we look forward to being able to support more Old Girls to continue the Abbotsleigh tradition of helping others.



From left, Sarah Franks (1991), Bronwyn Cooper (Ross-Jones, 1980), Belinda Burton (Tjeuw, 1991), Lara Lizzio (Dawson, 1996), Karen Hamilton (Bootle, 1988), Fiona Hobill Cole (Armstrong, 1981) and Kim Boniface (Anderson, 1985).



From left: Karen's close friend Emma Collinge (1988), who suggested she apply for the AOGU 110th Anniversary Grant, Emma's mother Judy Collinge and Headmistress Megan Krimmer.



Welcome from AOGU President Sarah Franks to Karen Hamilton, Old Girls and current parents attending in person and others attending via Zoom.



# Mindfulness and meditation

Kaz talks about her program for country cancer patients at the Western Cancer Centre in Dubbo, and what she hopes to do next.

## Can you explain the program recently delivered to cancer patients in Dubbo?

I designed and delivered a six-week Mindfulness and Meditation program in the Wellness room at the Western Cancer Centre in Dubbo earlier this year. The sessions provided an inclusive, compassionate and supportive space for cancer patients to explore mindfulness and meditation strategies. The aim was to relieve stress and anxiety, and to promote self-care and relaxation – all important aspects of holistic cancer care. Each weekly session ran for 1½ hours: a one-hour Mindfulness and Meditation session, followed by time to enjoy a shared space over morning tea.

## What particular challenges do cancer patients face in Central West NSW?

Challenges faced by those with a cancer diagnosis in Central West NSW can be many. Since 2021, when the Western Cancer Centre opened, it has been a little easier for local patients. However, the catchment area includes many outlying towns, hundreds of kilometres away. This means being away from the comfort of home, friends and family and there are also the huge costs of living away.

There are limited services generally in rural areas and there was no other program of this type in the area. To be able to offer a Mindfulness and Meditation program at no cost to cancer patients meant a great deal to me. There can be high costs associated with cancer treatments, compounded for those living away from home.

## How did your program help cancer patients undergoing treatment?

The positive social impact of this program benefits a vast number of communities throughout country NSW, due to the enormous catchment area of the Western Cancer Centre. A six-week program is adequate timing to increase the chance of long-term change and ongoing gain to each participant.

Mindfulness and meditation are now recognised as practices that can make a profound contribution to an individual's physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing.

## What ongoing effects do you hope the program will have for cancer patients and cancer treatment at the Western Cancer Centre?

I hold great passion for Mindfulness and Meditation programs and the numerous benefits that these can provide. One aim of the program was to empower patients to assist with managing the physical, psychological and social impacts of living with a cancer diagnosis. The benefits that each participant receives have a flow-on effect to all those around them.

The six-week program has been the catalyst for more Mindfulness and Meditation programs to be held at the centre. Also, the board has decided to create a position for someone to manage a variety of offerings in the Wellness room, which had not been used for its original purpose for a long time.

## Your personal experience with cancer led you to a change in career, from school teaching to becoming a Mindfulness and Meditation teacher. Can you tell us about this journey, the things that helped with your recovery and how these inspired you to develop this program?

I have always been drawn to mindfulness techniques and have offered these to students I have taught. When I was in Sydney to have a mastectomy due to having breast cancer, I experienced relaxation techniques through a mindfulness DVD. When I was in pain and unable to sleep, I found that listening to this had enormous benefits for me.

When I initially thought I needed a change in career and was thinking I would like to teach mindfulness and meditation, it was school students I had in mind. However, after training, this evolved into

teaching adults. I had always thought that I would love to share these strategies and techniques to cancer patients as well. As a cancer survivor, I realised it can be such a gift. This experience has given me the courage to live life to the fullest.

**How has the AOGU 110th Anniversary Grant contributed to your project?**

Not only has the AOGU 110th Anniversary Grant contributed to patients' wellbeing from the six-week program, it has helped so many more as it was the catalyst for the Wellness room to continue to be used. It certainly has had a flow-on effect to the families and friends of the patients as well as to the staff at the centre. I am now organising sessions for the staff to attend, which will have enormous benefits for them and their patients.

The patients who were in attendance have said they have used the strategies taught on a daily basis and have commented that it has changed their lives. They are more relaxed and when they are experiencing pain, they use the techniques learnt to help reduce their symptoms. One lady said she even used the relaxation techniques when she went to the dentist. An important thing I teach is to listen to our bodies and recognise when we are in pain or stressed. This is the first step to then realising we can use strategies to help reduce these symptoms.

**You grew up in a small country town and attended Abbotsleigh as a boarder. How have your Abbotsleigh friendships and the things you learnt during your schooldays at Abbotsleigh contributed to where you are now?**

The opportunity to further my education at Abbotsleigh is much appreciated. As difficult as it was to adjust as a boarder at times, I have kept in touch with some of those I met at school. In fact, it was a beautiful friend (a day girl) I made while in Year 7 who said I should apply for the grant. She knew the work I was doing with the Crystal Sound Bowls and thought it was unique.

Attending Abbotsleigh opened my eyes to the wider world and I believe the standard of education that is offered here certainly helped me do well. I thoroughly enjoyed my school teaching career and I guess now I'm still teaching, only not in the school system.

**You recently set up an organisation called Harmonious Heart. What inspired that, what services does it offer and what are your future plans?**

I registered my business name Harmonious Heart 3½ years ago to make sure I would remain focused on my goal. I trained as a meditation teacher with the Australian Centre for Mindfulness and Meditation and from there I followed my intuition and my business has grown.

I have a website, [harmoniousheart.com.au](http://harmoniousheart.com.au), which shows my offerings. These include Meditation and Mindfulness sessions and workshops, Women's Circles, End of Life Doula support, Vibrational Energy Healing (Reiki) and I will soon add Qigong classes. All these offerings marry well with each other and are often used in unison.

My inspiration to create Harmonious Heart was simply to help others in an increasingly busy and often stressful society. By learning simple strategies, we can completely change our lives and how we view the world.

As for the future of Harmonious Heart, it is looking very bright as I continue to follow my heart and I know it is going to grow at a rapid rate. I could not be more grateful and excited.

**If there are any Old Girls who would like to support your projects to help rural cancer patients, what can they do?**

I'm sure the Foundation of the Western Cancer Centre would be grateful for donations that would allow more supportive services to be offered in the Wellness room. A holistic approach to the treatment of cancer patients has been shown to assist with both recovery and coping with some of the treatments they endure.



Scan QR code to visit: [harmoniousheart.com.au](http://harmoniousheart.com.au)



# Generations Breakfast

**O**n 5 April our AOGU community hosted the Generations Breakfast at the new Junior School Library. This event is a chance to welcome those returning to school for the first time and it was lovely to have four new families join us, as well as two new daughters from families with older sisters already at Abbotsleigh.

Old Girl mothers and grandmothers and students look forward to this special event each year. Attendees ranged across many leaving years, with Old Girl grandmothers spanning 1960 to 1972, Old Girl mothers ranging from the classes of 1985 to 2002, and their daughters from Year 2 to Year 12.

It was especially wonderful to have three Old Girl sisters Anthea Hepburn (1992), Victoria Shortman (Hepburn, 1993) and Kathy Jennings (Hepburn, 1996) in attendance with their daughters, as well as two grandmothers, Ingrid Wiseman (Prinsen, 1963) and Margaret Sachs (Coburn, 1965), who are part of many generations of Abbotsleigh Old Girls with their mothers, daughters and granddaughters all part of the Abbotsleigh family.

It was both joyous and sad to have a large group of Year 12s, for whom this is their last Generations Breakfast as Abbotsleigh students. Who knows, one day they may be back as Abbotsleigh Old Girl mums!



## Calling all authors

An exciting project is in the pipeline involving a dedicated new section in our school library for Abbotsleigh community authors including Old Girls, as well as past and current staff. In the lead up to the launch we are planning a feature on our authors in the next issue of *Around Abbotsleigh* (to be distributed in early 2025).

If you are an author – or know of any Abbotsleigh community authors – who would like to be included, please contact the Old Girls Office at [oldgirls@abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au](mailto:oldgirls@abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au)

# Grace Cossington Smith NSW Blue Plaque unveiling

**G**race Cossington Smith (1892-1984) was born in Sydney and attended Abbotsleigh. She is celebrated as one of Australia's most significant 20th-century modernist painters. The Art Gallery of NSW describes her as forming 'part of the first significant wave of Australian responses to European post-impressionism. A brilliant colourist, she drew her subject matter from the familiar surroundings of her home and her experience of Sydney city life, which she transformed into vibrant images of light-infused colour.'

In March 2024, NSW Heritage honoured Grace Cossington Smith (AOG, c1910) with the unveiling of a Blue Plaque at her former home and studio 'Cossington', 43 Ku-ring-gai Ave, Turramurra. Heritage notes 'the adult home of Grace Cossington Smith and the subject of many

of her finest paintings, 'Cossington' is of State heritage significance for its association with this outstanding Australian artist. 'Cossington' is also of State significance for its association with women's history in NSW insofar as Cossington Smith's artworks represent an especially feminine perspective on Australian culture.'

The Blue Plaque unveiling was a simple and delightful affair conducted at the front gate of 'Cossington'. Margaret Sachs (Coburn, 1965), Bronwyn Cooper (Ross-Jones, 1980) and Rebecca Baillie (1989) represented the AOGU at the ceremony. Also in attendance were Grace's niece and the present owner of 'Cossington', Anne Mills; Headmistress Megan Krimmer; Director of the Grace Cossington Smith Gallery, Mary Faith; and Alister Henskens MP.

**Sources:** <https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/artists/cossington-smith-grace/>  
<https://blueplaques.nsw.gov.au/blue-plaques/locations/grace-cossington-smith>  
<https://www.hms.heritage.nsw.gov.au/App/Item/ViewItem?itemId=5049865>



From left: Megan Krimmer, Mary Faith, Margaret Sachs, Anne Mills, Bronwyn Cooper and Rebecca Baillie.



Grace Cossington Smith at home in Turramurra, c1915.



From left: Alister Henskens MP, Megan Krimmer and Anne Mills.

# Bulletin from Kazakhstan

Participating in an event unique to the motoring world, Old Girl Julia ('Lui') MacLennan Henderson, 1972) shared an update on her experience during the recent Peking to Paris Motor Challenge, a true endurance motor rally for vintage and classic cars.

'Writing this from Shymkent, Kazakhstan and it's Day 16 of the 37-day Peking to Paris (P2P) Motor Challenge, a competitive car rally that honours an event of the same name that ran with five entries in 1907. The P2P now runs every three years and with my brother John Henderson driving Sven, the trusty 1974 Volvo, and me navigating, we managed sixth outright in 2019. We are presently running second. Some of the roads have been absolutely brutal - to both cars and bodies! Bring on Paris!'

The route stretches across China, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey, Greece, Italy and France. Participants drive old cars against the clock nearly halfway around the world and camp with like-minded enthusiasts in very remote regions.

At the end of the rally, Julia and John came sixth outright and third in class. 'Unfinished business,' Julia says. 'So we'll be lining up again in 2025.'



# Peggy Carpenter (1984) is back in the Australian Army Reserve



Peggy during her officer course. She is looking forward to the 1984 leavers reunion later this year.

Last year, at the age of 56, I rejoined the Australian Army Reserve.

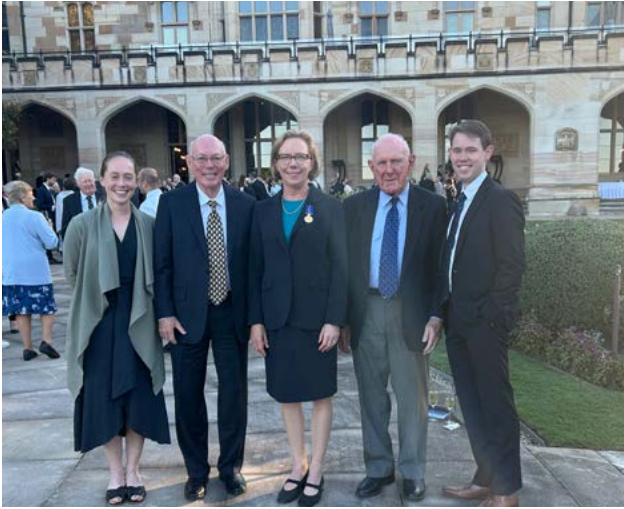
I worked for nearly two years on my fitness. It turned out that I had to learn how to run again - not due to injury or anything, just due to age and lack of running - which was quite a challenge.

In March, I completed the first part of my officer training course at Duntroon and loved it. I met an amazing bunch of really smart people. Age wasn't an issue - it was all about having a go and working together.

I rejoined the Reserve because of the camaraderie and friendships from my time in Sydney University Regiment in the 1980s. I have lifelong friends from that time. Indeed, in May I attended the 40th annual Sydney University Regiment Transport Platoon dinner. The Governor General, David Hurley, and his wife were there - it's an event they both enjoy and he has attended the dinner on several occasions, having links to Sydney University Regiment.

So now I am a Finance Officer in Pay Corps, putting my accountancy training to a new use.

# Well done, Kerry



Congratulations to Kerry Skellern (Howell, 1982), who has been awarded an OAM 'for service to the community through a range of organisations' in recognition of her board-level leadership of many community and professional organisations. In the local area, this included being the first female Club President (2018-2021) in the 94-year history of Avondale Golf Club.

Kerry is pictured with family, including one of her twin daughters Old Girl Amanda Skellern (2012), in the grounds of Government House during her investiture in May.

# Old Girls splash and dash

The School's annual Swimming and Athletics carnivals were graced with the competitive spirit and nostalgic presence of Old Girl teams, adding an exciting twist to the traditional student races.

At the Swimming Carnival, Old Girls Xanthe Cogan (2023), Annika Tonuri (2020), Georgia O'Connor (2020) and Talia Allsop (2022) took to the water in a thrilling relay race against the day girls and boarders. Their valiant effort and seamless teamwork secured the Old Girls a respectable second place, just behind the swift day girl team, who clinched the victory.

Transitioning from the pool to the track, the Athletics Carnival saw another set of Old Girls, Georgia Fichardt (2022), Ashley Fung (2023),

Larissa Pasternatsky (2009) and Ash Bruce (2012), lacing up their running shoes for the relay race. The Old Girls, each a beacon of the School's athletic legacy, took their marks with determination etched on their faces. The crowd roared with excitement as the Old Girl team surged ahead. With each baton pass, they edged closer to victory, ultimately crossing the finish line first, ahead of the day girls.

These races were more than mere competitions; they were a bridge between past and present, a showcase of the connection to the School community. We are immensely grateful to these Old Girls for their outstanding representation of all Old Girls.



Xanthe Cogan (2023), Annika Tonuri (2020), Georgia O'Connor (2020) and Talia Allsop (2022).



Georgia Fichardt (2022), Ashley Fung (2023), Larissa Pasternatsky (2009) and Ash Bruce (2012).

# Congratulations



Annabel Davis (2006) and Tom are excited to share the news of the birth of Eden Fae, born March 2024. Eden is the fifth grandchild but first granddaughter to Sharon Davis (Boult, 1969) and Bruce Davis (previous APA president). Eden represents the opportunity for a fourth generation to attend Abbotsleigh!



Eloise Gillespie (Norton, 2008) and her husband Adam were delighted to welcome Charlie on 2 May 2024. Big sisters Ruby and Amelia are thrilled with their baby brother.



Alexandra Davis (2009) and her husband Brendan Pryke welcomed their beautiful baby girl Violet ('Lettie') Hunter Pryke on 11 April 2024. They are absolutely besotted with their little girl who is already growing up so fast, showing off lots of big smiles!



Genevieve Laverty (2017) and Matthew Munro married on 10 February 2024 at 'The Rocks', Yandina on the Sunshine Coast.

Photo: Jodie Modric Photography



## We Remember

Margaret Boydell (Higgins, 1945). Died 23 March 2024

Jocelyn Cadden (Kimber, 1950). Died 25 February 2024

Margaret Davis (Alexander, 1950). Died 7 December 2022

Jan Ralston (Haskins, 1951). Died 25 April 2024

Elizabeth Scahill (Stitt, 1968). Died 2 December 2023

Charmian Warden (Kaleski, 1953). Died 8 December 2023

## Sylvia Faram AM (1946)

**17 July 1929 to 1 March 2024**



In 1940, 11-year-old Sylvia was abruptly moved from Wenona to Abbotsleigh. Her parents provided no explanation but, in later life, Sylvia suspected it was due to Wenona's proximity to Sydney Harbour and potential danger during wartime. Wenona's loss was Abbotsleigh's gain – Sylvia thrived in the classroom and on the

sports ground. An all-rounder, she played in the hockey and cricket firsts in 1945 and captained both in 1946. She won the Open Doubles Tennis Cup in 1946 with her partner Ann Julius and was a Prefect and Wentworth leader. Reflecting her contribution to Abbotsleigh, Sylvia received the Faith Brodziak Memorial Prize for good citizenship, work, sport and leadership in 1946. This prize foreshadowed a lifetime spent advancing the role of women in sport.

Sylvia's sporting prowess continued at Melbourne University, where she was awarded a Blue for her outstanding performances in intervarsity hockey. For the rest of her life, Sylvia played, coached and managed sport at community and elite levels. She represented Victoria in hockey and cricket and played in all of Australia's matches in the 1956 Women's Hockey Associations International

Tournament in Sydney. Sylvia was (unsurprisingly) also an excellent golfer and was a member of the Metropolitan Golf Club in Melbourne for 68 years. She was a pennant player and Women's Captain at the club for many years.

The increasing prominence of women's cricket on the world stage owes a huge debt of gratitude to Sylvia. For her leadership roles in Victorian and Australian women's cricket and her service as a delegate to the International Women's Cricket Council, Sylvia received more honours than can be listed here. She was a life member of the Australian Women's Cricket Council, the Victorian Women's Cricket Council, Hockey Victoria and the Melbourne Women's Hockey Association. She was one of the first women to receive an Honorary Life Membership of the Marylebone Cricket Club. Sylvia received the Australian Sports Medal in 2000 for her contribution to Australian sport and in 2013 the Australian Women's Cricket Council Pioneers Award.

Shortly before her death, Sylvia was awarded the Order of Australia for her significant service to cricket administration and to hockey. She died in March 2024 and is remembered with deep fondness by her nephew David, nieces Christine and Sandra, and her ten great-nieces and nephews. They describe her as an 'amazing, generous and wonderful person with one of life's great giggles', and sadly missed by all her knew her.

*Jen McLaren*



*Chapter 18: University Sport in the New Order*

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*The rigid segregation of the sexes in the sporting arena was eroded. In 1953 Mary Lou Doggett, Sylvia Faram, Jill Massey-Greene, Marjorie Woodfull, Kaye Neville-Smith, Beth Ruffin were recipients of Blues awards. They joined a growing number of young women who now participated in a wider range of sports and could look forward to higher levels of competition in their field. (Courtesy Sylvia Faram)*



**CRICKET TEAM**  
 Back Row: K. Kitto, F. Julius, P. Docker, A. Julius.  
 Middle Row: P. Wark, J. Street, J. Bond, M. Conolly.  
 Front Row: J. Perry, S. Faram (Captain), J. Berne, T. Gossevsy.



**TENNIS TEAM**  
 Back Row: M. Conolly, J. Bond.  
 Front Row: B. Smith, S. Faram (Captain), J. MacPhee.

## Caroline Dent Warton (Davies, 1952)

**19 December 1934 to 26 August 2023**



Caroline Warton passed away peacefully on 26 August 2023, aged 88. She was born at a small private hospital in Lindfield; her family built a home in Gordon and from there Caroline attended 12 years of schooling at Abbotsleigh, starting Kindergarten in 1941.

Their mother did not drive so, from the age of five, Caroline caught the train to school. A few years later, she taught her little sister Elizabeth how to do the same. Crossing the Pacific Highway and catching the train

to Wahroonga would have been no mean feat at such a young age.

Though not particularly sporty, Caroline played tennis well. She was extremely musical, an accomplished pianist with a beautiful soprano voice. After completing the Leaving Certificate, she became a highly regarded Registered Nurse, beginning her training at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in Camperdown. At the Royal Hospital for Women, Caroline completed her midwifery training. As a young woman she nursed in Calcutta, India, during the 1960s.

Caroline met her husband David in Canberra, where they started a family. They settled back in Sydney, living in Turramurra, with David Junior (Dave) at Knox. During this time, Caroline forged her career at Hornsby Hospital where her reputation as a very capable Assistant Director of Nursing was made.

In 1986, when Dave finished school, they had a tree change to Bellingen on the mid-north coast, where they owned and ran a local café. Caroline was an

extremely good cook and she and David threw themselves into 10 wonderful years there. Following this, Caroline worked at Bellingen Hospital, enjoying serving their community in another way.

Her son Dave gave her another role, which she truly loved: grandmother. She was 'Ma-Ma' to Stockley, Stirling (deceased) and Will.

Retirement to the NSW south coast was the Wartons next move. Caroline travelled from there to volunteer at the RPA Museum on a regular basis. She became a talented artist, specialising in watercolour; she loved current affairs and crosswords and enjoyed a robust discussion on just about anything.

Caroline nursed her husband through a terminal illness with everything she had. Widowed in 2010, she later returned to Sydney to be closer to family - full circle and, coincidentally, back to Turramurra.

Caroline stayed in touch with her dearest friends from school, attending many Old Girl events. She had a very strong Abbotsleigh family: sister Elizabeth Miller (Davies, 1955), niece Caroline Rigby (Miller, 1984) and great-nieces Annabel Rigby (2016) and Millie Rigby (2020). Caroline's cousins Mary and Elizabeth Snow (1935) also attended Abbotsleigh before her.

Caroline was all about family and fiercely loyal. She gave of herself freely and was full of kindness, never judging a soul. As she faced life's adversities, she always showed enormous inner strength, never complaining and always grateful. Caroline is very much missed by her family and friends.

*Elizabeth Miller (Caroline's sister) and Caroline Rigby (Caroline's great-niece).*



## Helen Katherine Hill Best (Davies, 1958)

18 July 1941 to 25 March 2024



Helen Katherine Hill Davies was born on 18 July 1941 at the Crown Street Women's Hospital in Sydney to Eleanor and Frank Davies. She was younger sister to Sue and Andrew and, three years later, an older sister to Margot. The family lived in Lynwood Ave, Killara, for many years with Helen and her sisters Sue Atwill (Davies, 1951) and Margot Downes (Davies, 1961) also attending Abbotsleigh.

Helen cherished her time at school and made many lifelong friends. She was the proudest Abbotsleigh Old Girl and loved reliving those days through her daughters, Lucy Best (1989) and Edwina Best (1988). After school, Helen had a long and successful nursing career.

She was married for 54 years and would have turned 83 this year. Helen died peacefully in Sydney on 25 March 2024 from Parkinson's Disease.

## Penny Wills (Walkom, 1962)

20 September 1946 to 7 January 2024



Penny attended Abbotsleigh for most of her school life. In 1963, she enrolled in a Bachelor of Pharmacy degree course at Sydney University, graduating in 1966 after taking most of 1964 off as an AFS (American Field Service) scholarship exchange student, attending the Dwight Englewood School in New Jersey, US.

While studying pharmacy she met her husband-to-be for 55 years, Chris Wills. They were married in 1968 and, after several years working in

pharmacy in the UK, travelling extensively in Europe and coming home overland as far as Nepal, made Turramurra their home.

While pursuing a successful career in hospital pharmacy, Penny was mother to three sons, Brendan, Lachlan and Cameron, and grandmother to seven grandchildren: Imogen, Clementine, India, Oliver, Ruby, Cordelia and Tate.

Penny was full of life, had a wide circle of friends and loved to travel, something she and Chris regularly pursued every year, attending pharmacy conferences and holidays all over the world. She was taken from us by a recurring glioblastoma in January 2024 and will be missed by friends and family.

Penny was loved by all and her premature departure has left a large hole in all our lives.

## Deborah Susan Anderson (Dolstad, 1969)

19 August 1949 to 28 November 2023



Deborah Susan Anderson (Dolstad, 1969) was taken into the arms of Jesus on 28 November 2023. She left behind her husband William 'Andy' Anderson after 55 years of marriage. They have a son Brian, a musician and hi-tech program manager, and daughter Rebecca, a contracts attorney. All live in the San Francisco Bay area.

Debbie lived with her parents in Australia for three years, receiving her Leaving Certificate from Abbotsleigh in 1965, after which she moved back to California. There she attended Monterey Peninsula College where she received an AA Degree and met her husband. She also received a BA Degree and Lifetime Teaching Credential from San Jose State University. While

attending university Andy and Debbie were married and she took a teaching post in San Jose.

Debbie left teaching to start a family in the city of Fremont. Shortly thereafter she started a pre-school and kindergarten at their local church and later took a position as an elementary teacher in the local school district. She decided at a very early age to be a teacher and always had a love for teaching the younger ones. She spent 37 years in the teaching profession, the last 20 of which were at the kindergarten level.

After retirement, Debbie enjoyed working with church committees, playing golf, painting and travel. Twenty months before her passing, she was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, during which time she suffered the side effects of chemotherapy, surgery and pain.

Her memorial service was attended by more than 150 people, mostly church members and parents of many children she had taught.

## Philippa Helen Low (1971)

11 May 1955 to 21 December 2023



Pip was from West Wyalong and had four siblings: Ian (deceased), Diane (deceased), Trish and Tom. She was a boarder from 1966 until 1971.

She studied law at Sydney University.

At about 30, while practising law in Sydney, she was diagnosed with bipolar disorder. Pip endured many health challenges and her life was compromised on many fronts. Despite this,

she was extraordinary as rarely did she complain and, instead, forged on independently with remarkable strength, grace and cheerfulness as she battled her raft of setbacks.

Pip is missed by many, because of her friendship and intelligence; her enduring spirit of equanimity

and social justice; her unfailingly happy disposition, smile and humour.

While Pip spent time in Wyalong, Forbes and Parkes, she mostly lived at Drummoyne. Her life was celebrated with family, friends and treasured neighbours on 12 January 2024 at the Drummoyne Sailing Club.



Pip (left) during school holidays, with Deb Hope.



Pip (left, front row), smiling through an injury.

## Felicity Halliday (Storey, 1977)

14 July 1959 to 29 January 2024



Felicity was born in Sydney in 1959. When she was 18 months old, the family moved overseas for her father's medical training, first to the UK then to the US. Upon returning to Australia, Felicity attended her local primary school before arriving at Abbotsleigh in 1970 to commence Year 5.

During her time at school, Felicity was most well known for her love of ballet and skiing. She was a gifted dancer and had aspirations to attend the Australian Ballet School. However, her father was concerned about the difficulty of her having a successful career as a ballerina and, instead, Felicity pursued a career as a paediatric physiotherapist as well as cultivating her other love, skiing.

Felicity left Abbotsleigh in 1977 to attend UNSW where she completed a Bachelor of Science and a Masters of Physiotherapy. She realised early on that her passion lay in paediatrics and subsequently worked at the Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children as well as with the Cerebral Palsy Alliance. She was able to incorporate her love of skiing into her work, often taking some of

her patients from the Cerebral Palsy Alliance for ski lessons. Felicity also served many years on the Perisher Ski Patrol and instilled the love of skiing into her family.

In 1984, she married her childhood sweetheart Robert and they welcomed two children, Melanie and Tim. Once Melanie was born, Felicity chose to become a stay-at-home mum while Robert was finishing his medical training.

While her children were at school, Felicity became very good at volunteering herself and the rest of the family to participate in many school activities. She was often seen helping at the Abbotsleigh canteen once Melanie (2004) started at the School and also taught girls to sew through Junior School clubs. Felicity became quite the accomplished quilter, for many years attending a Hunters Hill quilting club where she contributed to the construction of many quilts that were donated to hospitals and people in need.

Once Melanie and Tim were in their final years of high school, Felicity decided she would like to go back to work. She initially thought of going back to physiotherapy but the requirements to renew her licence were too onerous. At this point, the family were heavily involved in the swimming world, with Tim being a successful competitive swimmer, Melanie a swimming teacher and lifeguard, and both credentialled officials. Felicity decided swimming teaching was a very good option and quickly became a sought-after teacher. She worked at Sydney Olympic Park Aquatic Centre alongside Melanie in the schools program, where her experience as a paediatric physiotherapist made

her an excellent teacher for children with special needs. Felicity loved teaching the children to swim and they loved having her as their teacher.

Unfortunately, in 2009 Felicity became unwell and was diagnosed with a very rare condition, Behcet's Disease. This affected multiple systems in her body and, over the years, she became legally blind, cognitively impaired and her mobility declined to the point she needed a wheelchair full time. Having this condition didn't dampen her stubborn and tenacious spirit and one thing she was very determined to continue was her skiing. The family had caught the skiing bug early on and made regular trips to Steamboat Springs in Colorado, eventually purchasing property there and starting to call it their second home. In 2014, Felicity was introduced to Steamboat Adaptive Recreational Sports (STARS) where she was able to ski with a guide who helped her navigate the mountain with

her diminishing sight. Felicity absolutely loved this experience and attended STARS several more times before she was no longer able to travel.

In more recent years as her health declined and she required full time care from family and support workers, Felicity found a joy in LEGO. The more complex and large the LEGO set the more she enjoyed it, much to Robert's bank account's dismay. Felicity needed a lot of help to construct the sets and this was the aspect she loved the most, spending time with a friend or loved one, chatting away and doing an activity.

Felicity passed in January 2024 after a long battle with Behcet's Disease and oral cancer. She leaves behind her family, who are devastated but also thankful she is no longer suffering.



# Karina Timores (Metcalf, 1981)

14 March 1964 to 15 January 2024



Mum was the light of our lives. She battled cancer for 16 years before it took her life on 15 January 2024. She was 59 years old.

Mum loved her time at Abbotsleigh and always talked about it; the friends she made and fun she had.

After her time at school, she studied nursing in Sydney and travelled to countries using what she knew to help people. There she met my dad, Pascal. They married in New Caledonia on 19 May 1993 and later had two children, Chloe and Nicolas.

Mum was a fun and outgoing person who loved to socialise and was fit and active. She travelled and worked as a nurse right up until her death. She loved her job and her family.

Mum will be missed.

*Chloe Timores, daughter*









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