



## **Pymble Ladies' College** **EX-STUDENTS' UNION (ESU)**

### **Pymble Ladies' College Ex-Students' Union Inc** **Annual General Meeting** **Tuesday 20 October 2015**

#### **President's Report**

Welcome to the annual Ex-Student's Union Annual General Meeting (AGM). Tonight I have great pleasure in presenting the 86<sup>th</sup> Annual Report to members and special guests in attendance.

As I mentioned at last year's AGM, 2014 was a year of growth. This year 2015, I have seen as a year of consolidation, developing our connections and growing our brand as we approach our most historic year next year, the Centenary of the College. We truly are on the precipice of a very exciting, rewarding and momentous time at the College, certainly one we can all be involved in to enjoy and for the sake of our own personal legacies.

This previous year we welcomed three new Committee members, Robyn Soonius (Secretary), Joanna Bertoline and Larissa De Carle and going forward we have several who have chosen to step down from the Committee effective from tonight. The following members are leaving the Committee and I would like to thank each of them for their commitment, dedication and generous attitude to the time spent with us; Karin Attebo (Vice President), Kristen Faahan-Smith (Assistant Treasurer & Merchandise Officer), Margie Drury (Assistant Secretary) and General Committee Members Jennifer Macourt, Simone Brian, Edwina Fawcett, Christie Charlin and Annie Corbett. All of these ladies have extended themselves as dedicated advocates for the ESU and I have been thrilled to work alongside them. Thank you to you all. I am however thrilled to welcome several new members to the Committee for this coming year; Priscilla Taylor (Vice President) – unable to attend this evening, Shilpi Sanghera (Assistant Treasurer), Danielle Ainsworth, Janet Stanley, Li-Enn Koo and Jacki Stevens. Welcome!

Finalising our 99<sup>th</sup> year of the College certainly is a milestone. We, the Committee, are a critical link in the "unending chain" which is *Pymble*. We are here to help perpetuate memories, maintain traditions and of course to be active, connected, to flourish, engage and be known. We would like to be known in the wider community for our vibrancy, membership, strong network and for the positive contribution that our members make to the lives of current and past students, the College and the local, national and international communities. We strive to be an Association to which all students wish for and are proud to belong. The 'life-cycle' of an ex-student begins with their

attendance at the College and flourishes with their journeys, paths and destinations as they discover the world once they leave. We would like to enhance and capture these journeys to build a bigger and stronger network that forms the basis to all we strive for.

Again this year our membership numbers grew with the 2014 cohort of 213 girls who became automatic life members. As at 30 June 2015, our records indicated that we had 6,537 life members. Our growth also includes the engagement of the ex-student body through Reunions; locally, nationally and internationally, our regular events and social media (the eNewsletter, Facebook and LinkedIn). The ESU has proudly and consistently worked alongside the College, which in turn has supported our work and values. This can be attributed to the wonderful work of John Da Cruz, Director of Development, Joy England and Gayl McLachlan, Alumni Relations Managers and Susanne Lambert, Database Administrator. We sincerely thank each of them for their support and efforts this past year. It is however with sadness that we saw the departure of John Da Cruz recently from the College and I would like, in his absence, to express to you all how much we greatly appreciated his support, commitment, encouragement and enthusiasm for us as an incorporated body representing the ex-students. On a personal note, I will miss his wisdom, advice, friendship and support that I received, particularly during my current time as President. In John's place, I would like to introduce to you all and welcome the new Director of Development, Mr Byron Barnes. I am sure he will enjoy getting to know more of you as he settles into his new position.

Many of you may be aware that Joy England, Alumni Relations Manager has resigned from her day-to-day position at the College. Joy will continue to work on a more casual basis with the College and I do know that it was a difficult decision for her to step back in this capacity because she has truly enjoyed growing the Alumni Department and forming very strong relationships with many ex-students. I would like to express my extreme gratitude to Joy on a professional and personal level. She truly is an incredible ambassador for the College and ex-students and she always maintained a professional yet compassionate attitude to all she did. She built the Alumni Office up to where it is today which is a very strong and relevant part of the College. Joy's hard work will always be recognised and appreciated. Thank you Joy on behalf of the Committee for assisting and guiding us and from a personal level, thank you for believing in me and supporting me.

### **Membership**

With the continual dedication of Susanne Lambert, Database Administrator, who is partially funded by the ESU, and alongside Joy and Gayl, the ex-student records have improved immensely and are regularly updated, definitely an important achievement for the ESU and the College. With the implementation in 2013 of the Automatic Life Membership of each outgoing Year 12 girl, each year our ex-student database grows by approximately 260 members. All Year 12 girls still need to fill in a Life Membership form with their contact details and this current years cohort have been very efficient with all but a handful who have done so (they will become Life Members as at 1 January 2016). This Life

Membership form is part of the constitution and something that has been diligently followed up and achieved through the Alumni Office.

### **Social Media**

Again this year social media has played an enormous role in our communication to our ex-students. Each year our benefits from social media grow and grow and it truly brings our global connections closer and closer. We are now at 1,690 Facebook members. Facebook is continuously used as a very effective forum to reach ex-students from every age range and on here we post events, invitations, ask for help for the Garden Party and post news about ex-students and also about current College occurrences. It steadily grows month by month and we rely heavily on this to make the world a smaller place by having such personal contact with ex-students in all corners of the world.

LinkedIn still has been quite slow off the mark however we plan to raise the bar with this and bring it to a level of high usage for our ex-students because we believe it is a valuable tool. At present we have approximately 300 members.

The ESU eNewsletter has grown from strength to strength again this year as a vital and informative way of keeping in touch with ex-students. The feedback has been incredibly positive with many engaging back with the College due to this. This has been driven by Joy who has kept the content exciting, full of news and events and of course some history of the College and ex-students. The eNewsletter has also proved to be very successful in receiving updated contact details, which all in turn helps the database. All of the eNewsletter's can be found on the *Pymble* website under the ESU link.

Whilst social media is a very strong factor in our communication with our ex-students, especially with more and more of the younger generations now connecting back with the College and each other through the ESU, we still need to recognise that not all ex-students utilise this form of communication. Therefore the *Pymbulletin* continues to play an important part of our exposure to our ex-student Life Members and also still shows that we are part of the College community. Next year the *Pymbulletin* will be published twice a year rather than three times and due to this the Alumni Office will send out via email and hard copy to those not on email, a 'Year at a Glance' flyer so you can ensure that all upcoming events for the year ahead can be diarised and planned for.

### **Reunions**

This area of the ESU seems to be substantially growing locally, nationally and internationally. These Reunions have included (October 2014 – October 2015):

- Canberra, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, Toowoomba, Darling Downs & Northern New England,
- Singapore (joint reunion with Knox Grammar)
- London
- Hong Kong

- 12 Year Group Reunions.

Joy, John and Gayl have attended many of these and I would like to extend my sincere thanks to them for making the effort and growing these events with such success. I was thrilled to attend the Canberra reunion again this year and will also attend the upcoming Perth reunion next month. These reunions really show me the strength and bond that carries through us all and how vital it is to maintain these especially for those who aren't in Sydney and don't have easy access to the College. I would also like to acknowledge and thank Vicki Waters for showing her support on behalf of the College for the ESU Reunion program.

### **Finances**

Finances are but one factor of our incorporation but a very important one. Sabah is truly so efficient, effective, precise and dedicated to the preservation and growth of our Finances. During the time she has been Treasurer, we have consolidated our various accounts, which had seemed to grow in number through the changing Committee's over the years and she has also maximised our returns and invested wisely. We have continued again this year with sound advice from Tynan Mackenzie about our investments, Life Membership subscriptions and financial future.

Sabah has been wonderfully assisted from the grassroots level with everyday banking and financial matters from our Vice Treasurer Kristen Faahan-Smith. Together they have maintained and attended to the financial records of our incorporated entity. The Treasurer's Report will be tabled at this meeting together with a copy of our audited financial statements. Thank you again to Kristen, who is stepping down from the Committee, for her dedication and assistance in this role. Kristen will however continue on with her wonderful work on the ESU merchandise external to, but on behalf of, the Committee. She has instigated some wonderful initiatives by the way of bracelets, tea towels, blankets, mugs etc. This has been extremely financially rewarding to us as well as giving our ex-students the opportunity to own some ESU paraphernalia. I feel this is a very important development and growth aspect to our Committee in light of the Centenary next year. Thank you very much Kristen.

For the current financial year, our after tax profit was \$16,673.89 compared to a net operating loss after tax of \$6,227.87 generated for the year ended 30 June 2014. We have continued to execute an Automatic Life Membership Agreement with the College in which the College issued payment of \$64,500 in life membership fees together with the ESU partially funding the costs of the Database Administrator in the amount of \$35,000. Sabah will cover further financial information in her report.

This year, we as a Committee, have again remained focused on hosting our traditional functions whilst also adding an extra event, the ESU *Pymble* Corporate Golf Day at Avondale Golf Course. The aim behind this is to raise funds on behalf of the ESU towards the Centenary Precinct Project. Last year

was our first year running this event and we raised \$23,355 net profit, which will be pooled to contribute to our ESU Centenary contribution. In a few weeks we will hold this event again and next year will be our final year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the College for their incredible support of this event, in particular David Sexton, General Manager. Merchandise sales and *Pymble* camellia sales will also continue to contribute towards our contribution.

Finally on the Finances, I would like to take this moment to sincerely thank Sabah for her dedication, passion, commitment, professional attitude and patience in dealing with the Finances of the ESU. It truly is a big job however Sabah has never faltered and has been extremely professional and diligent always.

### **ESU Supported Events**

Once again we have had a very busy year with a variety of activities and events that have taken place. These have all been sponsored by the ESU and very efficiently run and managed by volunteers on the Committee with the support of the Alumni Office. The impressive lineup includes:

- Annual sponsorship of Indigenous Scholarship Program by providing uniforms
- Indigenous Scholars Morning Tea
- Networking Breakfast
- Contribution to the Careers Night at the College
- Annual Mothers and Grandmothers Morning Tea
- Year 12 2015 Good Luck Morning Tea
- Year 11 2015 Welcome to Year 12 Morning Tea
- Contributions to the *Pymbulletins* issued during 2014 and 2015
- ESU Scholarship awarded – Emily Ainsworth (Year 11, 2016) joining Madeleine Payne (Year 12, 2016)
- ESU Golf/Tennis/Bridge/Bushwalk Day
- ESU Merchandise Stall and Chicken & Champagne Stall at Garden Party
- Year 2012/2013 Leavers Cocktail Party
- Commemoration Day Chapel Service
- Support of the National Council of Women
- ESU Artist-In-Resident (AIR) Grant
- Pymble Golf Day

In addition to these continued significant events throughout the year (from last AGM October 2015 to present), we held 8 Committee meetings in addition to this AGM.

### **ESU Scholarship**

This was my 2<sup>nd</sup> year in the selection process for our new Scholarship recipient. Again this year I was incredibly impressed by the caliber of girls who sat for this Scholarship. I can truly say that all were very worthy candidates however unfortunately there can only be one recipient and the successful candidate for

the Year 11, 2016/Year 12, 2017 Scholarship is Emily Ainsworth. She will join our current ESU Scholar Madeleine Payne who has just commenced Year 12 for 2016.

### **Centenary 2016**

We are now only 111 days until the College's 100-year birthday on 8 February 2016. With this just around the corner, we are now fervently coordinating our event calendar in alignment with the College Centenary events calendar. We will continue to hold our regular events however we have introduced a few special Centenary events, for example an ESU Reunion at Ingelholme, a Back to Boarding Weekend, a Commemoration Day Centenary Lunch and the ESU *alumNOW* Centenary Art Exhibition. These events will be one off special events for the Centenary year so in addition to these, our ESU calendar is certainly a full one. We will continue to fundraise for our Centenary contribution through the *Pymble* Golf Day in November and also through our merchandise sales and a few other options we have.

### **Committee Members**

The Committee - my sincere thanks goes to you all. You have again made my journey as President thoroughly enjoyable and supported as I have navigated my way through the year and always with my main focus on the Centenary next year. To be a volunteer on a committee of a large organisation certainly takes dedication, commitment, passion and hard work. You have all shown this and taken on tasks, questioned processes, contributed physically and verbally and always supported each other and me. For all of this I thank you very much because my role I feel is only as strong as the support, encouragement and strength of the Committee that I receive. I feel very proud to stand alongside all of you as we have supported and grown the ex-student awareness, contribution and commitment and I look forward to developing this with the new 2016 committee. I would like to make a special acknowledgement and thank you to Robyn Soonius (Secretary) for her amazing work behind the scenes, always so efficiently and promptly, especially being her first year on the Committee.

Thank you to Sue Everingham for being our National Council for Women delegate. She has tabled her report for this AGM.

As I mentioned earlier in my report, we have several members stepping down and equally several new members joining. We will therefore have a total of 11 Committee members going forward into 2016.

My final thank you is to the College; Vicki Waters, David Sexton, Grant Birse, John Da Cruz, Joy England, Gayl McLachlan and Suzanne Lambert who all believed in me, supported me, encouraged me and have been behind us, the Committee, as we continue to strive for the highest in all we do.

Thank you everyone for attending tonight and showing your support of the ESU in the unending chain that is *Pymble*, and on a final note ....

“The future of Pymble need cause us no fears; ‘Twill grow ever greater and live through the years, And new girls will follow in unending chain, And Youth be renewed again and again”.

*All’ Ultimo Lavoro*

**Katrina Corcoran (Hum, 1987)**

**President**

**Pymble Ladies’ College Ex-Students’ Union Inc.**