



Pymble Ladies' College Ex-Students' Union Inc
Annual General Meeting
Friday 28 October 2011

President's Report

As the President of the Pymble Ladies' College Ex-Students' Union (ESU) Inc, I have great pleasure in presenting the 82nd Annual Report to the members.

An eventful year

2011 was a significant year marking the 95th anniversary of the founding of the College by Dr Marden on 8 February 1916. The Ex-Students have been an integral part of the history of the College over the last 95 years. I was extremely honoured this year to be invited to speak at the Foundation Day Service held on the Gloucester Quadrangle in February. As I related to readers in the May edition of the *Pymbulletin*, in addition to brushing up on my knowledge of the history of the founding of the College, the most remarkable part of the day for me was the vast sea of white hats upon those beautiful children's heads rising and falling as my tales of the College's past caught their attention. What I know to be true is that the College, and every student, teacher and parent who has been involved in this wonderful and exciting history, has much to be proud of. As formal representatives of former students, we have a responsibility to continue the traditions of the College and contribute to its future success.

On 22 October, the Ex-Students hosted a 3 or more Generations High Tea in the Senior School Centre - Kate Mason Building to acknowledge the history of the College. We had over 100 people in attendance who enjoyed a wonderful high tea and catching up with friends and extended families. I was struck by the strength and presence of all those women. So many people have since sent in their expressions of thanks to the ESU (Katrina Corcoran and Kristen Faahan-Smith in particular) for having organised this event. It makes me think that *Pymble* girls, no matter what age, will always make the effort to meet each other and happily share their memories of their school days. Of some significance was the implicit recognition and respect for the mothers and grandmothers whose proud and strong support of the College over the decades has obviously remained a driving force in those families staying connected with *Pymble*.

Other events during the year have focused on our traditional morning tea to welcome the mothers and grandmothers of girls at the College, held on 4 March and a Cocktails in the City event on the evening of 22 February where around 30 Ex-Students met to

reconnect and explore our connections as professional women in the commercial heart of the city.

One of the highlights for this year was most definitely the inaugural ESU Strategy retreat held on 26 and 27 February in the hinterland of Terrigal. Thanks to Angela Bean and her family we were accommodated in comfortable surrounds having time to discuss and debate the future aspirations of the ESU. This culminated in a Strategic Plan for the ESU. This has helped in making a contribution to the College's current review of its strategic objectives as 2020 approaches.

Ex-Students again turned out in numbers to participate in the careers night held annually in Term 1. My thanks to the many Ex-Students who volunteered their time to give guidance to our current students as they consider their future career options.

Our Commemoration Day Chapel Service was held on 31 July this year and was followed by a sparkling Diamond and Rubies celebratory lunch. Again, we had over 90 ladies turn up for lunch. The conversations were firing along so well that I shelved my plans to speak at this event. I decide to be realistic and acknowledge that everyone there was obviously enjoying each others company so much they didn't need to hear from me.

At the Garden Party this year we had new merchandise for sale as a foray into the marketing world (led by Wendy Dreyfus) where we offered a coffee mug and a "tea for two" set to unite old and new girls. This was one of our best Garden Parties ever, assisted by the generous donation by Jacqui Joubert, a current year 6 mother, of a lovely abstract painting of *Pymble* girls, which we offered as first prize in our ESU raffle. Another Ex-Student, Judi Elliot (1974) donated a beautiful crocheted *Pymble* rug in red, white and blue which she said she did whilst watching the 2011 Tour de France. Named aptly as the "Cadel '11" rug this was also popular, and assisted our finances being offered as the second prize in our raffle.

I again had the pleasure of interviewing candidates for the ESU Scholarship this year. The successful candidate was Ellie Walker in Year 10. She will join our current ESU Scholar Philpa Bean currently in Year 11.

In addition to these significant events throughout the year, we held 9 committee meetings in addition to this AGM. I attended several liaison meetings with the Principal and we funded an ESU Artist in Residence Program and sponsored an Ex-Students hockey team. In addition, the College assisted with organising 10 reunions during the year.

I have taken the time to list all these events in an effort to record and recognise all those things the ESU Committee has done this year in the interests of fulfilling our objectives of fostering the welfare of the College, upholding its traditions and bringing old and new girls together. I suppose our committed band of volunteers on the Committee could have managed a couple more events, but it is honestly hard to imagine how.

I am open to suggestions of refocussing our efforts to prioritise greater engagement with our growing under 30's membership, developing networking and mentoring

opportunities. But at the same time I am conscious of a duty to recognise and foster the continued support of our older members. I am confident that the College will provide its additional support to assist in the important goal of encouraging our younger Ex-Students to become active participants in the ESU.

Membership

As at 30 June 2011 we had 5,973 life members. This represents an increase of 196 new members since 2010.

Our strategic review helped us to recognise that, for all our fundraising efforts, it is our membership subscriptions that not only bolster our numbers but which also represent the major source of our revenue each year. Our strategic review also identified that we need to work far more closely with the College not only to deliver a dynamic marketing and communications strategy to attract new members, but also to streamline our new membership admission procedures for 2012.

Our steps in this direction have not been as significant as I would have hoped this year. For various reasons, our new Year 12 members numbered only 79 as at today's date compared to 148 last year. The lack of a targeted communication program to our Year 12 girls and their families has resulted in these lower than expected membership numbers. However, with the ever-present assistance of Community Relations, final emails have been sent to those girls who have not yet elected to become life members of the ESU. It is essential that in future years we have clear communication strategies in place to make sure that each and every Year 12 girl is encouraged to join the ESU.

As a priority, we will need to focus on this process next year with the objective of achieving at least a majority of Year 12 girls becoming life members of the ESU. We need to focus on developing and communicating to all our membership, but especially those in Years 11 and 12 and those who have left within the last 10 years, the value proposition of being a Pymble Ex-Student. Our vision is to create readily accessible networking opportunities for girls within their first 5 to 10 years of leaving *Pymble*. More work needs to be done in this space. Volunteers on our Committee are ready willing and able to identify and provide whatever support and connections they can. However, dedicated resources are an essential component to implementing the strategy.

Finances

Our Treasurer, Gill Ross-Edwards has again out done herself in dedicating her attentions to the proper management of the financial records of our incorporated entity. Her Treasurer's Report is to be tabled at this meeting together with a copy of our audited financial statements. I must state for the record my personal heartfelt thanks to Gill for being so diligent in her duties and persevering to keep us on the straight and narrow. She is handing over the reigns of Treasurer to Sabah Hussain to whom I offer my thanks and promise of our support for the coming year in this role. I am pleased to advise that although Gill could not be here tonight she has offered to stay on the Committee for the 2012 year.

Our operating surplus for the year was \$14, 948.94. Out investments remain in Term Deposits and cash and our intention is to revisit our investment strategy with a view to diversifying our investments to gain exposure to greater potential for longer-term growth. Our taxable status remains a consideration in this regard.

We have also just recently reviewed our insurance cover to ensure that the ESU and its Committee members have appropriate cover at reasonable rates.

We maintain a watching brief on the regulatory requirements of unincorporated associations and the current review by the Commonwealth government of the regulation and exempt taxation status of not for profit entities.

Strategy & Vision for 2020

In aiming towards greater relevance for our younger members, it has become all too apparent that a not for profit organisation such as the ESU, with no employees and operating as it does with volunteers outside College grounds and hours, can only achieve so much.

If the Ex- Students Unions Inc, by whatever name it may ultimately become known, is to thrive, it must work towards a partnership with the College to develop a shared vision. The vision and objectives of the ESU are definitely necessary but they are no longer sufficient to achieve best practice goals of an alumnae association of one of the most progressive and high achieving, well respected independent girls schools in Australia and, at some levels, the world today.

I am hopeful that with the continued support of the College, of both Vicki Waters and members of the College Council, we can consolidate our mutual understanding of the nature of our relationship and our respective strengths and abilities in order to excel.

The support of Christine Shute as the ESU liaison at the College until August this year was very much appreciated. We are looking forward to even greater support in the coming year via Community Relations at the College and the inspiring leadership of Grant Birse and his team. I would like to acknowledge Grant's assistance to date, his presence tonight and at our last 2 Committee meetings. I welcome his future contributions to this process.

Special recognition

As you will all be aware, the Governor of NSW, Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO, officially opened the Senior School Centre - Kate Mason Building on Saturday 29 January 2011. This was in recognition of Kate's significant contribution to the College.

Mrs Kate Mason, BA M Comm (Hons), joined the College Council in September 1998 and served as Chairman of Council for nine years from 2001 to 2010. She graduated from the University of NSW with first-class honours in economics and was a Teaching Fellow and lecturer in the Economics Department at UNSW and subsequently at Macquarie University. Her research interest focused on the participation of women in the workforce.

Mrs Mason and her husband Peter had three daughters at *Pymble*, Rebecca (1991), Claire (1997) and Alexandra (2001). During her time as Chairman, the College maintained its place as a leading educator of young women, with excellent academic outcomes and unrivalled opportunities in the cultural and sporting arenas. The College's community service program was emphasised and enhanced, and an Indigenous Education and Scholarship Program was inaugurated.

Mrs Mason brought to the Council and the College her own particular interest in scholarship and academic excellence. She worked with two College Principals, Mrs Gillian Moore AO and Mrs Vicki Waters. Two significant buildings were constructed during her chairmanship, the Gillian Moore Centre for Performing Arts, and the new Senior School Centre.

As a sign of the Ex-Students' respect and recognition of the invaluable contribution Kate made to the history of the College, the ESU Committee recently voted to extend to Kate the title of Honorary Colleague of the Ex-Students. I am confident that you will join with me in extending to Kate this special recognition and we look forward to including her in the celebration of our continuing achievements.

Committee Members

Finally, I extend my sincere thanks to each and every member of the Committee for their dedication, eagerness and willingness to assist with the many and varied activities of the ESU. I have truly enjoyed the companionship of the Committee Members and never cease to marvel at their capacity to organise events and still come back for more.

This year Fiona Thompson, Julie Opie, Lisa Scott and Christine Shute have left the Committee. We have however welcomed Cath Parker, Amelia Jacka and Sabba Hussain to the Committee.

My thanks to those of you here tonight. May I say on your behalf that we are all proud to be, and to continue to be, the mortar between the bricks.

All' Ultimo Lavoro

Sue Everingham (Taylor, 1977)
President
Pymble Ladies' College Ex-Students' Union Inc