

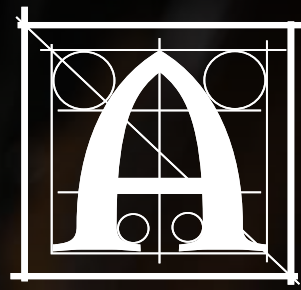
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COVER CAITLIN HOGAN, FAIRHOLME OLD GIRL 2009

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FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Learning Beyond The School Gates

PARENTS are their children's first teacher, most influential teacher, enduring teacher.

What if we could enrich student learning with small tweaks in practice? What if, by inviting our parents into classrooms (metaphorically speaking), learning would be enriched? What if?

In 2021, Fairholme embarked on a research project in conjunction with Independent Schools Queensland and Griffith University.

The focus was on parent engagement in inquiry curriculum (EPIC) and the project required us all to think differently about the way learning can extend beyond the school gates. Initially, we came to understand the significant differences between parent involvement versus parent engagement and how the latter can have a direct and positive impact upon student learning.

Involvement tends to centre around volunteerism – a worthy and vital part of our school culture but one that does not link directly to student curriculum and participation in events – again a rich aspect of community building but not focused on learning. Engagement, however, is about linking parents with the classroom and inviting them to share the curriculum, or aspects of it, with their child, at home, in the car, over the phone.

Debbie Pushor, Professor of Curriculum Studies at Saskatchewan University in Canada, describes the move in some schools, to increase engagement of parents in teaching and learning as a 'gentle revolution'. Despite decades of research that indicate the valuable impact of parent engagement in their children's learning, particularly as it occurs out of

school, schools have still traditionally held fast to an arm's-length approach to parent involvement, relegating it to the controlled, school-directed spaces of volunteerism and event attendance.

Typically, teachers and school administrators have held tenaciously to their place as education knowledge leaders and, as such, have been known to metaphorically draw the demarcation line between home and school, thus implicitly declaring that 'never the twain shall meet.'

Perhaps this approach has been born of bruising parent complaints or challenging parent-teacher interviews or emails of doctoral thesis length, penned vitriolically, and sent in the early hours of a morning.

Thus, perhaps the filter through which we educators think and view parent engagement has been faulty, distorted by occasionally soul-destroying moments which have led us to determined late-night searches on SEEK. In doing so, we have eclipsed access to a population of often highly educated or wonderfully wise adults with a thirst to be part of their child's learning. It isn't a new concept. When I think back to the dusty memories of my own school experience, I know that my own parents were engaged in my learning.

It is only now that I appreciate how much their interest in some subjects added to the richness of my classroom learning. Perhaps my love of English and language was born through that engagement?

My mother dutifully and quite happily read each of my English novels and I remember proudly listening to her talking on our (now archaic) landline defending the literary

worth of George Johnston's Australian classic, *My Brother Jack* to a parent seeking its censorship. She too admired the exquisite language of Giuseppe Di Lampedusa's novel, *The Leopard* that our forward-thinking English teacher, Michael Selleck, introduced us to in Year 12. Together we pondered paradoxes from the novel, like 'If we want things to stay as they are, things will have to change'. I remember discussing with my father the budget, economic growth, supply and demand chains and the share market as an extension of the Economics classroom. Possibly his speech bubble was, 'At last, at last she is learning something of worth...'

But Pushor's revolution and that of EPIC do have a gentle revolutionary feel. It is as simple as incorporating the language of invitation into a classroom setting, for example.

Last year, I asked a Year 12 English class, beginning their study of Poetry, to email their parents with two questions. Can you remember a poem that you studied at school? What is your favourite poem? Collectively, we were excited as the answers bounced in periodically via email throughout the lesson, and there was an opportunity to share some of the answers.

'The Stockman,' 'The Road Less Travelled,' 'I Love a Sunburned Country,' and the words to a poem about motherhood were some – along with AA Milne's 'Now we are Six'. It was this response that captured me most. A mother replied with the words of the whole poem, and her daughter shared them with the class. It was pin-drop quiet as she did. Her mother added that it was the first poem she ever learned by heart and that she had won a medal presenting it at a competition.

Would her daughter have known that otherwise? Perhaps not. Would they have talked further on that over the weekend? I imagine so. In a small way, does that moment add to that girl's study of poetry – I think, yes. Reciprocity in classroom and home

learning adds strength to the process of knowledge generation and content understanding.

Legitimising a rich conversation around curriculum between home and school is a gift in households where too much time is spent on the transactional – 'What time will you be home?' 'How are you getting there?' 'Have you got a clean uniform?' 'What's on for dinner in the Dining Room, tonight?'

A learning conversation may weave its way from school to home and back to school – it sets the scene for a deeper conversation between parents and teachers too. But because we have always done school this way, such a shift in perception is not without its challenges. As schools, if we want to engage with, rather than involve, our parents, then our own perspective needs to move beyond the metaphoric 'bake sale' paradigm. It does not mean that we are placing parents in the driver's seat, from whence they choose the school's direction.

This is a slow-moving evolutionary process that begins with an invitation in and working 'with' parents shift, sharing school beyond its gates. It is a shift that prominent educational researcher, Professor John Hattie is alert to, as well. Hattie (2023) conversely writes of parents not as 'first teachers' but as 'first learners'. He says, prophetically that 'as parents learn, so do their children.'

The influence of families collectively sharing a positive language about learning cannot be understated, according to Hattie. In his view, learning takes on a broader scope – beyond and within the school gates – when the influence of parents is considered.

So, here's to an invitation in, and the EPIC possibilities inherent in this well-researched but often undervalued approach to engaging with parents – gently revolutionary.

Here's to learning within and beyond the school gates – all for the betterment of our young people.

“

The influence of families collectively sharing a positive language about learning cannot be understated...



AUSTRALIAN JERSEY

The Tartan And The Green And Gold

Georgina Rackemann | 2013 | Black House | Boarder



'I learnt to appreciate what you can gain from sport and why it will always be a part of my life. Not many young people are lucky enough to have this exposure by the time they finish Year 12.'

- *Georgina Rackemann*

Georgina Rackemann is a shining example of 'She can, and she will', both on and off the sporting field.

In her time wearing the tartan as a Fairholme Boarder and Prefect for Sport, Georgina proved her strength across a plethora of sports, regularly making representative teams for Swimming, Cross Country, Athletics and Touch Football.

'My time at Fairholme exposed me to many sporting opportunities. From playing local schools, travelling all over Queensland or even going on trips overseas, I was able to establish such a strong love for sport,' Georgina says.

After four years of selection in the Queensland Touch Football team, it was as a teenager that Georgina first earned the opportunity to pull on the green and gold for the Under 18s Australian Schoolgirls team. Fast forward a decade, and after years of consistent hard work and determination, Georgina finally cracked the elite open level, being named in the Australian Women's Touch Team earlier this year.

'As they say, it was a childhood dream come true. To get that final call was a surreal feeling,' says Georgina.

'For the majority of the last ten years, I didn't think I would get the opportunity to play for Australia again. COVID

halted all representative opportunities and as I was getting older, I thought my time might have passed. Luckily, my enjoyment of playing touch never passed and I was fortunate enough to finally get my shot.'

After representing Australia in the Trans-Tasman Test Series, Georgina is now setting her sights on an even bigger goal.

'I'm currently working towards making my first Australian World Cup Team to compete in Birmingham in July 2024. This is the ultimate competition for Touch players, and I would love the opportunity to play overseas and represent Australia.'

But it is not just on the sporting field where Georgina has achieved success. After graduating from Fairholme in 2013, Georgina went on to study at university, eventually making her way back through the gates of Fairholme as a Maths teacher.

'It was a little strange at first, returning as a staff member, but once I started it was like I'd never left.

'The familiarity of the school and the support of the people within it made me feel as though I was back home.

'I love that I can help students make the most of their time at school.

'It goes so fast and there is so many opportunities. If I can inspire the girls to get involved in sport, even just a little, then I know it will have a positive impact on their future.'

Naturally, Georgina's passion for touch football and elite knowledge of the game led her to take on the role of Touch

“

I am proud to see how rugby has grown at Fairholme and the opportunities that are now available...

and Rugby 7s Co-Ordinator at Fairholme. 'I played my first game of Rugby 7s in my final semester at Fairholme; before that it wasn't a 'thing'. I am proud to see how rugby has grown at our school and the opportunities that are now available.'

'I think the shift in women's sport is really driving the growth of sport at Fairholme.

'It's great to see all women's football codes thriving and being reported in the media and this is giving the girls something to aspire to, particularly for our touch and rugby girls.

'When I was younger the opportunities to be a professional athlete were limited, whereas the girls are now able to find a sporting path and grab hold of it with a real chance of success.'

Georgina's determination continues to be an inspiration for our next generation of sporting stars. As both an elite athlete and a coach, she has an incredible future ahead of her.



“

I look around at my graduating class of 2010 and I see everyone flourishing in such varied professions...

Returning To The Family Roots

Caitlin Hogan | 2010 | Stephens House | Day Girl



AFTER honing her craft in the ‘big smoke’, Caitlin Hogan has returned to her Toowoomba roots to take on the role of Marketing Executive for one of Australia’s longest-established jewellers, Hogans Family Jewellers.

Upon graduating from Fairholme in 2010, Caitlin enrolled at Queensland University of Technology to pursue a Bachelor’s Degree in Creative Industries.

‘I was always good at English, Art, and Creative Writing,’ Caitlin says. ‘While attending school, I completed a Certificate in Visual Arts and Contemporary Crafts through the Fairholme Pathways Program.’

‘This exposed me to creative programs like Adobe Photoshop which led me to develop a keen interest in photography, editing and graphic design.’

Looking back on her time at school, Caitlin recognises how the support and encouragement she received helped cultivate her love of the arts.

‘Mrs Hayward was always on my team. She encouraged me to enter visual arts competitions and exhibitions. It was such a great experience and really nurtured my creativity.’

After a stint working in the fashion wholesaling industry, Caitlin fell into a marketing job and loved it.

‘Digital marketing is a passion of mine. I love the combination of expressing yourself creatively and being able to measure the results.’

When Caitlin’s brother, Lachlan Hogan, reached out to her to bring her marketing and creative skills back to the family business, she couldn’t say no.

‘It was an exciting time to join the Hogans’ team with the unveiling of our beautiful new showroom and workshop.’

‘It feels like the beginning of a new era for Hogans. We launched our online store eight weeks ago which has been one of my biggest achievements to date.’

Hogans Family Jewellers tells a narrative spanning three generations, intricately tied to the world of exquisite jewelry.

‘Since 1945, we have dedicated ourselves to the art of creating personalised fine jewellery,’ Caitlin said.

‘Originating in Griffith and Leeton, our journey has led us to our present location in Toowoomba.’

‘Throughout this evolution, Hogans remains steadfast in our commitment to delivering unparalleled jewellery and service.’

Having worked in the jewellery department of David Jones in Sydney, Hogans’ founder, Madeleine Hogan, discovered her love for fine jewellery.

It was in 1945 that she and her husband, Jack, opened their very own jewellery store in Leeton, NSW.

As well as the ability to draw on her creative vision, Caitlin enjoys the networking and philanthropic aspects of her role, with the business being an avid supporter of local charity and community events – including myriad Fairholme College events.

Those community connections are some of Caitlin’s fondest memories of her time at Fairholme.

‘Fairholme builds such a strong community that fosters lifelong relationships. All of us Fairholme girls have remained such good friends.’

Continued next page



‘It seems that everywhere you go, there’s a Fairholme connection. One of our jewellers at Hogans, Georgia Piggott, is also a fellow Old Girl.

Georgia, a Fairholme Boarder from 2009-2013, undertook her work experience at Hogans, which helped cement her interest in the jewellery industry.

After completing her apprenticeship in Brisbane, winning Apprentice of the Year, and gaining experience overseas, Georgia has, like Caitlin, brought her award-winning ‘craftswomanship’ back to Toowoomba.

The jewellery sector has historically been a ‘man’s world’ and it thrills Caitlin to see such growth for females in the industry.

‘At Hogans, it’s something we are very proud to be supporting and I’m really pleased to be a part of the shift’, says Caitlin.

For both Caitlin and Georgia, it was the support they received from Fairholme staff to pursue their creative interests that they remember fondly from their days in the MacLaren tartan.



‘Fairholme has this wonderful ability to support so many different career pathways,’ Caitlin says.

‘I look around at my graduating class and I see everyone flourishing in such varied professions.’



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“

A lot of things that were ‘compulsory participation’ at school prepared me for getting outside of my comfort zone, and I often tell my staff that if you are feeling too comfortable, then you are not growing as a person.

A Flourishing Career In Law

Peta Gray | 2006 | Powell House | Day Girl

PETA Gray's journey from Fairholme student to the founder of Enterprise Legal is a testament to her resilience, adaptability, and innovative spirit.

Her story unfolds in the halls of Fairholme in 2001, where she embarked on her educational journey. Little did she know that her path would lead her through twists and turns, shaping her into a successful entrepreneur and lawyer.

Graduating in 2006, Peta faced the challenge of finding accommodation while pursuing her law degree at the University of Queensland during a housing crisis. Her father's new job in Charters Towers prompted a change of plans, leading her to join her parents and to take a gap year. However, the charm of Charters Towers captivated her, altering her course of action.

'My intention was to stay 12 months but then I really got immersed in the small, country town culture – one year turned into four,' Peta said.

Peta adjusted her academic plans, enrolling at QUT, the only university offering external studies at the time.

Balancing part-time work and full-time studies, she completed her entire degree remotely, which came with its own challenges.

'Studying online back then was very unusual. Every second recording wouldn't work, and would take up

to two weeks for them to even be placed online.'

Arriving back in Toowoomba with two years of her degree still to complete, at a time where there was a huge surplus of law graduates, Peta knew that she needed to focus on securing a role within a law firm.

Out of the 50 emails Peta sent, with her resume attached, only five yielded responses.

'I literally contacted every law firm in Toowoomba!'

After a short stint with Browns Office Choice, Peta's persistence paid off and she secured her first position in a local law firm - as a Law Clerk in a Commercial Law team. This quickly led to a further opportunity to assist in the establishment of a new Commercial Law team at another firm, one of Toowoomba's most progressive law firms at the time.

'I had the benefit of a fantastic mentor and the opportunity to engage in challenging legal work for a diverse client base, which helped shape the lawyer I am today.'

After giving birth to her son, Harvey, in 2016, Peta took a bold step the following year in partnering with a lawyer colleague to establish her own law firm, Enterprise Legal, with a vision to redefine the traditional law firm model.

Enterprise Legal embraced a

holistic approach to work, a unique billing model, and a focus on client engagement. Starting with the two founders, the firm flourished, doubling its growth year-on-year for the first three years.

'Law had started to evolve when I began in 2010 and it was at the height of specialisation, which was lucky for me as I naturally fell into the area which I had thought I would like, which was business and property law.

'This laid the groundwork for Enterprise Legal's specialisation.'

Since opening in September 2017, Enterprise Legal has not only weathered the challenges of COVID but thrived, earning five major awards, including four national ones, and being finalists in 18 others.

'Being awarded as the best Regional or Suburban Law Firm in all of Australia in 2018, exactly one year to the day after EL commenced operations, was surreal.

'Best of all, it really silenced those who had doubted the viability of our progressive approach to the law.'

Peta's journey from playing *Judge Judy* during primary school lunch breaks to leading her own law firm exemplifies her determination.

Despite the challenges that came from trying something new in an extremely traditional profession, she persevered and carved her own path.

Continued next page

The concept of Enterprise Legal, born from a desire to do things differently, has flourished over six years.

Away from her professional life, Peta enjoys quality time with her family, having recently built a home with her husband Bryan, who runs a boutique real estate agency. Her interests extend to puzzles and paint by numbers, providing a balance to her dynamic career.

Reflecting on her Fairholme days, Peta fondly recalls the camaraderie among friends and the influence of teachers like Mrs Gilshenan, her first English teacher.

She attributes her writing skills, including a solid understanding of subject and predicate, to Mrs Gilshenan - skills she now imparts to her own team.

Peta remains connected to Fairholme, returning to MC the Fashion Parade and participating in career panels for Year 10 students.

‘I think it’s always good to have a passion or interest that is completely different from your vocation and fashion is mine! Fashion for me means breaking down stereotypes, challenging perceptions and, most importantly, helping people to feel confident in

themselves.

‘We are very excited to be able to support the next wave of upcoming talent.’

For Peta, Fairholme is not just a memory; it’s a place that feels like home.



“

‘Fashion means breaking down stereotypes, challenging perceptions and helping people feel confident in themselves.’





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Breaking Barriers And Crafting Dreams

Rhiannon Steffensen | 2008 | Stephens House | Day Girl

IN the dynamic and cut-throat world of animation and production, Rhiannon Steffensen stands out as a testament to the power of resilience, creativity, and a willingness to embrace unexpected opportunities.

From her Senior year at Fairholme in 2008 to her current role as an Animation Producer at Ludo Studio - working on the iconic children's animated series, *Bluey*, no less - Rhiannon's journey is a narrative of determination and passion in the pursuit of a dream.

'Even though it was a long, winding journey and I never expected to ever be in animation when I started, I have found that this is where my passion really lies and I'm really grateful that I have had the type of career I always hoped for back when I was a student at Fairholme,' Rhiannon said.

That 'long, winding journey' saw her taking a gap year in 2009 in Germany. Through an Au Pair program (which was organised by Fairholme), she immersed herself in life experiences and travel, broadening her horizons before deciding on a career path.

'I was never completely sold on what I wanted to do when I was at high school; all I knew was I didn't want it to be a job where I dreaded going to work every Monday morning or feel like it was something that I was just doing to "pay the bills",' she explained.

Though initially accepted into a Communications Degree at Griffith University, it was the allure of a Hollywood film history subject there

that ignited her passion for the world of media and storytelling. 'From this point, I was hooked and I knew this was the world I wanted to be a part of.'

A transfer to the Griffith Film School followed, where hands-on experience allowed her to explore various crew roles. It was in producing that she found her niche, combining her organisational skills with a genuine desire to support the creative vision of writers and directors.

'I found that producing was something I was naturally drawn to. It drew on my organisational skills and my tendency to want to look after, and look out for, the members of the cast and crew, whilst also giving me an opportunity to help writers and directors achieve their vision.'

Post-graduation in 2013, Rhiannon embraced a diverse career path, initially working in hospitality while contributing to independent low-budget projects. This multifaceted approach, including producing an LGBTQI+ web series, opened doors in the competitive industry. A pivotal moment came when she transitioned from live-action to animation, eventually landing the role of Production Manager for series three of the BBC Studios/ABC hit, *Bluey*.

'My mantra throughout my time in the film and television industry is to always lead with kindness and to never burn bridges because you never know where or when your next opportunity might come from. When we're not in production on *Bluey*, I work at Ludo

Studio as the Assistant Producer for *Bluey* commercial products (all the fun toys and merch!) and help set up and see through production on any animated projects we have coming through the Studio, working with both domestic and global partners such as BBC Studios and Nickelodeon.'

The rise - and meteoric rise - of *Bluey* hasn't surprised Rhiannon. Witnessing the show's early episodes, she already recognised its potential to resonate not only with Australian families but also with global audiences.

'The authenticity of *Bluey*'s storytelling, rooted in genuine experiences, has proven to be a universal language that transcends borders.

'To be honest, I'm not surprised it is so successful and resonates with so many age groups. Before I worked on *Bluey*, I was invited to the studio for a sneak peak of one of the first episodes and I knew as soon as I watched it that it was going to blow up. I thought people, especially Aussie families, will adore this show as it's so reflective of what life growing up is like for us.

'But perhaps what I'm most surprised about is how the show has translated so well in other countries. I think because we really stick to our authentic Aussie roots, audiences appreciate and are receptive to that.'

And as far as her own success is concerned, Rhiannon credits part of that to her time at Fairholme; the lived experience of wearing the tartan, and the support, guidance, encouragement and mentorship of her teachers.

Reflecting on her time at Fairholme, Rhiannon acknowledges the influence of her education. Although film and media subjects weren't prevalent during her school days, the practical skills and lessons learned, particularly in History and English, laid the foundation for her future career. Debating, in particular, played a role in developing the communication and diplomatic skills crucial in her current role.

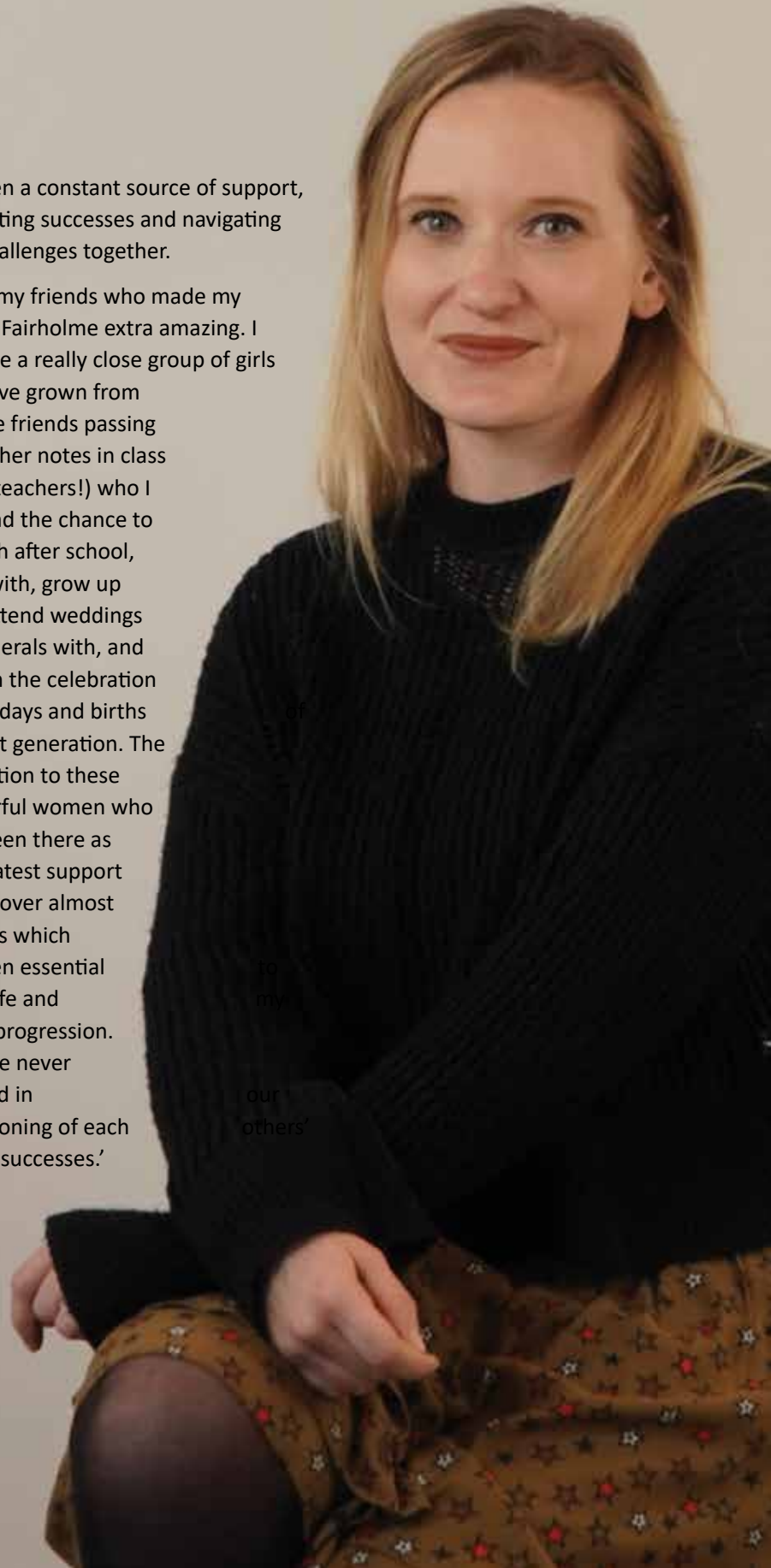
'I had a really great experience at Fairholme. I consider myself so lucky - I know high school isn't easy for everyone,' she said. 'I think the teacher and their guidance and support is essential to being passionate about a particular subject or area. I definitely don't think I would have considered a career in film and TV possible without encouragement from certain staff members that really made me feel like I could be capable of anything I set my mind to.'

'Mrs Anderson and Mr Davis from the English department, Mrs Hughes, my Modern History teacher, and Mr Turner (who taught us Geography and History in Year 8, and then had to put up with two years of me barely paying attention in Senior Chemistry - sorry, science just wasn't my jam!) really remain fond in my memory because of the way they inspired and supported not only me, but my fellow classmates.'

Maintaining connections forged during her school days remains significant for Rhiannon. Her close-knit group of friends, built over almost two decades,

has been a constant source of support, celebrating successes and navigating life's challenges together.

'It was my friends who made my time at Fairholme extra amazing. I still have a really close group of girls who have grown from teenage friends passing each other notes in class (sorry, teachers!) who I have had the chance to live with after school, travel with, grow up with, attend weddings and funerals with, and share in the celebration of birthdays and births the next generation. The connection to these wonderful women who have been there as my greatest support system over almost 20 years which has been essential to my life and career progression. We have never wavered in championing of each others' successes.'



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TALES OF MEXICO

Navigating a Foreign Land

Alexandra Hindle | 2008
Cameron House | Boarder

'In the outskirts of the ranch, a grim truth prevailed – a lifeless figure surfaced every week, callously abandoned. Whether it was an unfortunate soul, violated and forsaken, lying bare, or a morbid discovery concealed within a garbage bag, that was the reality of living in Mexico.'

From the Western-Queensland town of Charleville to the shadowy realms of Mexico, Alexandra Hindle, a resilient Fairholme Old Girl (2008), shared her narrative steeped in endurance and tenacity to a captivated crowd at the Fairholme Parents and Friends luncheon.

Alexandra's childhood was marked by simplicity and connection with nature. She ran barefoot through the red dirt, embracing the freedom of rural life.

'The idea of wearing shoes didn't even cross my mind until I was about 12 years old,' Alexandra said.

Her days were filled with lessons from her mother through distance education before she stepped into a traditional school setting at St John's in Roma.

Alexandra remembers the outfit on her first day of school... She says her mother attempted to blend country charm with a touch of flair.

'Picture this: a young, shy girl, for the first time in a classroom, and mum decided to dress me in floral bike pants, a polo shirt neatly tucked in, short boots, and high socks!'

Her path eventually led her to Fairholme College, where, as fate would have it, she emerged as the Cameron House Captain.

Continued next page



This role nudged her to step outside her comfort zone, a precursor to the challenges and triumphs that awaited her in the years to come.

Upon completing Year 12, Alexandra pursued her dream of becoming a Veterinaria Surgeon, enrolling at James Cook University.

However, life had a way of surprising her, and her journey took an unexpected turn. In an attempt to discover her feminine side, Alexandra said she signed up with a modelling agency, walked the catwalk, and posed for photo shoots.

‘The extremist that I am, I’d complete a shoot for TV, then I’d go play a game of Rugby. I enjoyed having unique pairings and kept working on that and embracing my differences, which was a big part of my story.’

The dream of becoming a Vet gradually faded as Alexandra pivoted towards a new path. She decided to study a Bachelor of New Media Arts, focusing on digital marketing.

In pursuit of self-discovery and new experiences, Alexandra embarked on a journey that led her to the International Sheryl Lake Congress in France. Little did she know that this trip would change her life forever.

‘We arrived in Paris on my birthday, I met a Mexican....and fell in love.

He carried my bags, opened my door, and pulled my chair out. I’d never experienced anything like this; it was like a new world.’

Within weeks, I was in Mexico over Christmas, meeting his family, and before I knew it, he came to Australia, proposed, and I was moving to Mexico full-time. I like to call this the honeymoon phase of Mexico.’

The allure of the unknown, however, was soon overshadowed by the harsh reality of an abusive relationship.

As she navigated the complexities of a foreign land, Alexandra found herself

entangled in a legal system tainted with corruption, and the prospect of marriage turned sour.

‘People in Mexico get kidnapped for three reasons. One, if they had a contact like my ex-husband, there was a significant risk of being kidnapped for ransom because he was pretty wealthy.

‘Another one is for human trafficking, so exotic-looking girls. The other one is if you’re related to the drug cartels, they’ll take you.

The relationship ended, leaving Alexandra in a state of emotional turmoil. In a twist of fate, she received a horse named Kalimba as a wedding gift from her ex-father-in-law. This Andalusian-Arab cross proved to be a handful – attacking, kicking, and biting those who dared to come close.

‘To outsiders, Kalimba seemed like a reckless choice, but to me he became a source of solace and a form of therapy.’

In Mexico, where traditions often clashed with Alexandra’s beliefs, she found herself in a Cabalgata – a gathering of riders showcasing their horses.

Witnessing the cruelty inflicted upon these magnificent creatures, particularly a stallion being mercilessly whipped, Alexandra felt a calling to make a difference.

Determined to challenge the status quo, she embarked on a journey to train Kalimba in Liberty, riding him without a bridle or saddle.

This unconventional approach became her way of breaking free from the norms that constrained women and horses alike.

‘The decision to confront the macho culture later defined me as the “crazy Australian,” the “witch,” and, most endearingly, “Wonder Woman”.’

Her shows and clinics gained recognition, but fame in Mexico

came with its own set of challenges. The danger of kidnapping loomed over her, and the more prominent she became, the greater became the threat. Despite the risks, Alexandra continued to push boundaries, driven by a vision to change the horse culture in Mexico and challenge societal norms.

‘I earned about \$100 a week and paid \$100 for rent every month, so I made little money.

‘Mum and Dad thought I was mad. But I was doing this all with a vision in mind that I could influence the horse culture in Mexico, change the way people looked at women in the horse industry, and also help the ethical training methods of horses in Mexico.’

Amid her journey, tragedy struck when her close friend, Ximena, fell victim to the violence prevalent in Mexico.

The loss was a stark reminder of the dangers surrounding Alexandra, prompting her to reconsider her path.

‘During a shootout near where I was living, sitting with a broken whiskey bottle as protection, I was faced with the decision: do I call my parents and say goodbye and tell them that I love them, or do I not worry them? I called my parents, and still to this day, I am sorry to have to put them through that.’

With a heavy heart and a resolve to protect herself, Alexandra returned to Australia. The warmth of Toowoomba welcomed her back, offering a safe haven to rebuild her life.

Establishing Hindle Horsemanship, Alexandra channelled her passion into teaching horse riding, bringing joy and confidence to her students.

Life, however, had more challenges in store. A shed fire devastated her business, wiping out equipment and hay.

Yet, true to her resilient spirit,



Alexandra rose from the ashes, rebuilding her business and continuing to spread her message of empowerment through horsemanship.

'I'm often asked where I get the strength from to keep going, but being a Charleville girl, a country girl, I was born and raised to keep going, one step at a time.' As she stands on the soil of her homeland, Alexandra reflects

on the twists and turns that brought her from the vast plains of Charleville to the vibrant chaos of Mexico and back to the welcoming community of Toowoomba.

The girl who once ran barefoot in the red dirt now stands tall, a testament to the strength that comes from embracing challenges head-on and forging a path uniquely her own.

“

Being a Charleville girl, a country girl, I was born and raised to keep going, one step at a time.



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Palm Drive Lights Up



SCHOOLS can be fortunate. The Fairholme Formal typified good fortune. Weeks of weather forecasts predicting rain and thunderstorms on the evening of Wednesday 29 March made planning for a school-hosted event fraught with nerves.

Somehow, after heavy downpours in the morning, a strong wind blew in during the afternoon and the clouds parted. We enjoyed the best of March weather with a rain-free walk in and parent soiree, for which we are so grateful.

This is the first formal in four years that has not been subject to COVID restrictions or rescheduling because of COVID – what a blessing to have had the opportunity to share this rite-of-passage event without this layer of limitations.

Arrivals included a bevy of assorted cars through to a staff member's Combi van.

As usual, the Seniors' transformation from tartan-clad schoolgirls to graceful and elegant young women was breathtaking – with some girls

almost unrecognisable, it was a fitting entrance for the Senior cohort.

Gowns were long, flowing, simple in design, and diverse in their colours - blue and green were the favoured choices.

Following the long red carpet walk-in, the evening began as it traditionally does, with a function for girls and their partners and parents in the Daisy Culpin courtyard - lit by fairy lights and under clear, starry skies.

The formal part of the evening was celebrated in the beautifully transformed Assembly Hall which included a well-attended photo booth and saw dancing – lots of dancing.

We are grateful to the student Formal Committee, under the guidance of Head of House, Mrs Jody Friend, and Head of Senior School, Mr Tom McCormick, for leading the organisation of this event.

The Fairholme community was proud to share this special social milestone with its impressive seniors of 2023. We are fortunate.

Continued next page





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FROM A NEW OLD GIRL

A Tapestry Of Memories

Amelia Webster | 2023 | Black House | Boarder



FROM the first day, marked by a flurry of photos captured by Amelia Webster's mother, Lisa, to the warm welcome extended by her 'Big Sister', Emma Scanlon, the initial impression of Fairholme from the Kilcoy Boarder was nothing short of amazing.

'I remember my mum took so many photos on the first day; before we left home, when we arrived in the Boarding House car park, one by myself in my room, and one with my first roommates (Bridget Rea and Jo Cox),' Amelia recounted.

The Boarding House became a second home for Amelia, and within her first few days, bonds were formed and memories made.

'I will miss chatting to everyone in the hallways, particularly in the Boarding House,' she said, highlighting the strong sense of camaraderie that permeates our Holme.

The tight-knit Boarding community provided opportunities for friendships that might not have blossomed otherwise, and conversations over dinner that revealed a tapestry of backgrounds, enriching her perspective



through the diversity of her peers.

'My highlights as a Boarder have been getting to know people I never would have if our rooms weren't a few doors away from each other, and also learning all sorts of things from everyone's different backgrounds just by talking at dinner.'

As a Boarder Prefect, Amelia said her mission was clear: to spread positivity

and encouragement throughout the Fairholme community.

'I took great pleasure in witnessing the younger Boarders dive into activities, especially during the cherished movie and popcorn nights in the Homestead.'

Among the many inspirational figures at Fairholme, Amelia expressed deep admiration for Dr Evans's dedication to understanding and supporting each student individually, a quality that she said would resonate with her for many years.

'I have loved learning from her excellent leadership over the past six years. She takes the time to understand and learn about each and every student at Fairholme and has encouraged me to do the same.'

Looking ahead, Amelia is set to embark on a new chapter at St John's College, at the University of Queensland in Brisbane.

Although her academic path has seen its fair share of contemplation, she said, the influence of Fairholme's Communications team has steered her towards pursuing a Bachelor of Communications at QUT.

Capturing The Countryside Through Art

Fairholme Open Art Prize 2023

FAIRHOLME art student, Kadence Wilson, fulfilled a lifelong goal as she exhibited her photography for the first time in the Fairholme Open Art Prize – FACETS.

Overwhelmed with excitement, Kadence couldn't contain her enthusiasm and immediately called her mother.

'Mum had just returned from an exhausting journey home, but I couldn't wait to tell her,' Kadence said.

Kadence's exhibition showcased a collection of recent works, all centred around the theme of travel. Each piece represented a different aspect of her journey from her hometown of McKinlay, 1778km away from where she boards in Toowoomba.

One particular photograph (pictured) caught the essence of her adventure.

Kadence says her father was eager to reach their destination, with the ominous signs of a storm on the horizon.

'I was driving on my Learner's Permit, and I could see just how beautiful the sky looked and I had pull over to get a photo of it, despite dad's urgency.

'It also captures the sight of green grass, which was such a rarity over the past six years.'

Growing up, Kadence was surrounded by the creative influence of her crafty mother who engaged in activities like scrapbooking, especially during months of dry weather.

'Immersed in an artistic environment, I developed a deep passion for the land and I aimed to showcase it through the medium of photography.'



For Kadence, receiving the coveted red dot, symbolising a sold artwork, was not the ultimate goal. Instead, she says it was about taking the courageous step of exhibiting her work.

'The experience has taught me invaluable lessons and provided a platform for growth and learning.'





AUSTRALIAN REPRESENTATIVE

From Rookie To Hockeyroo

Tatum Stewart | 2019 | Cameron House | Day Girl

TATUM Stewart, a proud Fairholme Old Girl, has achieved a remarkable milestone in her young career.

At just 21 years old, she earned a spot in the Hockeyroos 2023 squad, fulfilling a dream she says she's held since her Senior year at Fairholme in 2019.

'I feel very honoured to be able to say that I've achieved my dream goal and that I've reached something that a lot of athletes don't get to achieve in their sport,' Tatum said.

Balancing her sport, whilst studying a Bachelor of Health Sport and Physical Education, Tatum's passion for her degree shines through. Her approach to both hockey and academics reflects her 'best effort or nothing' mentality, a trait that has propelled her forward in all aspects of life.

'I've always been a very self-driven person. For me, it's best effort or nothing. And I'm like that with everything. I was like that at school with my studies as well, which is just how I am, it comes naturally for me.'

Tatum's success hasn't come without its challenges. She navigated a significant injury on the eve of the Australian Hockeyroos selection camp, a test of patience and resilience, as she was forced to watch from the sidelines.

'The Australian coaching staff decided that they'd still take me to the camp because there was a lot of valuable sessions around game day psychology, tactical game plans, and team culture.'



While I sat on the sidelines for all the trainings and games, I did my best to get what I could out of those sessions by taking my notebook and writing notes on what was going on and trying to link it to what we were learning.'

On the day of the selection announcement, Tatum says navigating the public transport system in Sydney was the perfect distraction.

'We were given the day off from training camp so everyone could take the time to process the news, good or bad. And one of my younger friends and I decided to go to Bondi because neither of us had been there before.

'But when the notification popped up and I saw my name on the list, the first thing I wanted to do was share it with my family and that's what I did. Unfortunately, both my parents don't have Apple phones, so I wasn't able to Facetime them and see their reaction, but it was the first time I'd ever heard my dad cry. They've always just wanted my brother and I to be happy. It was a special moment I'll never forget.'

Tatum's journey began with her brother's interest in the sport, a twist of fate that led her to discover her own passion for hockey.

'We went to the 2006 Commonwealth Games in Melbourne and somehow ended up at some hockey games.

'My brother, who's two years older than me, decided that he wanted to play the game with the stick and the ball, and because we lived in Millmerran at the time it was a two-hour round trip for trainings, so naturally, I had to play the game as well.

'I didn't love it immediately, but I had to stick it out and thank goodness I did because I ended up loving it more than I could have ever

imagined.'

Tatum says Fairholme played a pivotal role in her development, fostering a culture of support and excellence in sports. From her early days, the College encouraged her athletic pursuits and provided a platform for success.

Memories of victories in Queensland All Schools and Darling Downs All Schools Competitions highlight her outstanding achievements.

'We won the Darling Downs All Schools Competition three years in a row. We were very dominant, but I still remember the passion and dedication that our coach Mr Goodsell shared with us.'

Fairholme's emphasis on role models, including visits from Olympic athletes, left a lasting impression on Tatum. These experiences fuelled her ambition not only to reach the highest levels of sport but also to inspire future generations.

'I remember on my first day at Fairholme someone brought up in a speech about Cathy Freeman being a Fairholme Old Girl and I thought, 'Yes! Awesome, I love this place already.'

Then, in 2017, some of the girls who were a part of the Rugby Sevens Olympic team came and spoke at the Assembly.

'Having that extensive role-model base at Fairholme for sporting success beyond school was really important for students like me sitting in the audience and thinking, I can actually do this too.'

Now, Tatum's sights are firmly set on the Olympic team. Whether or not she secures a spot, her dedication and contributions have already made a significant impact. Her journey is a testament to the power of determination, and her story will undoubtedly continue to inspire young athletes, both at Fairholme and beyond.



“

I feel very honoured to be able to say that I've achieved my dream goal...



EVENTS 2023

Mothers' Long Lunch



P&F Lunch



Mothers' Long Lunch



Mothers' Long Lunch



P&F Lunch



Spring Fair



Fathers' Dinner



Spring Fair



Spring Fair



Spring Fair



Facets



Facets



Facets



EVENTS 2023

Fairholme Fashion Week



Principal's Welcome



Fathers' Dinner



P&F Lunch



Fathers' Dinner



Mothers' Long Lunch



P&F Lunch



Mothers' Long Lunch



Spring Fair



Spring Fair



P&F Lunch



Mothers' Long Lunch



Mothers' Long Lunch

CHANNELING COURAGE

The Disappointment To The Determination

Kate Gurney | 1999 | Powell House | Day Girl



Photo courtesy of RACQ

IN the world of open-water swimming, the English Channel stands as a daunting challenge, a test of grit, courage and resilience.

For Fairholme Old Girl, Kate Gurney, a finance professional with a penchant for adventure, the Channel represented more than just a swim; it was a chance to face the fear of failure head-on. Little did she know that her journey would be a rollercoaster of emotions, from the extreme discomfort at her devastating disappointment to profound pride which became her motivating force.

‘The more daring or challenging your goals are, the more likely you will face disappointment along the way,’ Kate says. ‘It’s not about perfection, or always succeeding. It’s about not giving up – not letting fate or misfortune break you.’

For Kate, a self confessed perfectionist, it was about feeling that disappointment - as uncomfortable as she said it was - and sitting in those feelings, but then taking that and re-framing it into something that was motivating. ‘Afterall, what is unfinished business cannot truly be failure.’

‘In the immediate aftermath of the swim, I felt pretty devastated,’ Kate shares.

‘The disappointment stung, and that was difficult to share with people. I was grateful to be surrounded by support, but at times that also felt like a magnifying glass, and I felt weighed down by the attention.’

The journey began with a consistent build-up over 10 months, involving rigorous training in Queensland’s warm waters. Kate swam five days a week, covering 25km to 40km per week, overcoming obstacles such as shoulder niggles, illnesses, and work deadlines.

The hardest challenge, however, was preparing for the cold water

of the English Channel, an aspect Queensland’s climate didn’t readily offer. Kate’s determination and disciplined approach paid off during her qualifying swim in 16-degree waters, boosting her confidence that the preparation was on track.

But the ‘Dover Coaster’, the waiting game before the actual swim, introduced its own set of challenges. She fluctuated between calm and excitement, avoiding weather predictions and focusing on what she could control.

Choosing the English Channel wasn’t about guaranteeing success for Kate.

‘I chose to attempt the English Channel because it was a goal that was not safe; not a sure thing,’ she admits. ‘It was an adventure and would challenge me to dare greatly. For me, it was about facing the fear of failure.’

During the swim, Kate faced unforeseen challenges, spending four hours adapting to motion sickness and swimming in a diesel slick. The decision to abort the swim was ultimately made by her crew, prioritising her health and safety. ‘I was determined to not get caught up in what I couldn’t control. All you can do is adapt and continue,’ says Kate. ‘I have learnt from those things – I think that’s all you really can do.’

Getting to that English Channel starting line did not happen by accident. Kate had done the training, worked with a dietician, completed the seven-hour qualifying swim in washing-machine conditions in 16-degree water in Melbourne. So when she got to the UK, she felt ready.

‘My body felt good, my head strong and focused, and I had a great support team around me. I was confident that everything that I could control, I had.

‘The main factor I couldn’t control was the weather. High winds had

prevented swims on any other day in my window, but there was one day: one day where we knew it would be blowy to start with but would settle throughout the day and I could have a crack at this swim.’

Alas, it wasn’t meant to be. ‘Four hours. That was all it took for my dream to slip through my fingers. A combination of seasickness and swimming in the diesel slick from the boat caused me to be physically sick almost constantly.

‘I couldn’t keep feeds down, and while I was concerned that would become problematic come the 9- to 12-hour mark, my handlers were more concerned about the sound of my cough, my body not functioning as it should – factors that pointed to a serious, potentially fatal condition of swimming-induced pulmonary edema. It was over.’

“

I chose to attempt the English Channel because it was a goal that was not safe; not a sure thing...

In the hours, days and weeks after the swim, Kate said she felt the sting of disappointment keenly.

‘I questioned my capability, I felt like I had let everyone down. It was only when one of my training mates, a successful Channel swimmer, said to me, ‘Sometimes the universe says, “No, not today,” that I started to work through my pain more productively.’

Kate anchored into her ‘why’ – her reason for attempting the swim.

Continued next page

'I had been fascinated by the English Channel since I was a child watching Australian swimmer, Susie Maroney, lather up and complete a two-way crossing. I thought she was extraordinary.

'And I believe that we are all more capable than we realise; that we can push ourselves to our own version of extraordinary.'

But at the core, her 'why' was to face her fear of failure. 'I was a bit of an all-rounder at school, so I interpreted 'do your best', as 'perform bloody well in everything'.

Kate said she got good grades, played the violin and piano, played rep sports, and in her Senior year, she was a Prefect.

'I went on to uni, got a good job, I got promoted. I challenged myself with triathlons and marathons. I've been blessed with a beautiful family. I achieved a life that I'm so proud of and grateful for.'

However, she says in a lot of ways, she felt like she played it safe. 'I hadn't challenged myself with goals that had a high rate of failure. But attempting the English Channel – that goal was not safe. That goal was an adventure. That goal challenged me to dare greatly!'

And while it didn't turn out exactly the way she had planned, Kate is grateful for the experience, grateful for the memories, grateful for the lessons learned and grateful for her team, many of whom are now friends for life. She says her support system played a crucial role in her journey, turning open water swimming, often seen as a solo sport, into a team effort.

From her coach and trainer to her family and colleagues at work, everyone contributed to her success.

'I believe that life is better lived by choosing the hard challenge, tackling it with grit and good humour,' Kate



remarks.

'This might have been a solo crossing, but open water swimming is a team sport.'

Despite the disappointment in the Channel, Kate is not deterred. She is back into training, eyeing upcoming swims in warmer and more picturesque locations. From a tandem 25km crossing to Rottnest Island to a swim around Great Keppel Island, Kate's adventures continue. 'I have unfinished business in the English Channel,' she declares, highlighting the resilience that defines her journey. As Head of Risk Insurance at RACQ, Kate encourages others not to let the fear of failure stop them from pursuing daring goals.

'I now look at this as the event that has turned me into a lifelong swimmer. I honestly don't know what I would have aimed for next if I had successfully crossed. I just know I don't want to waste my training or this lesson.'

Reflecting on her time at Fairholme, Kate expresses gratitude for the College's influence on her values. The camaraderie, selfless advice, and humor she experienced have become

guiding principles in her life. 'When I think back to my Fairholme time, what I'm truly grateful for are the flashes of the little moments, that were, in hindsight, the big moments.

'The camaraderie of standing arm and arm while we jumped and jived. The selfless advice of a teacher who encouraged me to follow the passion rather than the practical when choosing subjects (even though the practical option would be to promote his class!). The humour of our Maths teacher who giggled in her office for the few minutes that she put a University maths exam in front of us as an April Fools' Day joke. They represent values that I have carried with me.

'I was afforded so many opportunities, and I loved getting involved in everything that the school offered. I was into my sports, music, debating and mooting. I loved getting involved.

'But what I have learnt since leaving school is knowing that it's not about perfection or always succeeding.

'It's about not giving up; not giving in. Not letting fate or misfortune break you. It's about loving life – despite it all.'



Kate Gurney (1999) was the guest speaker at last year's Year 11 Breakfast, an event about leadership and resilience and stepping up. The girls were fortunate to hear the wise words of the Fairholme Old Girl.

She recounted her attempt to swim the English Channel in August, aborted at the four-hour mark due to untenable conditions, but a journey that yielded so much more.

In her possession, is a pebble from the beach in England where this magnificent effort began, and we suspect that this 'recovering perfectionist' will head back to England to retrieve a matching pebble from the beach in France in the not-too-distant future.

Irrespective, we delighted in her story, her bravery, and her resolve. In her words – 'what is unfinished business, cannot yet be deemed a failure'.



MUSICAL 2023

Kick Off Your Sunday Shoes!

TOOWOOMBA audience members left the Empire Theatre, dancing like nobody's watching as *Footloose The Musical* hit the stage.

Students from Toowoomba Grammar School and Fairholme College delivered the production in a theatre partnership that occurs every two years.

Whether working behind the scenes, in the Arts Department, or in the spotlight, students worked tirelessly on the show for more than six months.

Filling the main roles of Ren McCormack and Ariel Moore were Rueben Kruger and Sienna Green, parts originally played by Kevin Bacon and Lori Singer in the 1984 film.

The diversity and talent on display were truly remarkable. In addition to the performers on the stage, some of Fairholme's talented musicians also contributed as part of the *Footloose* band providing exceptional music from the Orchestra Pit, adding depth and rhythm to the entire production.

Head of The Arts, Mrs Karen Hayward, said the students polished their acting skills, refined their choreography, and committed numerous lines and vocal numbers to memory. 'Their collective efforts resulted in an extraordinary and highly-successful, visually captivating musical. We take immense pride in every student involved in this production, and we relished the opportunity to collaborate with girls from Year 7 to 12. The diversity and talent on display were truly remarkable.'







From Athlete To Handbag Designer

Leanne Drysdale | 1991 | Powell House | Day Girl

In the world of fashion, where creativity reigns supreme, one handbag designer has carved a niche by infusing joy and vibrancy into her creations. Fairholme Old Girl, Leanne Drysdale, the creative behind the handbag brand, Liv & Milly, shares her journey from property developer to the colorful realm of handbag design.

‘I have always had a love of creating beautiful new things,’ begins Leanne, reflecting on her early passion for transforming ideas into tangible beauty.

Before venturing into the world of handbags, she immersed herself in property development, where she enjoyed the process of seeing a concept through from an idea to something real and tangible.

‘The development of property follows a similar path to handbag design. Watching the creation of something beautiful from an idea on paper brings me great joy.’

Leanne’s wanderlust led her to spend nearly a decade in the northern hemisphere, until the warmer climes of Queensland beckoned her home. Upon returning to the Sunshine State, she realised the profound impact of sunshine and colour on her mood. It was during this time that Liv & Milly unintentionally came to life. ‘I accidentally started my business as I was looking for a colorful handbag and couldn’t find one,’ she reveals. ‘The creation of a new bag for myself led to many others, and the business organically grew.’

While initially treating her venture as

a hobby, Leanne has shifted her focus in the past 12 months, dedicating herself to growing Liv & Milly. With a committed team by her side, she now supplies over 200 stockists nationwide and internationally. ‘I have recently made my first big export to department stores in the UK.’

Leanne says her athletic background from her time at Fairholme has woven its way into her business life today. The discipline and stamina and tenacity learned from the fields of Fairholme bode well for her future small-business mindset; that, and her bike rides to school in the cold Toowoomba weather! ‘It taught me perseverance, a quality that I think echoes in my approach to business today.’

Playing netball, cricket and athletics and tennis weekly, she fondly reminisces about the days when she did athletics training before school, often barefoot on cold winter mornings. ‘I would borrow Kylie Schramm’s spikes when she wasn’t high jumping. Then Cathy Freeman would show up and blitz us all!’

The friendships forged during her time at Fairholme, particularly with Vanessa Turner, Kylie Malmstrom, and Helene Williams, remain a cherished aspect of her life. ‘Perhaps the most important experience I had at Fairholme was the wonderful friendships I formed. My two best friends today are from Fairholme... 32 years later.’

Reflecting on her Fairholme experience, Leanne recalls the infectious enthusiasm of Mrs Schmidt, her English teacher, and the fashion-forward Mrs Sulewski, both of whom

left lasting impressions. The ‘Where did you go to school?’ question continues to bring together Fairholme alumnae, creating connections to this day.

‘I recently met with a new, out-of-town stockist, who came to my office in Brisbane to look at the range. I discovered she, too, was an old Fairholme girl (Wendy Bassingthwaite). The lady who leases the space next to our office is also a Fairholme Old Girl. The MacLaren tartan connection ranges far and wide and long.’

For Leanne, the joy lies in reflecting on each collection, from the initial blank piece of paper to the vibrant designs that come to life. The rewards, she says, come from building an empowered team of women who support each other in work and life.

‘Choosing awesome people to work with and creating an empowered team of women. All supporting each other at work and in life,’ she says. ‘There is zero pressure to come to work if you can’t make it. Everyone comes to work because they love to be there.’

The challenges, she admits, include learning to delegate and overcoming the overprotective instinct. Yet, the innovative spirit that excites Leanne shines through in collaborations with local artists, successfully integrating their artwork into Liv & Milly’s designs.

‘Colour is joy!’ Leanne exclaims, emphasising Liv & Milly’s mission to bring fun and empowerment to those who carry her bags. ‘May you feel empowered to smile a little wider, stand a little taller, and apply a brighter lipstick.’

FAIRHOLME OLD GIRLS' ASSOCIATION

From One Old Girl To Another

PRESIDENT Sarah-Jane MacDonald | 2009 | Powell House | Day Girl

VICE-PRESIDENT Caitlin Crowley | 2006 | Powell House | Boarder



SINCE 1921, the Fairholme Old Girls' Association (FOGA) has maintained a rich tradition of connecting past students of Fairholme College with each other while creating new connections with present girls.

The Association is dedicated to helping our girls build a network with other alumnae.

Our growing membership - more than 11,000 Old Girls - allows girls to reconnect with classmates, further career networks and engage with other alumnae who share the Fairholme history.

FOGA Vice-President, Journalist, Caitlin Crowley, sat down with FOGA President, Lawyer, Sarah-Jane MacDonald, to talk about the MacLaren tartan connection...

Caitlin Crowley: What have you most enjoyed about reconnecting with Fairholme?

Sarah-Jane MacDonald: The Final Assembly last year was the first I'd been to since graduating and it was a heartwarming experience. Dr Evans gave an address and what stood out to me was that she did not emphasise accolades or academic achievements. Instead, she spoke about the personalities of the graduating class, their likes and dislikes and the little moments that made them a memorable year.

It reminded me of the things I value about my Fairholme experience now, looking back. It was the fact that we were treated as individuals and valued for more than just a 1st prize or an

isteddfod win. This allowed me to reflect on who I am today and how I came to be this person.

A big reason is because of Fairholme and the safe environment that allowed me to make mistakes, learn from them and develop into the person I am today.

I am honoured to be in a position where I get to meet current students and other past students and reflect on their time at Fairholme.

CC: As President, what is your vision for the Fairholme Old Girls' Association?

SJ: I hope to foster a vibrant and supportive community.

I aim to establish a platform that empowers our alumnae to connect, collaborate, and contribute their diverse expertise to current and past students. I believe that by nurturing strong bonds and celebrating the achievements of our alumnae, we will build a network of amazing resources and foster lifelong connections.

Fairholme is the bond that brings us together.

CC: How would you like to see FOGA evolve to meet the needs of future Old Girls, as well as those who may have graduated decades ago?

SJ: I envision FOGA evolving into a dynamic network that embraces the changing times while staying grounded in our shared history. By harnessing digital platforms and hosting a range of events (styles, types, locations), we can engage recent graduates as well

as those who have been part of the Fairholme family for decades.

I would love to see mentorship programs, skill-sharing workshops, networking opportunities, casual catch-ups, mums and bubs events and opportunities for meaningful contributions to the school's growth.

The Fairholme Old Girls' Association serves as a bridge between the past and the future.

CC: Do you think there's scope for FOGA to play a more active role in supporting current students, particularly Seniors navigating career decisions?

SJ: Absolutely. Old Girls have a wealth of experiences and knowledge. When we all left school, we each took a completely different path, at differing times and with different opportunities available to us.

Sharing this knowledge with current students offers an

invaluable opportunity for them to create connections and learn from alumnae who may have taken a path of interest for the student.

Through life, I believe we are defined by our connections and experiences. FOGA represents the connection that every person who went to Fairholme has. The appearance of Fairholme may have changed over the years, but its heart hasn't.

Every Old Girl I speak to shares different memories, but they all have the same core: inclusivity, opportunity, values.

I want FOGA to be where we can bring those connections together, build on them and remain engaged in a more holistic and direct way.

I am excited to see where Fairholme is taking this generation of girls. It is an exciting time to be a Fairholme girl – maybe it always has been.

After all, once a Fairholme girl, always a Fairholme girl.



Fairholme Old Girls' Association 2023

President Sarah Jane Macdonald

Vice Presidents Rebecca Vonhoff and Caitlin Crowley

Secretary Georgia Soutar

Treasurer Naomi Aird

Patroness Marie Cameron

It's about connecting our past with the present and engaging old girls and new in a vibrant space. We are so grateful to the committee for their work, commitment and dedication in safeguarding the history and relevance of FOGA. I am looking forward to continuing to strengthen the bonds of Fairholme Old Girls.

- Sarah Jane MacDonald

Stay connected with Old Girls' Association. Update your details by scanning the QR code, or visit the Fairholme website
W fairholme.qld.edu.au
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WHERE ARE THEY NOW

Fairholme Old Girls In The News



Georgina Pola | 2013

During Fairholme Fashion Week in October, the College welcomed Holme Georgina Pola as the special guest at the Fairholme Fashion Week Breakfast. Georgie, who hasn't been back to Fairholme since she graduated 10 years ago, said the warm and wonderful memories of her time at the College came flooding back. 'I loved my time at Fairholme, and I am so happy to be back to share my journey since school.'

Her pathway saw her start a Chemical Engineering degree at QUT before she realised fashion was where her passion lay. Georgie took the leap to the Whitehouse Institute of Design where she graduated top of her class with a Masters in Fashion Design. Georgie is pictured with her mum, Penny Wall (1987), who is also a Fairholme Old Girl.



Liz Wardley | 1997

The world's toughest row, The Talisker Whiskey Atlantic Challenge, is the extreme endurance race Fairholme Old Girl, Liz Wardley, and her team mate, James Ferrell, are about to face head-on this year.

The race will see the duo test themselves against mother nature and row thousands of kilometres across both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

Starting in December, the challenge will take Liz and James more than 4828 kilometres west from La Gomera, Canary Islands, to Nelson's Dockyard, Antigua.

Not long after she graduated from Fairholme, Liz became a skipper in the Sydney to Hobart Race at the age of just 19 years. Now, she is the acknowledged expert on the Volvo Ocean 65, having spent thousands of hours racing and with three wins under her belt. With over 500,000nm logged over most of the world's oceans, Liz says she's up for a new challenge.



Edwina Forest | 2009

Old Girl, Edwina Forest, and her Aje business partner, Adrian Norris, were included in this year's 'Business of Fashion 500' - the definitive index of the people shaping the global fashion industry of today and tomorrow.



Demi Ashurst | 2021

Issy Reed | 2021

Demi Ashurst and Issy Reed were classmates in 2021, and now the Fairholme Old Girls are Australian teammates...

The duo played an integral part in the Under 20s Women's Australian Touch Team this month as they played the Grand Final of the Asian Pacific Youth Touch Cup which was held in Brisbane for the first time.

The Australian team won pretty convincingly in the Grand Final against New Zealand, racking up 12 tries against two.



Tina Kent | 1999

Lady Chatterley's Affair (LCA) founder Tina Kent (1999) knows the importance of Old Girl connections. Whether it's a casual catch-up or a business collaboration, Tina says her Fairholme Old Girl connections have been a key to her success in her gorgeous home decor and fashion business, Lady Chatterley's Affair. 'One of the incredible things I have witnessed since leaving Fairholme is the extensive network of women

from all over Australia, particularly in regional areas of Queensland and New South Wales.

'This large network of Old Girls, my peers as well as older and younger, has proven to be a huge advantage since starting my online shop and interior decorating business 12 years ago.

'A small business starting from scratch needs a community and customers, and Fairholme networks certainly helped build that for Lady Chatterley's Affair.'

Georgina Hopson | 2007

A career on the stage can be a tough gig, but for Fairholme Old Girl, Georgina Hopson, the theatre is constantly calling. Since graduating from Fairholme in 2007, and then from Griffith University with a Bachelor of Music Theatre, Georgina has consistently starred on the stage alongside such illustrious actors as Anthony Warlow, acting opposite him in *The Secret Garden*, and then under the direction of Dame Julie Andrews in *My Fair Lady*. Georgina is currently starring in Kate Miller-Heidke's clever, quirky musical, *Bananaland*, showing at the Queensland Performing Arts Centre as part of the Brisbane Festival. 'The encouragement of Performing Arts at Fairholme is what sparked my love of it... I did every orchestra, every choir, all the musicals. It was just so nice to have somewhere to funnel all that creative energy.'



For the first time in its over 100-year history, Fairholme College can boast five generations of girls to wear the MacLaren tartan. Ruby and Eva Newell are the fifth generation to walk Palm Drive, a proud tradition that began with their great-great-grandmother, Beryl Powell (formerly Kemp, nee Wonderley), who attended Spreydon in 1914. Beryl's two older sisters, Marjorie and May, also attended Spreydon. The sisters were of the Wonderley family, from the well-known local firm, Wonderley and Hall Solicitors, in Toowoomba. Beryl married James Kemp in 1925 and had one child, a daughter, who attended Fairholme. James died in 1946 and Beryl remarried in 1950 - to Ray Powell, of Powell House. Beryl and James' daughter, Margaret Webster (Kemp 1938), attended Fairholme Prep School. Generations to follow are Julie Cornes (Webster 1969), Natalie Newell (Cornes 1993) and this year, Ruby (Year 12) and Eva Newell (Year 8).



Tahnee Hooper | 2007

Fairholme Old Girl, Tahnee Hooper (Weribone, 2007), is TAFE Queensland's Toowoomba Indigenous Student of the Year.

The Diploma of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health graduate received the special award in front of her family and friends at a TAFE Queensland Darling Downs and South West Graduation Ceremony for the class of 2022.

As the Professional Lead on her team, Tahnee is leading the delivery of holistic, whole-of-life care programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Toowoomba and the wider Darling Downs region.

'I want to make a difference in people's lives and to help our mob and communities achieve better health outcomes,' Tahnee said.

'The power of positivity in your life can help you achieve anything you put your mind to.'



Rebecca Vonhoff | 2000

Congratulations Fairholme Old Girl and FOGA Vice-President, Councillor Rebecca Vonhoff, who was elected the Deputy Mayor of Toowoomba Regional Council earlier this year.

‘The 12 years I was at Fairholme gave me a heart for where we live and a head for fixing problems and planning ahead,’ Rebecca said. ‘I want Council to humbly serve our community and be a place that says “How can we help?” when residents come with problems. My priorities haven’t changed: water security, tapping into our potential to grow, reducing our fire risk, making Toowoomba Region the best place for my family and every single resident to live - the standout in regional Australia.’



Catherine Wright | 2013

Catherine Wright (née Bartelen) married Christopher Wright in August last year in a ceremony at Gabbinbar Homestead in Toowoomba. Catie had her best friend Chloe Burey, sister Olivia Bartelen (2016) and best friend from Fairholme, Alice Cameron (2013), as bridesmaids while many FOGA friends witnessed the celebration.



Sophie Johnson | 2018

Western Australia rural reporter for the ABC, Sophie Johnson, said she owed a lot of her career to the teachers who inspired her at Fairholme. ‘At school I was encouraged to do what I loved and embrace my passions – performance and English. Broadcasting is the perfect blend of both. I am more of a creative than an academic, but Fairholme always built me up, and provided me with the confidence to pursue my dreams. I owe a lot to the educators who inspired me daily to strive for more and be true to myself.’



Amy Jahnsen | 2008

For Amy Jahnsen, it’s been a big few years. Her first child, Nate Corey, was born in 2021, she married her husband, Blake, at their family property at Pinehurst Emmaville in 2022 and this year she welcomed their family’s latest addition, Lane Clark.

Georgia Hayward | 2016

General Manager of Outer Space, Brisbane, and Fairholme Old Girl, Georgia Hayward featured as one of our guest panellists at the Facets Breakfast in May. Guests enjoyed insights into Georgia’s artistic processes, practices, love of art and her incredible creative journey since finishing at Fairholme in 2016.



Class of 1963

Margaret Hart (Slaughter), Jan Bimrose (Spencer), Marie Flegler (Batzloff), Narelle Carr (Deitz) and Margie Moore caught up over lunch in Toowoomba in October. ‘We had lots of laughs and thoroughly enjoyed ourselves,’ Margaret said. ‘It was particularly good to have Narelle Carr (Deitz) with us as she has been living in Canada for many years. It coincided nicely with her trip back to see her family here!’

REUNIONS 2023



Class of 1993

The Class of 1993 unravelled memories of their Fairholme days and remembered their time in the MacLaren tartan with stories that never seem to fade. The girls, who caught up at The Rock during the Spring Fair weekend, enjoyed each other's company, catching up with old friends and reuniting with new ones.



Class of 1983

The girls from the Class of 1983 reunited for a timeless blend of laughter, memories and friendship over dinner in October. Four decades may have passed, but organiser Naomi Hosking (Lowe) said the bonds the girls forged remained unbreakable. 'We have such an enduring connection, and always enjoy catching up at our reunions.'



Class of 1963

Six Fairholme friends, who graduated in 1963, first reconnected at their 40 Year reunion in 2003 and since then the girls have met regularly for a weekend together where they 'eat, drink and reminisce about our teenage years and our time at Fairholme'. Pictured at their mini-reunion this year at the Redcliffe Pier are Sandra Carson (Smith), Mary McBaron (Anderson), Wendy Button (Wilson), Sue Brown (Wild), Raylene Harris (Hurse) and Joan Brazier (Harvey).





Class of 2003

The Seniors of 2003 made a weekend of their 20 Year Reunion, starting off with a catch-up at the Spring Fair where they reconnected with Sr Heather Harrison (Head Girl 1958, and in later years, Nurse in the Health Centre), followed by a Boarding House Tour and an evening soiree in town.

Spring Fair 2023

The Spring Fair, held every year on the second Saturday in October, is a great weekend for catch-ups between Old Girls, and a popular weekend for hosting their reunions. This year, there were plenty of Old Girls who visited the College to wander the grounds, connect with old friends, tour the school and reminisce about their time in the tartan. The Spring Fair in 2024 will be held on Saturday, 19 October from 10am to 3pm.





Old Girls' Connection

'Opportunities will come from lots of different places, you don't know exactly when or where they'll come from, but say yes more than you say no.' - Sarah-Jane MacDonald, President, Fairholme Old Girls' Association.

Dinner with the Borders, a Founders' Day Luncheon, Career Day, Year 11 Engagement Day and Facets were just some of the opportunities our students had to connect and engage with our Old Girls.

Thank you to our Fairholme Old Girls for taking the time to provide experiences like these for our current students and sharing your histories and memories.





RAP PLAN

See Culture, Learn Culture Share Culture

FROM HEAD OF SENIOR SCHOOL Tom McCormick

Today, with virtually no aspect of the educational enterprise left untouched by the reform of government and private sectors, the need for Strategic Management is of growing importance for schools. This allows schools to respond to external variables and the ever-changing political and social landscape involved in educating young people. Schools have become obsessed with strategic management and, with it, a systematic drive to change the direction of operation by reflecting on internal factors while acknowledging the external landscape of society. However, within all of the policies, procedures, business development and operations associated with strategic management, schools must be reminded to reflect on the core three aspects of a strong school: its culture (its heartbeat), its students and its community partnerships.

It is these three strands that I keep front of mind with any new project, initiative, policy, or process at Fairholme, the most recent being the work we as a College are doing regarding reconciliation efforts.

Before coming to Australia, I would have classed myself as a specialist in certain aspects of European and South-East Asian History; however, my Australian history

knowledge was somewhat limited.

I knew that Australia had the oldest living civilisation in the world. Still, other than that, my knowledge of Australian history was confined to a strange mix of Steven Bradbury's heroic Olympic run, Eddie Mabo's legal fight for land rights, the heroics of Gallipoli, and the Ashes series of the 1980s and 1990s. My ignorance has always fuelled my passion for learning more about the beautiful history that shapes Australia today.

Over the past seven years, I have worked hard on building up a solid understanding of Australian history which has included leading Reconciliation efforts at schools where I have led. I now understand the important role educators play in educating young people on 65,000 years of history, from when humans first populated the continental landmasses.

When coming to Fairholme College in 2021 as Head of Senior School, I was very excited to be given the honour of managing the school's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) alongside two fantastic educators and advocates for indigenous rights: Derek Cattle and Sonya Nicol. A Reconciliation Action Plan is a formal statement of commitment to reconciliation.

Any RAP takes between 2-3 years to create and outlines a whole-school approach to driving reconciliation by building relationships, respect and opportunities in the classroom, around the school and within the community. Fairholme College is proud that we have a number of students at the school who identify as Aboriginal, and the RAP is one way to look at ways in which we can collaborate, accelerate and drive reconciliation efforts.

A key tenet of the RAP in any organisation is forming a solid Working Group, and we are lucky at Fairholme to have a very passionate and active Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group consisting of over 30 staff and student members who work hard to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' culture is recognised each day.

This Working Group has worked throughout 2021 and into 2022 and has prompted much listening, learning and reflecting by students and staff at the College.

There are many strands to the Fairholme College RAP, from implementing cultural competency training for teachers to creating a reconciliation garden within the Middle and Senior Schools. Each part is about looking at



ways the culture of Fairholme College can be enhanced through a solid foundation of reconciliation.

One key focus of the Fairholme RAP is Symbols, Spaces and Signs. This branch of the RAP looks at the various opportunities to promote reconciliation efforts around the College through visual representation. These signs and symbols are about education; they also provide comfort to our Aboriginal students and let them know that Fairholme College is a safe space. We acknowledge that these signs and symbols also provide a means of cultural expression and are a vehicle for the transmission of culture.

Furthermore, they chronicle

communication of knowledge of the land, events and beliefs of the Aboriginal people. We have started to ensure more of these signs and symbols are present around Fairholme for these reasons. For example, with a Fairholme Parents and Friends Association (P&F) grant, the Kindy commissioned a local artist, Daniel Blades to do a large mural for an outside wall. At Fairholme, we believe passionately about not confining celebrations to only one week a year, but rather making sure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures are part of our everyday practices. This is why a Reconciliation Action Plan is so important.

By making this commitment, we aim to create a culturally inclusive place of learning, where diversity is acknowledged, and where genuine conversations about reconciliation are ongoing.

The history that has shaped and continues to shape Australia stretches far beyond Steven Bradbury's heroic Olympic run, Eddie Mabo's legal fight for land rights, the heroics of Gallipoli and the Ashes series of the 1980s and 1990s, and I am proud that Fairholme is seeking to understand its place and its responsibility in nurturing and reconciling our histories.

FOUNDERS' DAY 2023

'Years have mellowed the old house, human lives have filled it with memories; the memory of an old, gracious lady still lingers there like the scent of dying roses on an evening wind; it has been filled with fun and frolic and laughter; it has known tears and heartache, too. Love has hallowed it, and sorrow has consecrated it; this beautiful old home on the mountains.'

- Obituary, Margaret Anne Cameron, July 1918

'We are all beneficiaries of her vision and generosity and through her we are connected with one another. We are Fairholme and you are Fairholme.'

At our special Founders' Day Assembly, Dr Evans spoke of Mrs Margaret Cameron, 'a strong woman who during World War I, decided that this place should become a school for girls.'

Fairholme College Old Girl Prefect for Boarding 2012, Megan Armstrong, also spoke of the connections she has made through Fairholme and the strong bond she had formed with her 'Fairholme sisters'.

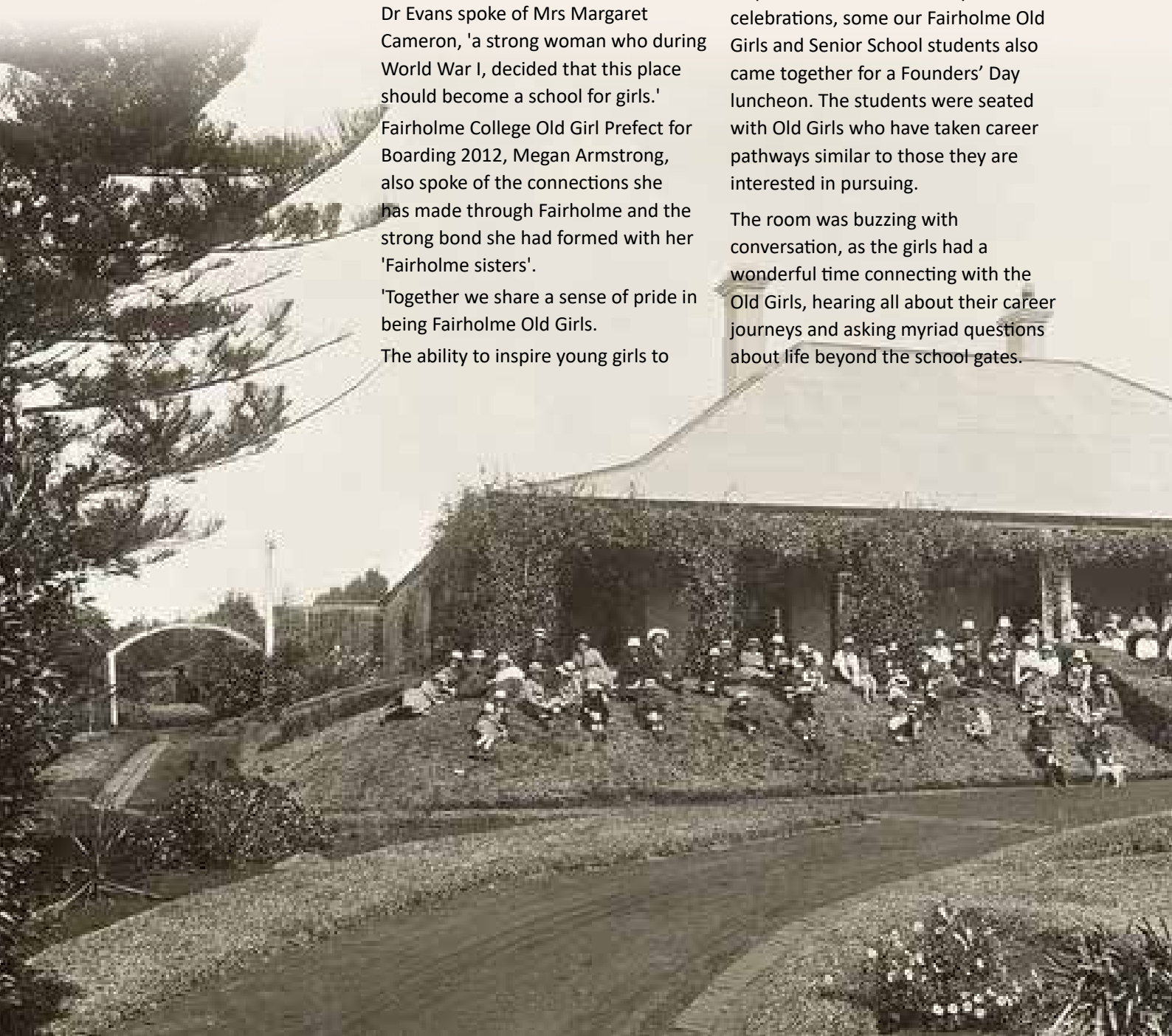
'Together we share a sense of pride in being Fairholme Old Girls.

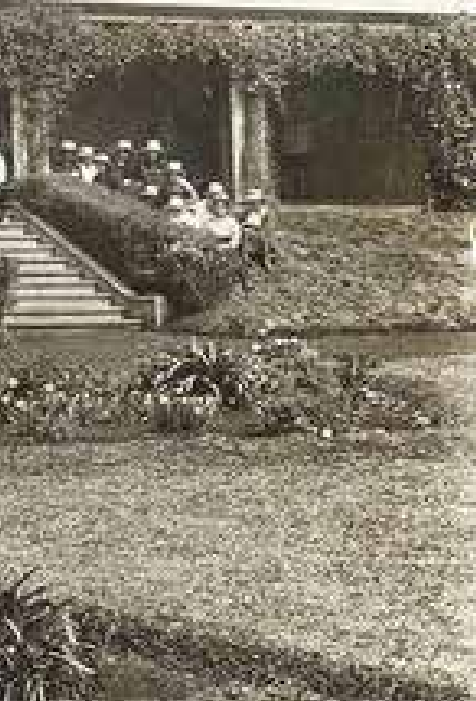
The ability to inspire young girls to

chase their dreams and the ability to create lasting friendships and a sense of belonging to me is what family means.'

As part of our Founders' Day celebrations, some our Fairholme Old Girls and Senior School students also came together for a Founders' Day luncheon. The students were seated with Old Girls who have taken career pathways similar to those they are interested in pursuing.

The room was buzzing with conversation, as the girls had a wonderful time connecting with the Old Girls, hearing all about their career journeys and asking myriad questions about life beyond the school gates.







CONDOLENCES

Avis Arndt (Smith) 1953 only

Valerie Basingthwaighte (Smith)
1952-1953

Kirsten Bray (Schepelern) 1948-1949

Gwen Campbell-Stewart (Warner)
1950-1951

Lola Cooper (Tyson) 1941-1942

Marion Dale (Gray) 1960 only

Diana Douglas (Morton) 1947-1957

Doreen Douglas (McCulloch) 1945
only

Elsie Edgar (Alexander) 1945-1947

Betty Everett (Gilmour) 1944-1945

Mary Feez (Cox) 1934 only

Heather Garsden 1951-1953

Annabell Gordon (Taylor) 1950-1951

Norma Hannant (Vidler) 1949 only

Nancy Hardy (Barnett) 1947-1948

Beth Hart (Cooper) 1946-1947

Pamela Hobden (Rogers) 1953-1956

Meryl Hooper (Treasure) 1938-1939

June Hoopert (Bogg) 1948-1950

Mildred Horne (Skerman) 1946-1947

Robyn Kane (Brown) 1972-1973

Margaret (Peggy) Mohr (Corner)

1939-1947

Joan O'Sullivan (Sumner) 1942-1946

Julanne Parlour (Munro) 1930-1943

Donella Pesch (Proctor) 1949-1950

Doreen Platz (Reid) 1945-1946

Joan Potts (Cooling) 1941-1942

Esther Quartermaine 1944 only

Laurima Rabe (Young) 1943-1945

Joyce Robinson (Winning) 1950-1951

Beverley Sanders (Deeth) 1942 only

Marguerita Slater (Pascoe) 1951-
1952

Joan Smith (Hoffmann) 1943-1944

Wendy Stevens (Brose) 1978-1981

Helen Symes (Hooper) 1940-1948

Carolyn (Carrie) Whebell (Lever)

1970-1974

Roslyn Woodhead (Binnie) 1939-1943

Audrey Woods (Braithwaite) 1955-
1957

Joyce Wright (Wagner) 1943 only

STAFF

Paul Merry 2000s

Jen Perrignon 2013-2019

Antoinette Porter 2014-2020



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