

# lights out

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## IN THIS ISSUE

- 03 Happiness is No Regrets
- 14 50th Anniversary of CHSHA
- 18 Early Findings on the Effects of Boarding School
- 22 Positive Psychology
- 24 The Good Common Room
- 26 New Heads



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## CONTENTS

- 02 Chairman's Report – Boarding School Funding
- 03 Happiness is No Regrets
- 04 Obligation to Report Sexual Abuse
- 06 Bullying is an Expensive Problem
- 07 SA Boarding Schools Unite for Professional Development
- 08 How Do You Eat An Elephant? – A Lesson in Goal Setting
- 10 Developing a Long and Trusting Relationship with Indigenous Students
- 12 Cathedral Survives the Wrath of Cyclone Yasi
- 14 50th Anniversary of CHSHA
- 17 The Bicycle Book
- 18 Early Findings on the Effects of Boarding School
- 20 Westwinster Jubilee
- 21 Scholarest Innovations
- 22 Positive Psychology
- 24 The Good Common Room
- 26 New Heads

### ON THE COVER

Girl boarders at The Cathedral School Townsville after the Cyclone Yasi cleanup.

### CONTACT US

Australian Boarding Schools Association Ltd.  
Po Box 279 Virginia Qld 4014  
P + 61 4 2555 7672  
F + 61 7 3863 2881  
E [absa@boarding.org.au](mailto:absa@boarding.org.au)  
[www.boarding.org.au](http://www.boarding.org.au)

## Boarding School Funding

### AUTHOR

Dr T F Hawkes, Chairman  
Australian Boarding Schools Association

There is a lot of bluster in the current debate on non-government school funding and misinformation is running riot.

By only quoting the funding that comes from the Federal Government, rather than acknowledging that school funding is a product of both Federal and State Governments, the enemies of non-government schools have 40% of Australians believing that the Government gives more money to non-government than state schools. The truth is that the Government gives much less money to non-government schools. It is also being alleged that non-government schools take money away from state schools. This view needs to be challenged. Non-government schools save the Government many hundreds of millions of dollars it would otherwise have to spend to educate these students in state schools.

There have been complaints of limited financial transparency in non-government schools. This is a selective complaint. For those in any doubt, I invite them to try and find out how much the Government spends on each of its selective state schools. There has even been some hysteria about the rising fees on non-government schools without referencing these fee increases to state schools, whose costs, in many cases, have not increased in a dissimilar fashion.

The proportion of children being educated in non-government schools is increasing. Already about 50% of secondary school students in metropolitan areas of Australia are being educated in non-government schools. Are these parents to be pilloried for paying for their children's education? I would suggest not. They are exercising a choice, which, if denied, would gift Government with a monopoly on education it doesn't deserve.

Secondly, a private education is generally not a statement of wealth but of priority. With the advent of low-fee schools, access to non-government schools is being provided to those with quite modest incomes. Thirdly, every child educated in a non-government school saves the government money.

The debate over the funding of non-government schools tends to polarise along ideological grounds. There are those who believe in needs-based funding (the needier the school, the more the funding) and there are those who believe in entitlement-based funding (all are entitled to some share of the education tax dollar).

We need to honour both positions in any funding model. This is not impossible. John Howard's social economic status (SES) model introduced in 2001 achieved this goal before the system became hopelessly compromised by nearly 50% of non-government schools being exempt from the need to abide by its guidelines.

A needs-based funding model, if pursued to its logical conclusion, could see rich families paying more for their children's education irrespective of whether they attend a state school or not. An entitlement-based funding model, if pursued to its logical conclusion, could see the introduction of a voucher system. Both are likely to attract significant opposition. However, I am in favour of fiscal transparency which, if enforced, might lead to an accurate revelation of the amount of monies spent on each and every school, state or private.

Whatever one's pet grumble about funding, any chosen model must respect need and entitlement, must not favour one sector of education over another, and must be annexed to accountability.

In closing, it needs to be recognised that there is virtue in looking at ways of multiplying the educational budget rather than squabbling over its division. It is also important to recognise that increased funding will not necessarily solve all the problems in schools. Many problems are a result of other issues such as poor management, indifferent morale and an inadequate devolution of responsibility to schools.



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# Happiness is no Regrets

AUTHOR  
Dr Bronnie Ware



## Top Five Regrets of the Dying

For many years I worked in palliative care. My patients were those who had gone home to die. Some incredibly special times were shared. I was with them for the last three to twelve weeks of their lives.

People grow a lot when they are faced with their own mortality. I learned never to underestimate someone's capacity for growth. Some changes were phenomenal. Each experienced a variety of emotions, as expected, denial, fear, anger, remorse, more denial and eventually acceptance. Every single patient found their peace before they departed though, every one of them.

When questioned about any regrets they had or anything they would do differently, common themes surfaced again and again.

Here are the most common five:

### 1. I wish I'd had the courage to live a life true to myself, not the life others expected of me -

This was the most common regret of all. When people realise that their life is almost over and look back clearly on it, it is easy to see how many dreams have gone unfulfilled. Most people have had not honored even a half of their dreams and had to die knowing that it was due to choices they had made, or not made. It is very important to try and honor at least some of your dreams along the way. From the moment that you lose your health, it is too late. Health brings a freedom very few realise, until they no longer have it.

### 2. I wish I didn't work so hard -

This came from every male patient that I nursed. They missed their children's youth and their partner's companionship. Women also spoke of this regret. But as most were from an older generation, many of the female patients had not been breadwinners. All of the men I nursed deeply regretted spending so much of their lives on the treadmill of a work existence. By simplifying your lifestyle and making conscious choices along the way, it is possible to not need the income that you think you do. And by creating more space in your life, you become happier and more open to new opportunities, ones more suited to your new lifestyle.

### 3. I wish I'd had the courage to express my feelings -

Many people suppressed their feelings in order to keep peace with others. As a result, they settled for a mediocre existence and

never became who they were truly capable of becoming. Many developed illnesses relating to the bitterness and resentment they carried as a result. We cannot control the reactions of others. However, although people may initially react when you change the way you are by speaking honestly, in the end it raises the relationship to a whole new and healthier level. Either that or it releases the unhealthy relationship from your life. Either way, you win.

### 4. I wish I had stayed in touch with my friends -

Often they would not truly realise the full benefits of old friends until their dying weeks and it was not always possible to track them down. Many had become so caught up in their own lives that they had let golden friendships slip by over the years. There were many deep regrets about not giving friendships the time and effort that they deserved. Everyone misses their friends when they are dying.

It is common for anyone in a busy lifestyle to let friendships slip. But when you are faced with your approaching death, the physical details of life fall away. People do want to get their financial affairs in order if possible. But it is not money or status that holds the true importance for them. They want to get things in order more for the benefit of those they love. Usually though, they are too ill and weary to ever manage this task. It is all comes down to love and relationships in the end. That is all that remains in the final weeks; love and relationships.

### 5. I wish that I had let myself be happier -

This is a surprisingly common one. Many did not realise until the end that happiness is a choice. They had stayed stuck in old patterns and habits. The so-called 'comfort' of familiarity overflowed into their emotions, as well as their physical lives. Fear of change had them pretending to others, and to themselves, that they were content. When deep within, they longed to laugh properly and have silliness in their life again.

When you are on your death bed, what others think of you is a long way from your mind. How wonderful to be able to let go and smile again, long before you are dying.

Life is a choice. It is YOUR life. Choose consciously, choose wisely, choose honestly. Choose happiness!

## *Obligation* to Report Suspected *Sexual Abuse*

AUTHOR  
Andrew Knott, Partner  
Macrossans Lawyers



Boarding House staff have important obligations in relation to the safety and welfare of the students in their care. These arise from a number of sources. The purpose of this article is to indicate a number of such sources in respect of suspected sexual abuse.

Firstly, and most fundamentally, is the general duty of care. The general principle here is to act in the way that a reasonable Boarding House staff member would act in order to protect the interests of students. The critical word is "reasonable".

If staff member becomes aware of, or reasonably suspects, sexual abuse (or other harm), then a duty may be imposed by the general law. If in doubt, it is prudent to report, and of course supervisors are usually available for consultation.

Secondly, most educational employers have detailed directions to their staff members about such reports. Boarding House staff should be familiar with the terms of these instructions (and any amendments or changes) and ensure that they comply with those.

Thirdly, and this is the principal purpose of this article, there has been in Queensland for few years a statutorily-imposed obligation to report certain forms of known or reasonably suspected sexual abuse by another employee. The significance of the statutory imposition (see below) is that persons who fail to comply may be charged with an offence.

In relation to non-State schools in Queensland, Section 366 of Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 reads as follows:

- (1) Subsection (2) applies if a staff member of a non-State school (the first person) becomes aware, or reasonably suspects, that a student under 18 years attending the school has been sexually abused by someone else who is an employee of the school.
- (2) The first person must give a written report about the abuse, or suspected abuse, to the school's principal or a director of the school's governing body –
  - (a) immediately; and
  - (b) if a regulation is in force under subsection (3), as provided under the regulation.Maximum penalty – 20 penalty units.

(3) A regulation may prescribe the particulars the report must include.

(4) A non-State school's principal or a director of a non-State school's governing body must immediately give a copy of a report given to the principal or director under subsection (2) to a police officer. Maximum penalty – 20 penalty units.

(5) A person who makes a report under subsection (2), or gives a copy of a report under subsection (4), is not liable, civilly, criminally or under an administrative process, for giving the information contained in the report to someone else.

(6) Without limiting subsection (5) –

- (a) in a proceeding for defamation, the person has a defence of absolute privilege for publishing the information; and
- (b) if the person would otherwise be required to maintain confidentiality about the given information under an Act, oath, rule of law or practice – the person does not contravene the requirement by giving the information.



(7) In this section – director, of a non-State school’s governing body, means –

- (a) if the governing body is a company under the Corporations Act – a person appointed as a director of the governing body; or
- (b) otherwise – a person who is, or is a member of, the executive or management entity, by whatever name called, of the governing body.”

- (d) details of the abuse or suspected abuse;
- (e) any of the following information of which the first person is aware –
  - (i) the student’s age;
  - (ii) the identity of the employee who has abused, or is suspected to have abused, the student;
  - (iii) the identity of anyone else who may have information about the abuse or suspected abuse.”

Section 68 of the Regulation made under the Act sets out the details which are required and it reads as follows:

“68. Report about sexual abuse – Act, ss365(3) and 366(3) of the Act must include the following particulars -

- (a) the name of the person giving the report (the first person);
- (b) the student’s name and sex;
- (c) details of the basis for the first person becoming aware, or reasonably suspecting, that the student has been sexually abused by an employee of the school;

Although the terms of this statutory provision are limited to sexual abuse by someone else who is an employee of the school, that simply means that it is only in respect of such abuse that the charge can be laid. Even if the suspected abuse is by someone else the general duty of care and the employer’s direction are likely to impose obligations.

*The general principle here is to act in the way that a reasonable Boarding House staff member would act in order to protect the interests of students. The critical word is “reasonable”.*



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## Bullying is an Expensive Problem

### AUTHOR

Michael Carr-Gregg, Honorary psychologist,  
Australian Boarding Schools Association

Ben Cox has never had a friend. According to the psychologists who assessed him, it is highly unlikely that he will make any in the future, let alone form any romantic relationships or hold down a job. In what is an extremely bleak psychological forecast, the experts say that at the age of 18, his life has "all but been destroyed", and his adult life will be no better with anxiety and depression his only companions.

In a landmark case, in May 2007, the NSW Supreme Court found that bullying was to blame and in what remains the biggest school bullying damages award in Australian legal history, Mr Cox's legal team estimated the reclusive Hunter Valley teenager will receive about \$1 million, giving him an income for life and superannuation.

The Court found authorities "grossly failed" him when he was in kindergarten and year 1 at Woodberry Public School by failing to protect him from repeated assaults, bullying and harassment by an older, disturbed student. The Court heard that during one attack he was "throttled" and lost consciousness, and in another had a tooth knocked out when the bully tried to make him eat his jumper.

Both Ben, his family and I, have a dream. It goes like this. Julia Gillard sends out a "Dear Principal" letter to every Principal of every school and educational leader of every TAFE and university across Australia explaining their legal obligations to provide students with a safe environment to learn, explaining how to enhance their existing policies, curriculum material and practices in relation to cyberbullying and bullying the letter would provide case studies and illustrate how a school should respond in each case. Ms Gillard allocates \$200 million dollars to roll out an evidence based strategy



for addressing cyberbullying that Victoria has already allocated 10 million dollars to. But when it comes to Australia, sadly it is only a dream. But not in Washington DC. where the US Government has recently escalated its involvement in school bullying, sending out a "Dear Colleague" letters to 15,000 schools and districts and 5,000 colleges and universities explaining their legal obligations to protect students from student-on-student racial and national origin harassment, sexual and gender-based harassment, and disability harassment. The letter provides examples of harassment and illustrates how a school should respond in each case.

In an unprecedented move, the letter puts schools on notice that they have a legal obligation to stop what U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan called "a silent epidemic". In the most egregious cases where institutions and K-12 schools ignore bullying, they could risk a loss of federal dollars, he warned.

The goal is to both help educational institutions build on their bullying prevention programs and to wake up "the schools that have their heads in the sand," said Duncan. "If the federal government has to step in, it means that the problem was ignored for far too long," said Duncan.

Many schools in Australia continues to display what I call the Cleopatra Syndrome (Queen of Denial) when it comes to bullying and cyberbullying, with anaemic policies that pay lip service to the issue while students continue to suffer in silence and parents fume. There are simple strategies that the National Centre Against Bullying has been discussing for years. Think about the policy implementation issue. Ask yourself 6 simple questions:

1. Has your school signed up to the Kandersteg Declaration - Prof Rigby has often stressed the importance of each school having a clearly stated ethos? In Queensland the Education Minister has created his own Declaration and encouraged schools to sign them.

2. Were students involved in the drafting of the cyber/bullying policy - or was it handed down like tablets of stone - policy from the top down never works, especially not for adolescents who have a special sensitivity to control.

3. To what extent is your existing policy backed up by curriculum material, DVDS, books, internet material eg: ACMA cybersmart material.

4. Do you have a clear definition of what bullying is and what it isn't - see the NCAB Bullying Hurts Pamphlet (<http://www.ncab.org.au/bullyinghurts/>).

5. When was your policy document last reviewed; with changes in technology a 6 monthly review is advisable.

6. Has your school got an acceptable use policy that provides students, staff and parents with appropriate guidelines for the use of IT in and outside of the school.

While Victoria and Queensland lead the way, the Federal Government having funded a trial, promptly sat back on its hands and did nothing federally to address this issue. With bullying being a key driver of mental health problems in the young, one wonders how long it will take for Ms Gillard to pick up her pen and open her wallet. Meanwhile Ben Cox and I are still dreaming...



# *South Australian* Boarding Schools **Unite** for Professional Development

## AUTHOR

Marie Wood, Senior Education Adviser  
Catholic Education SA

The advice offered by a parent and a former boarder to staff new to boarding life were amongst the insights gained by participants at a two day workshop held recently in Adelaide.

A mother of two boarders, whose philosophy is 'tough love', begged boarding house staff to look after her most precious possessions while challenging them to give value to her family's massive financial investment.

Another presenter new to boarding supervision spoke of her recent experience as a boarder – her joys, hopes and struggles – and painted an inspiring and practical guide on how supervisors could support those in their care.

For several years now Catholic Education SA (CESA) has been offering Catholic education and Independent school staff an induction program for those new to boarding, focusing on the knowledge and skills required to survive at the beginning stages. This year a partnership between CESA and the SA Division of ABSA changed the program to invite experienced boarding staff to attend sessions on the second

day, "We wanted to take advantage of the high calibre of speakers and the great mix of shared knowledge amongst staff to broaden our members' opportunities" Gary Davison, Chair of SA Division of ABSA said.

While the initial day of the program offered guidance for those new to boarding with topics ranging from dealing with adolescent behaviour to considerations of youth spirituality and values, the second day opened the discussion to issues of professional learning, legalities and support for boarding schools.

Richard Stokes outlined the work of ABSA and in particular the process for completing the Duty of Care program and Marie Wood from CESA spoke of their

organisation's achievements in developing a continuous improvement program to support schools and potentially contributing to the national standards agenda. Group discussions during the session presented by two of CESA's legal counsels provoked many responses with one participant commenting, "The legal section was very interesting; very relevant and an eye opener."

Reflecting on the new direction for the program Marie Wood was enthusiastic about future possibilities in working with ABSA, "Feedback from participants was most positive, they enjoyed the experts' input as well as interaction with each other. It makes sense for us to work together to take advantage of our experience and resources."



## *How do you eat an elephant?*

### A lesson in goal setting

#### AUTHOR

Robyn Brook, Principal, Avalon College

Isn't it fascinating how words of wisdom often come at a time when you least expect them? This week the wisest words I heard came from Sam, the driver who picked me up to take me to the mechanic's garage to collect my car after its regular service. This man, who had worked in various industries and had tried a range of jobs, was now in the twilight of his working days. As we drove from my workplace to his through the streets of Geelong he told me a story of a crisis his grown daughter was facing in her life. While the story itself was entertaining, the true value of what he had to say came in how he responded to his daughter. "After she spent 3 minutes excitedly telling me all about the crisis I asked her two questions – Is it life threatening? How do you eat an elephant?"

What great questions to ask in a time of crisis! The daughter, who had obviously heard these questions many times, quickly replied, "No, it isn't life threatening. You eat an elephant one mouthful at a time."

So, what is the wisdom in this man's approach and what can we learn that is relevant to our boarding houses?

The role of the first question is clear – setting perspective. In times of crisis people react emotionally in a manner which feeds on itself escalating the situation. Emotions such as anxiety and fear run high. During adolescence perceived problems come along often and quickly escalate into major dramas. Asking "Is it life threatening?" is a simple and direct technique for setting perspective. Reivich and Shatte, in their 2002 book titled "The Resilience Factor", point out that learning the skill of putting things



into perspective involves changing beliefs about some future threat. By viewing the future threat with greater accuracy we can reduce our anxiety towards that threat and as a consequence we'll feel more optimistic about our ability to cope with the future.

Reivich and Shatte suggest that the skill of putting things into perspective is a cognitive skill which can be taught both to adults and teenagers. Their approach to doing this is more comprehensive than Sam's quick question of "Is it life threatening?" and gives boarding house staff an effective tool to use with students who are anxious about some future threat. The steps that staff can help student work through are:

1. Identify and write down the worst case outcomes that they are associating with the crisis situation. Catastrophise this list through to a worst possible outcome. For example, for a student the crisis may be that they think they will fail their maths exam in two days. The list of worst case outcomes may start with fail the exam, and then escalate to be yelled at by an angry parent, be grounded for four weeks, have to make changes to subject choices for the following year, not have the right subjects to get into the chosen university course, have to go to a less desirable university or not get into university at all.
2. State the likelihood (in percentages) of each of the scenarios really happening.
3. Write a list of best possible outcomes. In the example already given the student may write something about finding that they know more than they realised and include scenarios such as the exam being easier than expected, pass the exam easily, have happy parents, continue with the class the following year and get into the chosen course at the best university.
4. Identify which scenario is most likely to happen.
5. Plan for what can be done to make this outcome become a reality.

Sam's second question of "How do you eat an elephant?" relates to the need to solve the problem. The answer of "You eat an elephant one mouthful at a time" is true wisdom. It tells us that any major crisis or problem can be solved by breaking it down into manageable pieces. For adolescents who are facing problems in their lives that





## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Robyn Brook is Principal of Avalon College, Australia's only English language school solely dedicated to providing English language and school preparation courses for 10-18 year old international students within a full boarding environment.

Holding a MEd (curriculum design), BEd and BA (psychology, Japanese), Robyn has taught ESL, English and Japanese and been involved in educational management.

In order to deepen her knowledge in the area of student welfare Robyn recently completed a Masters in Applied Positive Psychology through the University of Pennsylvania. She completed a substantial capstone project supervised by Professor Martin Seligman and titled "Positive Psychology in Schools: A Positive Education Model".

seem too large for them to manage the wisdom of taking bite size pieces is very meaningful. Implicit in this idea is the notion of goal setting and goal striving. To reach the outcome of dealing with the crisis at hand students need to be able to identify what has to be achieved and then work backwards to establish the steps that will lead to the successful resolution of the problem.

However, many young people struggle with the process of setting meaningful and achievable goals. They also have difficulties following through with appropriate and sustained action. Boarding house staff, in the role of loco parentis, can have a significant role to play in working with students to increase the likelihood of successful goal setting, action and achievement. A guided goal setting structure has staff members involved with students right from the start. In the initial stages staff talk with students, helping them to unpack the problem or major crisis and putting it into perspective. Staff then assist the student in setting appropriate goals by helping the student to understand their values, priorities and motivations.

The important next stage is to guide students through a process of planning the steps to reach their goals or in the wisdom of my driver, Sam, identifying the mouthfuls. As you can imagine when eating an elephant not everything goes according to plan and so this stage must include identifying potential hurdles that may arise and considering alternative pathways towards the final goal.

Research from the business world has identified the importance of feedback during the goal striving stage (Locke and Latham, 2002). Students who are not accustomed to persevering in the face of difficulties are likely to give up on working towards their goals unless they have someone who they respect and trust to support them. This support may be in the form of reminding the student of alternative pathways and encouraging them to use them, helping them to remain positive about their progress by keeping the difficulties in perspective and using techniques to combat negative thinking which can be destructive and lead to goal failure.

The final stage in guided goal setting involves celebrating goal achievement with the student and preparing them to use what they have learnt through the process, both practically and emotionally, in the future.

Of course, the goal setting process can be usefully applied in many different circumstances and not just when working through a major crisis. Research into goal theory, under the umbrella of positive psychology, provides important information on how we can assist our students to successfully use goal setting. Much can be learnt about what type of goals to set, how high to set them, the best circumstances for goal achievement, and the role of reward and praise.

However, there is unlikely to be a more evocative image to help students remember that achieving big goals involves taking many small steps than asking the question, "How do you eat an elephant?"

## ABOUT AIEF

The Australian Indigenous Education Foundation (AIEF) is a private sector led non-profit organisation focused on empowering Indigenous children in financial need to build a future through quality education and careers. AIEF is a product of strong partnership between the Australian Government and the private sector and has deep and broad support from all layers of the Australian community. AIEF is low cost, high impact, simple and effective and is proven to work.

AIEF has two interconnected and innovative core strategies:

1. the AIEF Scholarship Programme - a \$40 million joint venture supported by the Australian Government, that provides boarding school scholarships for Indigenous children to attend some of the leading schools in the country that provide a high expectations and world-class education to equip students for life in the 21st century; coupled with
2. the AIEF Post-School Pathways Programme to work with our major corporate partners to assist well-educated and job-ready Indigenous school leavers move from school to tertiary study and leading companies for meaningful careers.

AIEF is under the Patronage of some of Australia's most respected civic leaders and is managed and governed by Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals with proven track-records in the private sector.

## YOU CAN CONTACT AIEF AT:

Australian Indigenous  
Education Foundation  
Suite 312 • Level 3 • Edgecliff Centre  
203-233 New South Head Road  
Edgecliff NSW 2027  
Phone: 02 8373 8001  
info@aief.com.au  
www.aief.com.au

# Developing a Long and Trusting Relationship with Indigenous students

## AUTHOR

Andrew Penfold, CEO,  
Australian Indigenous Education

The Chief Executive of the Australian Indigenous Education Foundation (AIEF) Andrew Penfold, delivered a key note address on Indigenous boarding school scholarships at the ABSA Conference 'Point of Difference: Recognising and Embracing Diversity in Our Community' in September 2010. In this edition we explore AIEF's newest initiative – a mentor programme that partners Indigenous boarding school students with an experienced, professional mentor from the Commonwealth Bank of Australia.

AIEF is a non-profit organisation that provides boarding school scholarships and career pathways to empower Indigenous children to build a future through quality education and careers.

AIEF's network of partner and relationship schools include Kincoppal-Rose Bay School, Loreto Normanhurst Sydney, Presbyterian Ladies' College Sydney, Pymble Ladies' College, St Catherine's School Waverley, St Scholastica's College Glebe, St Joseph's College Hunters Hill, St Vincent's College Potts Point and The Armidale School in New South Wales, Clayfield College Brisbane, Marist College Ashgrove, St Augustine's College Cairns, St Joseph's Nudgee College, St Peter's Lutheran College, St Saviour's College Toowoomba, and The Cathedral School Townsville in Queensland. The Indigenous students at these schools come from more than 100 different home communities in metropolitan, regional and remote parts of the country.

In 2009, AIEF introduced the AIEF Post-School Pathways Programme in New South Wales to complement the AIEF Scholarship Programme. Through the Pathways Programme, AIEF works with Indigenous students through age-appropriate activities whilst they are at school to create, identify, coordinate and facilitate future pathways and opportunities so that they have a smooth transition into the workforce or into further study at university or vocational education and training upon completion of Year 12. Activities under Pathways include: workshops; workplace experience visits; and work activities including work experience, part-time employment, holiday jobs and school-based traineeships.

The AIEF Mentor Programme is the cornerstone of the Pathways Programme. It aims to create a structured and trusting relationship which brings a young Indigenous person together with an individual with life and career experience who can share their knowledge and offer guidance, support and encouragement to help the young person make good decisions about their life and career.

The Commonwealth Bank of Australia (CBA) was a founding corporate partner of AIEF. Now, volunteer mentors from the CBA, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, are matched one-on-one with an Indigenous student from one of the participating schools. Through this deeper engagement, CBA staff are able to see first-hand the difference a quality education is



making to these children and it also provides an opportunity for them to further add to the student's experience at boarding school.

AIEF has developed best-practice screening and monitoring processes to ensure that both students and mentors are safe and comfortable in the mentoring relationship and that mentors can provide effective support for their student. Mentors meet with their student once a month, and communicate via email and phone between meetings. Each mentor supports their student to maximise their opportunities and achievement in tertiary education, career development, personal development and leadership. Mentors may also share their personal and professional networks to support their student. Some of the activities include: listening, assisting with goal setting, study and career plans, helping students recognise their strengths and being a sounding board for ideas and problems.

A feature of the programme for participants last year was the Girls in the City: Corporate Wardrobe Challenge where students were given a donated \$100 Westfield voucher and an afternoon with their mentor to find the perfect corporate outfit for a first job interview.

Last year as part of the first intake of the Mentor Programme, volunteer mentor Karen James was partnered with Indigenous Year 12 student Keiryn Lenoy from Pymble Ladies' College. Karen, a General Manager at the CBA and mother of two, initially applied to be a mentor with a view to perhaps helping a student to develop a positive outlook on the future, a plan to achieve their goals and maybe assist with some practical strategies.

After the first year as Keiryn's mentor, Karen reflected on their relationship, "Keiryn is everything I hope my daughters graduate to be and her opportunities at university are plentiful. I believe that it is often the simple, practical advice provided at the right time which can make all the difference in a person's life. Being a part of Keiryn's support network is an honour."

Keiryn completed Year 12 at Pymble Ladies' College in November 2010 and will start her studies in Biomedical Science at the University of Technology Sydney later this month. The relationship has been a valuable support to Keiryn, "My mentor is a very caring and understanding person. She is a very experienced and has realistic advice to give and I'm thankful that she has helped through the transition from high school to beginning

university". Both Karen and Keiryn hope to continue their mentoring relationship, and AIEF staff look forward to supporting this relationship and many more into the future.

"I would love the opportunity to have my mentor see me graduate with a university degree," Keiryn said.

In 2011, approximately thirty Indigenous students from AIEF partner schools in Sydney will be participating in the programme, partnered with their own professional and experienced mentor.

The AIEF Mentor Programme works to create strong, meaningful relationships which will potentially support the students throughout key transitions in their life. Whilst the initial commitment from the volunteer mentor is 12 months, AIEF encourages the relationship to continue post year 12 and well into adulthood.

1. Former student Keiryn Lenoy (third from left) shares her experiences with some of the 2011 intake of volunteer mentors participating in the AIEF Mentor Programme at a recent training session



## Cathedral *Survives the Wrath of Cyclone Yasi*

### AUTHOR

Remy Atkinson from Dimbulah, Queensland  
Year 11 Boarder, The Cathedral School

Though school may have been cancelled and many families were preparing for the worst in North Queensland, about 70 boarders of The Cathedral School in Townsville were still at school, nervously waiting and watching the radar, getting the latest updates on Cyclone Yasi. For many of the boarders who live inland, we had never experienced a cyclone, let alone a cyclone of Yasi's magnitude. Wednesday 2 February was a day of preparation - window taping, charging lanterns and electronics and moving and tying down objects that may have been unstable during the winds.

Teachers and staff were also anxiously watching, waiting and wondering how to control 70 boarders during a category five cyclone. The 29 girls who stayed for Yasi were evacuated to the boys' dormitory, Akins, so all teachers, staff and boarding students were together. Many of us did not know what to expect so there was an array of mixed emotions, some excited and thrilled, others nervous and worried. Entertainment was not in short supply, we played Sing Star on the Playstation, put together a 1,000 piece puzzle, played cards and a few games of pool, until the power went out at 9.30pm. I think the power outage may have been assisted by the frantic 'charge-a-thon-of-all-electronic equipment' chaos

that went on that night. As a group, we all did well throughout the night. In fact, most of us slept through the whole occurrence.

Nothing could prepare us for what we were about to see as we woke up on Thursday morning and looked out our windows. The lagoon, which had previously been drained, had already flooded and was lapping only 30 metres from Akins. A thick layer of leaf litter, debris, trees and their branches covered the school grounds. As it was unsafe to venture outside, we spent most of Thursday inside. That afternoon the girls moved back to our side of the school and we were able to have dinner in the dining hall, though the power was still out.

Believe me, if you walked into the school before the clean up, you wouldn't even recognise the place. The cleaning up effort on Friday put in by the boarders was astounding! We were all eager to start moving the braches, trees, leaves and sticks. Hundreds of man hours of cleaning up were completed within just a few hours. After the majority of the clean up was completed, we finished the day with a game of touch football and a much-needed swim in the pool.



2

Saturday came and there were still traces that Cyclone Yasi had been, so once again the boarders, with their determined spirit, banded together to clean up the remainder of the debris and vegetation. The power was still out, and for some, it felt like an eternity! We had to be mindful of how we used our electronic devices to do our best to conserve energy, only using them in emergencies. There was a generator at the dining hall to keep the cold rooms working and meals were earlier while we still had daylight. During the night, countless games of spotlight were played in the girls' dormitory, but on Saturday night, both the boys and girls came together to play a game of spotlight in the Quadrangle. Power to half of the school came on that night at 9.00pm, and there was a mass hype of excitement, with hugs and screams coming from all directions of the girls' dormitory, not to mention stampedes of girls running and diving for power points with their mobile and laptop chargers! The boys were not as lucky, with the power not returning to them until Sunday night. To this day, we are still wondering how we could live without power for so long. Many long nights were spent without air-conditioning, television and internet, but we all survived!



3

On behalf of all the girls boarders I would like to say a big thank you to Mrs Shelley Koch who prepared all our meals while the boarding cooks were not able to make it into the school. Another big thank you to the boys, for their kind hospitality in letting us stay in Akins throughout the duration of the cyclone. Also to our Principal, Mr Ian Gamack, Director of Boarding Mr Jock Walker-Campbell, Head of Residence, Girls, Miss Rayna Page, Head of Residence, Boys, Mr Mark Muguira and all the other staff who were involved in the cyclone with us. We thank you all very much for keeping all of us safe, up-to-date, calm and happy before, during and after Cyclone Yasi. I think many would agree when I say, this will be a memory that will stay with us for years to come.

1. Lots of trees down at The Cathedral School after Cyclone Yasi, fortunately there was no building damage
2. The boarders do a great job cleaning up after Cyclone Yasi
3. The girl boarders after the Cyclone Yasi clean up



# 50th

## Anniversary of the Country High School Hostels Authority, WA. – *A College Manager's perspective.*

AUTHOR  
Mr Steve Lally, College Manager,  
Narrogin Residential College, WA.

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Most boarding professionals will be aware of the state providers of boarding for secondary students. In Western Australia, the Country High School Hostels Authority oversees nine co-educational boarding colleges which provide for students attending senior high schools and other secondary colleges in regional WA. From Broome in the north to Esperance in the South CHSHA boarding colleges have provided access to high quality regional secondary schools for over 50 years.

As an example, Narrogin Residential College, the largest of the colleges, located in the lower wheat belt region of south west WA and 200km from Perth, serves 180 boarders who attend Narrogin Senior High School with 750 students. In effect the school and the residential college combine to form the region's only "boarding school". CHSHA boarding colleges in other regional centres have similar public high

school partnership arrangements and in some regional centres these partnerships extend to and support private schools.

The boarding provided by CHSHA boarding colleges enables rural parents to send their children to a more geographically accessible school as an alternative to going to Perth. The majority of parents (and students) will always look at the educational opportunities available to them and if the regional senior high school offers what they want, then we will provide the excellent residential care expected for this to happen.

The word "Hostel" in the CHSHA acronym is probably a misnomer as the term conjures up a facility offering bed and breakfast as a matter of convenience rather than its real function. The Collegial community model is a far more accurate description. Formal implementation of education support, pastoral care practices



and programs, student leadership and development, community service involvement and sport and recreation are rigorously applied in the residential colleges. Staff from the private and independent schools sector would experience a great deal of their boarding school culture in a CHSHA residential college.

The residential colleges have their own identity (local management, logo, colours, ethos and heritage) and some came into service long before the CHSHA became established to support and administer their operations. They operate with the support of a P&C committee, and have student management structures (prefects and student councils) and student development programs (through social functions, boarders' dinners, community activities, sport, excursions) in place. End of year graduations are special events designed to reflect the value accorded to each student as a member of the college community and their future potential contribution to Australian society. Also, as clichéd as this sounds, they seek to provide a home away from home environment.

*As clichéd as this sounds, they seek to provide a home away from home environment.*

The CHSHA, and in turn each individual College (each with its own College Board), strive for best practice in boarding. On top of drawing from the excellent work being carried out and shared by boarding organisations, schools and their staff across the country, the CHSHA has been a leader in boarding-specific policy, development and training for decades.

All CHSHA residential college managers have significant day to day operational responsibility; from managing the college budget and infrastructure to the professional development of their hard working Boarding Supervisors and student welfare, development and outcomes. As part of the wider boarding fraternity's sharing of resources, the CHSHA

has, for example, formally applied the Duty of Care course work books as a prerequisite for the employment and introduction to boarding for staff. It funds and supports numerous professional development opportunities both in-house and those offered by ABSA, NARSA and others whose knowledge and skills contribute to its operational effectiveness.

As we and our boarding compatriots face the challenges and ever higher expectations in delivering quality boarding in the 21st century, we look forward to another 50 years of making that "lights out!" call to all our current and future boarders.



***Narrogin  
Residential College***







# THE BICYCLE BOOK

AUTHOR  
Conrad Mathias,  
St Joseph's College, Hunters Hill



Edward de Bono told this story nearly twenty years ago at one of his famous 'hats' seminars.

At a large hospital in the centre of London, during the Second World War, the powers that be decided that they would seek ways of reducing the cost of fuel associated with bringing staff to and from work. As well, bombing raids during the war made public transport both hazardous and unreliable. It was decided that the staff would be encouraged to ride bicycles to work. To monitor the effectiveness of this plan, a Bicycle Book was established in

the Porter's Lodge at the entrance to the hospital. The number of bicycles and who was riding the machine were recorded.

In 1975, during a routine efficiency audit, the specialists conducting the assessment chanced upon the Porter's Lodge and began an inventory of all that went on there. The Bicycle Book emerged in the look see and the auditor asked about the book and its contents. It was explained that the book contained details of anyone who rode a bicycle through the hospital gates. When asked what happened to the information, the Porter proudly announced, "Nothing,

Sir. It's just always been done that way. My father's father was Porter here during the war, and we have carefully kept up the tradition. Every bicycle ridden through these gates since 1942 has been faithfully recorded."

Like a good Talmudic parable, it's best not to comment on the story. However...

It doesn't hurt to check around your boarding community occasionally in case there are any Bicycle Books lurking.

Conrad Mathias works in the Boarding Program at St Joseph's, Hunters Hill.

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## Early Findings on the Effects of *Boarding School*

### AUTHOR

Andrew Martin (University of Sydney),  
Brad Papworth (ABSA), and  
Paul Ginns (University of Sydney)

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What impact does attendance at boarding school have on students' motivation and engagement? How does it affect outcomes such as peer relations, relationship with parents, and quality of life? In this article we present some early findings from the ABSA research project aimed at examining the extent to which attendance at boarding school affects students' academic and non-academic outcomes.

### Objectives

The study (funded by the Australian Research Council and conducted by the University of Sydney in partnership with ABSA) seeks to identify the role of boarding school in academic (eg. motivation, engagement) and non-academic (eg. self-esteem, life satisfaction) outcomes. It does so through a large-scale study of boarding and day students in Australia.

### Introduction

In recent years there has been a small body of research investigating the role of boarding school in students' development. However, little large-scale and longitudinal research has been conducted to deeply and broadly understand the processes and phenomena under focus. Research to date tends to be limited to relatively few boarding schools or limited to relatively narrow outcome measures. Hence, findings and conclusions can be susceptible to variability between individual schools, with relatively limited applicability across the sector.

On refining our data, our research is conducted amongst 13 schools comprising boarding and day students and assesses many academic and non-academic factors

to more fully and reliably gain a sense of the role of boarding school in students' academic and non-academic development. Due to the complexity of the research, there are a number of critical stages to ensure the research and its findings are of the highest quality (see Fig. 1).

### Participants

The sample comprises 5,198 high school students in junior high 11-14 years (54%) and senior high 15-19 years (46%) from thirteen high schools, including 50 boarding houses/residences, in almost every State and Territory of Australia. 29% were boarding students and 71% were day students. Schools in the sample were comprehensive schools of mixed ability (but generally higher in achievement and SES than the national average). Seven schools were co-educational, three schools comprised boys only, and three schools comprised girls only. Although not intended to be representative of the Australian population of high schools, we suggest the sample comprises enough students to yield broadly generalizable results. Just over half (57%) of the respondents were male and 43% were female. The mean age of respondents was 14.35 (SD = 1.67) years and the mean grade was between Yr 9-10 (SD = 1.63). A total of 10% of the sample was from a non-English speaking background and 5% of students were indigenous. With few exceptions, all targeted students in attendance on the day of the testing participated in the survey. Teachers administered the instrument to students during class. The rating scale was first explained and a sample item presented. Students were then asked to complete the instrument on their own and to return the completed instrument to the teacher at the end of class.

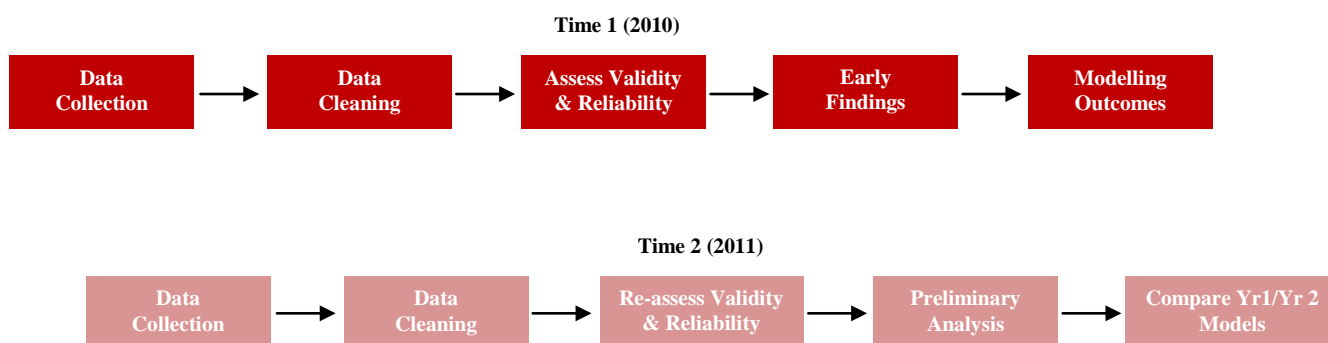


Figure 1: Stages of ABSA research project.

## Materials

- Self-report questionnaire
- Academic outcomes assessed included:
  - achievement (NAPLAN results)
  - achievement-related behaviour
  - approaches to learning
  - motivation and engagement
- Non-academic outcomes assessed included:
  - satisfaction with life
  - well-being
  - interpersonal relationships
- Perceived climate of the boarding house or school
- Big Five Personality Inventory to assess personality
- Students' general and family demographics

At this stage, preliminary analyses have been conducted. These analyses have investigated differences between boarding and day students after controlling for socio-demographics, ability, personality, and school characteristics. It is vital to control for these factors because we want to understand the unique effects of boarding school after accounting for these factors. For example, it may be that a particular personality or socio-demographic may be more likely to attend boarding school and thus it is important to know what effects are due to personality (for example) and what are due to boarding school.

## Analyses

Our preliminary assessments of the data are based on multiple regression analysis. In these regression analyses we included boarding school status (vs. day status) as a predictor – along with numerous socio-

demographic, ability, personality, and school factors as covariates. Of central interest is the effect of boarding school status after controlling for the covariates.

## Results

After controlling for factors such as socio-demographics, ability, personality and school characteristics we found (at  $p < .001$ ):

- On 23 of the 25 motivation and engagement factors (eg. self-efficacy, valuing school, persistence, homework completion, enjoyment of school, class participation), boarding and day students are not significantly different.
- On 2 problematic motivation and engagement factors (fear of failure, uncertain control), boarding school students score higher than day students.
- On 4 of the 5 non-academic measures (eg. self-esteem, life satisfaction), boarding and day students are not significantly different.
- On 1 non-academic measure (relationship with parents), boarding school students are significantly more positive than day students.
- On 20 of the 25 climate/organisational factors (eg. peer support, competitive focus), boarding and day students are not significantly different.
- On 5 climate/organisational measures, boarding school students are significantly more positive than day students.

## Discussion

The overarching finding is general parity in academic and non-academic outcomes between boarding and day students, after controlling for potentially confounding



factors. Hence, attending boarding school generally appears to provide boarders the same level of access and opportunities to academic and non-academic success as their day school counterparts. The data also identifies some areas for further development amongst boarding students – and some areas for celebration in the boarding sector.

Importantly, however, these are preliminary findings. From here we will be conducting more sophisticated analysis to further validate these findings and to better understand the various factors relevant to them. We will also begin collecting a second wave of data to understand these findings and processes from a longitudinal perspective.

For further information about this study, contact Brad Papworth: b.papworth@edfac.usyd.edu.au or (02) 9683 8490.

# Jubilee Celebration at Westminster School

AUTHOR  
Dr Linda Vining



An anniversary celebration is a perfect opportunity to showcase the present against the backdrop of the past, and it offers great potential as a PR event. It can advance a positive image of your school, encourage philanthropy and unite the whole school community. In February I attended the Jubilee Opening Ceremony at Westminster School in Adelaide and saw all these functions at work through a variety of creative initiatives that marked the school's 50th year. The ceremony was a regal occasion attended by the Governor of SA and many foundation scholars and other distinguished guests.



On arrival I noticed a striking new addition to the campus, silhouetted against the skyline – an outdoor metal sculpture commissioned for the Jubilee. Artist Gerry McMahon, an Adelaide metal sculptor and public and community artist, had shaped and elevated the figures of two school children made from corten steel that will rust and seal over time. ([www.gerrymcmahon.com.au](http://www.gerrymcmahon.com.au))

Director of Development, John Kramer, said the school has often admired the work of Gerry in the local Marion Village. "Westminster is strongly connected to the local community and the sculpture is a way to acknowledge this link and unify the school with its external environment through art," said John.

Westminster is a Uniting Church co-educational day and boarding school with 1200 students from Early Learning to Year 12, about 120 of whom are boarders. Looking at a jubilee video with early photographs of the Marion property, bought in 1957, it is inspiring to see how the school has progressed from open fields to today's beautiful garden campus on 23 hectares.

There were many other highlights to mark the jubilee year including a mother's club jubilee window, a jubilee song written by a present student and the launch of the school's history book, *A Venture in Faith*, which was presented to Principal Stephen Bousfield by former Principal Bradley Fenner (1999 to 2009) who was instrumental in commissioning the book.

Mr Fenner said it is important to plan a history book well ahead. "We started recording oral histories with the fathers of Westminster 12 years ago."

"To write the book, we selected historian Rob Linn who has deep connections with the school and an understanding of the individuals who took part in the foundations, the church, the pressures and directions, and how the history of Westminster connects the broader history of the city, the church, education in general and the state."

"Having read many school histories, this is not always the case, with many schools having engaged either a staff member to write the history, with the result there is a particular, internal focus, or a complete outsider, who does not really understand the rhythm and patterns of the institution's life," said Mr Fenner.

"*A Venture in Faith* is the story of progress, the triumphs, and the challenges, which inevitably occur in 50 years in the life of an institution," he said.

- 1 Jubilee sculpture by Gerry McMahon
- 2 Principal of Westminster School, Steve Bousfield (right) and Marketing Manager Darin Betro, with Dr Linda Vining who was a guest at the school's Official Opening of the Jubilee Year in 2011.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Linda Vining from the Centre for Marketing Schools is the Director of the School Education Expo to be held in SA on 28 and 29 May and in NSW on 3 and 4 September ([www.edexpo.info](http://www.edexpo.info))

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# *Positive* Psychology

## The Peninsula School Model

### AUTHOR

Mark Cook, Head of Boys Boarding,  
The Peninsula School, Vice Chairman,  
Victorian Division ABSA

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### A brief History

In 2009 a number of Peninsula school staff attended the Victorian ABSA schools information day at Geelong Grammar School. The purpose of the visit was to observe in some detail the Positive Education program and Well Being Centre. Earlier the same year one of our academic staff members attended the residential training program at Geelong. A learning syndicate was formed and further training was embarked upon with the Positive Psychology Institute in NSW. The perceived value of these preliminary studies gave momentum to engaging Associate Professor Lea Waters to guide us through the implementation process school wide.

2010 welcomed Mr Stuart Johnston as new Principal to The Peninsula School. Stuart was previously Principal at Trinity College in South Australia. His vision and commitment to the principles of Positive Psychology guide us confidently towards the future. The following is a summary as prepared by our Senior Leadership team.

### Preamble

Positive Psychology is a relatively new branch of psychology founded by Professor Martin Seligman (University of Pennsylvania) which focuses on the scientific study of the strengths and virtues that enable individuals and communities to thrive. Positive Psychology addresses the aspects of the human condition that lead to increased levels of happiness and fulfilment.

Seligman has identified a number of areas which contribute to creating a life of meaning; positive emotion, positive engagement, positive relationships and positive accomplishment. His research has indicated that, by giving attention to

these areas, individuals have the ability to contribute to their own happiness, regardless of their circumstances.

Positive Psychology activities heighten our awareness of what is working well in our lives, allow us to better understand our own character strengths and imbue us with a sense of gratitude, and empathy. A proven consequence is that levels of optimism and resilience are increased and, in turn, the likelihood of depression is decreased.

### Positive Psychology at The Peninsula School

The development of the whole person is fundamental to all that we currently do at Peninsula. In caring for the well being of our students we encourage them to take up life's challenges, both at school and beyond. Put simply, we aim to produce well educated and well rounded individuals who, as their lives unfold, are capable of flourishing personally and professionally and who are well equipped to contribute to society in a satisfying and meaningful way.

Positive Psychology aligns extremely well with the emphasis that we already place on building mutually respectful relationships and fostering connectedness within our community. Indeed, it sits very well with our School's core values, particularly Christian Faith and Community Spirit, in which kindness and altruism are important aspects.

Positive Psychology has the potential to have a powerful impact on classroom practice. Research tells us that a warm socio-emotional climate is a key factor in student achievement which supports our own belief that positive teacher-student relationships will result in enhanced academic performance. Positive



psychology adopts an evidence based approach drawing on empirical research findings on psychology, neuroscience and education. Research findings show that, when applied in schools, positive psychology can foster outcomes such as higher levels of engagement, school connectedness, emotional vitality, psychological functioning and academic performance. AT TPS, we aim for both students and staff to experience these benefits.

After working with Associate Professor Waters in 2010 and conducting an internal audit of our existing school programs, it is clear that much of what The Peninsula School already does falls within the realm of positive psychology. Our existing programs, together with the ethos and driving values of our school, provide an excellent platform from which to proactively and strategically build the school into a strength-based institution.

In 2010, Peninsula will begin embedding a school-wide positive psychology initiative that will involve staff, students and parents. The positive psychology framework will allow us to more systematically work with the programs we have in order to create greater connections and synergies with these programs across all levels of the school. In addition, the four pillars of positive psychology provide us with vital information from which to make informed decision about the future programs that we adopt at TPS.

### Positive Psychology training at The Peninsula School

During 2010 a team of 20 staff went through a two-term training program that was designed and led by Associate Professor Lea Waters from the University of Melbourne, a world renowned expert in the area of Positive Psychology. The Positive Psychology Implementation Team includes the Principal, members of the leadership group, the well-being team and the positive psychology syndicate.

In 2010, all Peninsula School staff will be trained through a series of in-service professional development days that will be lead by Associate Professor Waters and supported by the Positive Psychology Implementation Team members. Staff will be introduced to the key principles and frameworks of positive psychology. The training will cover concepts such as flow, broaden and build, active-constructive



responding, cognitive reframing, resilience and growth mind-sets. Importantly, the training is designed so that all staff have direct experience with positive psychology techniques as well as learning the theory and science behind techniques. This experiential learning component has been designed following Professor Peterson's, from the University of Michigan, argument that 'Positive Psychology is not a spectator sport.'

### Positive Psychology implementation at The Peninsula School

In 2011, the school will begin the process of formally embedding positive psychology into the school culture, class rooms, curriculum, pastoral care and co-curriculum. The Positive Psychology Implementation Team has decided that the best way to approach this change is to focus on three core positive psychology themes for 2011: gratitude, strengths and self regulation.

Of course, building positive psychology into the fabric of the school will take time. We are committed to ensuring that students, staff and parents will be constantly educated and supported through the implementation of positive psychology at The Peninsula School. As we successfully move through each phase, we will seek to focus on additional positive psychology areas such as resilience, emotional intelligence, and mindfulness.

In order to track and measure the impact that positive psychology is having on students and staff at TPS, an online survey will be administered to students and staff at the beginning of 2011. This survey will be assessing levels of engagement, school connectedness,

emotional vitality, psychological functioning. The survey will be repeated at strategic points in time over the next 5 years.

### Service Ethic

The Peninsula School aims to be a lighthouse school by developing a uniquely Australian positive psychology approach that seeks to foster a culture of flourishing that simultaneously benefits students and staff.

Once the Peninsula Positive Psychology Model has been developed and validated, The Peninsula School aims to assist other schools across all systems to implement positive psychology and enjoy the benefits of watching their students and staff flourish.

To this end, we will be working with Associate Professor Waters as a research site to present and publish our experiences to the wider school community and to the academic community of psychologists and educators. In this way our school will add to the positive psychology knowledge and inform debates in the future about the role of positive psychology in schools.

Mr Simon Hewitson has been appointed to the position of Positive Psychology Coordinator. As we successfully move through each phase, we will seek to focus on additional positive psychology areas such as resilience, emotional intelligence, and mindfulness.

Peninsula School will be hosting an ABSA conference day during term 2 of 2011. More information regarding our program will be available on this day. Please see the Victorian ABSA calendar for specific details.

# The Good Common Room

## AUTHOR

Dr T.F Hawkes, Chairman,  
Australian Boarding Schools Association

The Staff Common Room, be it in the boarding house or academic precinct, is a place of communion over coffee and of casual chatter away from the classroom. It is here, the place of pigeon holes, gowns on pegs and too many noticeboards, that an extraordinary group of highly credentialed people gather. They are called teachers, both pastoral and academic.

The Common Room is a sanctuary from the mewing demands of students. Outside its doors, sorrowful supplicants wait for absolution or a chance to wrangle a leave pass over the weekend. Inside its doors, one finds a warm tug of connection and companionship, a camaraderie born of an alliance against ignorance and poor behaviour.

The Common Room is a place for delicious exasperation and discussion about the inadequacies of the human condition. Like the psalms, Common Room conversation is – half complaint to God and half adoration of God.

- 1 Why art thou so vexed, oh my soul; and why are thou so disquieted within me?
- 2 Thou must be joking when thou sayest that Edward has lost his Ipod and Jane her mobile phone.
- 3 Oh, what sins have I committed that I am chastened with being on duty over the weekend?
- 4 After interminable years of student smells, wormwood and gall will be as nectar and ambrosia.

- 5 Whither shall I go for peace and quiet or where shall I hide from the sound of boys' voices.
- 6 If I climb the stairs I will hear them, and if I go down, even to the Boarding House, they are heard there also.
- 7 My days are gone like a shadow and I am withered like grass.
- 8 Iniquities are more in number than sand, particularly those of Wayne and Rebecca and their sullen little friends with truculent temperaments, too much pocket money, allergy to work, foghorn voices, dripping noses and mercilessly incessant questions.
- 9 Remove them from my sight lest I smite them asunder.
- 10 They who maketh foul messages on "Facebook" and their jackets to smell of Benson & Hedges.
- 11 They that litter the gardens and chewing gumeth the quadrangle.
- 12 Therefore, I swore in my wrath; and emailth by reproof.
- 13 They lay waste the dormitories, like a whirlwind; storm and tempest fulfilling their words.
- 14 Oh how amiable is the weekend.
- 15 By the notice boards I sat down and wept; by the pigeonholes I uttered my reprove.
- 16 Oh Lord, my soul longeth for the holidays.  
*Amen (Adapted from a poem of unknown origin)*

Why do boarding staff do what they do? Some suggest there are two reasons. The first is December and the second is January. Others advance a more altruistic response such as the satisfaction that comes from being able to shape future generations. In a world disillusioned with the "greed is good" mantra, in an economy betrayed

by its banks, and at a time when money has not been shown to make the world go round, more young people are considering teaching or working with children in one form or another. This is excellent news, given the anticipated exodus of baby boomer teachers and boarding staff over the next few years.

I want to encourage our new generation of teachers and boarding staff to:

- Let their character, passions and interests shine through their teaching.
- Be committed in their service for it is only in giving that the rewards in teaching are to be found.
- Take control of learning in the boarding house irrespective of the dictates of external agencies.

## Character

The contemporary boarding house is being bleached of its colour by a grey conformity to bureaucratic and functional constraints. Rigid codes of conduct, consuming obligations to test, measure and compare, a rise of accountability reporting all threaten to wash out that which is interesting in our schools. Add to this a near neurosis which has seen "no touching", "no running" and "no noise" rules introduced into schools, and a low-trust model of management by educational bureaucracies, and the fading of our schools' luminosity becomes complete.

Is there room in today's school for staff with character? Can we keep a teacher whose report-writing skills are ordinary but his knowledge of metaphysical and romantic poetry is extraordinary? Can we keep a boarding supervisor who cries in front of his class on 3 February as he remembers the death of Buddy Holly,





Richie Valens and “Big Bopper”? Can we keep a colleague whose supervision of prep is noisier than a Saturday night disco but whose excursions to the National Gallery leave his students in silent awe?

There are staff that touch the mind and there are staff that touch the heart. We tend to evaluate staff on their capacity for the former and neglect to value the latter. Evaluation of staff is based on what they do rather than who they are. This needs to change. We need to allow our teachers to reveal their character and even their weaknesses, when they teach.

### Commitment

There is little more flattering than to have someone give you the gift of time. There is little that is as rare as the gift of genuine interest. Small wonder that the student who receives these gifts from boarding staff, should treasure them. Although the “look-at-me” generation does not always deserve it, students enjoy staff who are committed to them – who watch them through lazy overs on the cricket field, who email them words of encouragement, who chat with them in dorms. These are all expressions of commitment as is the essay inked with faithful advice.

A good teacher is like a candle – it consumes itself to light the way for others.  
(Anon.)

We need more staff in our boarding schools who are prepared to give sacrificially of themselves. Some might be tempted to think that this is asking too much. It is not. It is only in giving that we receive.

### Control

Tragically, there is little freedom given to schools and even less to teachers when it comes to controlling the curriculum. However, staff can still control what happens in their boarding house.

Most teachers have little control over school policy or curriculum or choice of text or special placement of students, but most have a great deal of autonomy (outside) the classroom [such as a boarding house]. To a degree shared by only a few other occupations, such as police work, public education rests precariously on the skill and virtue of the people at the

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bottom of the institutional pyramid.  
*Tracey Kidder (adapted)*  
Australian boarding schools must not surrender control of what is taught. The development of character and the acquisition of essential life skills is a vital element of what should go on in their boarding houses.

Boarding schools need staff of character, staff who are committed to their charges and staff who turn their boarding house into a place of learning. We need to get it right for as it has been written:

When you teach your students, you teach your students' children.  
*The Talmud*

Staff with character are not necessarily the friendliest staff but they will be the people that will have the most impact. The committed staff member will not always be the most

popular for they will disturb their students with new levels of possibility. The staff member who looks for the “teaching moment” will not always be welcomed because of the frightening relevance of what they teach. However, these people - the staff with character who are committed to their craft and brave enough to take control of what is taught - will ensure that their Common Room will be remembered with genuine affection by generations of students.

# New Heads

*New Heads and Heads of Boarding were invited to share their stories and vision for the year ahead.*

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## **Gordon Royall, Headmaster, All Souls St Gabriels School, Charters Towers**

Gordon Royall has returned as Headmaster of All Souls St Gabriels School in Charters Towers in north Queensland after a 4 year absence. He previously served as Head from July 2000 to the end of 2006. During the last four years he has worked at A.B. Paterson College on the Gold Coast and as Head of Secondary at Immanuel Lutheran College on the Sunshine Coast.

The school was established in 1920 as a war memorial school and was once one of Queensland's largest boarding schools before being closed dramatically by the Anglican Church, due to falling numbers, at the end of 1999. The co-educational school re-opened in 2000 under the leadership of local people and past students, whilst still retaining its links with the church. Enrolments at the school have grown from 180 in 2000 to 386 currently. Boarding has always been All Souls life blood and boarding numbers have also grown from a low point of 86 to 190 this year. The school has actively pursued a programme of boarding regeneration and this year will complete the refurbishment of its fifth and final dormitory.

"When the Chairman of the Board of Governors made the offer to return I accepted instantly" he said. "I am delighted to be back in such a great community, with the down to earth country students and parents who make this boarding school such a wonderful place to live in and lead."

## **Mrs Anne Coutts, Principal, Canberra Girls' Grammar School**

The School Board appointed Mrs Anne Coutts to the position of Principal of Canberra Girls' Grammar School in May 2010. Anne commenced this position in January 2011 after relocating to Australia from the United Kingdom with her husband, Ian.

This is the fourth school Anne has led. For the past seven years she was the Headmistress of Headington School Oxford, which is one of the foremost day and boarding schools for girls in the United Kingdom. Prior to Headington, she was Headmistress at Sutton High School, South London and Headmistress at Eothen School, Caterham.

Anne has a background in Science with a Bachelor of Science in Microbiology and Virology, a postgraduate Certificate in Education and has a Masters degree in Management. Anne is passionate about education and enjoys being part of and leading a school community.

Anne has two adult daughters and is currently learning to play the saxophone. Her other interests include choral singing, photography, creative writing, cricket and knitting.

## **Robert Henderson, Headmaster and CEO, Ipswich Grammar School**

It is a great honour to be the 15th Headmaster of Ipswich Grammar School. A proud West Australian, I made the move to Queensland with my wife Robyn and our three daughters, who now attend Ipswich Girls' Grammar School.

Only last month we saw first hand the spirit and determination of the Ipswich community when the region was devastated by floods. Our school was able to become an evacuation centre, helping those in need and offering a home away from home.

It was Ipswich Grammar's way of supporting the wider community, and I'm pleased to say many of our staff went above and beyond to ensure people were well looked after in their moment of need.

They were trying times for everyone and the quality of the Ipswich people was on display for the rest of the world to see. Like the city itself, Ipswich Grammar School has a proud history of success.

The Darling Street school has a great reputation throughout Queensland and we have a responsibility to educate the young men of Ipswich and surrounding areas. Ipswich Grammar develops the leaders of tomorrow with a holistic approach in and out of the classroom.

Looking beyond school life, Robyn and I are very keen to get involved in the local community. Being a passionate Fremantle Dockers fan, I am looking



forward to AFL season and enjoying my Brisbane Lions membership, which was a farewell gift from my former school, Christian Brothers College Fremantle.

Even though they're on opposite sides of the map, Queensland and Western Australia both play important roles in driving the national economy. The Ipswich region is essential to this growth.

It is a wonderful, historic town with a great story to tell and a great place in the continued development of Queensland.

I have been incredibly impressed by the leadership across the south-east of the state, particularly during the flood crisis. Ipswich Mayor Paul Pisasale, Brisbane Lord Mayor Campbell Newman and Premier Anna Bligh are leading the region through a time of tremendous growth and vitality.

This growth will be reflected at Ipswich Grammar School with the development of our state-of-the-art \$2.5 million junior school library.

I look forward to the next 12 months and getting to know the people of Ipswich.

**Br Bill Sullivan FMS,  
Principal, St Augustine's  
College, Cairns**

It is clear to me that St Augustine's is a most impressive and welcoming place. I have very much enjoyed moving here from Sydney and am greatly impressed with the positive and vibrant nature of the school community.

Prior to moving to St Augustine's I have been the Principal of Marcellin College Randwick, Sydney for eight years and Marist North Shore for six years. My teaching areas are Religious Education and Mathematics. I love coaching Rugby League and involving myself in the extra curricular life of the College as my commitments allow.

At St Augustine's we pride ourselves on the family spirit and pastoral care in evidence here. In such an environment I believe boys are able to succeed and reach their potential. We aim to build men with strong minds and gentle hearts.



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- 1 Robert Henderson, Headmaster and CEO of Ipswich Grammar School
- 2 Mrs Anne Coutts, Principal, Canberra Girls' Grammar School
- 3 Br Bill Sullivan FMS, Principal, St Augustine's College
- 4 Gordon Royall, Headmaster, All Souls St Gabriels School, Charters Towers



**David and Leigh Knight,  
Co-Directors of Residence,  
The Friends' School, Hobart**

David and Leigh Knight have taken up the role of Co-Directors of Residence at The Friends' School. Formerly, David was the Junior Boys Dormitory Master at Assumption College Kilmore, where he worked for 10 years. Before this appointment and while completing his Arts degree, he worked in boarding at The Kardinia International College in Geelong.

Before beginning their family, Leigh taught English and Literature at The Geelong College, where she was Head of English at the Senior School and worked as a Resident Tutor in Mackie, the boys boarding house. Before this, she was the Year 11 Coordinator at Assumption College, where she and David met.

They and their children, Maisy (3) and George (11 months) are very excited about joining Walker House and The Friends' community in 2011.

**Mrs Jan Nicholas, Head of Boarding,  
St Ursula's College, Yeppoon**

I am the new Head of Boarding commencing this year at St Ursula's Yeppoon. Here are a few sentences about myself.

Previous to this position I spent two years as a Supervisor at St Ursula's and prior to that was a Matron at Hamilton Boys High

School in New Zealand for 6 years. (Yes I am a Kiwi!) I am looking forward to the new challenges that this position brings.

**Mark McGinnity, Principal,  
Monivae College, Victoria.**

Mark was Director of Boarding at Saint Ignatius' College, Riverview from 2001-2009. Prior to that Mark was at St Joseph's, Hunters Hill for four years as the Religious Education Co-ordinator and a Year 11 Boarding Assistant. Very much enjoying the tree change to western Victoria and the return to co-education, Mark finds the 650 student senior school including 70 boarders quite a pleasant environment in which to work.

**Gayle Morgan, Boarding Manager,  
The Kilmore International School**

I would like to introduce myself. I am the Head of Boarding at The Kilmore International School and have been since July 2008. I have attended one on your conferences in the past. I am pleased that The Kilmore International School has now joined the Australian Boarding Schools Association and look forward to meeting everyone at the Head of Boarding conference in Adelaide.

I have been employed at TKIS for the past 15 years working in many areas of the school and now have the privilege to manage our boarding facilities and look forward to gaining as much knowledge and insight as possible from being part of your organisation.



- 1 Marki McGinnity, Headmaster of Monivae College Victoria and students.
- 2 Marki McGinnity, Headmaster, Monivae College, Victoria
- 3 David Knight, Co-Director of Residence, The Friends' School, Hobart
- 4 Leigh Knight, Co-Director of Residence, The Friends' School, Hobart



### **Geoff Guggenheimer, Director of Residential Community, Christ Church Grammar School, Perth**

A bit about me. I have moved from Melbourne Grammar to Christ Church Grammar to take up the position of Head of the Residential Community. I was at Melbourne Grammar for 10 years and prior to that I was at Camberwell Grammar. I am married to Kate, who is also a teacher and have 3 children (15, 12 and 8) the eldest two are attending Christ Church. I am thoroughly enjoying the culture of the school and the boarding house and the welcoming nature of the boys.



### **Dr Paul Burgis, Principal, PLC Sydney and PLC Armidale**

Dr Paul Burgis joins PLC Sydney in 2011 as it's 13th Principal. He has extensive experience as an educator in Australia, United Kingdom and Zimbabwe at each level of education, including tertiary. In the United Kingdom he led the MA in Education Programme focusing on teaching and learning, research methodologies and school improvement.



PLC Sydney is Dr Burgis' second principalship; he led Inaburra School, Sydney prior to his appointment to PLC Sydney. His teaching background is in English and the Humanities.

His doctoral research was in the growth of student knowledge, values and attitudes towards poverty and development in Australian, Filipino and Zimbabwean schools. He undertook this at the University of New South Wales after receiving a grant connected to the development of the Millennium goals. He is a member of the ISTAA Council, the body that oversees the programme established to develop the quality of teaching in Independent Schools in NSW; and the Academic Committee of AHISA, the body that liaises with the Board of Studies on behalf of the Heads of Independent Schools

The Peninsula School is a coeducational school of approximately 1450 students from Kindergarten to Year 12. We cater for day and boarding students and truly aim to help each student achieve their potential. Our International program comprises of our Boarding House, which is home to 70 students, and our VCE program in China

I have a Master of Educational Leadership, a Bachelor of Education, a Diploma of Teaching and an Associate Diploma in Music. I am a member of the Australian College of Education, Australian Institute of Company Directors and the Australian College of Educational Leadership.

The school has an excellent record of academic achievement, extensive co-curricular activities, including a highly respected music and drama program, sporting opportunities, a House program, unsurpassed pastoral care, a well defined code of behaviour and a well developed sense of community.

I hope that my leadership experience in a range of educational settings will allow me to bring a dynamic and innovative approach to further enhance the standing and achievement of The Peninsula School which is celebrating its fiftieth year since foundation

### **Stuart Johnston, Principal, The Peninsula School, Victoria**

As from the 1st of January 2010 I became only the fourth Principal of The Peninsula School, Mt Eliza; Victoria

Prior to this appointment I was the Principal of Trinity College South School, South Australia for six years and before this I enjoyed a unique opportunity as Deputy Principal - Teaching and Learning at Jerudong International School, Brunei in South East Asia.

- 1 Geoff Guggenheimer, Director of Residential Community, Christ Church Grammar, Perth
- 2 Dr Paul Burgis, Principal, PLC Sydney and Armidale
- 3 Gayle Morgan, Boarding Manager, The Kilmore International School
- 4 Stuart Johnson, Principal, The Peninsula School, Victoria



**Dr Peter Britton, Principal and CEO, Ipswich Girls' Grammar School**

This is my first appointment as Principal and CEO of a School. Previously, I was the Head of Senior School at Brisbane Boys' College and before that an Assistant to the Principal at Ipswich Girls' Grammar School for fourteen years.

It is important that a Principal has a set of personal and professional values that guide how the Principal lives his or her life and how he or she intends to lead a school. It is also important that the Principal's values match the School community's values that he or she has been asked to lead. A disjoint between the two sets of values will cause confusion, anxiety, and poor team work. Eventually, the quality of learning and teaching and student outcomes will diminish, school spirit will decline and team work will be less productive.

I was offered, and accepted, the role of Principal of IGGS and JGS because the Board of Trustees and I agreed that my values and the School's values were aligned. Therefore, I am confident that I can be of service to the School's community and contribute to the School's efforts to achieve the best learning outcomes possible for its students; maintain a happy, professionally challenging workplace for staff; and continue contributing to the School's proud history and valued traditions.

I became a Principal because I enjoy Education and the Business of Education. Educating young people is more than a job. It is a responsibility that all community members share and teachers and parents are in the frontline. I consider myself to be first and foremost a teacher. I enjoy interacting and educating young people and I enjoy studying the art and the science of teaching and learning. Coupling my interests creates an exciting professional challenge of working with students and with staff to develop programs and facilities aimed at bringing the very best out in the students and the very best out of staff.

There are various elements associated with the Business of Education – Human and Physical Resource Management, Finance, Marketing, Strategy, Operations, to name a few. There is a professional challenge associated with getting the right mix of these elements at the right time to ensure that the School achieves its Vision, Mission, and strategic goals.

As Principal and CEO, I have been given the opportunity to marshal and focus the School's resources in an endeavour to provide an all-round, personal, positive education for every young woman, girl and boy in safe, first-class learning environments. I am looking forward to the opportunity of working with the School's highly-professional staff to develop happy, confident young women well-prepared for higher learning, leadership and life.

I have an interest in personalising learning and the psychology associated with teaching happiness. I believe the overwhelming majority of our children are happy, well-balanced, contributing citizens and, therefore, we should build on these qualities by spending appropriate amounts of time, resources and effort to teach our children about happiness, how to be happy, how to be positive and about the beauty of the wonderful world we live in. There is some exciting work being done in this field of behavioural psychology. I am committed absolutely to embedding practices focussed on personalising learning, that is, staff knowing the educational needs of every young woman, girl and boy in their care and then developing an all-round educational program to meet each student's needs. In my short time at IGGS and JGS I have noticed how warmly staff speak about their students and how well many know their students.

I have worked in two boarding schools, including Ipswich Girls' Grammar School. Schools that have boarding facilities provide broader, richer educational and life experiences for all students. Boarders share cultural differences; different daily routines and levels of independence; and generally, boarders have a stronger commitment to community well-being. Parents of boarding students need to feel confident that their daughters are living and learning in a caring and secure environment with the best academic support on hand. Boarding parents want boarding schools to have an excellent communication system so that they can remain partners in their daughters' education and informed about their well-being and the school. Boarding houses in girls' schools must be aware of the importance of supplying a variety of healthy food to the boarders. Students grow from girls into young women whilst at boarding school. Their bodies need good food and plenty of it to sustain growth and enhance learning. Boarders must feel safe and comfortable in the boarding house, similar to living in their home environment. Boarders need to have opportunities for social development. Weekend leave and social contact with family and friends is important for all students. Boarding schools need to offer leadership roles to senior students. Senior students are expected to assist younger boarders to settle in and to help ensure that school guidelines and procedures are followed.

IGGS and JGS are renowned for:

- Academic excellence. Both schools have the exceptional staff, programs and learning environments that bring out the very best in students. A feature is the use of a school-wide learning and teaching framework (Dimensions of Learning) that is used to align teaching and learning. Along with the School's excellent NAPLAN results, the 2010 Year 12 students attained the following results:

- 94% of OP-eligible students obtained an OP 1-15,
- Almost half the students obtained an OP 1-7,
- Five students were awarded an OP 1, and,
- 97% of the Year 12 students who applied for a tertiary course received their first preference.



- Programs and facilities that match the developmental needs of students. For example, IJGS offers co-education for girls and boys from Pre-Prep to Year 4, and girls only education from Year 5 onwards. Girls and boys learn differently and in a lower primary co-educational learning environment both genders can be enriched by the differences of learning together before gender-related issues start to become a distraction.

- Smaller class sizes and consequently more time for teachers to interact with every student every period every day.

- Highly-experienced teachers who are experts in their fields of professional practice and who care for their students.

- Access to leading edge information and communication technologies that include interactive white-boards, over 700 desktop and laptop computers and wireless networks.

- Safe, first-class learning environments. The School has three new buildings and beautiful grounds – The Early Education Centre for 3 and 4 year old boys and girls. This facility is very popular with busy parents because they know their young children will be cared for and educated by caring, professional staff; the Mavis Parkinson Junior School; and the Peter Phillips Senior School.

IJGS and IJGS are wonderful schools with wonderful students, staff, Old Girls and Parents and Friends. I am delighted to have been appointed as the School's eleventh Principal in its 119th year.

### Ros Curtis, Principal, St Margaret's Anglican Girls School, Brisbane

2011 has heralded in a new year, and a new era, for St Margaret's Anglican Girls School in Ascot, Brisbane, with the induction of a new Principal and the expansion of the School's works projects.

The Principal, Ms Ros Curtis, was officially inducted at a Ceremony held on 7 February.

At the Ceremony Ros reflected on her past experience, spanning 25 years predominantly across some of Queensland's leading independent girls' schools, and more recently her role as Deputy Principal of St Aidan's Anglican Girls' School.



Ros said she was "enthusiastic" to seize opportunities to participate in all areas of school life.

"I am a firm believer in the saying 'actions speak louder than words', and will contribute to the wider St Margaret's community and be driven by what can make a difference," she said.

"Being a good leader is more than simply being at the forefront of the crowd, or by virtue of positional leadership. A good school leader must be active and make choices every day which serve the needs of the larger group and help to improve and further develop the school.

"Therefore, my actions, as the leader of the School, are based on one main goal - to turn this great school into an even greater one where all girls are assisted in the achievement of their personal best, whether it be in academic endeavours or alternative pathways.

"I am very privileged to be in the role of Principal of St Margaret's and am looking forward to leading the school in the next phase of its growth and development."



The long list of ongoing works at St Margaret's firmly attests to this growth.

Beginning in late 2010 with the opening in the Primary School of the new multi-purpose Atrium, expanded classrooms and playground, the development continued in 2011 with the refurbishment of the boarding dormitories over the summer holidays, and the commencement of construction of the \$8 million Science and Resource Centre.

- 1 Dr Peter Britton, Principal and CEO of Ipswich Girls' Grammar School
- 2 Artist's impression of the expansion and refurbishment works at St Margaret's Anglican Girls School, Brisbane
- 3 Boarders at St Margaret's Anglican Girls School, Brisbane
- 4 Ros Curtis, Principal of St Margaret's Anglican Girls School, Brisbane

# Coming Events

## AUS

**31 July – 1 August 2011**

Leader's of Residential  
Communitys Conference  
Adelaide

## NZ

**31 May – 3 June 2011**

NZBSA Annual Conferemce  
"Beyond our Doors"  
Dunedin

## USA

**22 – 24 June 2011**

Managing Risk Workshop  
Wilmington, Delaware

**1 – 3 December 2011**

TABS Annual Conference  
Boston

## UK

**4 – 6 April 2011**

Residential Easter Course  
Dauntsey's School, Devizes

**3 – 5 May 2011**

Annual Conference for Head Teachers  
The Queen's Hotel, Leeds

**11–13 July 2011**

Annual Conference for Matrons  
and Medical Staff  
Venue TBA

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