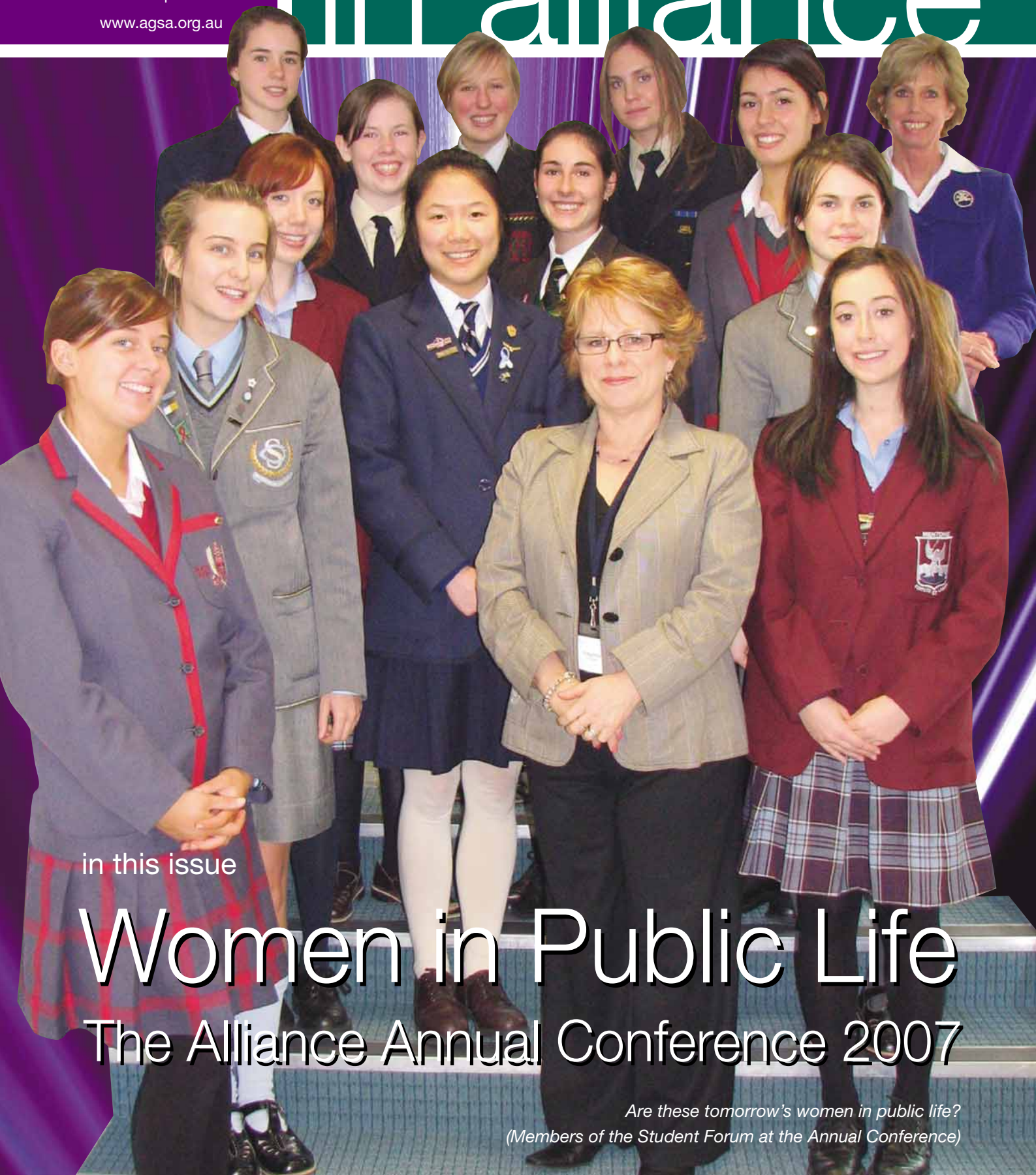


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in alliance



in this issue

Women in Public Life

The Alliance Annual Conference 2007

*Are these tomorrow's women in public life?
(Members of the Student Forum at the Annual Conference)*

**The Alliance
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**in Alliance 2007
Editorial Deadlines**

VOLUME 39
Friday 19 October 2007
Global Education

The Editor would be grateful for any articles or photographs for forthcoming editions. Please forward these to Jan Butler at jbutler@agsa.org.au

From the President...

Susan Just



I would like to begin this edition of *in Alliance* with my congratulations to the organising team of our 2007 Alliance of Girls' Schools Conference held at Lauriston Girls' School in Melbourne. Planning a conference that will meet the needs of our Alliance schools and their staff members is never an easy task. If I can return to my own school with a seed which has been planted in my mind that can be nurtured at a later time, then I know that the conference was successful for me. I also find it tremendously important to speak with my colleagues from around Australia and New Zealand and elsewhere. I learn just as much from a discussion with a colleague as by listening to a keynote speaker.

I am now planning the 2008 conference which will be held at Canberra Girls' Grammar School. Our theme will be *Broadening the horizons for girls*. I am working hard to ensure that we inject some of the Canberra identities and environment into the conference and have already secured some excellent speakers. Instead of school tours, I have been working with Outward Bound to develop a Leadership program which you may attend prior to the conference. This will involve experiential activities around Canberra, or further away in Tharwa, which is the Outward Bound base camp. You might like to purchase some thermals and a warm jacket. Canberra is brisk and sunny in June.

I have read a number of comments offered as feedback in relation to the 2007 Conference. The majority of comments were positive, but there were some critical comments about the speakers and the general format of the Conference. I believe that the annual Alliance Conference is an essential date in the calendar for any Girls' School. Therefore, I am keen to hear from you about what will bring you along to the 2008 Conference. Who are the speakers to whom you most want to listen? What are the important topics for Keynote Speakers and discussion? How would you like to connect with other delegates? Given my practical nature, it would be useful for me to hear from you while I am putting the 2008

Conference program together. Please send your responses to our Executive Office, Jan Butler, and I will do my best to develop a program which will meet your needs.

I recently attended a conference in Canberra where I was able to listen to Dr Peter Shergold from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and Bill Burmester from the Department of Education, Science and Training.

Dr Shergold told the audience that the prosperity of Australia in the 21st Century would depend upon investing in education which was vital to productivity and growth. He said that completion of Year 12 was a key factor in influencing employment opportunities. He pointed out that a female who completes year 12 will earn \$212,000 more over her lifetime than one who doesn't. He also said that we had misinterpreted 'knowledge nation' to mean tertiary studies, and pointed out that trade and vocational skills were equally as important.

Bill Burmester outlined the Summer School for teachers and explained that 1000 teachers would be selected in 2008 to complete a ten day residential course. The focus of this professional development would be evidence based research on core subjects. He also made comment about the National Curriculum and consistency of standards within Australia.

Both speakers were very clear about the thinking of our current government and I sense that the Opposition will share similar views on a number of these topics.

I believe that we will be increasingly involved in a debate about mandatory elements which will be introduced by the Federal Government and the obligation of schools to meet these elements in return for funding. We do not want the important elements of education for the girls in our schools to be lost in a sea of mandatory requirements; therefore it is imperative for each one of us to be voices in any process of discussion or debate.

Susan Just



Marie Wilson with Meg Hansen, Principal of the Conference's Host School, Lauriston Girls' School

From the Editor...

Jan Butler



A number of new strategic initiatives have been begun during Beth Blackwood's term as President of the Alliance and I have enjoyed working with her and with the Executive to make them happen. The Executive will continue to benefit from Beth's energy and passion for girls' education as she continues on the Executive as Past President for the next year. I look forward to working with the new President, Susan Just, as she works to prepare for the next conference in Canberra from 20-22 June 2008 and to continue with the strategic directions initiated under Beth's Chairmanship.

As well as recording some highlights from the annual conference, we have devoted this issue to profiling some women in public life and looking at how their experiences in a girls' school have shaped them. The statistics indicate that there is still a long way to go to have women equally represented on Boards, in politics and in management positions alongside men, but it is clear that our girls' schools have contributed many talented and capable women to public life and will continue to do so. I have had to leave some of the conference reviews for the next issue to find room for all the stories I received. Marie Wilson's thesis that as more women become leaders it will be seen as normal and more young women will aspire to the top positions is being strongly taken up by the Alliance and has inspired the girls who were part of the Student Forum at the Conference. (See pages 8-9.)

To quote from The White House Project web site:

*Add Women, Change Culture.
Add Women, Change Business.
Add Women, Change Politics.
Add Women, CHANGE Everything.*

(<http://www.whitehouseproject.com/about/casestatement/>)

Much debate has occurred as to why New Zealand is able to have more representation of women in the highest offices than elsewhere. New Zealand was the first country in the world in which all the highest offices were occupied by women, between March 2005 and August 2006: the Sovereign Queen Elizabeth II of New Zealand, Governor-General Dame Silvia Cartwright, Prime Minister Helen Clark, Speaker of the New Zealand House of Representatives Margaret Wilson and Chief Justice Dame Sian Elias.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics_of_New_Zealand). One explanation put forward is that "over time women have carved out an entrenched but recognised position within both major parties. Since the

inception of the National Party in 1936, women's sections have been in existence, and have become increasingly active in encouraging more women to stand for nomination, providing support and training for women seeking candidate selection." (Curtin, J 1997, Research Note 14 1997-98, *Gender and Political Leadership in New Zealand*, Politics and Public Administration Group, www.apf.gov.au/library/pubs/rn/1997-98/98rn14.htm).

This support exists in Australia: Women on Boards (www.womenonboards.org.au/index.php) is a national program to improve the gender balance on Australian company boards through skills based selection. The program funds research, holds high-level networking and mentoring events and actively promotes women onto boards. The website is a meeting place for current directors and aspirant directors, who are registered with the WoB program. The Centre for Leadership for Women (www.leadershipforwomen.com.au) also "empowers women to believe in their own unique leadership qualities" and for a small annual joining fee, women can access recent research and statistics as well as network with other women leaders.

In politics, EMILY's List is 'a national organisation aimed at getting more progressive Labor women elected to Parliament. Formed in 1996, EMILY's List has provided crucial support to women seeking election to government. To date EMILY's List has supported 115 new women MPs into parliaments around Australia. EMILY's List provides financial, training and mentoring support to endorsed candidates in State and Federal election campaigns.' (<http://www.emilyslist.org.au>)



The Student Forum at the Alliance Conference

The Alliance web site is providing a useful space to include news items and events that we don't have the space for in this magazine. You will find current membership details, copies of newsletters and this magazine, order forms for our brochure "Why a Girls' School?", and advertisements for employment as well as copies of presentations from our recent and other conferences. There is also a discussion forum for members and links to web sites which may be of interest. I encourage you take a few minutes to click your way through the web site and become familiar with what we can offer our members there and how you can contribute to this site. Some parts of the site are for members only and are password protected. An email was sent to all members on 12 December 2006 giving access details. If you have mislaid these details, please email me for your school's username and password.

Jan Butler

FOR YOUR DIARY
Visit the website for more details

September 2007	Registrations open for Student Leadership Conference 2008
12 - 14 November 2007	Girls Schools Association Conference, Queen's Hotel, Leeds, UK (www.gsa.uk.com)
16 - 20 January 2008	Student Leadership Conference 2008, Penrhos College, Perth, Western Australia
20 - 22 June 2008	Alliance Annual Conference 2008, Canberra Girls' Grammar School, Australian Capital Territory
24 - 27 June 2008	National Coalition of Girls' Schools Annual Conference, Cleveland, Ohio, USA (www.ncgs.org)

Thoughts from the Student Ambassadors to Baltimore

Antonia Morris, Brisbane Girls Grammar School, Australia and Emma Haggis, Nga Tawa School, New Zealand

Antonia and Emma were selected to represent the Alliance at the International Girls' Forum which was held in conjunction with the National Coalition of Girls' Schools (NCGS) annual conference in Baltimore in June 2007. Their airfares were partly funded by World Challenge, with the NCGS providing a host family and free registration to the Forum and the conference. The Alliance thanks all those involved in making this experience possible.

The girls were asked to provide some insights they gained from the Forum including some of the ingredients they feel are important in educating young women to be global citizens. Here are some of their ideas:

All-Girls Education: This is one of the best ways girls can be educated and achieve high grades; an all girls education means there are few distractions in class and we feel we have more confidence to both ask and answer questions and to participate fully in the class.

Diversity: We think that diversity needs to be accepted so that we can understand each other better and appreciate others' differences so we can feel we are all on equal terms. We also realize that people need to be respected for their differences and when the time is right it is a good idea to celebrate differences. We were particularly impressed with the number of cultural awareness groups that Roland Park Country School had and think it would be a great idea for schools, so others can learn in a friendly environment about other people's cultures.

Service: Serving others, for example community service, helps us to realize just how lucky we are. At Brisbane Girls Grammar, girls have the opportunity to help people in challenging situations; they have recently helped overseas, to build a school for young children and this has helped them to understand others' situations.

Science and Technology: We think that it is important that girls can feel as though they are easily able to take these classes and that they can also succeed in these classes. We think it is important to change the male domination in science and technology. Technology does have some disadvantages but we realize it is one of the keys to our future and it should be used wisely.



The girls at the Baltimore Aquarium

“...an all girls education means there are few distractions in class and we feel we have more confidence to both ask and answer questions and to participate fully in the class.”



Creativity: We think creativity is very important for the future in both education and our careers and we think it is important to keep thinking outside the square so we have plenty of new ideas to challenge us.

Analytical and Critical Thinking Skills: Dr Freeman Hrabowski III made it clear that these are important for girls so we don't just give up, but instead we use these skills to try things we may not try normally.

Empathy: To be able to understand others' differences and the different situations they face we need to be empathetic not sympathetic.

Leadership: Women leadership is especially important for the future. It is important to encourage all students to have leadership roles in any size. At Nga Tawa they have both Year 11 and Year 13 leaders and also other various leadership roles in the other years. By giving students many opportunities to lead throughout their schooling, in whatever way they feel comfortable it will help them in their future careers and helps to strengthen leadership for the future for women.

Imagination: We all need to have imagination so we can achieve our dreams.



Emma (right) with Hannah from the UK

The Alliance Annual Conference 2007

womenleading@global.edu



Joy Wandin Murphy AO

The stage was set for a warm and friendly conference when Joy Wandin Murphy AO, senior elder of the Wurundjeri people, presented a moving Welcome to Country, offering branches of wurrun leaves to the delegates as a symbol of peace and understanding. Joy is an honorary Professor of Swinburne University, Chairperson of the Australian Indigenous Consultative Assembly and has held executive positions in different departments of Government. She has been involved in Aboriginal issues for the past 30 years, is a Trustee of the National Gallery of Victoria and a member of the Equal Opportunity Commission. She also operates her own business, Jarlo Visions.



Dame Beryl Beaurepaire AC DBE

The Alliance was fortunate to have Dame Beryl Beaurepaire AC DBE, a Patron of the Alliance, to officially open the annual conference at Lauriston.

In her opening Beryl spoke of the importance of single sex education for girls. She commented that we would find that most of the prominent women in Australia had attended single sex schools. She also mentioned a time that she spoke at a leading coeducational school, after she had attended an international conference in Jerusalem, and the only students who asked questions were male. She felt that the girls had been inhibited from asking questions. Of great interest to the listeners was mention of her own experience in the air force (WAAF) during WWII and the discrimination that she faced because she was a woman. She talked about having to be much better than the men to get opportunities.

As well as being an old scholar of Fintona Girl's School, Dame Beryl was the Chairman of the Board of Management from 1973 to 1987. She is deeply aware of the nature of girls' schools and their particular strengths and has contributed to many organisations in the interests of women.



Marie Wilson

Despite being near the end of a whirlwind tour to Perth, Adelaide, Brisbane and Sydney, sponsored by the Alliance, Marie was full of energy and passion in her presentation to the conference. Marie is President of the White House Project (www.thewhitehouseproject.com.au) which "aims to advance women's leadership in all communities and sectors—up to the U.S. presidency—by filling the leadership pipeline with a richly diverse, critical mass of women." In her visits to Australian schools, she was very keen to discover the issues of importance to young women and made an interesting comment in her online blog that "leadership is very much a part of the curriculum within girls' schools here, but leading after school is not on the radar screen." Perhaps we have been too quick to assert that

"women can do anything" without pointing out that choices still need to be made – Marie referred to the "choiceless choice" described by Mary Catherine Bateson as any choice demands sacrifice. "Girls still have issues around voice and confidence, around saying what they think and acting on it, and around discrimination in jobs" and the culture of Australian politics is not attractive to women. Until there is a substantial number of women leading in this and other areas, there will not be an incentive for others to follow.

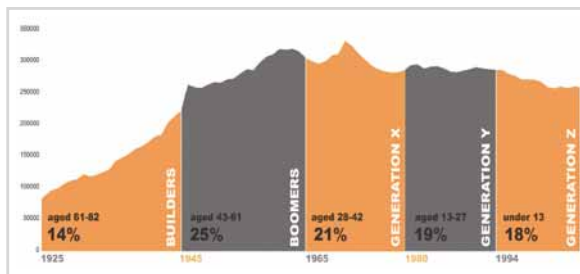


Mark McCrindle

Mark showed how a keynote address can be full of statistics and yet interesting and entertaining. He compared the generations, labelling them the Builders, Boomers, Generations X, Y and Z and discussed why what worked with the Boomers

and others cannot work with the Y and Z Generations that are in our schools today.

His presentation can be found on the Alliance web site and many of his research papers are available on his own web site at www.mccrindle.com.au



	20th Century (Boomers & Xers)	Today (Generations Y & Z)
Who	Teacher - Learned	Facilitator - Learner
What	Monologue - Long term needs	Multi-modal - Short term demands
How	Positional - Factual	Relational - Practical
Where	Sit and listen - Classroom style	Try and see - Café style

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Conference Discussion Cafés

Introduction

Conference delegates have a wide range of experience and extensive expertise. Discussion cafés, held on the last morning of the Conference were designed to capture everyone's thoughts on the conference themes. Sixteen groups, with between ten and fifteen people in each, spent an hour talking about what they had heard and what they could do about it in the future.

Initial feedback indicated that this was a valuable part of the weekend. Here are the responses. All ideas have been included unedited and there was inevitably overlap in the questions.

Topic 1: Role of the Alliance

Some of the **key functions** should be networking for staff and girls, a conference with a specific focus on girls only issues; organising events for girls such as the leadership training and US liaison; providing professional learning for a wider range of staff, promoting girls' education; liaising with other women's organisations. The annual conference should be continued, along with the speaker program and the student leadership conference.

For the future, suggestions were: a conference specifically on leadership including emerging leaders; having members trained in leadership to educate and encourage girls in this area; using the talents of alumnae and providing mentoring from former leaders; revamped Women's Day breakfast, leadership for Australian Year 11s and New Zealand Year 10s; links to such ideas as 'Women to Watch', politicians and engineers. Other ideas included more publications, perhaps electronic; a student section on the Alliance website; the use of 'road shows' around states and districts. Some ways the above could be achieved include partnerships with other organisations; commissioning research; appointing a Research Officer.

Topic 2: Knowledge Management

Points made under the heading of **Reinforcement of existing ideas** included: schools risk losing knowledge; knowledge belongs to the school if generated there; too much time is spent re-inventing the wheel, databases of existing knowledge are a good starting point; a sharing culture needs to be emphasised; good knowledge management will assist professional development; meetings can be structured so as to share knowledge. **Concepts which have been neglected** are the

importance of information flow; the value of a common language for teaching and learning; the need to analyse how data flows through the organisation; rewarding staff for information flow. **New concepts** included: analysing and mapping an organisation's social networks; data-base managers linked to change management; implementing a more structured approach to knowledge management; making the storing and accessibility of knowledge a built-in habit; use of the actual environment to provide new knowledge.

What can be done? Acquire greater knowledge of the knowledge management concept; implement classroom walkthroughs; identify information brokers and blockers; look at the Conference Workshop notes on capturing implicit knowledge (Brain Lamb); improve access and depth of databases; provide staff-only days for sharing across subjects and through year-levels; link sharing principles to professional development; establish broad professional learning teams.

How? Survey staff about the skills they have and want; conduct social network analyses to discover how information does or doesn't flow; give staff ownership by recognising their contributions; capture more information about student learning; provide data-entry and support staff.

Topic 3: Demographics

What existing concepts were reinforced? The need to cater for Gen X staff and Gen Y students; valuing diversity; understanding that demographics do and should influence schools and that the concept of loyalty has altered; the population is aging.

What neglected concepts were recalled? The need to inform parents of the importance and use of demographic data; the need to deal with the impact of the internet; the aging work force

What new concepts were introduced? Evidence of students'

poor understanding of internet dangers; the importance of TRUST to this generation; work/life balance research is available; offering parent 'Safety nights'; specific examples of Net dangers.

What can schools do? Use Gen Y staff to help with internet protocols; acknowledge that there will always be a knowledge gap and time lapse for schools in these areas; share knowledge with schools and their parent communities; look at the workload outside the classroom; influence the media to present teaching positively.

"The current situation for young women aspiring to leadership is that only 8.7% of non-executive directorships are women and there has been almost no change in recent times..."



Brian Lamb, Director of the Lauriston Institute



Thanks to the Lauriston team who packed the conference satchels

How might you go about this? Keep ourselves informed as to what is being accessed on the net; set up an Alliance 'MySpace'; survey staff expectations regarding their career; rethink employment structures e.g. part-time leadership; consider paid study; emphasise with staff, "It's not about you, it's about the students."

Topic 4: Leadership

The current situation for young women aspiring to leadership is that only 8.7% of non-executive directors are women and there has been almost no change in recent times; only 3% of the top 200 Australian companies have women CEOs and when they get there it's harder. **New issues raised** were: develop a can-do attitude that applies to the widest range of leadership situations; don't be limited by traditional views of both girls and leadership; women should be valued for the differences they bring to leadership; emphasise leadership as 'service'; promotion of, and support for mentoring. It was noted that females may sometimes discourage each other.

Girls' schools can inspire young women to aim for influence by: bringing role models into schools; profiling young achieving alumnae as students relate well to them; discussing the role of risk-taking; making use of the fact that girls learn through relationships; providing mentoring programs which operate at a number of different levels; having school leadership structures that allow for wide involvement rather than the few school captains; allowing specific curriculum time for leadership.

We can keep young women connected to leadership goals and pathways by: exposure to leadership models; a wide variety of opportunities; encouraging and teaching self-motivation and organisation; teaching the ethical aspects of leadership; promoting not-for-profit organisations and services; separating leadership from 'popularity'; providing awards programs such as Duke of Edinburgh and community-based programs.

We can foster and support aspiring leaders by: providing exchanges between Alliance schools, experiences outside the comfort zone and exposure to other school cultures; keeping abreast of popular culture; being scholarly without being elitist or 'superior'; initiating Alliance projects that raise girls' schools' profiles and place girls in the forefront of education; strengthening women to strengthen society; creating Road Shows of influential leaders; developing more Alliance initiated research into this area; managing up-to-date blogs and chat rooms on these topics.



The Spotless sponsored lunch was delicious food from different countries, presented in spectacular fashion



Conference Student Forum

Delegates were given an opportunity to 'look forward with today's youth and help them define what they need to learn'. In *I am the Future's Child*, Hedley Beare (2001) captures some of the preparation for life and learning which this generation values:

You need to understand what I am learning to believe, how I think about my future, what my world-view is. You and I want me to be a success in the world in which I will enter as an adult and which I will be responsible for. In future days I will admire you for being able to look forward with me and to help me define what I need to learn.

Girls in Year 11 from five Alliance Member schools were invited to present a panel discussion responding to themes and issues raised by the keynote speakers. As part of their preparation they read Marie Wilson's book, *Closing the Leadership Gap. Why women can and must help run the world*. Workshopping for only a day before they were to present their ideas on the second day of the conference, they were also asked to suggest actions which could be taken by the participants and themselves when they returned to their schools.

On her blog at <http://blog.thewhitehouseproject.org/2007/06/18/alliance-of-girls%e2%80%99-schools-national-conference-melbourne>, Marie Wilson succinctly captures the key points made by the students. In her words they are:

- Invite more girls to lead — too often the same girls (in fact, girls like themselves) are chosen to lead while others with potential don't feel the same encouragement. Girls have a keen sense of justice, wherever they live, and these girls in particular really picked up on the need for invitation to leadership. Clearly, they want to lift as they rise.
- More access to women leaders — The girls validated the practice of bringing alums back to the school to talk, but not just at assembly speeches about the paths to power. They want their schools to give them the opportunity to interact with women leaders, which leads to #3...
- Set up mentoring programs — This could be email, or perhaps one-on-one meetings every now and again — but these girls were very clear about the need for concrete exposure to women in business and politics so they can replicate their leadership.
- Politics and the need to know much, much more — Seems that even though education in civics is a part of curriculum, these girls (like their sisters in the states) say they know very little about the nuts and bolts of entering politics. Just as American girls told us in our "Pipeline to Power" study, the Australian girls need the process demystified.
- Critical thinking in regards to the media — The girls deeply understood the need for women to be seen and heard in media, and the need for the girls themselves to develop skills in critical thinking so they can be more sceptical about what they read and hear.

The following are the reflections of some of the girls who shared this experience:

Chloe and I were a little apprehensive having been informed we were to represent Lauriston Girls' School for an Alliance Conference hosted by our school. We had little idea of the goals, objectives and outcomes of the Conference, and were further bemused by the idea of reading Marie Wilson's *Closing the Leadership Gap: Why Women Can and Must Help Run the World* in a few short weeks.

On our first day, there was a quick introductory session where we met our facilitator, Dagmar Turnidge, and one of the Student Forum organisers, Amanda Swaney, as well as ten representatives from the five other girls' schools. Because we all shared a common interest in the status of women leadership in the world, we found it to be a comfortable working environment. We divided into groups, expressing similar ideas and views in addition to some interesting and insightful ones. Following the introductory session, we ventured into the Hall and sat with the delegates from all over Australasia for the opening welcome and first keynote speaker.

The next morning, we sat in on Mark McCrindle's presentation about the emerging trends in the changing generations. We then assembled in the Conference room and discussed viewpoints on women's leadership, and drew up a set of principles for action to promote leadership development in girls' schools. These included: inviting more girls to lead throughout schools, having more access to women leaders, setting up mentoring programs, bringing politics into the school curriculum, and developing critical thinking with regard to the media. Later that day, we formed a panel on stage to express our views as senior school students to the audience of conference delegates.

The Student Forum was a confronting yet enjoyable experience; for us, it was the most significant part of the Conference. It was good to be able to communicate our views and respond to questions from the audience. The Forum concluded with Marie Wilson joining us on the panel.

Stephanie Li



the Panel for the Student Forum with Dagmar Turnidge (front) and Amanda Swaney (back)

Being part of the conference exposed me to a number of strong women leaders, including principals and senior staff from a range of schools as well as the guest of the conference, Marie Wilson. This was a positive experience as it allowed me to learn by simply seeing what they have achieved. Sitting in on the keynote sessions was highly informative and allowed me to see how passionate so many teachers are about training a new generation of women leaders. This was inspiring because as a student I am not exposed to the hard work teachers put in behind the scenes. Presenting our own keynote session was daunting but definitely an experience I enjoyed and one I will cherish for the rest of my life. Finally, the best part of the conference was the amazing women I met through the conference, especially the other students who were all so talented in their own right. I look forward to meeting these girls again and working together on some of our ideas which resulted from the conference.

Danielle Panaccio

I felt extremely privileged to have taken part in such a Conference and worked with Marie Wilson and the representatives from the other schools. It motivated us in our pursuit to make a difference. Having been oblivious to the situation of women in leadership all over the world, the session gave me an insight into leadership and opened up my eyes to the possibility of influencing young women of our generation to take action and help reshape our nation. The Conference has had such a profound affect on us all that we have planned a meeting to assemble and discuss goals and values next week, with plenty more meetings to come.

Stephanie Li

The Conference was an amazing experience for the students involved, and I am sure the delegates also. For me, it was extremely eye-opening and challenging. With my particular interests in social justice issues, for example: global poverty and human trafficking, the conference led me to see the potential of more women becoming the decision-makers on these sort of issues, and what a huge benefit to society this could have. Before the conference, I rarely took notice of the sex of our leaders and the way that they are presented in the media, but reading Marie Wilson's book has made me more conscious of the way that females are presented to the world. Being at the conference enabled me to look deeply into these issues, and realise that I am in the ultimate position to become a leader and fight for what I believe in. The world can and will become a better place if I and women around me rise to the challenge of leadership.

Justine Carey



Marie Wilson joined the panel for question time

The student participation at this conference may well present a model which would enrich future conferences thereby equipping us all to better answer the questions posed by Angelica in Hedley Beare's story:

"So do you know what to teach me? Do you know what I need to learn? And do you know how to teach me? Are you confident that you can design a curriculum which will equip me to live in my world?" (Beare)

References:

Beare, H. 2001, *Creating the Future School*, Routledge Falmer
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Wilson, M. 2004, *Closing the Leadership Gap. Why women can and must help run the world*, Penguin.

The Panel

Justine Carey and **Danielle Panaccio** (The Mac.Robertson Girls' High School); **Jacinta Halsall** and **Samantha Poole** (St Catherine's School); **Alice Crockett** and **Chloe Lawrence** (Ruyton Girls' School); **Kate Doherty** and **Emma Black** (Mentone Girls' Secondary College); **Stephanie Li** and **Chloe Champion de Crespigny** (Lauriston Girls' School); **Hayley Wright** and **Laura Irving** (Korowa Anglican Girls' School).

Facilitated by **Dagmar Turnidge**, Centre for Strategic Education, Department of Education, Deakin University

Thanks also to **Carolyn Anderson** and **Amanda Swaney** of Ruyton Girls' School for their work organising this section of the conference and to **Marie Wilson** for her participation.

When I was first asked to attend a conference on woman's leadership it sounded like it could be interesting but the words honour or excitement didn't immediately come to mind. However, my mind-set quickly changed as I began to read Marie Wilson's book and I realised just how much women, even in today's society, are undervalued and how far we still haven't come. As the date of the conference quickly approached my nerves about what exactly was going to be expected of myself and the eleven other girls mingled with my excitement that maybe we could have an impact on this issue of woman's leadership, an issue that concerns us all.

Meeting the other girls was one of the many things that made this such an amazing experience. Listening to Marie Wilson speak about the problems facing women in leadership in our own country and world wide was truly inspiring and made me, made us all, really think about where our world could be heading if we don't let women help lead the world and made me want to take responsibility for what was happening. Discussing the ideas presented to us throughout the conference, trying to organise our minds so that when we got up to talk it wouldn't all collapse around us, we all got to know each other, inspire each other and be inspired.

I can't remember much of the actual student forum, apart from a dramatic increase in my own heart beat and the feeling that every word I was saying was coming out wrong, as it all rushed past me through the adrenalin but I like to believe that we were listened to and that maybe we made a difference, however small, and took a step in the right direction. When the conference was all over, my throat dry and a feeling of exhaustion sweeping through, I felt extremely honoured that I had been given that experience and ever so grateful to my school for providing me with such an experience. All the student delegates have kept in contact and more meetings have been planned so that we will be able to continue to strive forward, creating more options for young women, like us, who are interested in women's leadership. Thankfully the conference is just the beginning of what I hope will continue to be an incredible experience.

Chloe Lawrence

Women in Public Life

Maxine McKew

Candidate for ALP for Bennelong and former ABC presenter

I attended All Hallows' Convent in Brisbane throughout the 1960s, matriculating in 1970.

This was also the alma mater of my mother Mary - she completed Year 12 in 1940 at a time when very few Queenslanders finished 12 years of schooling, let alone many girls.

Run by the Sisters of Mercy, it is one of Brisbane's oldest institutions, started in 1861 by Ellen Whitty, one of the pioneering educationists (in the mould of Ursula Frayne, Mary MacKillop and others who battled bishops etc) of the 19th century. Women who should be celebrated and honoured in my view. They founded schools and hospitals which survive to this day. They are among our great nation builders, is how I see it. It was all driven by the Mercy ethic. As Catherine McAuley always said, "Nothing is more conducive to the good of society than the education of women."

As I have always said, I was taught by women who seemed to know what was worth knowing. The best of them set the imagination racing. My speech and drama teacher, Sr Mary St Vincent, literally gave me my voice. If I have any confidence about what I am doing this year, it goes



right back to her speech room where I had to stand and deliver every day. She taught me control of my voice, about presentation and tried to give me a certain poise.

It was an interesting period when I was at school. I bridged the pre and post Vatican period so this was a time of intense argument about the role of the Church and in particular how religious orders should organise their activities.

Complementing the teaching by religious women was a small band of lay staff - superbly educated women who in a History or English lesson could take you way beyond the parochial confines of Brisbane of the 1960s. I am still in touch with some of these women.

If you are well taught you never forget it. And I do retain a strong partiality towards the idea of single sex schooling for girls. I certainly appreciate, in retrospect, the space it gave all of us to test ourselves and to do so in an uninhibited way.

The company of women is a fine thing and one of the great joys of my life.

Christine Milne: Empowering Girls for Leadership

Australian Greens Senator

As a little girl growing up in the 1950s on a modest family dairy farm in north-west Tasmania, I attended the Wesley Vale Area School. For five years, I was in combined grades classes with children from farming and fishing families. Seven of us, from all those in my year group, four girls and three boys had similar ability and competed every week for the top marks in the weekly tests for mental arithmetic and spelling. At age ten, two of us were sent to all girls' boarding schools in the city. The others went to the newly built Latrobe High School.

Of the seven, one boy left school in Grade 10, completed a trade and became a farmer, and one of the girls left school, found a job and married to settle into family life. The rest of us went on to university where we all met up again. So I cannot say that an all girls' school resulted in a better academic outcome than would otherwise have been the case. But what I can say is that it shaped the values and the drive I developed to make the world a better place. It gave me the confidence and skills to lead and sidelined gender as an excuse not to do so.

St Mary's College in Hobart in 1964 was a Presentation Sisters' school run by strong, independent women. Nuns not only ran and taught in the school from the Principal down, but also cooked, cleaned, did the books



and oversaw the boarding school. There was a strong ethos of personal responsibility and a commitment to social justice. Not only could girls do anything, they had a responsibility to do so. Anything less was letting parents, school and God down. The idea that gender might be an impediment to leadership or achievement was not tolerated.

We were inculcated with the view that we should have the courage of our convictions and stand up for what we believed in. By their own example, the nuns challenged us vain teenage girls with the idea that happiness and fulfilment would come from serving others and not ourselves.

Schools give you many things. An academic education is important, but of itself it will not develop a social conscience or produce leaders. You have to be nurtured, challenged, encouraged and empowered to act. This too can come from co-educational schools but what an all girls' school gave me, that no co-educational school could, was all of those things plus the knowledge, born of day to day lived experience, that women are independent, equal citizens of the world, capable of running it, with no need to wait for or defer to any male in getting started.

Women in Public Life

Donna Duggan: Out of Africa

1991 Senior - Moreton Bay College

It's a long way from suburban Wynnum Central to sub-Saharan central Africa, but this is a journey that a surprising number of Moreton Bay College students and graduates have made.

The College's aim for each student 'to develop a sense of care and compassion for one another, especially the less advantaged' has seen students embrace service projects such as the Watoto charity which builds homes for Ugandan orphans whose parents have died of AIDS, and several students have travelled to Africa to provide very hands-on and practical support.

Others have had a more circuitous journey. 1991 Senior Donna Duggan, for example, had no idea that she would eventually live and work in Tanzania, helping to develop important educational and health programs.

Donna travelled overseas and studied nursing in Australia before deciding, in 1995, to backpack with a friend from Cape Town to Cairo. While they didn't make it to Cairo on that occasion, she loved Africa so much that she went back twice more. Each time, she found herself in Tanzania where, she says, the people are 'the friendliest in Africa'.

Although she loved the warm welcome she received in Tanzania, Donna soon became concerned about the social and medical problems caused by the entrenched poverty. With an average annual income of around \$490, most people had little or no access to education or health care. This was a particular problem in a community where thirty percent of the population had HIV/AIDS, and three in every five children died before their fifth birthday. Poverty and disease caused family breakdown and the abandonment of children. Donna felt that she could make a difference and set about raising funds for health education, immunisation clinics and other social and medical programmes.

In 2004, Donna and her Tanzanian husband Nas established Maasai Wanderings, an eco-safari company which not only provides employment for locals, but also generates funding that they use to maintain educational programs for children. One of these initiatives came to fruition with the opening of the Ilkurot Nursery School in a Maasai township, which now has an enrolment of 200 students who are all excited to be in school and loving their uniforms!

"Everyone knows me as a kind but careful person," she says, "so I'm approached for assistance for various things. Recently, it was \$187 to help a widow put her son in school for another year. She walks from sunrise to sunset selling baskets that she weaves to try and save money, but she would never earn enough to be able to send her son to school.

"So we do that for her. Maybe one day he'll finish school, find a good job, and support his mother, who is doing everything she can to support him right now.

"People helping each other kind of stuff is what I like," she says.

Donna attributes much of her motivation to her upbringing.



"... Donna soon became concerned about the social and medical problems caused by the entrenched poverty. With an average annual income of around \$490, most people had little or no access to education or health care."

"I think anyone's approach to the world comes from their background," she says. "The way they were raised and what values they were taught through education and family support. Then, I believe it is up to the person themselves to make the best of it all and use it to become an even better person.

"Often when I'm trying to make decisions on what is right and wrong, I ask myself, 'What would my Mama do?' or 'What would my father think?', because fairness is very important to them.

"And of course, I was taught the 'right' thing to do at school at MBC. It seemed to be a

focus - not only to excel in the academic and sporting fields, but to become a good person within yourself and for yourself too."

Though she didn't deliberately set out to become a public figure, Donna's work has made her an important member of her local community. Through her actions in identifying problems and taking direct and personal steps to implement solutions, she is a graduate of whom we are truly proud.

Donna hasn't quite made it to Cairo, but she's still determined to get there some day. In the meantime there can be no doubt that through her work she has given something very precious to 'people who have nothing but want to give you everything'.

Women in Public Life

Alison Watkins

by Dr Julie Rimes, Senior Curriculum Advisor, St Michael's Collegiate School

Where would we be without women in public life? Women have played a crucial part in the economic development of this country since the time of the first colonial settlers. As women have claimed a full public role, they have sought and been appointed to positions at every level of the public and private spectrum. One such person is St Michael's Collegiate Old Girl, Alison Watkins (formerly Lester), a non-executive director of retailers Woolworths Limited and Just Group Limited. The Director's role is a complex and demanding one in these competitive environments.

Her recent career includes several years in leadership roles in agriculture and food processing industries, where she was Chief Executive Officer of Berri Limited and Chairman of Mrs Crocket's Kitchen Pty Ltd. She is a Board member of the National Food Industry Strategy which has a focus on leadership and strategic direction for the Australian food industry. She was a member of the Corish Review Group which developed a national policy blueprint for agriculture and food processing during 2005. This group made recommendations on Australia's rural industry including drought policy, environment policy, sustainable land management, biotechnology and food regulation. It was a critical report, central to the Nation's prosperity and our ongoing sustainability.

Between 1999 and 2002 Alison held several senior roles at ANZ Banking Group Limited. She also spent 10 years at international management consultants, McKinsey & Company from 1989-1999 and became a partner of the Firm in 1996. At McKinsey she gained wide experience working in financial services, fast moving consumer goods, retail, professional service, industrial and public sector organisations. Her work covered strategy, organisation and performance improvement. Alison started her career with Chartered Accountants, Touche Ross, where she gained audit and taxation consulting experience.

Alison combines these demanding work roles with membership of Boards of various Arts and Sporting organisations; for example, Alison was a Director of the World Swimming Championships held in Melbourne earlier this year and from 2001-2006 a Director with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.

Alison and her husband Rod live in Melbourne with their four children.

Reflecting on her career, Alison points to the importance of growing up on a farm, which she loved, and where she learned to work in male-dominated environments like the shearing shed. She regards her time as a boarder at St Michael's Collegiate School in Hobart as fundamental. "I was given some wonderful leadership opportunities, and developed independence and resilience. I can point to three or four teachers who played a formative role in helping me achieve academically, and becoming more creative and confident in putting my views forward. My father would regularly discuss the economy and politics, and the performance of different companies, and this gave me a real interest in the business world."

After completing a Bachelor of Commerce at Tasmania University, Alison moved with her husband, Rod Watkins, to Sydney. Alison recalls being very reluctant to leave Tasmania, but says it was vital in developing the experience that has given her today's opportunities. She is a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants and a Fellow of the Financial Services Institute of Australasia.



When asked what advice she would give girls at school today, Alison makes a number of observations. "I have daughters at two wonderful girls schools in Victoria, Lauriston and St Catherine's, and am so impressed with the opportunities that girls in schools like these have today, including a much stronger focus on the opportunities after school for women. My advice is, at school, embrace the opportunities you have, take risks and just generally have a go. You are in such a supportive environment, compared with what life after school can be like, and the confidence you can build at school will stand you in great stead.

"At school and afterwards, think about favouring breadth over specialisation, especially in the early stages. I've always tried to keep lots of options open, mostly because I was never quite sure what I wanted to do. That's given me a range of experiences across industries and roles and that breadth is valued at senior levels in business.

"Develop relationships with people who can and want to help you as you progress through life. I can point to a small number of people who've created opportunities for me and often, taken quite a risk to do so. I try to play this role for others, especially women, at earlier stages in their career, and find it very satisfying.

"Always remember work is just one part of life and never let work compromise your family, friends and contribution you make to our community. You may find yourself, as I have, focusing to a greater or lesser extent on the different areas over the years, but watch you manage this journey with care. I know when I'm 70, I am going to gain a lot more satisfaction from my family and friends than I will from whatever I've achieved in my career."

Women in Public Life

Professor Sally Walker

Vice-Chancellor, Deakin University

Professor Sally Walker is the Vice-Chancellor of Deakin University, a position she has held since 2003. Her tenure at Deakin University has been described as ‘achievement heavy’ and rightly so. Professor Walker secured a Medical School for Deakin University and has attracted vast amounts of new investment in the University. When she took on the CEO’s role, Deakin’s annual turnover was a little more than \$320 million; she now administers a budget that is nudging \$500 million. Most recently Professor Walker launched her latest ambitious plans to develop a state-of-the-art biotechnology facility at the University’s Geelong Campus at Waurn Ponds that has the potential to turn Geelong into Australia’s Silicon Valley.

There is no doubting Professor Walker’s passion for education. She says that “the transforming power of education given the opportunity to participate has been an influential message throughout my life”.

Professor Walker studied at a number of excellent State High Schools in various places in regional Victoria until she won a half scholarship, as a boarder, to Melbourne Girls Grammar.

“I am immensely grateful to my parents for the sacrifices they made to allow me to attend Melbourne Girls Grammar where I had the great privilege of being taught by women such as Lorna Osborn and Edith Mountain. Educators in single sex girls’ schools were the pioneers of educational reform that has made great gains for the schooling of girls. I see myself as a beneficiary of the best that a girls’ school education can provide.”

From secondary school, Professor Walker studied Law at the University of Melbourne. She graduated with First Class Honours in her Law degree; she was placed first in her graduating class and was awarded the Supreme Court Prize, the Anna Brennan Memorial Prize and the inaugural Joan Rosanove Memorial Prize.

“Perhaps it is because of my background that I greatly value higher education for the opportunities that it can create for those who have access to it. Indeed, I feel passionately about higher education. In all its activities, but particularly in its teaching and research, a university can have a profound, positive effect on the welfare and development of individuals and society.”

The influence of Professor Walker’s background is revealed in the ways that she leads Deakin University. Deakin has Campuses in Melbourne as well as in the regional city of Geelong and rural Warrnambool in Victoria’s south-west. Although it is certainly easier to run a profitable university in a metropolitan setting, Professor Walker is committed to enhancing the contribution the University makes to its rural and regional communities. Deakin’s new Medical School is the most obvious example of this to date. Deakin was successful in its bid for a new Medical School as its School will train doctors who are seeking to work and study in rural and regional areas. “There is a critical shortage of doctors working in rural and regional areas; Deakin’s response was to provide a realistic plan that contributes to addressing this problem.”

Professor Walker assumes a special responsibility for promoting the benefits of higher education and for using her best endeavours to make higher education affordable for those in most need of assistance. She established a scholarships program in an attempt to overcome the negative consequences of higher educational costs for the most disadvantaged groups. “The generous scholarships available at Deakin



include scholarships that provide free accommodation in a Deakin residence at the Geelong Campus or the Warrnambool Campus as well as more traditional cash payments and fee-reduction bursaries. They have been developed specifically for students from rural and regional areas or disadvantaged financial backgrounds, students with a disability, mature-aged students, Indigenous students and students from under-represented schools.”

Professor Walker says that issues of cost are just one consideration for students. “It is equally important for me to promote the benefits of higher education, especially for students from schools where there have been no students or very few students who have completed school and pursued higher education. For these students, higher education might not be on the radar. We have a responsibility for putting it on the map and for stressing the life-long benefits that flow from it.”

Professor Walker is not only a role model for students, she feels that she has a responsibility to other women, especially younger women contemplating the compromises associated with combining work and family responsibilities. “It is important for me to reveal that I have reached my current position and, at the same time, I have a husband and two children.”

In 2005 Professor Walker won an Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency Award for her contribution to the advancement of women. The award recognised the outcomes she had achieved in personally championing a range of initiatives to effectively advance talented women into senior positions within the University.

Women in Public Life

Margy Osmond

From Brisbane Girls Grammar School to Politics and the Boardroom

Climbing a political career ladder, Margy Osmond, former Brisbane Girls Grammar School student (1977), is now the CEO of the Australian National Retailers Association (ANRA) which represents the largest national employers in Australia. "I always look for the opportunity to work with great people and as my Board is made up of the national CEOs of Coles, Woolworths, David Jones, Bunnings and Best and Less, I consider myself very lucky," she said.

Having developed a passion in politics from her family she took a government job in the Queensland Lands Department and then the Premier's Department directly after school and studied her Communications degree part-time at Queensland University of Technology.

"I am not sure that I am a very good role model for those considering tertiary studies as I have started three degrees and failed to finish any yet! I seemed to have taken off on a working path that made part-time study very difficult. While I am conscious at times of the lack of those letters after my name, it seems not to have been an insurmountable stumbling block for promotions or being taken seriously at the boardroom table," said Margy.

Moving to New South Wales with her husband, she took a job in media and public relations for government departments varying from Fisheries to Health which eventually led to a position as the media liaison officer for the Royal Tours of Australia in 1988. Soon after she became the media adviser to the Minister for Business and Consumer Affairs.

"Political staffers are often a reviled species but I think this was the most valuable period of my working life. I became a Chief of Staff for another Minister and then moved on to lobbying, policy development and media for a major industry association. After this I became the CEO of the State and Sydney Chamber of Commerce for five years. Women are reasonably rare at the helm of peak industry groups, and as the Chamber was established in 1825, I often think a woman in the top job must have sent the 'founding fathers' spinning in their graves!" said Margy.

Margy enjoys politics because of the sense that she can affect Government policy for the better. Her advice to others interested in the area: "Be interested and involved in politics, don't just follow it."

"Having a high profile means key people and opportunities quite often come your way and the trick is how to get the most value from that network," she said. "Probably the most rewarding outcome for me is putting that network to use for talented young people. I have been lucky enough to mentor a number of terrific people on their career paths. I now have a little 'family' of former mentees who have gone on to great things and are now far more important, not to mention better paid, than I am! Watching and applauding their progress spells achievement for me."

Brisbane Girls Grammar School played a pivotal role for her in building a future; it gave her so much more than the basic educational skills. "It taught me about networks, teams and leadership and gave me a level of confidence in myself and my intellectual judgement. The only gift you keep for a lifetime is your education and I use what Girls Grammar gave to me, every day," said Margy.



She maintains her grounding from her life outside work: "I am blessed with an amazing, supportive husband and fabulous friends, who delight in keeping me honest. I am a voracious reader with very catholic tastes which keeps me in touch with new ideas and old facts. And yes, I have already read the new Harry Potter book!"

If she were pressed to choose an alternative career Margy would probably be in the media or a history teacher.

Margy also sits on the boards of The Bell Shakespeare Company, the NSW Major Events Board and the Organising Committee for the World Masters Games in Sydney in 2009.

"There's nothing quite like being at the triumphant opening night of Othello and knowing you have made some small contribution to the success of the company. I have a real passion for my adopted home of Sydney and being part of organisations that contribute to the event profile of that city is a buzz. The World Masters Games is the biggest non-elite sporting event in the world and we will have 30,000 athletes attending in 2009. As the Chair of the Organising Committee I wanted to make a contribution to the wider community and highlight the benefits of sport for life," said Margy.

She highly values what she learns from her fellow Directors on each of these Boards, who she describes to be unfailingly very generous with their time and experience.

When not in the boardroom, Margy is either spending time with her husband following the rugby or opera or walking her dogs and has a passion for collecting old Japanese Kimonos.

Women in Public Life

Judge Marie Shaw

Loreto College Old Scholar and ex-Boarder

Judge Marie Shaw was born on the Eyre Peninsula and was raised on a farm with her four siblings. Her parents instilled the importance of education in their five children very early on in their lives, believing that if you have the opportunity to be educated then you must take it and do your best with it. She also learned from her father that the greatest virtue in life is to have humility. These words have stayed true to Marie throughout her life and these values no doubt helped form the wonderfully inspiring and intelligent woman that she is today.

These early teachings were further enhanced when Marie was given the opportunity to board and study at Loreto College Marryatville, with Loreto's philosophy of developing the 'whole person' quickly taking shape and being consumed by Marie. She was an active member of Loreto's Debating Team and was a keen sports person. She was also an exceptional student due to her hard working determination and belief that results would flow if she applied herself. Results certainly did flow as she topped the State in Year 11 Economics which she humbly attributes to her teacher reinforcing what her parents had instilled in her.

Marie went on to win an American Field Service (AFS) Scholarship enabling her to live with a host family in Massachusetts for a year. The ultimate objective of this Scholarship was to promote friendship throughout the world. It was there however that Marie first experienced racism as she was now seeing the world through the eyes of a young adult learning to survive away from familiar comforts.

Upon her return to Australia, Marie went on to study Law at university and married her husband at the age of 20. After graduating, Marie's turning point was being articulated to Frank Moran QC who was known to be a fearless defender of the 'underdog' and did much work pro bono. Mr Moran further developed Marie's belief that irrespective of public disdain and the pressures of the courtroom the defender's duty is to give every accused person the right to be heard and a fair trial. Marie worked for Frank Moran's firm for 10 years and then went on to be a member of the Independent Bar for 15 years. During her period at the Bar, a large part of her practice involved acting for indigenous people from the northern lands of South Australia, Darwin and Alice Springs. She was then appointed QC in 1996, and in 2005 Marie was appointed Judge of the District Court of South Australia.

Throughout this period, Marie and her husband raised three children – even moving to the country for two years in order to give their children the opportunity to gain respect for the land and for their roots. This move saw Marie travelling 140km from home to work and back every day, as well as actively getting involved with their local community.



“Her parents instilled the importance of education in their five children very early on in their lives, believing that if you have the opportunity to be educated then you must take it and do your best with it.”

Further to this and through her youngest daughter's achievements in ice hockey, Marie became involved in helping to convince the State Government to underwrite Thebarton Ice Arena's lease so it could stay open. She then became a Board Member of the South Australian Ice Sports Federation which went on to develop the Ice Factor Program: a program for disadvantaged youth, developing in them the ability to work in a team and to respect each other and those who believe in them. This program is now in its third year and has been instrumental in providing many young people with a strong focus, enabling them to develop life skills for their now much brighter future.

This is just the briefest synopsis of Judge Marie Shaw's life to date, but we could really write a book. As previously stated, Marie Shaw is truly an inspiring and intelligent woman. And yet with all these accomplishments what strikes you most about her is her humility. Things were not handed to her on a silver platter: her parents made huge sacrifices so that their children could have the best opportunities possible, so she certainly wasn't going to let them do that without working hard for her results. Marie Shaw lives her life with the belief that we are responsible for our choices and can really make a difference regarding one's choice of career and involvement in the community. She is a shining example of what we can all achieve if we seize the opportunity and really focus on making a difference.

Women in Public Life

Pru Goward

Liberal Member for Goulburn in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly, formerly Sex Discrimination Commissioner and ABC Radio Presenter

Being at an all-girls' school meant we could have a go at everything. There was no gendered allocation of tasks, no conforming with gender norms, no peer pressure to be a particular sort of girl. Our uniform, including our school regulation underwear, was closely monitored to ensure girls were not competing with one another. The strict adherence to uniform, including the banning of makeup and jewellery, ensured any female competitiveness about appearance was minimised.

It also meant girls could be taught in ways best suited to young women, in an era when educational opportunities for girls were only just opening up. Girls at my school were free to pursue their interests in science and maths, for example, in a way previous generations had not and which girls in mixed schools might have found more difficult. In the humanities the reading texts, plays and all curricular activities we pursued were provided to maximise the opportunities for young women to excel and engage. I am sure the absence of boys meant teenage girls could pursue their interests without the distractions of having boys around. I would unhesitatingly recommend a single sex education for women.



Congratulations

The Alliance of Girls' Schools congratulates Dr Ruth Shatford who was made a Member of the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday Honours list in June. Her citation reads: For service to education, particularly as Principal of Tara Anglican School for Girls and through participation in professional educational organisations. Dr Shatford is an Associate Member of the Alliance and gave the keynote address at the very first conference *Educating Girls in Girls' Schools* at Ivanhoe Girls' Grammar School in May 1996 when the Alliance was born.

Old Ruytonians' Association Business Exhibition and Market

Ruyton Girls' School in the suburb of Kew, Victoria, has a proud history spanning almost 130 years, and a very active Old Girls' Association which will celebrate its centenary in 2008.

One of the functions of the Old Ruytonians' Association is to provide networking and mentoring opportunities for its members. With this in mind, it was with much excitement and anticipation that the ORA presented the ORA Business Exhibition and Market, at the end of Term 1, 2007.

Several months before, the ORA Committee "put the call out" to a number of successful businesses known to them which were being run by Old Ruytonians. The result was a dozen or more enthusiastic exhibitors, eager to showcase their businesses and sell us some of their wonderful goods and services. The Royce Theatre was abuzz with Old Girls, parents and current students,

enjoying a glass of champagne and being inspired by our guest speakers, Serena Dougall from Real Good Food, and Bianca Wiegard from Fat Fashion Stores. Their hard work and commitment was an inspiration, especially to the senior students present, who were encouraged to believe that dreams are possible to achieve.

Our guest speakers provided a great insight into how they started their companies, and the challenges they faced in becoming the successful business women they are today. Serena Dougall (alumni 1983) has created a business that specialises in wholefood, such as muesli and breakfast products, snack foods, nuts and grains, etc. All of her products are organic and grown and produced in Australia. Bianca Wiegard (alumni 1987) and her three partners have built a reputation as the arbiters of top Aussie design, and their retail empire now



spans four outlets of their boutique, 'Fat 4', in Melbourne's premium fashion-forward locations.

The Business Exhibition may well become a regular event. The wonderful array of goods on offer, combined with our much lighter wallets at the end of the evening, are testimony to a very successful function!