



in Alliance

THE ALLIANCE OF GIRLS' SCHOOLS
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in Alliance

*The Alliance
of Girls' Schools*

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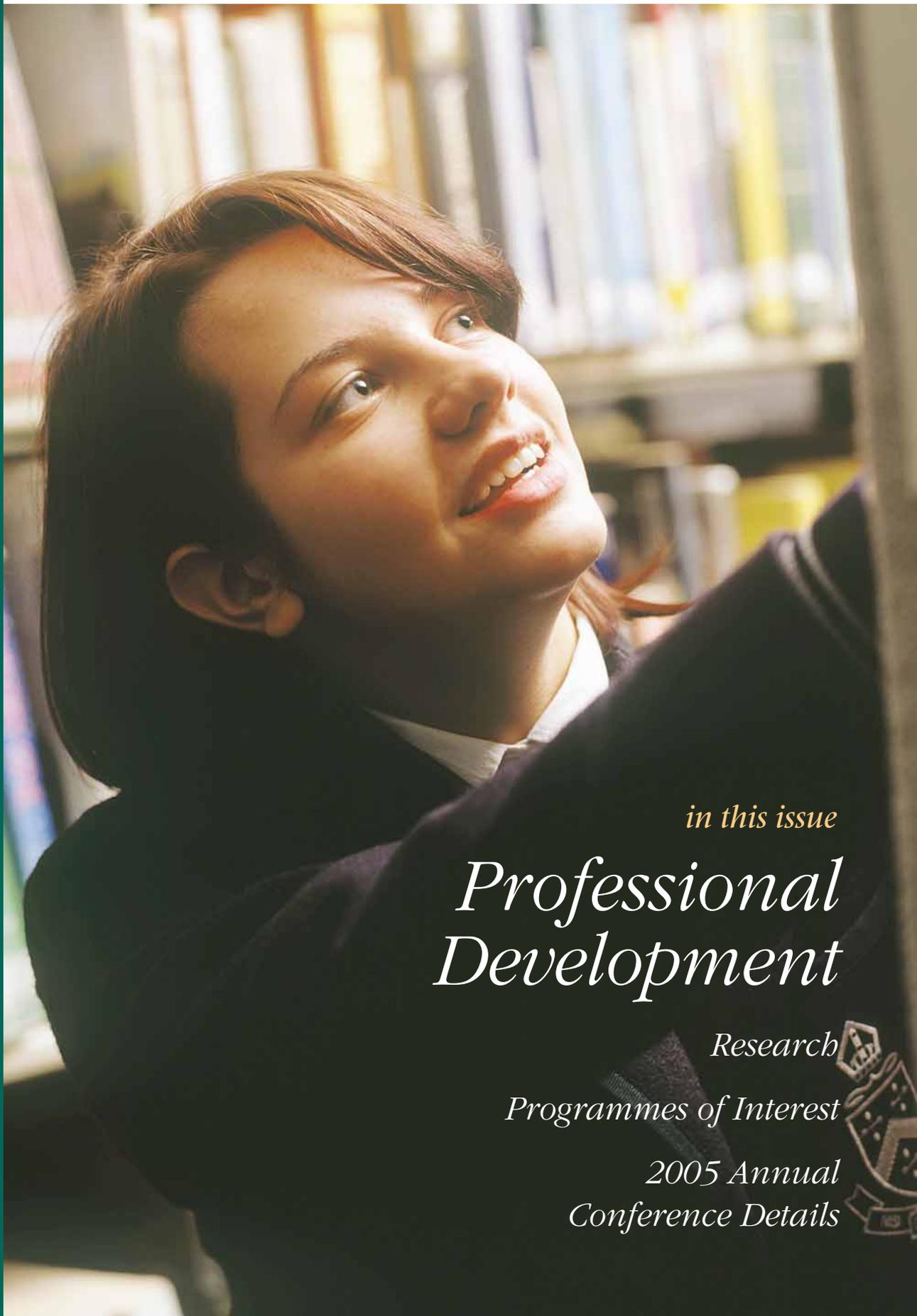
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New Zealand



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Girls and the School Environment

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The editor would like to thank Susan Just, Ipswich Girls' Grammar School, for assistance with the review of articles for this edition.



Cover photo courtesy of Melbourne Girls Grammar

FROM THE EDITOR...

In our final edition of *in Alliance* for 2004 we explore professional development opportunities that our students, alumni and staff have had throughout the year.

At all levels professional development is an essential ingredient of our ability to move forward. We see this in the experiences of our Student Ambassadors at the Student Forum and the National Coalition of Girls' Schools Conference. We also have an insight into how our alumni enhance their lives as tertiary students, by pursuing a variety of opportunities that will help further their future professional standing.

Of particular significance are the opportunities teachers in our member schools have had during 2004. Margaret Crawford, as recipient of the Woolf Fisher Fellowship, investigated programmes for the gifted and talented. Helen Robertson attended the world's largest people management conference, in Rio de Janeiro. James Harpur, as recipient of a school-funded scholarship for Queenwood teachers, had the privilege of pursuing his love of History and enrolled in a Cambridge University Summer School Programme, *International Politics in a Global Age*. And Maree Herrett, on a fellowship from the Asia Education Foundation, experienced first hand, life in an Indian family and the scholarship of Indian students. Funding for such programmes was



provided so that staff could explore pedagogical issues relevant to their students. All the accounts, we are sure, will give our readers an appreciation of the breadth of professional development opportunities in the teaching profession.

Volume 30 of *in Alliance* includes our inaugural **Letters** section. All members are encouraged to use this section to comment, in 100 – 150 words, on any issue they feel can help highlight significant aspects of the education of girls.

Readers will also have the opportunity to learn of the results of a Tasmania programme that separates girls and boys in the upper classes of selected government primary schools. To improve our research knowledge member schools are invited to contribute articles about post-graduate studies being undertaken by members of staff and research that the school has participated in. As well, we encourage you to write to *in Alliance* with information about research projects being undertaken in your school.

Finally our **Programmes of Interest** includes an article on the Social Justice programme at Santa Sabina.

Seasons Greetings and we look forward to another exciting year for girls' education in 2005.

Marita MacMahon Ball

FROM THE PRESIDENT...

It is significant at this time to reflect on the progress of The Alliance of Girls' Schools during 2004.

We can point to our many national and state events that have given members the opportunity to network with each other in their endeavour to benefit girls' education. We are in the process of revamping the image of The Alliance and in 2005 you will see a new-look website and a new logo for The Alliance. *in Alliance*, the magazine of The Alliance, has expanded the opportunities for members to publish the achievements of their schools and to have their say about the issues that impact on the education of girls. And of course the number of members of The Alliance continues to grow. In 2004 we signed up our first South African

and Hong Kong members

At the 2004 AGM we made a commitment to furthering research relevant to girls' education and extending our knowledge of the available literature on the education of girls. A comprehensive bibliography is now available on The Alliance website, www.agsa.org.au and we hope to be able to report in the next edition of *in Alliance* that a contract for a major research project, investigating the academic excellence of girls in girls' schools, has been signed.

Our students have also benefited from the presence of The Alliance with our Student Ambassador Programme and the up-coming Student Leadership Conference, to be held in Melbourne in



January 2005. In a recent letter to the *Australian Financial Review*, reprinted in this edition of *in Alliance*, I wrote: "schools must do more mentoring for girls with business leaders". Our 2005 leadership conference has addressed this issue and will run sessions that specifically focus on girls setting up mentor relationships with leading women in their communities. Girls attending the conference will also have the opportunity to attend a special session run by Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu where they will get every encouragement to achieve at the highest level in their fields of interest.

Planning for our 2005 conference *Healthy Women: Healthy Girls* is progressing well. You can get further information about the conference, our first to be held in New Zealand, on the back page of *in Alliance*.

Thank you for your support during 2004. To our member schools completing the academic year, enjoy the break, and Seasons Greetings to all members of The Alliance of Girls' Schools.

I will look forward to our continued association in 2005.

Barbara Stone AM



CONGRATULATIONS DR KAREN STARR

The Alliance of Girls' Schools congratulates **Dr Karen Starr**, Principal of Fintona Girls' School, on being awarded the **Telstra Business Women's Hudson Community and Government Award**.

The Hudson Community and Government Award is awarded to employees of government departments, statutory bodies and not for profit organisations. Dr Starr's award recognises the responsibility that she has taken for the long-term viability of Fintona. Since she became Principal of the school in 2001 Dr Starr's energy, versatility and approach to challenge have led to her emergence as a leader and role model for the Fintona community.

Dr Starr was previously the Chief Writer of South Australia's Curriculum, Standards and Accountability Framework, the world's first birth-to-year-12 curriculum framework. She is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and a member of both the Australian Association of Educational Research and Australian College of Education.

LETTERS

SAME WORKFORCE, DIFFERENT REALITY

The results of the Australian Women in Leadership Census are very disheartening, an increase of only 1.4 percent for women in senior executive roles and hardly any increase in the number of women who hold board directorships. The results clearly demonstrate that the job of equality for women in the Australian workforce is only half done.

I see so many talented young women working hard in their secondary school and university years to gain outstanding results.

While I recognise we have gained equality in numbers of female postgraduates, particularly in courses such as law (57 per cent female), and medicine (57 per cent female), when you look at what happens when they enter the workforce, the statistics are tragic. In 2004, only 7 per cent of females are law partners and only 30 per cent of doctors are female.

Educating women for the realities of the workforce needs to be undertaken in secondary school years. Values and attitudes that perpetuate gender inequalities are instilled in childhood; adolescence may be one of the last opportunities to offer alternatives.

Schools must do more mentoring for girls with business leaders. The old boys club, so alive and well in Australian business, is a network that is usually formed in secondary school.

Barbara Stone, MLC School, NSW

The above letter was published in the Financial Review, 7 October 2004.

JUST WHAT IS EQUALITY?

This year the **Association of Women Educators** held its Annual Conference in Melbourne. Two of the Keynote speakers, **Carmen Lawrence** and **Anne Summers**, provided thought provoking fare on the last day of the conference.

Carmen Lawrence contrasted the privileged situation of most Australian women, in terms of life expectancy and access to education, with that of indigenous women and women in developing countries and the Middle East. Her point was that we need more women in public life to make a difference for the underprivileged in Australia and elsewhere.

Anne Summers spoke about the reality for today's working women being in sharp contrast to the rhetoric of equality, and painted a picture of slow and steady losses over the last ten to twenty years.

Summers reported that over the last thirty years the proportion of women in full-time work has not increased, and women are still only earning an average of 65 percent of male wages in all categories of work (full-time, part-time and casual).

Furthermore, women's dependence on welfare has increased to an all time high, and childcare provision continues to be inadequate, limiting re-entry to the workforce. And, Summers argued, government policies act against the interests of women and conservative media are loathe to take up the issues. Her book *The End of Equality* makes fascinating reading.

It was inspiring to hear speakers of such a high calibre and I congratulate the Association of Women Educators on being able to attract these intelligent and forthright women to speak at its conference.

Chris Jenkins, Korowa Anglican Girls' School, Malvern, Victoria

To have your opinions published in LETTERS please email the Editor: mmacmahonball@korowa.vic.edu.au



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: OUR STUDENTS

Being a Student Ambassador – An ‘ober awesome’ Experience

In June this year Georgina Horsburgh, Brisbane Girls’ Grammar School, and Hannah Lewis, The Mac.Robertson Girls High School had the honour of representing The Alliance of Girls’ Schools as our student ambassadors at the National Coalition of Girls’ Schools (NCGS) student forum and conference, held in America’s spectacular Bay city, San Francisco.

Georgina and Hannah were chosen following a rigorous selection process that asked entrants to produce a short film about themselves and have their academic, community service and sporting contributions closely scrutinised and evaluated. As anticipated, this selection was not easy as there were so many admirable applicants from our member schools.

The challenge and the excitement that the NCGS conference offered both our ambassadors manifested itself in many forms. For Georgina the challenge was far sooner than she anticipated. Her delayed flight from Brisbane meant that she missed her connecting flight to the US and had to fly alone on a flight that took her to San Francisco via Los Angeles.

For both girls, the only non North American delegates, getting to know 12 complete strangers in a 4 day concentrated period, was both daunting and exhilarating. As Georgina expressed it, the opportunity was about “extending my personal comfort zone”. Learning to work with, socialise with and to compromise with others for the collective benefit is no small accomplishment.

The conference offered Georgina and Hannah an all-round experience: the opportunity to participate, with others impassioned about girls’ schools, in a forum that explored the issues related to the education of girls; the chance to hear celebrated speakers such as author

Anne Lemott and Maria Klawe, Dean of Engineering and Applied Science at Princeton University; the privilege, although a nerve-racking experience, to address more than 200 principals of girls’ schools from around the world; the opportunity to smell the San Francisco harbour seals from sea kayaks, feel the euphoria of a Red Sox game from aboard a dinner cruise and appreciate the splendour of the Golden Gate Bridge, Alcatraz and Bay Bridge from San Francisco Bay; and of course, the chance for potential life-long friendships, on the other side of the globe.

For Georgina and Hannah the experience was also personally significant. Hannah returned to The Mac.Robertson Girls High School with the confidence and skills to initiate the coordination of a Victorian Student Leadership Conference for more than 100 students from across Melbourne. Georgina’s personal growth was greatly enhanced. In her words the conference gave her: “the independence to evaluate my own aspirations, to recognise how I manage stress and personal fears, to see the bigger picture and take on the role of encouraging other students to seize the opportunities that are increasingly available to them.”

With their expanded horizons Georgina and Hannah are well placed to help guide their contemporaries, as they prepare for their final school year and embrace more onerous leadership responsibilities. The American experience was, as Hannah so succinctly put it in her newly acquired American slang, ‘ober awesome’.

“Learning to work with, socialise with and to compromise with others for the collective benefit is no small accomplishment.”

Material for this article was drawn from reports submitted by Hannah Lewis and Georgina Horsburgh



*Front row, from left: Georgina Horsburgh and Hannah Lewis
Top row, third from right: Alliance Executive Member, Ann Mildenhall.*

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: OUR ALUMNI

In 1993 three girls came together as Year 7 students at Loreto Mandeville Hall in Melbourne, Victoria. A friendship was struck that strengthened as they moved through secondary school and has endured to the present. Each, after completing her Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), began tertiary studies as an Arts/Law student.

The pathways of these three students are indicative of the breadth and complexity of study for many modern day students. All are still completing their degrees, but in the process, one has pursued political aspirations, another has spent a semester studying international law and philosophy at St Catherine's College, Oxford University, and another has worked on a mission in Swaziland. 2004 has however been a defining point in the lives of Clare O'Neil, Phoebe Knowles and Rachel Ball.

Making the World a Better Place

When I was 17 I joined the ALP because I shared the party's view that our country could be a better and fairer place. And I strongly believed that the government had to play an active role in bringing that about.

After finishing school I worked as a volunteer on campaigns and was eventually offered employment with state MPs. I worked in the offices of three state MPs, dealing mostly with people who had been adversely affected by government policy. It was a pretty powerful experience and ensured that I gained a really good understanding of the most intricate aspects of how government and the public service actually make decisions. My job was really satisfying because I could offer genuine assistance to people, whether it was getting them into public housing or getting them out of an unjust parking fine.

At 22 and living in Springvale I started to pay attention to what my local Council was doing. At the time, I believed, it was dealing poorly with major capital investment decisions. I felt that young people in our City should be represented on a Council then made up of substantially middle-aged people.

Running for Council was hard. I'm not a natural salesperson, so having to ask people to support me in the election and explain why they should was painful – but worth it! I was elected to Council in March 2003. Being on Council gave me the amazing opportunity to sit around a table as an equal with people much older than I am, and work to make Greater Dandenong a better City. I was pleasantly surprised to find that our work is mostly strategic and mentions of roads, rates and rubbish are kept to a minimum.

After a year on Council, I decided that I'd like to run for Mayor. I had so many ideas I wanted to implement, and after discussion with the Councillors they agreed to elect me as the Mayor of Greater Dandenong. At first I was a bit overawed by the honour and responsibility of

Clare in 2004, at age 23, became Australia's youngest-ever female Mayor when she took up her position as Mayor of the City of Greater Dandenong. Phoebe, while a student at Oxford University, was offered an internship with the Special Court for Sierra Leone. This led to a position on one of the defence trial teams assisting counsel, and being catapulted into war crime investigations and legal drafting. Rachel was selected to go to Washington DC to take up the only under-graduate internship in the legal division of the World Bank.

Below, each gives a brief account of her 2004 experiences. Each relation is testimony that professional development is very much a part of the education of our alumni in the 21st Century. And the message for all our alumni is to 'go for it' and apply for every opportunity that is available, as you may just 'be the one' to get it.

representing the views and interests of 130,000 people – but it's something I'm now used to.

Currently I lead the City of Greater Dandenong, an organisation with an \$88 million budget and about 700 staff. Greater Dandenong is Victoria's most multicultural municipality, with 52% of our residents born in countries where the main language spoken is not English. It is an exciting, vibrant, diverse community.

As Mayor, I chair Council meetings (which sometimes contain some pretty robust debate). I act as the public face of the City, handling media inquiries, and I work with the staff to implement the agenda I developed on my election. I do a huge amount of public speaking, on some days I deliver up to six speeches.

One of the best parts of my job is the variety in every day. On a typical day at work, I might meet the CEO, talk to a group of primary school students about government, meet a State Government Minister to discuss strategic challenges for future residential development of the City, catch up with business leaders to talk about economic development projects in the City, meet a constituent about concerns with a major Council project, launch an ethnic community celebration and then chair a Council meeting. I work incredibly long hours but I wouldn't have it any other way.

I've continued by enrolment (but not always attendance) at university since I finished school. I've almost finished my Arts/Law degree, after six years, and next year I'm enrolled to do Honours in Australian History. It is true that my marks are a reflection of whether there was an election on at the time, whether or not I was a candidate in that election, whom I was working for, and what sort of hours they demanded.

But the most constructive thing university has provided me so far is an opportunity to explore different jobs and ideas and get a sense of



Clare O'Neil, Mayor, City of Greater Dandenong



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: OUR ALUMNI

MAKING THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE *Continued from previous page...*

what my passions are. Most people will never have the opportunity afforded to university students: opportunities to do volunteer work, work experience and get involved in areas that do not necessarily pay very well.

From a professional development point of view, making sure that your university years are used for getting really diverse experiences is crucial. Employers don't always look for young people with exceptional marks. Just because a young person is good at study doesn't mean that they will be a good employee. Employers want employees who will get on well in the workplace and bring a different perspective to the workplace.

I try to remind myself how short life really is. I don't want to have an epiphany at 45 and realise that I've spent too long in jobs I don't enjoy or university lectures that hold no interest. And life is so exciting if you embrace the opportunity to do interesting things. So I try to cram lots in. I'll have the opportunity to sleep all day when I'm old!

Clare O'Neil
Mayor, City of Greater Dandenong
Arts/Law Student, Monash University

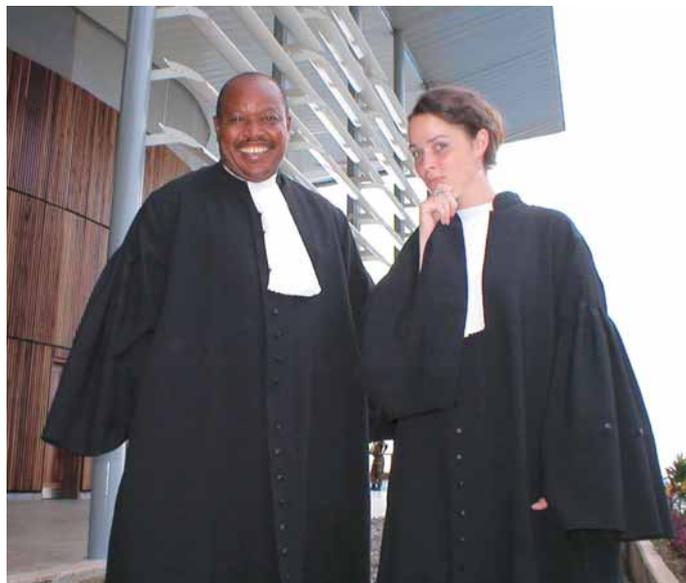
Clare plans to complete her Arts/Law course in 2006.

Start Life Now

At school there was often the sense that life would start on the eve of some external defining date: when we finished school; when we began our tertiary studies; when we started going out with the guy we liked. The danger with this assumption is that we are waiting rather than living. Life doesn't start when you finish school. It doesn't start when you begin or even finish university or even when you marry, or find a career. None of these defining points means that life begins: it merely changes and sometimes it doesn't even do that. The external event signalling to us that we may begin participating in life never happens. Your timer has already started; it started the moment you took your first breath.

At the end of my first year at university I travelled overseas by myself and spent a day in Oxford. I decided I wanted to return. Two years later I downloaded the form and applied. I am still surprised by my acceptance. During a lecture at Oxford it was announced that the Special Court for Sierra Leone was seeking interns. I applied and was accepted.

Without doubt the experience has been life changing. I lived with a Sierra Leonean family, learnt Krio, and found hope in the poorest country in the world. I have seen incredible humility, suffering and the human spirit's capacity to move forward. The boys in my area, dressed in dusty third generation t-shirts, brought me flowers, photos of themselves, fruit and an abundance of friendship. Mornings saw



Counsel Arrow Bockarie and Pheobe Knowles in Sierra Leone

the streets decked with colourful school uniforms as hundreds of children walked to school. Police cars became taxis honking and bumbling along pot-holed roads, skinny brown elbows and arms hanging out open windows.

At the end of my internship I was offered a position assisting counsel, on one of the war crimes defence trial teams. My client is Mr Moinina Fofana, a man in his mid-thirties, with 3 wives and 18 children. He is the alleged Director of War for the Civil Defence Forces (CDF) and is charged on an eight-count indictment for war crimes and crimes against humanity. The crimes include murder, looting, terrorising the civilian population and recruitment, enlistment and use of child soldiers.

During trial (court sits month on, month off) I record and analyse witness testimony and try to establish how it may impact on my client's defence. In the evenings I face the daunting task of preparing questions to be used in cross-examination. More than the investigations, I find this frightening stuff. The following day, when I sit next to counsel listening to the questions and waiting for the answer we want, the adrenaline pumps.

Trial is hectic. In addition, the legal work - research and defence strategy - is ongoing, and we must continue to be responsive to the evidence led by the Prosecution. When Court is in recess I spend much of my time working with the team's investigator, interviewing potential defence witnesses. Travelling around Sierra Leone's

"The external event signalling to us that we may begin participating in life never happens. Your timer has already started; it started the moment you took your first breath."



countryside in clapped-out mini vans overflowing with people and produce and discussing the war with both ex-combatants and civilians has been incredible, saddening, and yet also hopeful. The justice process is undeniably difficult and my position in this process is exciting and challenging.

Every person I have met in Sierra Leone has been touched in some way by the war. However, after the stories are told conversation moves to matters of today: the price of fuel, the work of the Court, the

children's schooling. Sierra Leone is rebuilding with a sense of purpose and will to move on. My fortune is that I have had the opportunity to know these people.

*Phoebe Knowles
Arts/Law Student, University of Melbourne*

After completing her 2004 exams Phoebe will return to Sierra Leone to continue her work with the Defence team. She expects to complete her Arts/Law course in 2005.

Taking a Few Risks

I am not sure what I will be doing in 10 years but I do know what I like to do now. I like travelling, meeting new people, learning about things I never imagined I'd learn about and I like being out of my depth. Through doing the things that I like and being unafraid to take up challenges I was fortunate to be chosen for a 6 month internship in the legal department of the World Bank in Washington D.C.

Here I was given the opportunity to see the largest multi-lateral development bank in the world from the inside. I learnt about telecommunications reform in Eastern Europe, court practices in Latin America and about legal and judicial reform in South East Asia. I learnt about countries that I hadn't previously known existed, the problems that they face and what the international community is trying to do about those problems. I had the opportunity to experience the workings of one of the most highly criticised international organisations in the world and judge for myself. Of great personal significance to me was learning how institutions approach problems such as those I had experienced first-hand, while working on a mission in Swaziland during 2002.

My workday involved such tasks as researching national insolvency laws for the Global Insolvency Law Database being launched by the World Bank, researching and producing a short memo on the structure of various law reform commissions, for the Minister of Justice in Albania, writing an executive summary for a report on the financial sector in Lebanon, reviewing regulatory frameworks for private sector participation in Cairo Airport, and other such assignments. Quite a contrast to my university assignments!

The Bank also offered the opportunity to attend seminars and discussions on a variety of development issues. These included such topics as: *Saving Capitalism from the Capitalists, India in the 21st Century, International Law in Occupied Territories*, and *Working with Older People as Care-Givers for People with HIV/AIDS*.



Rachel Ball at the Global Judges Forum in Rio de Janeiro

"I had the opportunity to experience the workings of one of the most highly criticised international organisations in the world and judge for myself."

The highlight of my internship was when I was invited, as part of the World Bank team, to attend a four-day Global Judges Forum in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. I was there with over one hundred of the most senior judges and insolvency experts in Latin America. It was an incredible experience to hear these people, all at the top of their profession, talk about issues such as judicial independence, the need to make credit available to the poor and the best ways in which to structure legal frameworks to achieve a fair and effective insolvency system.

Beyond all this my Washington experience was fun. I explored an interesting and sometimes highly amusing city and I made friends from Argentina and Belarus and other exciting places. To be able to visit, at leisure, the Smithsonian Museums, enjoy the Washington gigs, running tracks, bike paths and picnic spots, when the ice melts, and be in relatively close proximity to New York, just enhanced the experience so much more.

The whole experience seemed too much like playing for me to call it professional development, and keep a straight face. Nevertheless, I suppose it was professional development – which goes to show that professional development isn't all about focused ambition. It can also come from taking a few risks, applying for positions you really don't think that you'll get, and having confidence that if you do the things that you enjoy and challenge yourself from time to time, you'll end up somewhere good.

*Rachel Ball
Arts/Law Student, Monash University*

Rachel is now working, in a voluntary capacity, with the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre and will soon commence a four-week clerkship with Phillips Fox. She will complete her Arts/Law degree in 2005.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: OUR TEACHERS

An Unreal Surprise

Professional Development involves professional and personal development. This year I was given the opportunity to have a professional and personal development opportunity that was 'like a dream'.

In 2003 I was awarded a Woolf Fisher Fellowship for a three-week study visit to Australia in 2004. The award was for \$6000, plus paid school relief. The award is for Excellence. The Trust also offered another \$3000 if my husband wished to accompany me. The award came as 'a surprise', which is the nature of the award. I received a letter in my pigeonhole at school offering me the award. The recipient does not apply and the process and procedures are kept 'a surprise'.

The purpose of the award was to enable me "to study education in selected States in Australia, with particular reference to my own subject, and to see something of Australian life in general". The value and duration of the Fellowship was designed to allow visits to a total of six to eight schools in two Australian States with "some time for general touring". I could provide another focus, for example, attendance at a conference. On the completion of the award the Trust was to be sent a report.

What did I plan to do? My plan was based on study that I had undertaken as part of my own professional development and personal experience. Thirty years after a Masters in English, I had recently completed a second Masters in Educational Administration at Massey University, with a project on Gifted Girls. My supervisor was Dr Tracy Riley. My draft title was *Hicks from the Sticks*, but the University thought I should revise the title. I am very interested in gifted girls, professionally and personally. Wherever they go to school they should have the opportunity to fulfil potential. My own daughters, from a provincial school, studied medicine. Gifted education is also a big focus in New Zealand as it is mandatory to report on gifted students as from 2005.

Our school is a member of The Alliance and it was through the Alliance that I made contacts with schools. Thank you to Marita MacMahon Ball who circulated the members in Melbourne, Adelaide and New South Wales. My educational objectives were to find out about the gifted and talented programmes and practices for teaching and learning in Australian schools, to learn about ways to encourage leadership in girls, and to learn different ways of creating environments for gifted and talented students.

I wanted to attend two conferences: The Annual Conference of the Alliance of Girls' Schools in Sydney, with its focus on *Leading Women:*

Leading Girls, and the 10th Biennial Conference of the Australian Association of Gifted and Talented Schools, in Melbourne in August. I also selected to visit: The Mac.Robertson Girls' High School, Melbourne Girls Grammar, and Ruyton Girls' School, in Melbourne; and Wilderness School and Glenunga International School in Adelaide. At The Alliance conference I was invited to visit a further Adelaide school, Walford Anglican School for Girls. In Adelaide, my husband, Assistant Head of English at Spotswood College, New Plymouth, and in charge of the School Library, also visited the Adelaide Schools and reported back to his school.

The experience for professional development was outstanding. The Alliance Conference provided speakers and workshops of international repute including Professor Roslyn Arnold, and Professor Sally Walker.

Australian Schools have had a focus on gifted education for some years: New Zealand has not yet had the same focus. Schools I visited had programmes and procedures, and staff with responsibility. It was the personal contact with the teachers in charge, and being able to see students and teachers in these schools that was important. I heard Janet Farrall's presentation at the Alliance Conference and was able to visit Wilderness. I heard Rosalind Wiseman at the Alliance Conference but was also able to see her with classes of senior students at Ruyton.



Margaret Crawford
New Plymouth Girls' High School, Taranaki, New Zealand

Schools provided stimulating visits. There were integrated programmes for gifted students from junior to middle and secondary. There was an emphasis on data as a basis for identification and

monitoring programmes, and identifying candidates for competitions like Tournament of Minds, GeneEthics Essay Competition, and Maths and History Challenges. The IB programmes in action were exciting. There were enrichment programmes, accelerated programmes, withdrawal programmes, mentor programmes in schools and with universities, and problem solving classes. There were differentiated and expanded curricula with emphasis on Resilience, Ethics, Philosophy and Health, and Theories of Learning. All the schools had a commitment to giftedness. Programmes were based on research, state requirements, and the school, and its community and environment. Many teachers had had school and university professional development; some had done study on giftedness and presented papers at World Conferences. The

schools were 'resource rich' in teachers and resources, especially technology. They had policies and procedures, which worked and were continually evaluated. Support was in place for staff, through professional development. Above all they had principals and staff

"Australian Schools have had a focus on gifted education for some years; New Zealand has not yet had the same focus."

committed to providing for gifted students.

The final highlight was attending the conference of the Australian Association for the Education of the Gifted and Talented, in Melbourne. Some of the speakers were writers that I had read during my Masters studies. Some of the titles of addresses were: Jane Piirto's *A Postmodern view of Creativity*, Kate Noble's *Resilience, Spirituality and Giftedness*, and Louise Porter's *Gifted Children's Emotional and Social Needs*.

There were also special personal memories, including the Impressionist Exhibition in Melbourne. I was made an Honorary

Ambassador of New Plymouth and Districts at a Mayoral Reception, and my husband and I made our first visit to Darwin. As Geography and History graduates, this was professionally and personally 'another world'.

*Margaret Crawford
New Plymouth Girls' High School, Taranaki, New Zealand*

To find our more about the Woolf Fisher Fellowships visit
www.woolffishertrust.co.nz

A Professional Development Experience – The 10th World Congress on Human Resource Management

Over the past decade human resource (HR) management has developed a higher profile in schools. People management used to be little more than hiring staff and ensuring information about them was correctly filed. However changing times, expectations and environments (especially the legal environment) have altered approaches to the way staff are managed. Effective human resource management is now a major component of every organisation (including schools), and quality professional development experiences are essential for those involved in this area.

As HR is one of my key areas I was keen to take up the opportunity to attend the 10th World Congress on Human Resource Management in Brazil. The Congress is a biennial event and is the largest worldwide event on people management. This year it brought over 6000 speakers and delegates from all over the world to listen, discuss and debate different strategies for the effective management of human resources. The theme was *Building Connections, Getting Results - the Link Between Potential and Performance*. Outstanding speakers from international corporations ensured that the Congress delivered on its promises of stretching HR horizons – especially at the strategic, big picture level.

Although initially daunted by being one of six thousand attendees, irritated by the amazing length of the queues for sessions, meals, drinks, and bathrooms, and at times quite overwhelmed by the challenge of trying to negotiate for everything in Portuguese, I found the Congress to be both personally and professionally an incredibly positive experience.

For me the key outcomes were a reinforcement of what I already knew to be good HR practices, and the emergence of clear themes which were repeatedly referred to by the speakers in their sessions. These are themes that schools can now take, as we will, and evaluate in light of their own HR policies, practices and procedures. The emerging themes are:

- The inclusion of HR as an essential business component of an organisation – linked to and contributing to strategy
- The absolute need for an alignment between vision, strategic goals and operating objectives
- The importance of effectively communicating the core values of an organisation to all staff

- The effective management of short term and long term change to move staff forward
- The value of innovation and risk taking in organisational development
- The importance of developing organisational social responsibility
- The recognition that world events inform local practice: think global – act local
- The importance of work/life balance and the development of strategies to support this
- The knowledge that HR is not a soft option. It is accountable and measurable and should report on return on investment
- The confirmation that 'e-HR' is the way of the future. Technology has and will continue to influence good HR practice, and
 - The need for HR to 'future forecast': plan for the future; do not just wait for it to happen.

Of particular interest was a session focusing on the difference between good and great companies. Great companies to work for do certain things exceptionally well and this sets them apart from other organisations. In particular they:

- Have open two way communication
 - Show approval of good work
 - Treat people as individuals
 - Have high levels of trust and great relationships with staff
 - Are more productive than other organisations and have data to support this, and
 - Identify what they have that is unique and market this effectively.
- I think that there is something in this for us all to reflect upon.

The next World Congress on Human Resource Management is in Singapore in May/June 2006. I would highly recommend this to individuals or schools wanting an exceptional HR professional development experience. For further information visit the web site – www.hrcongress2006.com

*Helen Robertson
St Cuthbert's College, Auckland, New Zealand*



*Helen Robertson
St Cuthbert's College, New Zealand*

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: OUR TEACHERS

Curriculum and Culture: An Asian Experience

At the end of 2003 I was fortunate in gaining a fellowship from the Asia Education Foundation to travel to India, with a group of Australian teachers from all states, sectors and systems. It was an exciting, challenging and educational experience, that included a home stay and teaching in a range of Delhi schools. We travelled throughout the northern sections of India, from New Delhi, to the cities of Udaipur and Jaipur in the state of Rajasthan, then to Agra and Varanasi. Our final five days were in New Delhi and included our home stay and school experience.

The purpose of the trip was to help us to understand 'other' cultures and to consider ways of incorporating Asian perspectives across our curriculum areas. At the time of my application for the fellowship, I was Director of Curriculum at Santa Sabina College and had been inspired by much of the work that had been undertaken at the College as part of the Access Asia Programme. As an English teacher, I was particularly interested in the way texts represent different cultures, especially those that are 'other' than dominant, Western cultures, and the way such representations help to shape our response to difference. I had developed a unit of work for senior English students that focused on the representation of 'India' and 'Indians' in a range of different texts, including EM Forster's canonical, *A Passage to India*, excerpts from contemporary fiction, such as Vikram Seth's *A Suitable Boy* and Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, popular culture texts, such as Mira Nair's *Monsoon Wedding* and even the character of Apu in *The Simpsons*. Students were introduced to postcolonial theory and critique and pursued independent research into the dialogue between colonial and postcolonial texts.

Of course, the more we read, viewed and discussed, the more we realised the complexity of other cultures, such as India, and how stereotypes were not only limited but demeaning. The opportunity of travelling to India and meeting students and teachers was for me a challenge to any simplistic definition of what Indian culture is really like and the beginning of a lifetime's respect and fascination for its rich heritage, literature and diversity. I began reading Salmon Rushdie and haven't stopped since. I was also introduced to the poetry and short stories of Rabindranath Tagore and RK Narayan. The contrast between

Rushdie's lush, sprawling narratives and the sparse 'short' texts of Tagore and Narayan highlight the futility of assigning a fundamental 'Indianness' to its literature. It is a hybrid, diverse heteroglossia and as such is a perfect mirror of the 'nation'.

This of course was explained to me in a very direct way by Indian students themselves as they told me that India 'is a very diverse nation but a very united one'. I was struck by how much Indian school students knew about Australia – anything from Ricky Ponting and cricket to our refugee policies. One student told me that Indians are very curious about how we see their culture and why Australians are so good at cricket. I was also impressed by how proud they are of their own culture. They are intensely interested in the politics of their own country and were preparing to celebrate Indian National Day while we were there. As the recent surprising defeat of the Bharatiya Jananta Party (BJP) in India, to the Congress Party, led by Sonia Gandhi, attests, democracy is alive and well in India.

If I were asked to summarise my impressions of India after a relatively brief and limited experience, I would say that it is a land of paradox and colour. While there are confronting levels of poverty amongst India's billion people, there are also amazing degrees of wealth and comfort for the largest middle class in the world. Old and new jostle side by side in streets of elephants, cows and internet cafes. While I sat on a camel in Jaipur, I received two texts messages on my mobile phone. Arranged marriages are still dominant cultural practice, even when the parents would prefer their daughters to organise their own affairs. The richness of the

culture is not only visible in the beauty of the Taj Mahal but also in the vibrant textile industries, 'Bollywood' bonanzas, and revival of classical dance and music within schools. On the other hand, cows are dying from strangulation caused by their diet of littered plastic bags that dominate the street scape. Education is highly valued with 250 million children in school while 80 million, however, cannot afford to go to school. 8,000 children under 6 die each day!

Apart from my immersion in Indian culture, the other great highlight of the experience was meeting and travelling with a fantastic group of Australian teachers. The sharing of our different professional experiences



Maree Herrett (left) at Delhi Public School

helped us to understand the complexity of our own culture and helped make us more respectful of our own culture's differences.

While the term 'globalisation' can have negative connotations of loss of regional identity or domination by superpowers, it also suggests the connectedness of all cultures. We need to know what is important to other cultures, what we really value about our own, and help our students to appreciate the dignity of difference. One of my favourite Indian gods (and there's many to choose from) is elephant-headed Ganesh. His symbolism transcends cultural differences: his long trunk-

nose pokes around inquisitively, his large ears and small mouth mean that he speaks less and listens more. Perhaps there's something in that for all of us!

*Maree Herrett
MLC School, Burwood, NSW*

For information about the Asia Education Foundation go to www.asialink.unimelb.edu.au/aeef and to read more about the Access Asia Programme go to www.accessasia.edu.au

Freedom to Think

In 1997, the Board of Governors of Queenwood School for Girls introduced a Queenwood Staff Scholarship. The scholarship enables members of the academic staff to pursue an interest in an area of professional development that might not otherwise be available. Initially, the Board set the scholarship at ten thousand dollars, an amount that has subsequently grown. Since its introduction a number of staff have combined the staff scholarship with long service leave (LSL). Once a teacher becomes a member of the staff at Queenwood he or she is entitled to apply for a scholarship for the following academic year.

The Board set broad parameters for the scholarship to encourage staff to pursue professional interests at an appropriate level. The Board recognised that teachers are a varied group, with different aims and ambitions, and at different stages of their careers.

To apply, applicants submit a written proposal revealing:

- The aspect of professional development they wish to pursue
- How their choice relates to their role as a member of staff at Queenwood, and
- How the study will be undertaken, including names of institutions the applicant may be intending to study at or visit.

As the fortunate recipient of a scholarship in 2004, I was able to travel to the United Kingdom and take part in one of the Cambridge University Summer School Programmes. I further combined the scholarship with LSL and travelled to Europe, visiting sites of historical interest in Germany and Poland.

Although Deputy Principal at Queenwood, I chose to focus the scholarship opportunity on my academic area of Modern History. Consequently, the programme at Cambridge I chose was *International Politics in a Global Age*. Its focus was the post Cold War world. The programme offered an optional assessment component of essays. My empathy for Queenwood students at times of 'essay-stress' developed significantly.

As professional development, I found the Cambridge course extremely valuable. Most obviously, the course

introduced, developed and challenged many of the ideas that underpin contemporary history and effectively forced a rethink of approaches to teaching in this subject area, at a senior level. On a more esoteric level, it granted a freedom to think beyond the daily routine and this, more than any other aspect, has reinvigorated my teaching and learning. It is often held that teachers in positions of responsibility should undertake courses related to educational management. Such courses are valuable, but in my case it was the intellectual pursuit of my speciality that led to reflection and affirmation.

Returning to Queenwood was exciting. The international perspective, the re-established empathy with the learning process, and the insights I gained, will further enhance the experience of the girls' education at Queenwood.

*James Harpur,
Queenwood School for Girls, Mosman, NSW*



Left: James Harpur

Below: King's College Chapel, Cambridge University





RESEARCH

To Separate or Not?

An editorial in *The Age* (daily Melbourne newspaper) on 14 October had the title *An exciting boy's own story*. It addressed the issue of finding a solution to the problems of educating boys. In particular the editorial stated: "there is compelling local and international evidence that, compared to girls, boys are struggling in the classroom. Fewer boys meet the national literacy benchmarks. At Year 12, the retention rate for boys lags about 10 percent behind that for girls".

The editorial went on to further add: "there is strong evidence that boys and girls learn differently. Girls show better communication and

social skills. Boys often prefer a more physical approach."

Such statements are not unfamiliar in the annals of girls' schools, and the findings have now led to the trials of 'boys-only' classes in a small number of Victorian primary schools.

The issue of single-sex classes in primary schools has also been the focus of research by **Robin Wills**, Faculty of Education, **University of Tasmania**. In the following account, Wills, writing expressly for *in Alliance*, highlights significant findings of his research.

A New and Different Space in the Primary School: Single Gendered Classes in Co-educational Schools

The research I conducted, using ethnographic, case-study techniques, involved looking at single-sex primary school classes. It was my original intention to understand how boys' only classes might benefit boys, but my attention was also caught by the happenings in the girls' classes that were established when the coeducational classes were split.

The schools where I conducted the study were quite near each other in two adjoining low socio-economic suburbs of a Tasmanian city. Teaching staff in both schools were concerned because the children in their schools were consistently performing very poorly in all aspects of the basic skills tests at year five. In particular, the boys had defied all efforts to motivate them, to challenge them, to interest them, to change their attitude to school. Nothing the teachers tried had succeeded – until they considered the idea of separating the boys from the girls in grades five and six.

When I heard about the four classes, they had been in existence for almost 100 days. I was invited to attend a meeting called by one of the school principals where he and the classroom teachers were to give a progress report to parents of children in the single-sex classrooms. The principal spoke briefly and then the teachers explained the outcome of their reflections.

The teacher of the girls' class reported that the girls were enjoying their time in the single-sex class. The teacher explained that she was spending far more of her time 'actually teaching'; consequently the children were more commonly 'on task'. There was much less time spent on behaviour management and damage control in the area of inter-student relationships. Apparently there had also been a considerable decline in the amount of 'nastiness' that was acknowledged as a common aspect of inter-girls behaviour in the upper levels of co-educational primary schools.

When the teachers met to set the goals of the single-sex trial they acknowledged that they needed to build a benign classroom environment as a necessary foundation for teaching; and that this needed to happen before they could expect more productive work to begin. The teachers understood their first priority was creating classrooms where 'put-downs' were not permitted, and where the values of tolerance and acceptance were a focus.

As the girls' teacher explained her impressions of the first hundred days I realised there were important advantages for the children in the single-sex classes. For example, each class provided numerically an increased friendship base from which pupils could choose and a strong

sense of community had developed amongst the girls. At that age boys and girls do not play together. In a class of say 28 in a coeducational situation a girl student has 13 others from whom to make friends. In a girls' only class a girl would have 27 other girls from whom to choose friends.

The increased group cohesion also had an impact on the teacher. She felt a greater sense of commitment to 'her' class and, perhaps in reciprocity, the teacher recognised that the children had a heightened sense of empathy for their peers. The change in the children's attitude towards each other and the teacher produced a situation in which the teacher felt she could more confidently and comfortably explore topics through her own emotional and personal experience. This radical change in educational practice in government schools needed more thorough investigation, which has now been happening for three years.

The apparent change in classroom climate, to one of support and quite intimate connection between the teacher and her pupils, has had direct pedagogical outcomes. The level of confidence amongst the girls is tangible; girls are now much more willing to attempt new tasks. Indeed, many of the parents mention that their daughters are far more self-reliant, more motivated, and increasingly more interested in their schoolwork. Their raised confidence also means that fewer girls are shy about voicing opinions and have become more willing to attempt to answer questions when they are doubtful about the outcome – in fact they are more willing to take risks and perform in public.

Importantly, the teacher no longer feels that she needs to continually adjust her curriculum to suit the needs of the boys; thus making the work the girls engage in more relevant and more interesting to them. Because her class remains 'on task' for substantially longer periods, and thus achieves more work, the teacher is able to spend time every day in conversation with the girls. This conversational interaction enhances their knowledge of each other and creates stronger social bonds between them. A positive outcome of this bonding process is that the teacher presents herself as a positive role model to the girls.

The trial at the Tasmanian schools continues and the teachers and I are still learning about the impact of single-sex classrooms in the primary school. The current evidence does however suggest that, certainly for the girls, it is unlikely that there will be a reversion to the coeducational structure of the past.

Robin Wills, Faculty of Education, University of Tasmania

"The level of confidence amongst the girls is tangible; girls are now much more willing to attempt new tasks."

PROGRAMMES OF INTEREST

Think Globally, Act Locally – Education for Justice

The Santa Sabina Education for Justice Strategic Plan aims to move its community beyond the justice-as-charity model.

For many years, teams of staff, parents and students have dispensed food and humanity from the Night Patrol van, served dinner at the Matthew Talbot Hostel for Homeless Men, and responded in cash and kind to countless appeals.

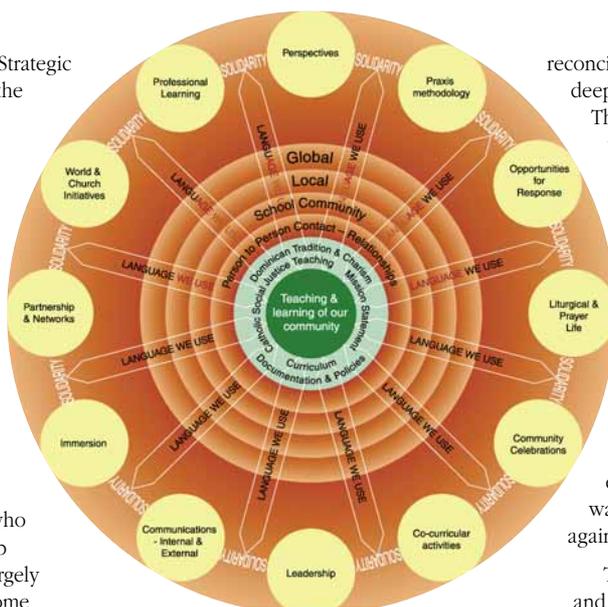
But this is not enough! The students who volunteer for outreach activities already have the compassion and generosity of spirit we want all our students to take into the world. Working with the converted through outreach activities, however, does not reach those who have no interest in giving their time to help others. We cannot expect students, who largely live comfortable middle class lives, to become passionate about injustice unless they know injustice exists, and have explored the consequences for the lives of other human beings.

As Director of Social Justice Education, I work with teachers to identify ways in which their curriculum outcomes can be linked to justice education. Rather than adding yet another requirement for classroom teachers, I help integrate justice perspectives into existing programmes.

The **Education for Justice Strategic Plan** provides a formal framework to educate the whole school community: kindergarten to year 12 students, staff, parents and ex-students. Recently we invited a group of staff to reflect on what social justice education looks like in the College, and to create a visual model. The graphic above is the result of that consultation. It shows that learning about social justice is integral to a Santa Sabina education, and pervades every aspect of school life.

Teaching and learning are central to the life of the College, and so this is the heart of our model. The teaching and learning happens within the official frameworks of formalised documents and policies of the school, secular and Church bodies, as well as the school's Dominican heritage.

The model depicts the **Think Globally, Act Locally** paradigm, but recognises that justice is not just about what happens beyond the school fence. All staff and students are challenged to look at the justice of their relationships – in the classroom, on the sporting field, or in the staff room. The eternal challenge for schools of



Last term, one of Year 2s *Human Society and Its Environment (HSIE)* outcomes was **“the importance of past and present people, days and events in their life, in the lives of the family and community members and in other communities”**. After exploring the differences between the students’ lives and those of their parents and grandparents, the teachers contrasted their students’ lives with those of children in Cambodia. They invited into the classroom a member of staff who had been to Cambodia on a *Think Globally, Act Locally* study tour. They imagined the reality of life in ‘de-mining’ areas, as they padded up in protective suits (cardboard boxes) and were talked through the process of finding potato land mines with floor mop detectors! Moved by the reality of life in Cambodia, our students moved to the next step: the response. They wanted to raise money for the Cambodian children they had learnt about.

Our response to learning about injustice is not always fund raising, but in this case it was the most appropriate, especially as the idea of selling party cakes to the whole primary campus fitted in so well with the HSIE unit. Parents of year 2 students were asked to make cakes, not to buy them or use a packet mix! They were invited to deepen, through discussion, their child’s understanding of how the lives of successive generations of Australians have changed, while demonstrating old-fashioned baking. A creative imitation of the ‘Bakers Delight’ television commercial, at assembly, promoted the sale of cakes, and introduced the rest of the school to the land mines issue.

Year 2s HSIE unit shows the model working well. Rather than time being lost from a KLA to ‘do’ a justice activity, KLA learning and justice activities reinforce and support each other.

reconciling the rhetoric and the practice is felt deeply in the area of Social Justice Education! Therefore the concentric circles represent the widening arenas in which just relationships are required.

Solidarity with the poor and marginalized underpins all the College’s social justice activities. A key objective is developing in students an openness to see the world from the point of view of the disadvantaged. They are invited to develop empathy by moving beyond their own experience, to see and feel the situation from the perspective of those living with injustice. Students are encouraged to see that there are diverse ways of standing compassionately with others against injustice.

The language we use reveals our prejudices and biases. We are committed to developing sensitivity around language. We are a community that uses inclusive language. We are conscious of the way language can reflect unequal power relationships, perpetuate stereotypes, offend minorities and can inadvertently wound others. Language is powerful and all pervasive and therefore needs to be critiqued as part of the learning about any issue.

Space here does not allow for explanation of the twelve outer circles, but there is a written explanation available for anyone who would like further detail. If interested, please contact **Jane Sulis: Ph 61 2 9745 7034; or email j.sulis@ssc.nsw.edu.au**

Praxis methodology is the preferred approach to learning about injustice. Students are challenged to ask, **Why is it so?** to critique social structures, to analyse root causes of injustice and to search for long-term solutions. Essential to praxis is the opportunity to respond through social action. The framework is: **see-reflect-act**. Responses are varied – not only fund-raising - whether the initiative is at the class, year, Key Learning Area (KLA), house or whole school level.

We want our students not to be overwhelmed by the injustices of the world, but to have the desire to use their skills and knowledge to work for a transformed society, for **“all that it takes for evil to flourish is that good men (sic) do nothing”**.

Jane Sulis
Santa Sabina College, Strathfield, NSW

To submit Programmes of Interest articles contact the editor: mmacmabonball@korowa.vic.edu.au



Louise Zaetta - Writer in Residence

Louise Zaetta's first novel, *Land of Gold & Silver*, was released by Penguin in 2002.

Her second novel, *Waterline*, is due for release towards the end of 2005.

Louise taught writing at RMIT for a number of years, before commencing **Footnote**, her own creative writing centre, in 2003.

Since the inception of **Footnote**, over 200 students have been taught by Louise, and a number of these continue to be mentored by her. Two of her students have gone on to be published by major publishing houses.

Among her private students are pupils from Years 10 to 12, from a number of different schools, who are keen to develop their interest in creative writing. Louise delights in discovering their individual talents, nurturing and watching their writing improve.

In the coming year, Louise is keen to have the opportunity of becoming a **Writer in Residence**, to students who show an interest in expressing themselves through writing. Helping to steer their individual talents towards a further understanding of the process and the joy of writing, is where she excels.

Louise Zaetta can be contacted by phone on 03 9882 5040 and email at thaz@ihug.com.au



QUALITY ASSESSMENT FOSTERS EXCELLENCE...

One of the qualities that marks outstanding performers in any field is a willingness to embrace objective assessment. Knowing where you are is the first step, knowing where you want to be is the second, and getting there is the third. Thus, a comprehensive and well-thought-out educational assessment program is an essential foundation to promoting excellence in any school.

There are several good reasons to assess a student's educational progress. A school may be selecting scholarship winners, selecting students for entry, placing students into classes with tailored difficulty levels, or benchmarking educational attainment. In all these cases, the underlying purpose of student assessment is to measure traits that are predictive of future academic success.

ITSA has been providing educational assessments for over 25 years. ITSA assesses academic and reasoning abilities, and attainment in reading comprehension, mathematics, spelling and writing. For overseas students, ITSA Global provides a



comprehensive English language proficiency and educational assessment online. The ITSA tests are scientifically constructed by educational psychologists, compare students to the Australian population at grade appropriate level, are available online or in paper-and-pencil format, and are competitively priced. ITSA makes it easy for you to implement your assessment program, providing full support and guidance during every step of the process.

This is the first of a series of articles on educational assessment and outcomes. To discuss ideas for your educational assessment program, please contact:

Kathy Boburka
ITSA General Manager

61 3 9342 1380 or kathy@itsaglobal.com

Further information may be obtained at the ITSA web site:

www.ind-test.com.au



MEMBER SCHOOL PROFILE

St Cuthbert's College

St Cuthbert's College, Epsom, Auckland, New Zealand is the host school for the 2005 annual conference of The Alliance of Girls' Schools. Delegates who attend the conference will have the opportunity to enjoy the expansive grounds of the school and witness a school at the cutting edge in all areas of teaching and learning.

In 1915 St Cuthbert's College, originally called The Auckland Presbyterian College for Ladies, opened as a private school for girls with a roll of 190 students, 38 of whom were boarders. The College offered a wide range of subjects, sporting and musical achievements, and encouragement for students to serve their community.

Ten years later the College moved to its present Market Road, Epsom site. Three boarding houses were established, catering for about 100 boarders.

Today St Cuthbert's is a Year 1-13 independent day and boarding school with 600 students in the Junior School (Years 1-8) and 780 students in the Senior School (Years 9 – 13). There are 135 boarders in Years 7 – 13.

In September 2003 St Cuthbert's was reviewed, as is customary every three years, by the New Zealand Ministry of Education's, Education Review office (ERO). The ERO Report spoke glowingly of the attributes of St Cuthbert's, particularly the special relationships that exist there. These relationships are a true reflection of the school motto: *By Love Serve*.

St Cuthbert's looks forward to extending the spirit of this motto to those beyond the school community, in New Zealand and overseas, with its hosting the 2005 Alliance of Girls' Schools Annual Conference, **Healthy Women: Healthy Girls**.

To find out more about St Cuthbert's College visit www.stcuthberts.school.nz



ALLIANCE MEMBERSHIP

Membership of The Alliance continues to grow. New members that we would especially like to welcome are:

- Mercedes College, Perth, Western Australia
- Woodford House, Havelock North, New Zealand
- Diocesan Girls' School, Hong Kong

Diocesan Girls' School, Hong Kong, is our first member school from Hong Kong and we will enthusiastically look forward to its contribution to the work of The Alliance. With the joining of Diocesan The Alliance of Girls' Schools now has a presence in five countries in the southern hemisphere. We look forward to expanding this further and increasing our presence in each of our five member countries.

The Power of Teacher Information Online

TASS (The Alpha School System), administration software for K to 12 schools, empowers teachers to become educators who make a difference in the development of individual students by providing fast and easy access to accurate student information.

Teachers at girls' schools across Australia log into TASS Teacher Kiosk everyday to view student profiles, review academic reports, print off class lists and check timetable information online.

Staff at Somerville House, Queensland, have developed a successful practice of using TASS Teacher Kiosk to view student profiles including photographs, academic history, attendance records and medical details. Being a web-based, centralised application, as soon as any information is added or changed, it is available to everyone. This allows administrators and teachers to access the most up-to-the-minute information available on an individual student.

Academic staff at Somerville House also find the innovative TASS web based reporting system essential at the busy time of student reporting. As a teacher enters a result or a comment at home or at school, via PC or laptop, the database is updated. This provides the teachers with the ultimate choice of where they prefer to work.

Checking timetables, maintaining an up-to-date school calendar and keeping track of teacher and student schedules can be a nightmare for staff at large schools. Teacher Kiosk can solve these problems.

Teachers at many schools are actively using the software to view and print off their own timetables and class lists, dramatically reducing the administration work usually involved with this procedure. Teacher Kiosk also makes the school calendar available online, to all members of the school community. School calendar items can be linked to PDF® documents, picture files and even other websites.

Many of the 4000 teachers using Teacher Kiosk now find it easier to arrange meetings with other teachers. The software will evaluate the timetables of all teachers to include the meeting and suggest periods when they are all available. It will also create an email to invite the relevant teachers to the meeting.

TASS Teacher Kiosk focuses on the successful practice of responding directly to the needs of teachers online. **To see the difference that TASS Teacher Kiosk can make at your school visit www.alphabus.com.au**



Healthy Women: Healthy Girls

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Auckland, NEW ZEALAND

15-18 June 2005

The 2005 Annual Conference, **Healthy Women: Healthy Girls** will be held at St Cuthbert's College, Auckland, New Zealand. St Cuthbert's and Diocesan School for Girls are jointly sponsoring the conference. The dates for the conference proper are: 17 – 18 June. Conference **registration** will take place at 9.30 on Friday 17 June and the conference will close at 5.00 pm on Saturday 18 June. Cocktails and the **conference dinner** will immediately follow the final session on Friday 17 June. Saturday evening will be free for delegates to make their own arrangements.

In addition to the conference proper there will be a programme of Auckland school visits organised for Wednesday 15 and Thursday 16 June. Further information about the school visits will be available with the conference registration documentation that will be forwarded to you early in 2005.

The conference hotel is **The Ascott Metropolis Auckland**. This hotel is located in the centre of the city. Buses will transport delegates to St Cuthbert's College and return them to the hotel at the end of each day's proceedings. Delegates will be collected from the hotel for the school visits that will be organised for 15 and 16 June.

Rates (inc GST) for The Ascott Metropolis are:

- Studio Residences: NZ\$179
- Deluxe Studio Residence: NZ\$191
- Premier One Bedroom Residence: NZ\$281
- Executive One Bedroom Residence: NZ\$348
- Premier Two Bedroom Residence: NZ\$382

The Studio Residences have a close view of city buildings. The Deluxe Studio Residences have either Harbour or Park views. To guarantee a Harbour view there is a surcharge. The rates with guaranteed harbour views are:

- Deluxe Studio Residence: NZ\$213
- Premier One Bedroom Residence: NZ\$326
- Premier Two Bedroom Residence: NZ\$449

Contact details for The Ascott Metropolis are:

Australia Toll Free: 1800 827 268
New Zealand Toll Free Number: 0800 20 2828
Phone: + (649) 300 8800
Facsimile: + (649) 300 8899
Email: enquiry.auckland@the-ascott.com

Please quote The Alliance of Girls' Schools conference when booking The Ascott Metropolis.

There will be a second collection point for conference delegates at the Quest Apartments in Heather Street, Parnell. These apartments are located close to an excellent shopping and restaurant precinct.

Rates at Quest Parnell are:

Studio: \$148.00 (inc GST)
1 Bedroom: \$173 (inc GST)
2 Bedrooms: \$233 (inc GST)

Contact details for Quest Parnell are:

Phone: + 64 9 337 0805
Facsimile: + 64 9 337 0805
Email: reservations@questparnell.co.nz

Please quote The Alliance of Girls' Schools conference when booking Quest Parnell.