

Tomorrow's female CEOs kick off 2018 at Australia's largest girls-only student leadership conference

The ranks of female leadership are set to get a boost as 164 students from 75 girls' schools set their sights on becoming their nations' next leaders at the Alliance of Girls' Schools Australasia's Student Leadership Conference, held at Bond University from 3-6 January.

Students are travelling from around Australia and New Zealand and as far afield as Zimbabwe, the Philippines and the United States to take part in the much-anticipated event.

The four-day course, designed specifically for girls, equips attendees to become effective and motivational leaders during their final year of school in 2018.

Now in its twentieth year, the Student Leadership Conference promises to be an inspiring start to 2018 for the 164 girls. Girl Up, a United Nations Foundation campaign engaging girls to take action to achieve global gender equality and change our world, will be involved for the first time.

Loren Bridge, Executive Officer of the Alliance of Girls' Schools Australasia, said girls from girls' schools were uniquely positioned to embrace leadership opportunities.

'Girls in single-sex schools hold every leadership position in their schools — from captain of the cricket and debating teams to president of the science and coding clubs. This diversity of opportunity and lack of gender stereotyping gives girls the confidence and experience to tackle any career or leadership role they may choose,' said Loren.

'The conference creates a vibrant environment in which these student leaders make life-long friendships and creates a huge network of young women who will support each other through 2018 and beyond.

'The girls will leave the conference ready to step into their 2018 leadership roles and make a difference to their schools and communities,' she said.

Girl Up Regional Coordinator for Oceania and one of the keynote speakers at the event, Sarah Gulley, said that girls can achieve incredible things when they work together.

'It's so exciting to be in a space with so many inspired young leaders, and to know that these empowered girls can change the world,' said Sarah.

Students will hear from a stellar line-up of speakers, who provide real insight into the many ways leaders can make authentic change in the world, through business, social enterprises and as individuals.

Speakers include:

- DAY 1:** **Liz Atkinson** – Founder Zest Possibilities & Project Gen Z, a project designed to educate one million new young entrepreneurs by 2030.
- DAY 2:** **Cam Greenwood** – Founder Monsta Surf, inspiring people to live without limits, dream without fear and live passionately in every moment.
Scott Harrison – Community Awareness & Multicultural Programs Coordinator, Surf Life Saving QLD
- DAY 3:** **Sarah Gulley** – Regional Coordinator for Oceania, Girl Up, Uniting girls to stand up for girls in need, empower each other and transform our world.
- DAY 4:** **Stephanie Rice** – Retired Olympic swimmer, author, speaker and entrepreneur

Lilly Van Gilst, Year 12 student at St Aidan’s Anglican Girls’ School in Brisbane, said she was very excited to meet like-minded girls from around the world at the event.

‘I think the conference will be an unparalleled opportunity to strengthen my ability to lead in 2018, and will help me set my leadership goals for the year ahead,’ said Lilly.

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INTERVIEWS AND PHOTOS AVAILABLE.

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About the Alliance of Girls’ Schools Australasia:

The Alliance is a not for profit organisation which advocates for and supports the distinctive work of girls’ schools in their provision of unparalleled opportunities for girls. It represents all school sectors – independent, Catholic and state, and has over 165 member schools throughout Australasia, representing over 132,000 girls and 10,000 educators.