

# Pymble Ladies' College

## EX-STUDENTS' UNION (ESU)

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It is my pleasure to write the 89<sup>th</sup> Annual Report for members and special guests in attendance at the Ex-Student's Union (ESU) Annual General Meeting (AGM).

### 2018 events

2018 has been another good year for the ESU Committee. The Committee arranged and participated in a range of events this year, including:

1. ESU Golf Day and lunch at Avondale Golf Course
2. Annual sponsorship of the ESU Scholarship
3. Annual sponsorship of the Indigenous Scholarship Program
4. Artist in Residence Grant
5. Mothers and Grandmothers Morning Tea
6. Indigenous Scholars Morning Tea
7. Commemoration Day Chapel Service
8. Garden Party Chicken and Champagne Stall
9. Social Evening at Paintings Drawings Prints Gallery
10. Year 11 "Welcome to Year 12 and an introduction to the ESU"
11. Year 12 "Welcome to the ESU"

The **ESU Golf Day** and lunch was held on 27 November 2017 at Avondale Golf Course. The day was well attended with teams of golfers enjoying their 18 holes, before joining the nongolfers for a leisurely lunch and to hear an entertaining speech from former professional rugby union player, Stirling Mortlock. I would like to thank Larissa De Carle, Kristen Faahan-Smith, Peppy Mitchell and the committee for organising the event.

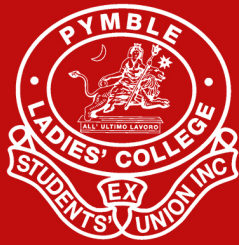
Our annual **ESU scholarships** for two daughters of life members were granted to Maddison Everingham (2018) and Kate Soonius (2017). Next year's scholarship will go to Chloe Luzar.

We also sponsored the uniforms of two new **Indigenous Scholars**.

This year's **Artist in Residence Grant** was given to Drama Coordinator, Tamara Sweetman, who arranged for the scriptwriter Richard Graham to work with Year 11 Drama students on writing a full-length play. The project started with an intensive workshop, which was designed to walk the students through how to write their own original play. This term, they are starting the process of rehearsing and blocking which will culminate in a performance in the theatre at the start of 2019 (to be confirmed but likely Term 1, Week 4).

The committee have been impressed by the breadth and depth of applications for the Artist in Residence grant. Previous grants have gone to interests ranging from the robotics program to authors and composers.

The annual **Mothers and Grandmothers Morning Tea** in March was a wonderful opportunity for ex-students, with daughters or grand-daughters at the school, to mingle and to see their girls during the recess period, here in the Heritage Centre. There's always a sense of excitement as we renew old friendships, make new links and look at the uniform displays that help many of us to reminisce.



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Likewise, the **Indigenous Scholars Morning Tea** was a lovely occasion to see our scholars developing year on year and to show appreciation for the benefactors of the program. I thank Katrina Corcoran, Alumni Relations Manager, for organising the morning teas.

Our annual **Commemoration Day Service** was held as it is every year, on the last Sunday in July, for ex-students and their families to commemorate the Dedication of the College on 31 July 1919. More than 120 ex-students, past and present Council members, College staff, family and friends filled the chapel. Kate Soonius (2017 ESU scholar) shared her insights before Kate Mason (past Chair of Council) and Vicki Waters (Principal) celebrated Alison Hale's life. Alison was a much-loved ex-student who devoted herself to the College and will be greatly missed. Many lingered in the warmth of the sun afterwards, enjoying tea and scones whilst catching up with friends. I would like to thank Kristen Faahan-Smith the Alumni Department and the committee for organising the event.

We once again held our famous **Chicken and Champagne stall** at the Garden Party in September. We were blessed with a beautiful day and prime position on the lawn in front of the Chapel. The day was a sell out for all our champagne, sandwiches and strawberries. We thank all our volunteers who helped out on the day, chopped strawberries and donated sandwiches. All proceeds went to support farmers affected by the drought. Once again, I would like to thank Kristen Faahan-Smith and the committee for organising the event.

We held a casual **Social Evening** at the Paintings Drawings Prints Gallery in Pymble in March. It was a lively event where old friendships were rekindled and new ones formed. We are always open to holding more such events and feedback on what format, day and time would most resonate with all our members. I would like to thank Peppy Mitchell and Kristen Faahan-Smith for organising the event.

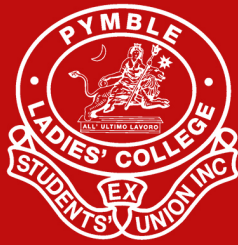
A key objective for the committee is to create a connection with our members, particularly those graduating from the College. So, each year, we hold a "**Welcome to Year 12 and an introduction to the ESU**" session for Year 11 students. We provide them with a brief overview of the ESU and wish them luck as they start Year 12, with a cupcake to enjoy. We also hold a "**Welcome to the ESU**" for Year 12 students just before they finish their year. We give them a warm welcome, an ESU key chain and form to complete for automatic life membership, which most complete on the spot. I thank Katrina Corcoran, Alumni Relations Manager, for organising the talks.

I again thank the College and in particular Vicki Waters for supporting and partnering with the ESU on the automatic life memberships. With 227 new members joining the ESU from the Class of 2017, we passed a milestone of **20,000 ex-students** at the College during this year. I am humbled to be part of an institution that has seen 20,000 girls come through its gates to be educated and nurtured. They all leave as fine women.

### Looking ahead

2019 should be another busy and exciting year for the ESU.

We are planning **alumNOW2019** - an exhibition and sale of fine arts by ex-students of the College. Opening night will be on Wednesday 13 February 2019 with the exhibition running daily until Saturday 16 February, in the Colonnade Main Hall. Artistic works will include paintings, sculpture, ceramics, jewellery, etchings and photography. I encourage everyone here to support the opening night by attending with friends and family and buying the art. It is a fantastic occasion to showcase our alumnae's creative



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careers and to bring us together. I would like to thank Gill Ross-Edwards and Philippa Graham for the considerable time and energy that they are devoting to the organisation of the artists, works and event.

We plan to run a **City Networking Event** for ex-students in 2019, with a focus on those that have left in the recent 15 years or so. We have found that students tend to leave the College, go onto further education, travel and their personal lives, and do not generally return until, in many cases, their own children attend the College. We would like to bridge this gap and create a better sense of connection between ex-student age groups. We hope that by creating this network, they can help each other in their corporate, personal and working lives. As plans firm up for this event, I encourage you all to get involved.

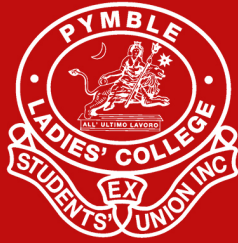
We will introduce an **Ex-Student Grant Program** that will begin in 2019. The aim of the grant will be to support ex-students in meaningful endeavours related to contributing to the community or career development. The grant will recognise the value of ex-students who are independently making their mark on the world by contributing to their communities or developing their careers to become contributing citizens. The committee will accept applications for a limited number of ad hoc grants from eligible ex-students, capped at \$3,000 per applicant. Further information will be provided on the College website and through our social media channels in the coming months.

We have a **strong committee for 2018/19** with a mix of past committee members and new joiners. As always, as our new committee forms, we will place a priority on helping new committee members to understand their statutory and governance responsibilities. The main reason for this prudence is to ensure that we fulfil our responsibilities and act with integrity. In doing so, we believe that we contribute to and preserve the positive reputation of the ESU and of the College.

In my President's report last year, I mentioned the issue of **charity status**. There were numerous articles in the press this year indicating increased scrutiny on private schools, their tax structuring, finances and government funding. More broadly, there has been an increased focus on what institutions do, as well as how they do it. Committee members, including myself, will come and go but the ESU is an institution that will hopefully operate for many years to come. The maintenance of the ESU's positive reputation is paramount. Therefore, the committee has prepared a short note, attached as an addendum to this report, for the reference of future committees on our learnings from our charity status experience. We hope that it will serve as a reminder to future committees of the importance of keeping good governance, ensuring that a broad range of skills are represented on the committee, seeking advice, questioning and retaining documents in a systematic and secure way.

All **members are encouraged to join the committee**. We have a lot of fun as a committee organising and participating in events, as well as connecting with the College community. We welcome a diversity of views on how we can evolve the ESU to meet the changing needs of our members and the College. We generally meet in the Heritage Centre under the chapel on a Tuesday or Wednesday evening at 7pm (and have conference facilities for dial-in).

As always, we continue to try various ways of communicating with our members, from mail, to email, the College website, social media, and the Pymbulletin. There are 2,728 members on the ESU Facebook page and 653 alumni connected with the College via LinkedIn. We look forward to further evolving how we communicate in the coming year - and we welcome all suggestions.



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Next year, a **new Principal** will begin a new era with the College. We look forward to seeing many of you at our 2019 events so that we can appropriately thank Vicki Waters for her strong support of the ESU and then welcome our new Principal.

Tonight, we have with us our **Chair of Council, James Hunter**. I would like to thank James for holding an open Forum for ex-students to find out more about the College Council, as well as the Principal selection process.

I would like to thank the ESU Committee for their hard work, dedication, support, friendship and enthusiasm this past year. I thank Vicki Waters, for her support, collaboration and ideas. We thank Katrina Corcoran and Kelly Mancey in the Alumni and Marketing departments for their partnership and support. I would also like to wish Annie Corbett from our committee, all the best in her recovery from illness.

Lastly, I thank all attending our AGM as your support and feedback is valued.

*All' Ultimo Lavoro.*

**Li-Enn Koo** (1991)

President

Pymble Ladies' College Ex-Students' Union