From the Chairman

Andrew Katay
Chairman
Meriden School Council

The School Council is delighted to present to you the next iteration of Meriden’s Strategic Plan, entitled ‘Excellence and Wellness for Girls’. Through it, we continue to ensure that, by experiencing all that Meriden has to offer, the girls will be equipped and inspired to embrace the opportunities that are available and, at the same time, be resourced to do so with poise and strength. I commend the Strategic Plan 2014-2016 to you.

Andrew Katay
Chairman
Meriden School Council

From the Principal

Dr Julie Greenhalgh
Principal

Recently, there has been considerable attention in educational journals as well as in the media about the need to improve the health of Australian children. A school, of course, has a moral and legal imperative to ensure that its academic environment is healthy. However, more and more, schools are being called upon by families and community leaders to contribute to the physical and mental health of the youngest members of our society – the children.

For all its history, Meriden has sought to improve the health of the girls at the School. Some of the earliest memories of Old Girls are based around before-school exercises. This Strategic Plan, Excellence and Wellness for Girls, seeks to continue this tradition and to actively address the need for our girls to be healthy in all aspects of their lives. And, of course, healthy girls learn better!

This is a visionary and exciting Strategic Plan that will, I believe, bring enormous benefit to the Meriden girls.
Preparing for the Strategic Plan

Over the past seven years, Meriden has completed three comprehensive Strategic Plans: Moving Meriden Forward (2007 – 2010); It’s All About the Girls (2010 – 2012); and Women of the Future (2012 – 2014). The fulfilment of these plans has brought Meriden to the forefront of education in Australia, and has seen significant and continued improvement in the quality of teaching and learning at the School; the standard of the facilities; the level of pastoral care of the girls; the range and significance of the values, ethics and Christian education on offer; and the extent and level of opportunities offered to the girls.

In preparation for this most recent strategic plan, the School Council generously funded the attendance of the Principal at two world-renowned conferences – the 11th World Convention of the International Principals Conference in 2013 and the 2014 USA National Coalition of Girls’ Schools Conference. In response to the presentations at these conferences, as well as the findings raised in current educational literature and research, it became apparent that the main current issue affecting school girls is their health and well-being. With this in mind, the Strategic Plan, which is to cover the next three years, 2014 – 2016, is entitled Excellence and Wellness for Girls. It is designed to build upon the progress that the School has made in recent times, to address issues currently facing Australian school girls, and to continue to prepare Meriden graduates for their futures.

The Principal and School Council are grateful for the input from parents, staff and Meriden girls towards the writing of this Strategic Plan.

Founded in 1897, Meriden has a long tradition of academic excellence, personalised care for the individual student, and a strong sense of community.
The Meriden Vision

By the time a girl leaves Meriden at the end of Year 12, it is hoped that she will be a:

— Confident, articulate and responsible leader
— Aspiring and academic achiever
— Well-informed and critical thinker
— Well-rounded and resilient team-player
— Creative innovator and collaborative problem-solver
— Compassionate, healthy and optimistic global citizen
— Woman of integrity, appreciative of the Christian faith

In order to help Meriden girls to develop into women with these skills and attributes, we value:

— Cognitive Health where every girl is provided with learning opportunities to think creatively and develop her individual strengths and talents
— Environmental Health where resources and facilities promote sustainability and high-quality learning for Meriden girls
— Mental Health where the resilience and positive outlook of every girl are enhanced
— Physical Health where every girl has the opportunity to improve her personal fitness and learn strategies associated with safety
— Social Health where every girl has a responsibility to contribute generously to the well-being of others within the School’s diverse community and the wider community
— Spiritual Health where every girl is given the opportunity to hear and respond to the Gospel and to celebrate life with joy.

The holistic teaching and learning that occurs at Meriden is consistent with The Fidelis Model.

The Fidelis Model sets the breadth, the depth and the direction of the School’s education, and has been used to unite and coordinate all aspects of a Meriden girl’s learning – both inside and outside the classroom – since 2011. This framework has the girls as its prime focus, aiming to enable them to learn optimally, and to leave school ready for the challenges ahead. The Fidelis Model outlines the Christian foundations upon which Meriden is based; the knowledge and understanding that the girls need to acquire; the learning practices that they need to master; the capabilities, competencies and skills that they need to develop; and the attitudes and values that they need to foster, as summarised below:

—  Christian Foundations: Building Strong Faith
—  Knowledge and Understanding: Inspiring Young Minds
—  Learning Practices: Equipping Life-Long Learners
—  Capabilities: Developing Global Women
—  Attitudes and Values: Nurturing Spirited Hearts.
Academic Well-Being

— To further encourage and enable the girls to reach their learning potential
— To cater for the learning needs of very able girls
— To increase the richness and depth of the School’s curriculum and cocurriculum
— To implement the Australian curriculum in accordance with the requirements of the NSW Board of Studies Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES)
— To lift the profile of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education across the Junior and Senior Schools
— To increase the size and identity of the different academic departments within the Senior School
— To further enhance the learning transitions between primary/secondary and secondary/tertiary levels of education
— To continue the upgrade of the School’s technology facilities
— To actively teach the Learning Practices as outlined in the Fidelis Model
— To continue to offer professional development opportunities to the staff in line with current research, best practice and accreditation requirements
— To complete the refurbishment of the teaching and learning spaces of the Senior and Junior Schools

Strategic Goals
Environmental Well-Being

To ensure the School maintains its community-based tone and ethos, as well as its emphasis on the individual girl in the face of increasing enrolment demand

- To encourage practices and initiatives which further promote sustainability and environmental responsibility within the school grounds
- To keep the girls up-to-date in issues associated with sustainability
- To update the School’s Master Plan, policies and risk assessments
- To modernise the School’s security measures for the safety of the girls and staff
- To reduce the need for girls to carry cash to School

Mental Well-Being

- To introduce pastoral and technological initiatives that support the mental well-being of the girls
- To teach specific strategies that promote mental health to the girls, including the management of stress
- To inservice staff in the latest effective approaches to support the mental health of the School community
- To support parents in their endeavours to enhance the mental well-being of their daughters
- To increase the use of appropriate technology to further strengthen the connection of the School with Old Girls
4. Physical Well-Being

- To construct facilities and spaces that enhance the sport and fitness program in the Senior and Junior Schools
- To introduce and promote activities and initiatives that are designed to enhance the health, fitness and safety of Meriden girls and other members of the school community
- To ensure the School is a healthy and hygienic environment

5. Social Well-Being

- To investigate the possibility of providing accommodation for regional, rural, interstate and international students
- To monitor and improve the cyber-safety of the girls
- To integrate the effective and safe use of appropriate social media into teaching programs and classrooms
- To strengthen the links with regional, interstate and international schools
- To teach strategies that enable the girls to live safely in a busy city
6. Spiritual Well-Being

To establish a Chaplaincy Centre within the School
To enhance the role of music in the Christian ministry of the School
To enhance Christian discipleship within the School
To broaden the community service opportunities for the School community