

Prefects host International Women's Day forum

Recently, Meriden's Prefects hosted a forum in light of International Women's Day. Year 12 students and Prefects, Khushi Jain and Linda Wang, share their experience with the School community in the following report.

On International Women's Day, the Prefects hosted a forum for Senior School students that explored Australia's theme for this year, "Cracking the Code: Innovation for a gender equal future", which celebrated the ongoing achievements of women in STEM around the world, while recognising the challenges that still exist for many communities.

The forum began with a quiz about International Women's Day, the history of women's equality and the stories of distinguished women in areas of STEM. These stories ranged from Marie Curie, the physicist and chemist and her advancements in radioactivity research, to Melanie Perkins, the CEO and co-founder of the graphic design program, Canva.

In the following discussion, girls and teachers shared their thoughts on what this theme means to them and the conversations it could lead to. In the context of rapid technological advancement in the twenty-first century, discussion points ranged from the impact of social media on a women's self-image, to the echo chambers that harmful comments generate in an increasingly connected age, and the barriers that prevent women from entering a career in STEM.

Small and large-scale initiatives were proposed when discussing strategies that could be implemented to address these challenges and empower young women to pursue these careers. We also discussed the significance of establishing universal access to technology as a human right.

The forum brought together multicultural perspectives from students of all ages. It was an opportunity to celebrate the valuable contributions of women in STEM and acknowledge the steps that need to be taken to allow more women to develop these spaces.