

Fidelis

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MERIDEN
AN ANGLICAN SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Meriden girls
make their *marks*.

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Old Girls' news

Front cover: CUO Parneet Sandhu, CUO Olivia Lee and CUO Isabella Wong. Olivia is the first female cadet to lead the Trinity Grammar School Army Cadet Unit.

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Thank you to the staff who provided photos for this issue

2024 has been another outstanding year at Meriden. As you browse the pages of *Fidelis* you will read about wonderful achievements across a variety of domains including academics, sports and the performing arts. Meriden girls continue to *make their marks*, and we are proud to acknowledge their hard work and determination, which has contributed to their achievements.

This year has reminded me of the importance of progress; progress refers to the process of improving, developing, or advancing toward a more complete, effective, or desirable state. It involves moving forward, overcoming challenges, and achieving growth or better results. This year we have seen progress in many forms at Meriden.

Our major building project, construction of the new Design and Creative Arts building continues to progress, nearing its completion date of early Term 2 2025. This building will provide purpose-built and cutting-edge facilities for Visual Arts, Design and Technology and Food Technology students, allowing us to build on the already excellent results achieved in these areas. Following this project, we aim to submit a development application for a new aquatic centre very early in 2025. These projects are evidence of our desire to continue developing our facilities to meet the needs of our students.

In other progress, this year we announced a major House restructure for the Senior School which will commence in 2025. You can read more about the change on page 5.

The purpose of the House restructure is to ensure that we can care for the girls in the best way possible. Reducing the size of tutor groups allows each Tutor teacher to know and support each girl, and to take action if there are hiccups along

the way. Smaller House sizes means that each girl is a member of a smaller school community within the larger school community. In 2025 we will see a greater emphasis on House activities, allowing for more opportunities for the girls to connect on a vertical level and develop stronger friendships between year groups. We are excited about the change and look forward to the impact this change will have on our community.

FROM THE Principal

In 2024 we bid farewell to known and loved members of our community. Mrs Kath Hynd, who first commenced as a Maths teacher at Meriden in 1981, headed into retirement at the end of Term 4. Mrs Hynd had served alongside five Principals, quite remarkable given there have only been 11 Principals in the 127-year history of the school. She served the school in many roles including as acting Head of the Maths Department, Year Coordinator and most recently as a specialist numeracy teacher within

the Academic Support Department. Mrs Hynd will be missed by the girls and her colleagues.

Sadly, we also farewelled two other staff members during the year. Mr Mark Stephens, Director of ICT, passed away in September after a relatively short illness. In October, Mrs Elizabeth Smith, Uniform Shop Manager passed away suddenly and unexpectedly. Both Mr Stephens and Mrs Smith were well-known to all members of our community due to the nature of their roles which crossed all campuses. We grieved their passing and gave thanks to our Lord for their lives and service to our community.

I thank the Meriden community for their support throughout the year. I hope you enjoy this edition of *Fidelis*.



A stylized, handwritten signature in dark blue ink, which appears to be 'LB' with a flourish.

MRS LISA BROWN
Principal

Meriden establishes partnership with remote NT schools



Meriden has this year formed an inspiring partnership with the Yadha Muru Foundation and two remote Northern Territory schools which aims to improve school attendance at partner schools, provide professional development for teachers and foster cultural understanding through immersive experiences.

Yadha Muru means “good path” in the Dharug language, reflecting the Foundation’s mission to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The partnership connects Meriden with Ti Tree School, located 200km north of Alice Springs, and Neutral Junction School in the Barkly region. Both schools have predominantly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student populations.

“Our partnership is centred around meeting Elders from the local community and school leaders to listen and hear their educational outcomes for their schools,” says Mrs Jenny Greenhalgh, Meriden’s Coordinator of Learning Link – Cultural Connections.



“The centre of the approach is through authentic relationships and connecting learning to culturally responsive pedagogies.”

— MS SPOONER-RYAN

The subsequent educational plan uses Meriden’s resources to enhance opportunities for children in remote communities in an exchange that promotes mutual respect, understanding, and appreciation of diverse cultures.

Meriden specialist teachers in literacy, music and STEM have visited both schools.

Ms Jodie Spooner-Ryan, Meriden’s Dean of Music, led the music program combining music and literacy learning, spending time with Community Elders, learning their language and using this knowledge to compose songs.

“The centre of the approach is through authentic relationships and connecting learning to culturally responsive pedagogies,” says Ms Spooner-Ryan.

She says the program used music education activities to promote focus, attention, deep engagement and concentration, linking music to literacy.

“These activities included repetition, memory retention, self-driven learning and self-efficacy in building skills in playing music, singing in language, and using symbols in music notation to connect with literacy in Anmatyerre, Walpiri, and English.”

As part of the partnership, Meriden students took part in cultural immersion trips to both schools, learning from Community Elders about traditional art and the importance of on-Country learning, and studying Dreamtime stories and Aboriginal art symbols while forming connections with their Northern Territory peers.



OLIVIA LEE

Meriden cadet becomes first female appointed to lead Army Cadet Unit

In November, Meriden student **OLIVIA LEE** made history as the first female appointed to the position of Senior Under Officer (SUO) of the Trinity Grammar School Army Cadet Unit (TGSACU).

The SUO serves as head of the Army Cadet Unit, the highest executive role responsible for planning, leading activities and managing the unit. Olivia, who joined the TGSACU in Year 7, has risen through the ranks to Cadet Under Officer (CUO), the highest attainable position within a school cadet unit. Olivia is entering Year 12 and will serve as Meriden's Head Prefect in 2025.

"Cadets is a unique environment to develop leadership, respect for self and others and various practical skills," Olivia said. "I have grown in courage, resilience and discipline and developed my understanding of what good leadership looks like in different contexts."

"In senior years, overcoming challenges and organising logistics have made Cadets particularly rewarding, especially sharing these accomplishments with cadets from different year groups and schools who all play distinct and valuable roles."

"I have grown in courage, resilience and discipline and developed my understanding of what good leadership looks like in different contexts."

— OLIVIA LEE

The Cadets program, Meriden's largest cocurricular activity, operates in partnership with Trinity Grammar School to form a co-educational unit of more than 500 students.



New Houses announced in the Senior School

Kristy Thapa (York), Annabelle Allen (Cambridge), Samantha Pei (Durham), Analise Nguyen (Kent), Sienna Liu (Cumberland), Mai Chu (Sussex), Cynthia Yao (Oxford), Nerissa Du (Warwick), Elissa Freney (Lincoln), Kaitlyn Blair (Norfolk)

Meriden will introduce four new Houses at the Senior School from the beginning of 2025. The new Houses – to be named Cambridge, Lincoln, Norfolk and York – will bring the total number of Houses in the Senior School to ten.

The House system at Meriden dates back to 1931, 34 years after the school was first established, and began with four Houses. These were: Cumberland – named after the County of Cumberland, NSW, where Meriden is located; Warwick after Warwickshire, England, where the village of Meriden is situated; Kent after the birthplace of

Miss Bertha Turner, Headmistress 1908-1924; and Sussex after the birthplace of Miss Grace Overy, Headmistress 1926-1940. In 2014, Durham and Oxford Houses were added, named after university counties in England.

Principal Mrs Lisa Brown says the House system helps establish smaller communities within the broader school community. “One of the most significant benefits of a House system is that it helps to develop a strong sense of belonging,” she says. “Each House becomes a smaller community within the school, a place where girls are known and supported by their peers.”

The Houses can also motivate students. “Through sports events and creative competitions, girls have the chance to push their limits and discover what they are capable of. The goal isn’t just to win, but to put in effort, learn from the experience and develop resilience,” says Mrs Brown.

The introduction of additional Houses will enable significantly smaller tutor groups within each House, enhancing the school’s ability to provide personalised care and support for its students.

Meriden Houses

INTRODUCED IN
1931

Cumberland	BLUE
Kent	GREEN
Sussex	RED
Warwick	YELLOW

INTRODUCED IN
2014

Durham	PURPLE
Oxford	ORANGE

INTRODUCED IN SENIOR SCHOOL IN
2025

Cambridge	TEAL
Lincoln	PINK
Norfolk	NAVY
York	MAROON



ISABELLA LU

Artist announced as finalist in Young Archie competition

Year 7 student **ISABELLA LU** was selected as a finalist in this year's Young Archie competition in July. This annual art competition for artists aged 5 to 18 is held alongside the prestigious Archibald Prize.

Encouraged by her uncle, who owns an art gallery, Isabella created an acrylic portrait of her grandfather titled *Light Switch*.

In her artwork label, Isabella describes her inspiration: "Every time I see my grandpa, he makes me very happy. It's like he turns on a light switch. He is usually a very serious person. Those who don't know him well rarely see him smile. But every time I come to him, he greets me with a warm smile and a huge hug."

Isabella says she learned some important skills from Ms Gillian Legge, Meriden's Head of Design and Creative Arts.

"In class, Ms Legge taught us about shadows, and we learned about lighting. I used some techniques I learned in class to emphasise the contrast between light and shadows in my portrait."

She says that taking part in the competition was an incredible experience. "I was very happy to find out that I was one of the six finalists in the 9 – 12 years category. This is one of the biggest achievements in my life so far."

Isabella's painting was exhibited at the Art Gallery of New South Wales alongside the Archibald, Wynne and Sulman Prizes.



Sabrina wins Mosman Youth Art Prize

Year 11 student **SABRINA CAO** has made an impact with her art this year, winning the Senior Youth Art Prize as part of the Members of Mosman Art Gallery prizes in April. Her painting, *The Contradiction of the Gaze*, was selected for display at a local business showroom.

“I like the feeling of being immersed in drawing something without having to worry about anything else for a while, and an opportunity to take a respite from the intensity of other studies,” says Sabrina.

“A wrinkled nose, a thinned lip – these small micro expressions and nuances ultimately affect the entirety of a person’s appearance and consequently, what they communicate to the rest of the world.”

— SABRINA CAO

Sabrina was also one of the Inner West Art Awards Finalists announced in November, for her landscape painting, *Awaiting the horizon*.

Jemma named as finalist in Young Archie competition

Year 1 student **JEMMA HAN** is following in the footsteps of Isabella and Sabrina, having been named as a finalist in the Young Archies 5 – 8 years category.

Jemma’s artwork, titled *Guiding Hand in Hand*, depicts Jemma and her father. “When my daddy holds my hand, I feel safe and snug in his big strong grip. I love going on adventures with him.”



Shortlisted student applies growth mindset to competitions

In August, Year 9 student **KITTY GAI** was shortlisted for the prestigious John Locke Essay Writing Competition and invited to attend an academic conference and awards dinner in London.

This highly competitive international competition challenges students to analyse questions on economics, history, law, philosophy, psychology, politics and theology.

Entries are judged by senior academics from universities including Oxford and Princeton, and Kitty said that she is thrilled at the opportunity to visit the United Kingdom, as she hopes to study at either Oxford or Cambridge universities in future.

Kitty chose to address a psychology question about the correlation between IQ and marriage rates, and why these differ for men and women.

“In my essay, I argued that intelligence is synonymous with personal autonomy, a trait that is both biologically and socially repellent for women but seen as desirable in men,” she said.

Her analysis drew on Charles Darwin’s *On The Origin of Species* and literary works including Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* and Anna Funder’s *Wifedom* to explore how female agency is systemically censored in patriarchal society.

Kitty encourages other students to choose topics they are passionate about when entering competitions.

“A genuine interest in the subject matter helps alleviate those late-night, slumped-at-computer moments while researching, drafting and editing your essay,” she said.

“Above all, treat it as a learning experience – it’s ultimately the knowledge and skills you acquire through participation that will help you the most as you progress through life.”

— KITTY GAI

KITTY GAI

Students shine in international astronomy competition



Year 7 student Ella Zhang achieved Silver Honours in the International Astronomy and Astrophysics Competition (IAAC) in September this year, placing in the top 15% of high school and university students worldwide.

Seven other Meriden students earned Bronze Honours, placing in the top 35% globally.

The IAAC challenges students to demonstrate astronomical creativity through qualification rounds and research problems requiring analysis of scientific papers.

“The astronomy competition differed from other science competitions as it required me to research more about the subject rather than simply regurgitate information,” Ella said. “I enjoy astronomy because of its applicability in both modern and futuristic problems. I wish to be in a career that is on the frontiers of science and discovery for humanity.”

Mrs Alexandra Phillips, Coordinator of Learning Link – Innovation, said Meriden encourages students to explore beyond the classroom. “Meriden girls can even become official IAAC Ambassadors, promoting astronomy at the school,” she said.

The successful students were:
Silver Honours: Ella Zhang; Bronze Honours: Kate Nguyen (Year 8), Michelle Lu, Mia Pertsinidis, Anjali Popuri, Reshmi Ramana (Year 10), Leah Har and Aiyang Wu (Year 11).

Students showcase critical thinking and problem-solving skills

Meriden students have excelled in two prestigious academic competitions this year: the da Vinci Decathlon and Tournament of Minds. Both events showcase participants' skills in critical thinking, problem-solving, deductive reasoning and teamwork.

Meriden's Year 9 team was crowned NSW State Champions in the da Vinci Decathlon before securing second place nationally. Team members **LISA CHEN, EVA GAO, YIRU LI, VIVIAN LIAO, OLIVIA KIM, AMELIA VON, JASMINE YANG,** and **CHLOE ZHOU** competed across disciplines including Art and Poetry, Code Breaking, Engineering, Mathematics and Science.

ANNIE FANG, CLARE YANG, ILA BAINS, ISABELLA ZHU, HANNAH XIAO AND SHEISZEN LING



CHLOE ZHOU, LISA CHEN, EVA GAO, JASMINE YANG, OLIVIA KIM, AMELIA VON, VIVIAN LIAO, YIRU LI

“We knew we were up against very strong competition, but we were determined not to let that faze us. We had been training hard for this opportunity and each of us played to our strengths.”

— OLIVIA KIM

In the Tournament of Minds International Finals, Meriden’s STEM team represented New South Wales against top teams from Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Indonesia and the United Arab Emirates.

The team members included students from multiple year groups: **ANNIE FANG** and **CLARE YANG** (Year 7), **CINDY SHEN** and **ISABELLA ZHU** (Year 9) and captains **ILA BAINS**, **SHEISZEN LING** and **HANNAH XIAO** (Year 10), who tackled two demanding engineering and creative challenges.

Hannah Xiao said the team members loved the opportunity to meet other competitors from the Tournament of Minds International Finals, with teams also joining a scavenger hunt across Sydney, and trading badges with peers from around the globe.

“A highlight for me was creating an interesting scenario and plot for our second challenge; it was fulfilling to see it play out during the presentation,” Hannah said.



SERENA LI, MISHA JHA, MANDY SHI, ALICE FENG, ROCHELLE TAO, MIA WU, ARIANA ZHANG, YUMI TAKUSAGAWA, NOEMI SNELLING

Meriden teams victorious at Archdale Debating

Meriden’s debating program has achieved outstanding success with both Year 8 teams winning their shields at the Archdale Debating competition, while the Juniors team secured runner-up position.

This year, 37 students across eight teams represented Meriden in the prestigious competition, which has run since the 1970s and now involves 24 schools. The teams tackled topics ranging from education and government policies to international relations and social media.

“The students’ hard work and dedication have truly shone throughout this competition,” said Ms Brittany Clark, Meriden’s Debating Coordinator. “Their impressive debating skills and remarkable growth throughout the season have been truly inspiring.”

Five Meriden teams reached the quarter-finals, with the 8A, 8B and Juniors teams progressing to the grand final. In September, the success of these teams culminated in the school finishing third overall in the Archdale Shield.

“Debating has improved my confidence in public speaking, collaboration skills, and ability to manage pressure,” said Ariana Zhang from the 8B team.

The 8A team successfully argued against abolishing formal student leadership positions in schools in their grand final debate. “A highlight was winning the grand final and maintaining an undefeated streak for most of the season,” said team member Alice Feng.

The following students represented Meriden in the Year 8 and Junior teams in Archdale Debating this year.

8A team: ALICE FENG, DANIELLE KIM, SERENA LI and YUMI TAKUSAGAWA

8B team: MISHA JHA, MANDY SHI, NOEMI SNELLING, ROCHELLE TAO, MIA WU and ARIANA ZHANG

Juniors team: TINA DONG, ISABELLA JIANG, ANNIE LI and ASHLEY SHU (Year 9)

Drama students win with moving performance at Shakespeare Carnival



SIENNA HOWARD
AND ELISSA FRENEY



DIYA MANINATHAN,
SAOIRSE FITZGERALD,
AISHANI DATTA AND
MATILDA GONG

Year 10 Drama students showcased their theatrical talents at this year's annual Shakespeare Carnival, with **SIENNA HOWARD** and **ELISSA FRENEY** earning equal first place in June for their duologue from *Macbeth*.

The carnival, run by Sport for Jove Theatre Company, challenges students to deepen their understanding of Shakespeare's works. Sienna and Elissa's powerful performance captured Lady Macbeth's manipulation and the corrupting nature of power, earning them a place in the state finals and a masterclass with professional actors.

"We got to perform on a professional stage at the Seymour Centre and in a theatre-in-the-round, with the house lights up so we could see the audience," Elissa said.

"One of the best parts about being part of the state final was watching groups we saw at the regional carnival and seeing how they changed and enhanced their performances," Sienna said.

Another group of students – **AISHANI DATTA, SAOIRSE FITZGERALD, MATILDA GONG, DIYA MANINATHAN** and **SOPHIE YANG** – wrote and performed their own work, *Roses of Nobility*.

The piece told the story of noble children struggling under societal pressure.

"One of the most enjoyable parts about creating our own piece was that we were able to tailor our characters and plot to suit the performance strengths of each actor," Diya said.

The girls found writing in Shakespearean language while balancing understandability of modern audiences the most challenging and said in-class workshops helped them here.

"The workshops helped us nail key Shakespearean elements, including some wonderfully obscure insults we used in our final script."

The students found the carnival both educational and inspiring. "The environment was very supportive, with a real sense of community," Elissa said. "It was fascinating to see how different schools approached Shakespeare."

"I was captivated by all these talented, creative people inspired by plays written 400 years ago," Diya added. "The performances gave the scripts life and emotion, and seeing everyone passionately perform and breathe life into them was incredible, and you don't get that when studying Shakespeare in class."



SHARON ZHAO AND
NERISSA DU

Musicians tour with the Australian Youth Orchestra

Three Meriden musicians have been selected to tour with the prestigious Australian Youth Orchestra (AYO) in 2025, gaining remarkable world-class experience as young pre-professional musicians.

Year 12 graduate **TERESA YANG** will perform at venues across Europe, including the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam and the Musikverein in Vienna.

Meanwhile Year 10 students **NERISSA DU** and **SHARON ZHAO** will join the Australian Summer Season tour in Queensland, performing under British conductor Kerem Hasan, alongside concert violinist Emily Sun.

The orchestra will perform *The Chairman Dances*, by John Adams, *Fantasia im Wintergarten* by Elena Kats-Chernin and *Ein Heldenleben* by Richard Strauss.

“I see this tour as a stepping stone in my journey towards a career as a professional musician,” says Nerissa, who joins the AYO for the first time and is looking forward to learning new repertoire.

“I think it will be an extremely eye-opening experience that will further fuel my passion for music.”

Sharon, who also dreams of pursuing a career in music, says: “As a violinist, I’ve come to realise the immense impact music has in shaping our lives and bringing us together.”

“As a violinist, I’ve come to realise the immense impact music has in shaping our lives and bringing us together.”

—SHARON ZHAO

Sharon is also excited to perform alongside a full symphony orchestra and to work with Emily Sun. “Emily has profoundly influenced my musical pathway, and I can’t wait to learn even more from her during this tour.”

MERIDEN'S PRODUCTION OF

Daisy Pulls it Off

Set in 1927, *Daisy Pulls it Off* revolves around the adventures and misadventures of Daisy Meredith when she is awarded a scholarship to Grangewood School for Girls. Superb acting and impeccable comic timing defined the Senior School's production of this award-winning play, leaving the audience thoroughly entertained.

- 1 Daisy celebrated for scoring the winning goal
- 2 Youya Wei as Mr Thompson and Vasiliki Cominos as Mr Scobrowski
- 3 Youya Wei as Mr Thompson
- 4 Indiana Cheung as Winnie Irving and Sara Hawley as Daisy Meredith
- 5 Chloe Papageorgiou as Trixie Martin and Sara Hawley as Daisy Meredith





- 6** Shalini Kangatharan as Miss Gibson
- 7** Abbie Kemp as Miss Granville
- 8** Sneha Hasanat and Sophie Yang as students
- 9** Students from Grangewood School for Girls whispering about new student, Daisy
- 10** Evangeline Lee as Mademoiselle
- 11** Celeste Ryan as Monica Smithers and Amali Taggart as Sybil Burlington
- 12** Chloe Papageorgiou as Trixie Martin and Sara Hawley as Daisy Meredith
- 13** Sara Hawley as Daisy Meredith and Aishani Datta as Belinda Mathieson

“All the world is made of faith and trust and pixie dust”

Audiences were enchanted by the Junior School's production of *Peter Pan, the Musical* in September. Students captivated and warmed the hearts of all who attended the sell-out performances as they sang, danced and acted their way through the magical tale.

- 1 Audrey Buckle as Bill Jukes, Jireh Roberto, Chloe Shi as Cookson, Ayla Geybi as Ship's Cook, Arya Thillainadesan as Hook, Molly Greenhalgh as Mr Smee and Emmy Trinh as Starkey
- 2 Olivia El Daghl as Peter Pan, Lorena Tram as Wendy, Alexa Loe as Michael and Sophia Wang as John
- 3 Aarya Tarvade as Tinkerbell, Ayden Zhang as Shadow, Xanthe Turvey as Shadow and Lorena Tram as Wendy
- 4 The Lost Boys

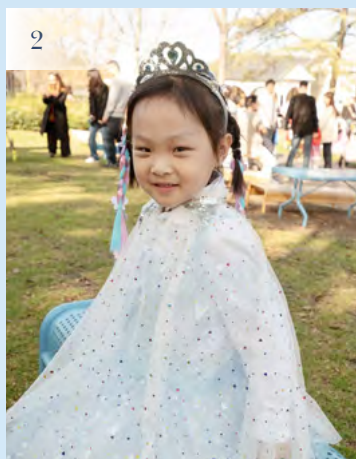




- 5** Audrey Buckle as Bill Jukes, Claudia Viner as Tiger Lily, Willa Liang as Cecco and the Pirate Chorus
- 6** Pirate Chorus
- 7** Mermaids: Tiffany Zhao as Seashell, Mia Milinkovic as Bombshell, Angela Xia as Rochelle, Charlotte Tang as Shelley, Cynthia Tian as Michelle
- 8** Fairy Chorus
- 9** Narrators: Scarlett Maroun, Ella Quach, Sophia Le, Kaitlyn Xi
- 10** Irene Zhang as Liza, Xanthe Turvey as Nursery Toy, Alice Wu as Mrs Darling, Elizabeth Ivanos as Nana, Nikita Sritharan as Mr Darling and Ayden Zhang as Nursery Toy
- 11** Wild Warrior Chorus

Favourite characters come to life

An array of storybook characters was brought to life in the Junior School in August when students from Pre-Kindergarten to Year 6 dressed as their favourite character to celebrate Book Week. While costumes ran the gamut from princesses and wicked witches to hungry caterpillars and unicorns, the students were united in their love for reading and the excitement of their next literary adventure.



- 1 Frankie Efremidis
- 2 Felicia Qin
- 3 Juliana Salib and Mrs Freeman
- 4 Annie Tian and Doreen Xie
- 5 KR students with Mrs Ronning and Ms Hancock
- 6 Madeleine Yoon
- 7 Sabine Sukar and Olivia Jun
- 8 Gabrielle Gu

9



10



11



12



13



14



15



16



17



- 9 Ariana Dib
- 10 KG students
- 11 Krishne Sivasubramaniam
- 12 Ellie Yang
- 13 Victoria Lee, Nicalina Whitfield and Julia Dimitriou
- 14 Harper Wei and Janet Jiang
- 15 Charlotte Truong and Ailee Kim
- 16 Alannah Sibai
- 17 Liyaani Ganeshalingam and Myolie Jiang

SENIOR SINGERS CONDUCTED
BY MS JODIE SPOONER-RYAN



Accolades for Meriden's musicians at Sydney Eisteddfod

Meriden's Senior Singers were crowned the 2024 Australasian Open Choral Champions in June this year, competing against top-tier adult and community choirs.

The group earned their place after winning the Youth Vocal Ensemble category at the Sydney Eisteddfod.

The Years 5 and 6 Choir won second place in the Youth category of the Championships after winning their Primary Choir section at the Sydney Eisteddfod.

Meriden's Dean of Music Ms Jodie Spooner-Ryan says the Sydney Eisteddfod is a wonderful opportunity to see other choirs and instrumental ensembles from all over Sydney, in schools and in the community, perform a diverse range of repertoire.

"The competitive aspect gives us a goal to work towards and to perfect repertoire," she says.

Meriden's ensembles achieved outstanding results at the 2024 Sydney Eisteddfod.

Senior School ensembles that achieved first place honours included the Symphony Orchestra (Premium Youth Orchestra), Sinfonia (Intermediate Youth Orchestra), Madrigals (Youth Vocal Ensemble), and Senior Singers (Youth Choir).



Strong performances were also delivered by the Big Band and Jazz Combo (both second place), Wind Symphony and Intermediate Chamber Strings (both third place), while the Concert Band and Chamber Strings earned Highly Commended awards in their respective divisions.

The Junior School celebrated victories with the Years 5 and 6 Choir (Primary Choir), Year 2 Choir (Infant Choir), and Junior School Chamber Strings (Primary School Premium String Ensemble) all winning their respective divisions.

The Senior Singers were invited to compete in the Open category, after placing first in the Youth Vocal Ensemble (19 Years and Under) at the Sydney Eisteddfod.

Their repertoire included *Always keep this close* by Zachary J Moore, and *La Niña*, composed by Mr Huw Belling, Meriden music composition teacher.

“The power of music and the ways it brings the girls together, is invaluable and creates life-long memories,” says Ms Spooner-Ryan.



Years 5 and 6 Choir conducted by Ms Melinda Bryant

“The power of music and the ways it brings the girls together, is invaluable and creates life-long memories.”

—MS SPOONER-RYAN



Mrs Jodie Winton and Ms Michelle Rollins (on piano) leading a singing class

Years 1 and 2 singing program

Meriden's Years 1 and 2 singing program brings together music specialists and classroom teachers in a collaborative approach to music education.

Students join weekly 30-minute singing sessions led by Meriden's three highly-qualified Junior School music teachers, Ms Melinda Bryant, Mrs Jodie Winton and Ms Michelle Rollins, along with their class teachers.

"My doctoral research explored music teachers' experiences of learning communities, supporting the sharing of responsibility for student learning among staff so that music education can thrive," says Dr Michele Benn, Head of Junior School.

"During fieldwork in regional NSW, I observed class teachers actively engaged in the content and processes of timetabled

multi-class singing sessions led by the music specialist teacher. The success of these lessons inspired me to consider whether similar classes could become part of the Junior School timetable," she says.

"Central to the program is the partnership between class teachers and music educators. Music education research highlights the critical role mentorship plays in the confidence and self-efficacy of generalist class teachers. By collaborating in singing sessions, teachers enhance their understanding of singing pedagogy and gain opportunities to actively participate in the shared practice of music education. This mutual engagement contributes to a professional learning community where staff work collectively to contribute to the high-quality musical experiences for students," explains Dr Benn.

She notes that singing develops choral skills, provides a strong aural foundation for music studies and can enhance young children's language skills, memory, and auditory processing, promote emotional expression, reduce stress, and build self-confidence.

"Group singing, in particular, contributes to a sense of belonging and teamwork, creating a supportive community where children feel connected to one another," says Dr Benn.

Leading the program are Ms Melinda Bryant, a highly regarded music teacher, choral conductor and presenter for the Orff-Schulwerk Teacher Certification courses; Mrs Jodie Winton who is renowned for her expertise in early childhood music education; and Ms Michelle Rollins who regularly presents professional learning for music teachers, is an accomplished accompanist and holds an L.Mus.A (AMEB) in singing.



Meriden's team of the year

Abigail Oates, Ella Creighton, Alyssa Chan, Christina DiGiandomenico, Kate Duffy, Nita Churcher and Sophie Pethers

Meriden's S01 Water Polo team has been named School Team of the Year at the annual Sports Awards Presentation, which recognises exceptional sporting achievements from Term 4 2023 through to Term 3 2024.

The team of **ALYSSA CHAN, NITA CHURCHER, ELLA CREIGHTON, CHRISTINA DIGIANDOMENICO, KATE DUFFY, ELISSA HOOK, LUCY LEVENBERG-PENKLIS, ABIGAIL OATES** and **SOPHIE PETHERS** dominated the 2023 championship season, going undefeated to secure their fourth IGSA Championship trophy in five years. The girls then successfully defended their title in the IGSA Invitational season in Term 1 2024.

Individual team members have also achieved international success. In July, Abigail competed for Australia at the U16 Women's Water Polo World Championships in Turkey, bringing home a bronze medal after training camps in Greece and Hungary. Christina represented Australia at the U18 Women's Water Polo World Championships in China in August, where the team progressed to the quarter finals.

"The girls have been able to learn and grow as a team in and out of the pool," says Head Coach Ms Chloe Wilcox, adding that she was 'immensely proud' of the team's achievements.

"Our players already display skills at an exceptional level, and with the Brisbane Olympics on the horizon in 2032, their dedication and ambition is continuing to grow."

— MS CHLOE WILCOX

COMMUNITY CHAPLAIN

Mrs Teresa Lee



Mrs Teresa Lee joined Meriden's Chaplaincy team in 2022 as Community Chaplain, working with students, families and staff across the school community.

Her role involves caring for the Meriden community, including staff, families and students from Pre-Kindergarten to Year 12 and beyond, forming connections, listening, and walking alongside people in the good and hard times of their lives.

A significant part of her role involves praying and providing spiritual and pastoral support.

"I have also been able to help people explore their questions about Christianity and who Jesus is, and to hear about their beliefs and cultures, which is something I really enjoy. We are a school of many cultures and there is so much we can come to appreciate about each other's backgrounds," says Mrs Lee.

"The enthusiasm of students, families and staff for the school is what I find so special here at Meriden. People care for one another and take time to give back to the school and to one another in friendship."

— MRS TERESA LEE

"I see this joyful willingness to serve and care at the school gate, assemblies, and chapels, in the staff common room, in prayer meetings and in our Parents, Friends and Auxiliary groups. There is a camaraderie and a willingness to be involved evident here in the girls, their families and in the staff."



LUCY LEVENBERG-PENKLIS

Lucy Harvard-bound after the HSC

Year 12 student Lucy Levenberg-Penklis has received an offer to attend Harvard University in 2025, maintaining Meriden's strong connection with the prestigious institution.

"Going to Harvard was always my dream," says Lucy, who hopes to follow her studies of neuroscience at Harvard with a medical degree at the University of Sydney.

"I would like to study neuroscience because I love science, particularly biochemistry, and I am fascinated by the human brain and how it works. This is motivated, at least in part, because two of my grandparents suffered from Alzheimer's disease, and a third from mental illness later on in life."

Lucy's achievements in Water Polo complemented her application. "Never underestimate the value of hard work and dedication to your cocurricular activities," she says.

Lucy will be the third Meriden student to attend Harvard University, following alumnae Inde Halligan (Class of 2017) and Daniela Zapata Rincon (Class of 2019).

All three students were selected for Harvard's water polo team, ensuring Meriden will have had an alumna playing on Harvard's water polo team for ten consecutive years.

Gallipoli Youth Tennis Champions

Meriden successfully defended its title as the reigning Gallipoli Youth Tennis Cup Champions for the third consecutive year in November. The event, formerly known as the Australian Schools Tennis Challenge, brings together the top secondary school tennis players from around Australia to compete. Ten girls' teams competed for the national title from 24 to 27 November at Traralgon Tennis Centre, Victoria.

Representing Meriden were NIKITHA DESAI, GABRIELA GARİPOVA, GISELLE GUILLEN, AIMEE JIN, JIZELLE SIBAI and MIRANDA XU.

Following some exceptional play in the singles matches, Giselle and Jizelle secured the win for Meriden after defeating their opponents 6-2, 6-2 in the first doubles match of the final.

This is the tenth win for Meriden since first competing in this tournament in 2010.

Earlier in the year, Meriden successfully defended its title as Tildesley Tennis Champions for the 15th consecutive year – a record for the Tildesley Tennis tournament which commenced in 1918. Thirty-three players represented Meriden at this tournament at Pennant Hills Park in March.



Aimee Jin, Nikitha Desai, Miranda Xu, Jizelle Sibai, Giselle Guillen and Gabriela Garipova

High-performance football



Meriden's high-performance football squad



Following the Matildas' inspiring 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup campaign, Meriden launched a high-performance football program in early 2024.

"We all encourage one another to train and perform to their best ability and keep up a positive atmosphere while striving to achieve the best results possible."

— OLIVIA ROBINSON
2024 FOOTBALL CAPTAIN

The program is led by Coach James Spanoudakis, First Grade Assistant Coach at St George City FA, and student members from Years 7 to 12 train year-round including in a program focused on skill development and fitness. Players' progress is regularly tested against previous benchmarks.

Meriden's 2024 Football Captain Olivia Robinson says that her football skills and technique have greatly improved since joining the high-performance squad.

"The coaching staff organise sessions and drills to focus on areas of development," says Olivia.

"The coaches use the Veo footage to analyse past games and discuss the skills we need to work on and develop, so each girl gets the most out of each training session," she says.

The team's impressive results in 2024 competitions include strong performances in the CIS Cup and reaching the final of the inaugural SACS Cup Competition.

Meriden's S01 team also competed in the IGSA competition for the first time, achieving strong results including two hard-fought wins in challenging circumstances. In July, Meriden competed in the Kanga Cup in Canberra, the largest youth football tournament in the southern hemisphere.

"We all encourage one another to train and perform to their best ability and keep up a positive atmosphere while striving to achieve the best results possible," Olivia says. The program has fostered strong friendships across year groups while developing players' technical skills and leadership capabilities.

Athletes excel on the national stage



MERIDEN'S NATIONAL
SCHOOLS CHALLENGE
ATHLETES

Meriden's athletes continued their winning streak at the National Schools Challenge in Brisbane in December, with the Intermediate Team securing the bronze medal – their third consecutive year on the podium. The Senior Team placed fourth, while the Junior Team finished ninth.

The bronze-winning Intermediate Team of **OLIVIA ACHIKE, YOLANDA DOLENAC, LUCY GREENHALGH, REKHA LEVINE, JULIA MEAKER, INDIANA MIDDLETON, EMMANUELLA OMAGE** and **SIENNA SUKH** secured multiple top placings.

Individual victories came from Indiana Middleton (first in Shot Put), Rekha Levine (first in Long Jump and third in 200m), Emmanuella Oimage (second in 100m), and Yolanda Dolenac (third in High Jump).

The Senior Team of **ADRIANA BORG, KIERA KREBS, BRONTE LOCANE, CLAUDIA MEAKER, ALANNAH ROBERTS, AUDREY SUTTON** and **CAITLIN YEOH** saw Claudia win the 1500m and the team place third in the Medley Relay.

The Junior Team of **ELLA ACHIKE, PRAPTHI RAVINDRA, PRATITHI RAVINDRA, ZOE RIPPON** and **AMBER WORDEN** celebrated Amber's third place in Long Jump.

In April, Adriana Borg won silver in Triple Jump at the Australian Junior Athletics Championships.

Meriden also achieved its highest-ever representation at the NSW CIS Cross Country Championships with nine athletes selected. Claudia Meaker won gold and her sister Julia secured a top-six finish.

At the IGSA Track and Field Championship, Meriden placed second overall for the third consecutive year, winning the Intermediate Age division with Julia Meaker named Intermediate Age Champion.

The Intermediate Relay team of Olivia Achike, Rekha Levine, Indiana Middleton and Emmanuella Oimage also claimed victory.

The school dominated the NSW CIS Athletics Championships with fourteen students earning spots on the CIS Merit Team. In September, Meriden won both Senior and Intermediate Team events at the NSW All Schools Athletics Championships and placed second in the Junior Team event.

In the Australian Athletics All-Schools National Championships in December, Adriana Borg came fifth in U17 Long Jump and sixth in Triple Jump, Audrey Sutton was fourth in U18 Long Jump and sixth in Triple Jump, and Julia Meaker came seventh in U16 1500m.

The year concluded with Claudia Meaker crowned Australian All Schools U18 1500m Champion.

Meriden's bronze-winning Intermediate Team.



President's Message

KYLIE KAPELERIS (2004)



The Meriden Old Girls' Union (OGU) has had another remarkable year, and I take great pride in our committee's dedication to nurturing the OGU network. We continue to cultivate connections that resonate deeply. These connections encompass our shared experiences and cherished memories from our time at school, strengthen our bonds with fellow Old Girls, and reinforce our ties to the school and its current students who join our community each year.

It is a true privilege to serve on this committee, and we look forward to welcoming more Old Girls into our community in 2025. I am also excited to announce the formation of a new committee for 2024/25 and thank them for unwavering support and commitment throughout the year.

Our Annual General Meeting, held on 13 June 2024 at the Blue Ocean Equities Boardroom, provided breathtaking views of Vivid Sydney and served as a wonderful platform for reconnection and socialising. Led by Natalya Rodrigo (2000), the event featured an inspiring panel presentation with inspirational

Meriden Olympians. We were honoured to host Danielle Le Ray (Class of 2001), Olympian in Rhythmic Gymnastics at Sydney 2000; Danielle O'Brien (Class of 2007), Olympian in Figure Skating Mixed Ice Dance at Sochi 2014; and Taylah O'Neill (Class of 2012), a dual Olympian in Freestyle Skiing at Sochi 2014 and Beijing 2022. Each shared their unique journeys and fond memories from their years at Meriden.

Our annual social gathering is an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of our Old Girls, and we continue to host these events at the beginning of each calendar year to foster connections among our community.

Back to Meriden Day, held on 24 August 2024, proved to be our most popular event yet, with many Old Girls in attendance. The day commenced with a Chapel Service, followed by guided school tours and lunch in the Greenhalgh Centre for Music and Drama, providing ample opportunity for Old Girls to reconnect and reminisce. We extend our congratulations to all cohorts celebrating reunion milestones this year and look forward to welcoming everyone back next year. Special thanks to Irene Karantonis (Class of 1994), Mrs Lisa Brown, Reverend Brie Pattinson, and the Year 10 Ambassadors for their contributions on the day.

This year the OGU also hosted 30 Old Girls for a private tour of the Archibald, Wynne and Sulman Prize 2024 at the Art Gallery of NSW. Thank you to Milica Mitrevski (Class of 2003) and Marina Mitrevski (Class of 2000) for organising this event, which we hope to make an annual tradition.

We were also privileged to attend the Pre-Kindergarten/Kindergarten – Year 12 Dinner, where we presented embossed Bibles to the girls — an enduring tradition of the OGU. We sincerely hope these Bibles will serve as lasting reminders of God's presence and guidance, along with the support of the Meriden Old Girls' Union.

- 1 OGU members on a private tour of the Archibald, Wynne and Sulman Prize, Art Gallery of NSW
- 2 Principal Mrs Lisa Brown with Olympians Danielle O'Brien, Taylah O'Neill and Danielle Le Ray at the OGU AGM

OGU Committee

KYLIE KAPELERIS (2004)
President

—
AMY TAYLOR (2015)
Vice President

—
BILLIE LOTTEY (1980)
Treasurer

—
NIKKI KELSO (1996)
Secretary

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

IRENE KARANTONIS (1994)
MARINA MITREVSKI (2000)
HERMIONE KIDD (1980)
NATALYA RODRIGO (2000)
CARLA GAGLIANO (2000)
JESSICA MELDRUM (1996)
NADENE O'NEILL (1995)



We are delighted to announce that the Vocational Prize Scholarship for 2024 was awarded to Year 12 student Poppy Georgas. Poppy has excelled in her nursing studies through TAFE while simultaneously completing her HSC at Meriden. An enthusiastic participant in both sports and the Performing Arts, she has also exemplified leadership as a Year 12 Prefect, serving as a role model for younger students. Her consistent kindness, helpfulness, and commitment to serving others make her a deserving recipient of the OGU Vocational Prize.

As part of our continuous efforts to strengthen relationships with senior students at Meriden, we participated as mentors in the Year 10 Student Futures Day on 13 November 2024. Jessica Meldrum (Class of 1996), Head of Cyber Risk at Westpac, and a valued OGU Committee member, represented the Old Girls and shared insights on the vital support the OGU offers to girls transitioning from their time at Meriden. It was a great morning and the Old Girls thoroughly enjoy participating in this event each year.

Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to Mrs Brown, Mrs Chilton, Mrs Kirollos and Ms Brophy-Williams for their support of the OGU throughout the year. We look forward to continuing to build relationships with the staff at Meriden and being involved in ways that support the students and the school.

We send our best wishes to the graduating class of 2024, who have already made a significant impact. Their tenacity and resilience exemplify the Meriden values of faithfulness, resilience and perseverance. We wish Year 12 and all the students at Meriden the very best in their studies and look forward to personally welcoming the Class of 2024 as OGU Members in the new year.

On behalf of the OGU, I look forward to connecting with you in 2025.

Semper Fidelis



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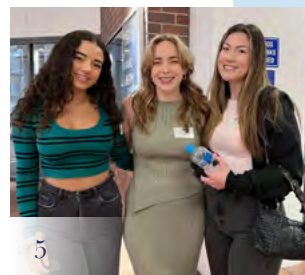
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- 1 Class of 1984
- 2 Ann Tomlinson (Wald, 1965), Jan Ashton (1964), Lucie Anderson (1964)
- 3 Janice Vince (Pickett, 1957), Helen Boyce (Parkhill, 1957)
- 4 Chris Gardiner (1969)
- 5 Kristina Poulos (2019), Alexandra Gregory (2019), Jessica Stanmore (2019)
- 6 Jennifer Whiteman (1982)
- 7 Rogen Gayed (2019), Emily Halloran (2016), Tanya Koo (2016), Tasfia Hossain (2016), Madeline Lam (2016), Anu Karunaratna (2016)
- 8 Leanne Avery (Evans, 1979), Elizabeth Croft (Norman, 1979)

Spotlight on two of Meriden's Olympians

During this Olympic year, Meriden Old Girls Danielle O'Brien and Taylah O'Neill reflected on their remarkable journeys as Olympians.



DANIELLE O'BRIEN
(CLASS OF 2007)

Current role:

- Lead Business Analyst, Financial Crime Compliance, Westpac Group
- Figure Skating Coach (part-time)

Inspired by the 1998 Nagano Olympics, I wrote in a school worksheet in Year 3, "My unfulfilled dream is to compete at the Winter Olympics in Ice Dance". At this time, I had only been skating for two years! This was the start of my Olympic journey.

In 2002, I got my first taste of international competition at a Novice International event in the USA. I went on to compete internationally at the Junior and Senior level during my high school years at Meriden.

Fast forward to 2009, I graduated from Meriden, put my University studies on hold and moved to Canada to chase a qualification with my skating partner, Greg Merriman, for the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver. We were in a strong position to earn an Olympic berth for Australia. Unfortunately, when we arrived at the event in Germany, Greg was hospitalised with Pericarditis (inflammation of the sac around the heart), and we were forced to withdraw.

For the next four years, I was based in Detroit, MI USA. My partner and I invested everything into our goal of Olympic qualification. In 2013, we achieved our goal, qualifying for the 2014 Winter Olympics and becoming the first Australian Ice Dance team to compete at the Olympics since 1988.

Achieving Olympic qualification was the highlight of my journey. We saw the Olympics as the ultimate reward for all the hard work and challenges we had overcome. At the 2014 Sochi Olympic Winter Games, we qualified for the Ice Dance Final, placing 20th overall. It was an honour to share the 2014 Olympic stage with fellow Meriden alumna Taylah O'Neill.

In 2014, Greg and I retired from competitive Ice Dance as Australia's most decorated Ice Dance team. I continue to be involved in Australian Figure Skating as a coach, mentor and former Director of the Ice Skating Club of NSW Co-Operative.



TAYLAH O'NEILL
(CLASS OF 2012)

Current role:

Account Manager at PR agency alt/shift/

I have been skiing since I was two years old and competing since the age of seven. My first taste of competition was at Interschools Snowsport Championships competing for Meriden. From there I joined the Perisher Winter Sports Club and slowly moved up the Australian rankings.

In 2008 when I was in Year 8, I was selected to be part of the Australian National Team and two years later competed in my first World Cup competition.

After graduating from Meriden in 2012, I decided to take a gap year to commit full time to mogul skiing, and in 2014 competed at my first Olympic Games. After this I suffered a few injuries and setbacks, including two ACL tears and missing out on the 2018 Olympic Games. However, I kept training hard and I went on to compete at the 2019 World Championships and 2022 Olympic Games.

I decided to retire from the sport following the 2022 Olympics and now work full-time in Public Relations, having attained my Bachelor's degree from UNSW during my athletic career from 2014-2018.

STUDENT FUTURES DAY

Old Girls share their wisdom and experience



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3



- 1 Matilda Freeburn (2010)
- 2 Nikki Kelso (1996), Jessica Meldrum (1996), Joanne Arancibia (Tralaggan, 2002)
- 3 Julia Krapeshlis (2013)
- 4 Guest Speaker Panel: Ashlee Thompson (2006), Zoe Bennett (2017), Rebecca Rippon, Cara Woods (2002)
- 5 Ashley Chidiac (2017)
- 6 Zoe Spanos (2014), Monique Piggott (2014), Mrs Joanne Spanos, Matilda Freeburn (2010)
- 7 Paris Nicolaou (2016), Emily Perich (2017), Katharine Franklin-Tripodi (2017), Julia Arnaout (2017)
- 8 Lara Strati (2018)



Once again, many Meriden Old Girls gave generously of their time to connect with students at the annual Year 10 Student Futures Day. The day is a feature of the Tertiary and Careers program at Meriden, designed to equip students with the skills necessary for success in the modern workforce.

Students were engaged in meet-a-mentor sessions and group interviews with Old Girls, as well as a panel discussion with speakers from various sectors, tutorials and workshops and a rotating Tertiary and Careers Expo.

The school is appreciative of the support and generous gift of time given by our Old Girls in making this event a success.





- 1 Iris Loudon (Perren, 1959), Elizabeth McCusker (1964)
- 2 Emily Halloran (2016), Elise Fioretto (Bergan 2016)
- 3 Linda Huang (2016), Paris Nicolaou (2016), Vanessa D'Souza (2018), Emily Thomson (2018)
- 4 Mr Luke Mottee, Milania Di Maria (2023), Demi Arronis (2023), Abigail Omage (2023)
- 5 Dijana Dragomirovic (1989), Sarah Karavasiliadis (Hanania, 2009)
- 6 Alannah Yenson (2023), Lael Sakalauskas (2023), Brianne Tam (2023), Vanessa Wu (2023), Talia Yin (2023)
- 7 Tara Graetz (2015), Rachael Whitford (2015)



CAREER MENTORING PROGRAM AT MERIDEN

Meriden would love to hear from Old Girls who are interested in being a career mentor to current Meriden students.

Meriden Old Girls are a valuable resource for advice and guidance on career opportunities and tertiary pathways for our senior students. The settings may include year group presentations, small group discussions and industry events for students and parents.

If you would like to lend your support to this program, please contact us in one of the following ways:

- Complete the online Expression of Interest form on the Old Girls' page of the Meriden website: <https://www.meriden.nsw.edu.au/community/meriden-old-girls/>
- Drop us a line via email at communityrelations@meriden.nsw.edu.au and let us know about your career, industry sector and why you would like to be involved in mentoring Meriden students
- Allow the school to communicate with you via LinkedIn by adjusting your LinkedIn profile to include Meriden School in the Education section and enable notifications from Meriden.

We look forward to hearing from you!



www.linkedin.com/school/meriden-school-strathfield/



- 1 Joanne Arancibia (Tralagga, 2002), Gina Lee (Kim, 1995), Ashlee Thompson (2006), Cara Woods (2002), Sian Green (Willis, 1999)
- 2 Annie Dong (2018), Jessica Wei (2018), Eunice Park (2020)



60th Anniversary for the Class of 1964

Meriden was delighted to welcome our Old Girls from the Class of 1964 for a special 60th anniversary reunion held at the school in October.

STANDING: Barbara Randle, Katrina Patterson, Linda Rosenman, Helen Palmer, Ann Tomlinson, Marilyn Higgins, Anne Henry, Lucie Anderson, Elizabeth McCusker, Therese Messner, Isabel Twivey, Lyndall Sawyer, Jan Astridge, Rosemary MacDougall, Virginia Robinson, Sheryl Radford

SEATED: Jan Boyd, Jill Bownas, Trish Jones, Erica Archer, Jeannie (Virginia) Bristow, Nancy Seeto, Pauline Wong

Old Girls inspire as guest judges at annual Science Showcase

During STEM week, several Old Girls pursuing careers or studies in STEM fields, returned to Meriden to serve as judges for the annual Science Showcase. This event featured 120 inventions and research investigations created by students from Years 8, 9 and 10.

In addition to their official duties as judges, the visiting alumnae took the opportunity to inspire and encourage Meriden students, offering valuable words of advice to those considering a future in STEM.

MADDISON KING
(CLASS OF 2016)

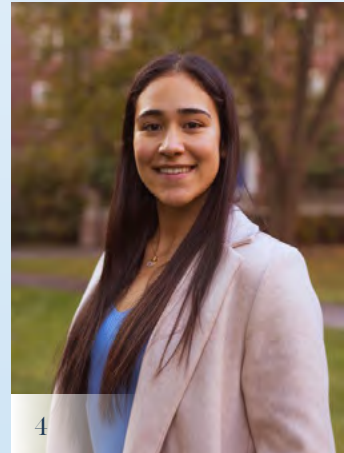
Current Role:
Asset Project Coordinator at Taronga Zoo

“Exploring a career in engineering or construction project management opens the door to diverse opportunities and niches, where your unique perspective can lead to groundbreaking solutions and endless growth.”

DR JOANNE LING
(CLASS OF 1985)

Current role:
Senior Team Leader, Water and Wetlands Team, Water Wetlands Coastal Science Branch, Science and Insights Division, Department of Climate Change Energy, the Environment and Water

“The great thing about doing something that you love and are passionate about, is that you will have no problem doing it for five days a week. There are so many topics that you can do in the broader category of science and, going forward, the impacts of the environment must be considered in all professions. From the impacts of climate change on human health, sustainability of economics and business, to changes in policy that will be required as we try and come to terms with changes in climate and pollution. A better understanding around science will be part of everything we do in the future.”



- 1 Maddison King
- 2 Dr Joanne Ling
- 3 Lily Yang
- 4 Daniela Zapata Rincon

DANIELA ZAPATA RINCON
(CLASS OF 2019)

Current role:
Harvard Undergraduate Student, graduating May 2025

“Dive in, ask questions, challenge assumptions and believe that you have the ability to make a difference through science. We are facing incredibly challenging problems and we need curious, dedicated female scientists to come up with solutions for them.”

LILY YANG
(CLASS OF 2019)

Current role:
Software Engineer at Atlassian

“Science has already unlocked numerous mysteries and abilities but there is still much to be done; a career in science will allow you to be at the forefront of unearthing these next discoveries and shaping our future.”

Making her mark in healthcare with AI

Esther Wu (Class of 2021) is making her mark in the healthcare industry, working to develop an AI-based support system to remotely monitor patient health, which aims to improve health outcomes of the chronically ill, the elderly and patients who live in rural and remote locations.



Esther is currently finishing the third year of her Software Engineering and Biomedical Engineering degree at the University of New South Wales (UNSW).

"I chose this degree because I love coding and technology, and I love being able to help people in a tangible way," Esther said. "It is really exciting to explore how engineering can make a positive difference in the world!"

This year, she joined the Vertically Integrated Projects Program, where students engage with ambitious, long-term, multidisciplinary project teams that are led by UNSW researchers. They tackle real-world problems, developing their technical and design skills, and expanding their professional expertise.

Through this program, Esther worked on developing an AI model that clinicians can use to interpret their patients' ECG heart rhythm data remotely and in real time. The aim of this project is to reduce the rate of hospital re-admissions by accurately monitoring and managing patient metrics.

"Our model is trained to read the raw data and translate it into text reports, which will highlight vital information about any cardiac issues present."

"Through our project, we hope to help clinicians diagnose cardiac conditions more quickly and efficiently. This means less manual workload for hospitals with limited resources, and it allows patients to receive the treatment and care they need sooner!"

Esther encourages all Meriden girls to keep feeding their curiosity.

"STEM is about so much more than school subjects or a future university degree. In fact, many of my most useful skills and favourite experiences have come from things I've done outside of the classroom.

"So don't be afraid to go out and explore something new, whether that's through extracurricular activities, local workshops, free online courses, or the occasional YouTube video.

"Have fun and take your learning into your own hands!"

— ESTHER WU



Year 13 at Meriden

Year 13 is a Christian gap-year program run by Youthworks, focusing on discipleship. It allows school-leavers to take some time to grow in their knowledge and faith. Meriden hosts Year 13 participants to complement their discipleship, providing them with part-time employment while they participate in some hands-on ministry within the Meriden community.

Recent graduates IMOGEN LEON and JEMIMA LOANE (Class of 2023) describe their experiences in the Year 13 program at Meriden.

What was your role as a Year 13 participant at Meriden?

IMOGEN: Our job is to help fill in gaps and assist staff and students across all Meriden campuses. We help in the libraries, run lunchtime Christian groups, help Kindergarten classes, work in the uniform shop, organise lost property, and assist teaching staff.

JEMIMA: I was involved in a variety of tasks around the school, but the highlight was the opportunity to be involved in hands-on ministry within the Meriden community. This year I joined 'Shine', the Years 3 and 4 Bible Study Group, and 'Oasis' the Year 12 Bible Study Group.

Why did you decide to participate in the Year 13 program?

IMOGEN: I was encouraged to consider Year 13 by Meriden girls in the year above me who had participated in Year 13 and worked at Meriden. I wanted to prioritise God in my life and Year 13 was a great way to focus and deepen my faith. Year 13 is a unique opportunity, and I wanted to make the most of it.

JEMIMA: Year 13 had been at the back of my mind for a while, but I had decided against joining the program initially. However, after I was asked about my decision, I decided to look into it a bit more. The idea of a year dedicated to growing my faith



Jemima Loane and Imogen Leon

and joining in fellowship with Christians from all over Sydney really excited me, and the promise of a change in pace to look forward to while in the midst of the demands of the HSC made it extra appealing. So, Imogen and I decided to give it a go! I am so grateful for the way this program has shaped me and equipped me for however God calls me to serve him in the future.

What was it like coming back to Meriden for a 13th year?

IMOGEN: It took a bit of adjustment, but it was also nice to be working in a familiar environment. I found it helpful being a past student, knowing where the buildings are and having a sense of what goes on at a school like Meriden. It has been interesting to see the other side of Meriden and how much work goes on unseen.

JEMIMA: It was weird at first and the hardest part was calling the teachers by their first names! However, after getting over the initial weirdness, I felt very welcomed. It was interesting learning about how various departments, such as Enrolments, work at the school. The Dean of Community Learning, Vanessa (always Mrs Kirolos in my heart), helped us in the transition, assisting us whenever we needed and giving us a variety of tasks!

What was the most rewarding aspect of the Year 13 program?

IMOGEN: Being able to apply the skills I was learning at Year 13 in the ministries I was serving in, such as pre-school kids church and SCG groups.

JEMIMA: I think a very rewarding part recently has been reflecting on my growth in my faith this year. I have been encouraged by Christians in all parts of the program at Youthworks, Meriden and at my church which has helped me grow and, therefore, helped me to better lead younger Christians.

Would you recommend the program to current students?

IMOGEN: I would definitely recommend this program to current students. Year 13 is a great place to make lasting friendships and deepen your faith and understanding. Meriden has been so supportive with this partnership, giving us both work and discipleship.

JEMIMA: Absolutely! Initially I was in a rush to get to university but this year I have really learned that it is never a waste to invest in your faith. Year 13 is an amazing opportunity at a unique point in your life to do that. It has been a great way to transition into work and life and I am grateful for the way Meriden has supported me even as a graduate.

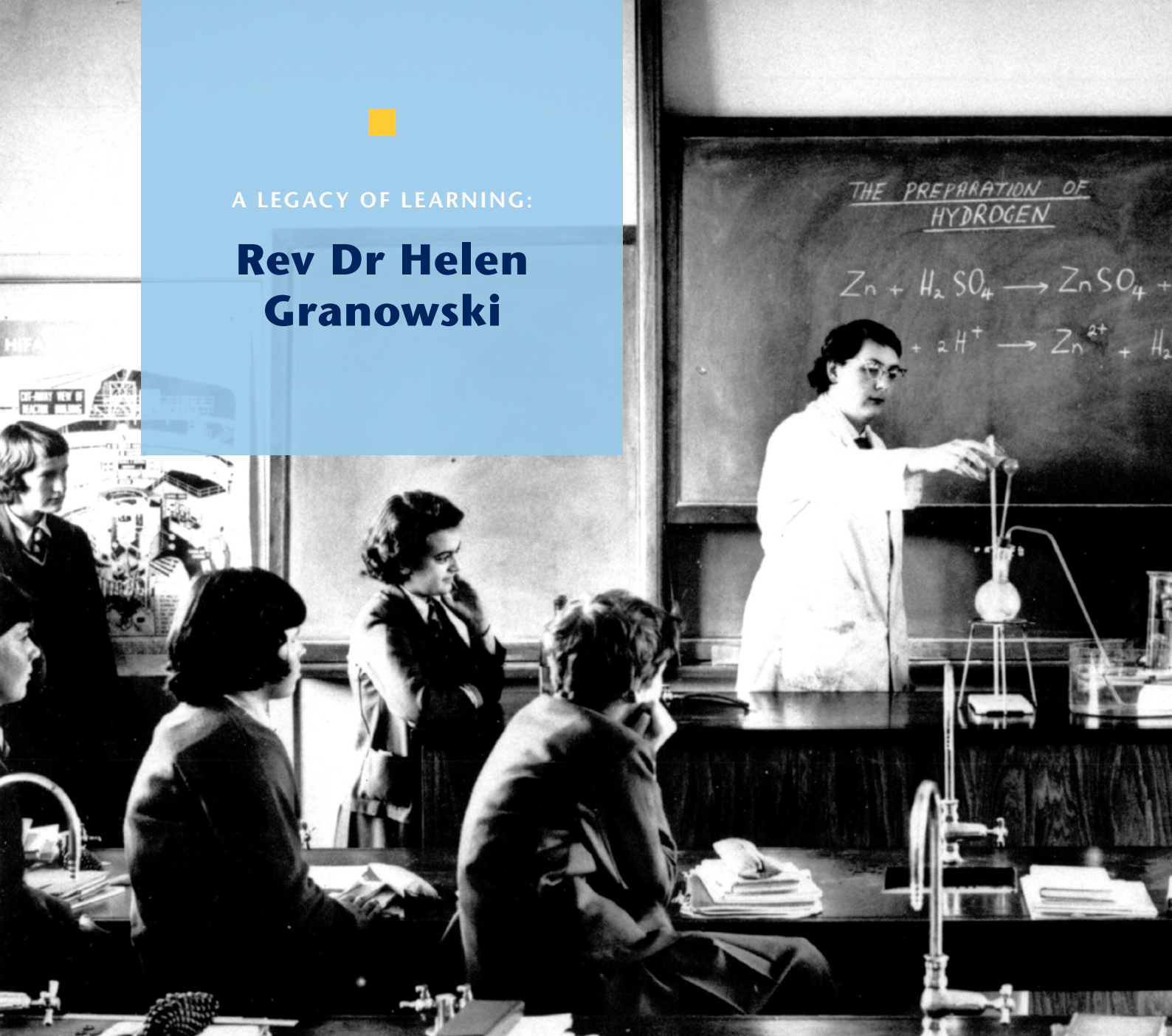
What are your plans for next year?

IMOGEN: I will be studying a Bachelor of Product Design and Creative Intelligence and Innovation at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS).

JEMIMA: Next year I am going to be studying a Bachelor of Speech Pathology at Sydney University. I am looking forward to involving myself in the Evangelical Union, continuing to serve in ministries at my church and working part-time at the Meriden Uniform Shop!

A LEGACY OF LEARNING:

Rev Dr Helen Granowski



The Meriden Foundation received an unexpected gift in early 2024 when former teacher Rev Dr Helen Granowski named the school as a beneficiary in her will.

Helen taught Science at Meriden from 1959 to 1964, where she was remembered as “a teacher by heart as well as profession”.

A pioneer in encouraging young women to study physics and chemistry, she also served as Girl Guide captain, where students fondly nicknamed her “Greno”.

Helen’s career in education continued as Principal of St Hilda’s Southport (1965-1974) and Head of Canberra Girls’ Grammar School (1980-1984). In

1991, she was ordained in the Anglican Church, serving as an Associate Priest at Holy Trinity Kew and as Deputy Chair of Lowther Hall Anglican Grammar School’s board.

In 1993, Helen returned to Meriden to deliver a memorable sermon at the Old Girls’ Union Service. Drawing inspiration from the School Song’s line ‘While through life we wend our way’, she explored the profound difference between simply “getting there” and “wending one’s way” through life.

Helen said that some of her happiest periods were the “in-between times” when she stopped pursuing achievements, learning instead to appreciate the journey itself – including her years teaching science at Meriden.



"I'm learning to step out of my categories and prejudices and see things afresh."

— REV DR HELEN GRANOWSKI

"I'm learning to step out of my categories and prejudices and see things afresh," she told the audience. "I'm trying to listen to what people are really saying, to be aware of myself as I am and not as I'd like to be, and to stop looking for perfection in myself and others."

Helen's message described Christian faith as not merely an anchor but an attitude, and an acknowledgement that God is present in life's journey, and she encouraged the assembly to embrace their own winding paths.

Rev Dr Granowski passed away on 5 September 2022 at Mary MacKillop Aged Care, Hawthorn, aged 89. The school community gives thanks for her devotion to education and her generous support of Meriden's future through the Foundation.

OLD GIRLS' NEWS

Past Meriden students are invited to stay connected with the Meriden community by sending news and updates. Please email 200 words and a photograph to

communityrelations@meriden.nsw.edu.au

FOLLOW THE OGU ON FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM AND LINKEDIN.

ABOUT THE MERIDEN FOUNDATION

The Meriden Foundation plays a vital role in securing the School's future, fundraising for building programs, resource centres and facilities.

The Foundation is led by a Board of Directors including

MRS ROSE MEGALE (Chair)
MR RICHARD ARKELL (Treasurer)
MRS LISA BROWN (Principal)
MRS VIVIANE GIRGIS
MR PHILIP MCKENZIE
MR PETER POULOS
MR FEROZE SUKH

Supporters can contribute through building fund donations for capital works; named facility sponsorship; library Fund donations; named scholarships, bursaries or prizes or Bequests.



For more information, visit meriden.nsw.edu.au/community/meriden-foundation



or email communityrelations@meriden.nsw.edu.au



ROSEMARY ISABEL SNOW (CHAMBERS, 1950)

24.3.1924 – 12.2.2024

Rosemary Chambers was born on 24 February 1934, the second of five children of Dr George Chambers and his wife Evelyn Bessie.

Rosemary's primary schooling was mainly at Calrossy in Tamworth where the family was based during World War II; she and her elder sister, Jocelyn, remained there as a boarders when the rest of the family returned to Sydney in 1943. She joined the Meriden community in 1945 for her secondary education, as did her two younger sisters (Gwenneth and Beryl).

Rosemary proved to be a meticulous student with a bent towards science, being especially noted for her exquisitely accurate drawings of animals, insects and flowers. She was part of the Tildesley Shield tennis team. Her steady, reliable persona meant that she was frequently given

the task of ringing the school bell – she was always proud of this honour. She was a Prefect in her final year.

Following tertiary education at Sydney University where she majored in microbiology and biochemistry, Rosemary was immediately employed by Davis Gelatine. Her time in the workforce became increasingly limited after her marriage to another scientist, Norman Snow, and a subsequent change of occupation to that of homemaker and mother. They took their two young children to Oxford where Norman completed a PhD while Rosemary managed, with some difficulty, to eke out the minimal scholarship money provided. A third child was born in England.

The family returned to Australia, settling in Beaumaris, Melbourne. Three more children were born, making a total of six, thus Rosemary's life was busy and her resourcefulness optimised as she nurtured them to adulthood. She hosted many



international visitors and enjoyed occasional overseas travel.

As time became available Rosemary began volunteer work as a nutritionist at a local hospital and completed a degree in Public Health.

In later years Norman and Rosemary moved from Beaumaris to Macedon where they could relish their splendid garden which featured its own bit of forest, a creek, many birds and other wildlife. Eventually the maintenance of this paradise became too much for the now aging couple and they moved into aged care in Kyneton under the watchful attentions of family which by now included grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Rosemary passed away on February 12, 2024 only a few months after her husband.

*Gwen Bennett
(Gwenneth Chambers, 1953)*

The Meriden community extends its condolences to the family and friends of the following Old Girls who passed away in 2024:

JUDITH INGLE
(HAWKINS, 1948)

ELIZABETH SMITH
(BELFIELD, 1987)

In addition to being an Old Girl and a Meriden Mum, Elizabeth was a Meriden staff member for more than ten years. She is greatly missed by her colleagues.

VALE

Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and friends of our Meriden colleagues:



Mrs Elizabeth Smith

3 December 1969 – 5 October 2024

Uniform Shop Manager

Joined the staff at Meriden in 2013



Mr Mark Stephens

6 April 1964 – 28 September 2024

Director of ICT

Joined the staff at Meriden in 2012

“Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the Lord.”



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