



109<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting, 17 May 2021

## OLA Presidents Report

As I reflect upon my OLA Presidents report from 2020, I can see how much we have achieved and the difference we have continued to make to members of our OL community. I can see how each day we are truly living our mission statement to engage and connect our alumnae while fostering lasting and meaningful relationships with the Lauriston community for life. This makes me proud and committed to keep going.

From lockdown in early 2020 I wrote: **“The purpose and focus of our committee in 2020 and beyond is to make sure we are relevant and engaged with each of you. We can only do that if we are willing to honour our past, while ready and willing to change and listen.”** I wrote that without truly knowing how this global pandemic would alter our lives forever. Upon reflection and even with the enormous challenges COVID- 19 forced upon us, the OLA spent last year listening, adapting, and changing. Like most organisations we used whatever technology was available to us and we actively connected with OLs across the world to show we were here, and you had our support. We stepped up all communication channels uncovering the most incredible stories of our community fighting this pandemic from London to New York, from Sydney to Darwin and everywhere in between. We did interviews from our homes and conducted zoom meetings with our neighbours near and far. Our social channels and website became beacons of support, connection, and great interest. So, we did what we said we would do, and we achieved what we set out to achieve just from the confines of our homes, using a different rule book while deeply missing face to face contact with our Lauriston alumnae community.

During lock down I remembered my amazing Year 11 English teacher Patty Wallace-Smith teaching us about the writings of Plato and spending hours in class dissecting quotes such as “...our need will be the real creator.” With Mrs Wallace Smith ‘s teachings still ever present and coupled with the very real need for the OLA to step up and show the greatest practical support ever given to a group of year 12’s, Mentor for a Moment was born. Our OLA Committee knew these years 12’s had spent much of the year in lockdown and were about to graduate understandably apprehensive about the ‘post COVID’ world that greeted them on the other side of the Huntingtower Gates.

Within weeks the OLA had rolled out a vital mentoring program for our year 12’s over zoom, we had set up LinkedIn accounts for each of them, the committee were reaching out to their networks to offer support and we had delivered care packs and letters to every year 12 making sure they felt that their next steps were ones taken together.

This year marks the 120<sup>th</sup> birthday for Lauriston. 120 years ago, sisters Lilian and Margaret Irving started our great school when most women were confined to very traditional roles and could only dream of a professional career. To celebrate this milestone and with the philanthropic support of Najla and Shayne Elliott the OLA announced the launch of the inaugural OLA Fellowship. This Fellowship is open to all

Lauriston past graduates. The successful applicant will receive \$5,000.00 that will go toward further education, a new business opportunity or travel, supporting her career. Together with the committee we look forward to seeing applications open via the OLA website next month.

Finally, it gives me great pride to continue to lead the OLA in 2021 together with the most amazing, dedicated committee. Not only am I inspired by their passion and commitment to our OL community I am energised by their hard work, determination, creativity, and drive. It remains our unwavering focus and passion to provide the Old Lauristonian community with relevant structures, connections, opportunities, events, programs, pathways and lived values that provide you with REAL support.

Our committee want to provide you, your daughters, your sisters, your family, and friends with the safety net of a strong active alumnae community like that is afforded to our sons and our brothers as 'old boys'. If in 1901 Lilian and Margaret Irving could crash through the thick glass ceiling of their times and start a school, then in 2021, we can provide the same support, the same loyalty, the same access to networks and the same opportunities for all Old Lauristonians, as generations of our male counterparts continue to enjoy.

Together we can achieve this and many more opportunities that engage and connect us as old Lauristonians for life.



Anna Wilson  
President  
**Old Lauristonians' Association**