

# FREDA



The Women's College  
within The University of Queensland  
ready to lead

Alumnae Magazine  
Issue 06, June 2025



# Because You Gave ... she can stay, strive and succeed

At The Women's College, philanthropy doesn't just make a difference – it changes lives.

Because you gave, a student found the courage to lead. Because you gave, another stayed to finish her degree. Because you gave, she dared to dream bigger.

Financial support through bursaries and scholarships provides immediate relief for students facing hardship, allowing them to focus on their studies, contribute to College life, and chase bold aspirations. You can help make Women's a reality for the next generation. Give generously to the 2025 Annual Giving Appeal. Every gift – no matter the size – makes a lasting impact.

Make your gift now: visit [womens.uq.edu.au/support-womens](https://womens.uq.edu.au/support-womens) or scan the QR code. All donations over \$2.00 are tax deductible.



"Because you gave, I could return for a third year to Women's. It's taken so much pressure off financially and allowed me to keep focusing on my studies and enjoy all the opportunities College offers."

– Ainhoa Fernandez Santalla,  
2025 Cultural Convenor (pictured middle)



# Contents

- 04 Welcome
- 06 Turning Pages, Building Connections: Online Alumnae Book Club
- 08 Sharing Alumnae Perspectives
- 10 Honouring Excellence: 2025 Alumnae Awards
- 12 In Their Words: Meet the 2025 Alumnae Awards Winners
- 14 Where Are You Now?
- 16 Stories, Laughter and Legacy at Back to Women's
- 19 Long Lunch at The Women's College
- 20 Coming Home to Women's
- 22 From Veterinary Science to Global Impact: Notable Alumnae
- 26 Women who Lead, Change and Inspire: Notable Alumnae
- 29 Mark Your Calendar
- 30 Signature Events that Unite Generations: Empowering Connections
  - » Academic Dinner & Alumnae Awards
  - » Women of the World Q&A Networking Dinner:  
Women in Government & Politics
  - » Women's Industry Night
  - » Mother & Daughter Dinner
  - » Celebrating Legacy: Multi-Generational Families
- 36 Voices That Inspire: Guest Speaker Program
- 38 Young Alumnae Making Their Mark: Next Chapters
- 40 Alumnae Stories of Friendship and Reunions: Connected For Life
- 41 Celebrating New Chapters: Wooza Weddings
- 42 In Memory: Honouring the Lives and Legacies of our Alumnae
  - » Liz Alexander (1991 – 1992)
  - » Allana Smith (1999 – 2001)
- 44 Helen McBride Annual Lecture

*FREDA* turns 6! Since the launch of the first issue in 2020, *FREDA* has connected alumnae from around the world, brought to life countless inspirational stories and even won an award. To read past issues, scan the QR code or visit [womens.uq.edu.au/publications/](https://womens.uq.edu.au/publications/)



The Women's College within  
The University of Queensland  
College Road,  
St Lucia QLD 4067, Australia  
Telephone: +61 (07) 3377 4500  
Email: [admin@womens.uq.edu.au](mailto:admin@womens.uq.edu.au)  
Website: [www.womens.uq.edu.au](http://www.womens.uq.edu.au)

*FREDA* June 2025  
Florence Kearney,  
Head of College & CEO  
Managing Editor: Susan McGinley,  
Director of Advancement  
Associate Editor & Graphic Designer:  
Dilshad Sattha,  
Communications & Design Officer

*Cover image*  
The 2025 Multi-Generational  
Family panellists (L – R) alumnae  
Peta Jamieson OAM (1989 – 1991),  
Dr Nina Petroff (1992 – 1994) and  
Georgina McKeown (1986 – 1989).

Connect with The Women's College







→ Head of College & CEO Florence Kearney and Director of Advancement Susan McGinley with the 2025 Multi-Generational Family members, pictured in the Sallyanne Atkinson Building (Old Wing).





# Welcome

Welcome to our 2025 edition of *FREDA*!

Since 1914, more than 7,200 women have called The Women's College home. Today, our alumnae span some 37 countries, forming a truly global network united by shared memories, bold aspirations, and the enduring spirit of Women's.

Whether you called the Old Wing home in the 1960s or valedicted just last year, *FREDA* continues to be your space for reconnection and celebration. Now in its sixth edition, this magazine honours the many ways alumnae are shaping communities, careers and causes – across generations and across the globe.

In this issue, you will meet pioneers like Dr Donna Bennett and Dr Margie Bale, whose careers in veterinary science have led to international influence and industry innovation. You will also hear from the next generation of Woozas, like filmmaker Eleanor Swan and digital entrepreneur Lexie Murray, who are boldly stepping into their futures with creativity and courage.

Continuing our theme of legacy from previous issues, this edition brings heartfelt reflections from alumnae who have recently returned to College – some walking through the doors again for the first time in decades. Their words remind us that while the buildings may change, the sense of belonging remains the same. We are especially proud to celebrate our Multi-Generational Families who, year after year, pass on the traditions of the Women's experience.

Signature events like the Long Lunch, Women's Industry Night, and the Alumnae Awards illustrate the incredible impact of our shared commitment to community. These occasions are more than calendar highlights – they are living proof of what happens when past, present and future Woozas come together.

*FREDA* is named after Freda Bage, our founding Principal and a woman of vision, intellect and community spirit. Each page of this issue reflects her legacy, brought to life by the stories of remarkable women who lead with integrity and generosity.

To our alumnae near and far, thank you for staying connected. Whether you are reading *FREDA* from your family home in regional Queensland or on a rooftop in New York City, know that you remain a vital part of our story.

We hope this issue leaves you feeling proud, inspired and ever connected to The Women's College.

Warm regards

**Florence Kearney**  
Head of College & CEO

**Susan McGinley**  
Director of Advancement

# Turning Pages, Building Connections

## Online Alumnae Book Club

*Alumnae unite online through a love of literature.*

A new chapter in alumnae engagement has begun with the launch of the Online Alumnae Book Club in 2025. In its first year, nearly 50 alumnae – from different generations and locations – have joined to connect through storytelling, conversation and a shared love of literature.

More than just a reading group, this online club offers a meaningful way to reconnect, reflect and stay part of Women's – no matter where life has taken you.

The idea was brought to life thanks to alumnae Emma Robinson (1994 – 1995) and Olivia Williamson (1999 – 2003), whose passion for storytelling and community building inspired this initiative.

"Since returning to Brisbane, I have appreciated the opportunity to re-engage with The Women's College and to meet alumnae of all generations through the in-person events available for us to attend. I thought there should be a way to include those not living in Brisbane, hence the online book club was born! We hope many of you take this opportunity to connect online."

– Emma Robinson

"Reading for pleasure brings perspective and great joy to my life, so I had to be part of the wonderful opportunity to blend that love with the extraordinary alumnae of The Women's College. We are excited to foster deep connections over shared storytelling and insights."

– Olivia Williamson



The 2025 reading list is as compelling as it is diverse, featuring four thought-provoking titles that explore themes of resilience, identity and reflection. Our first book club meeting was held in March and sparked rich discussion.

- **24 March (completed): *Love & Virtue* by Diana Reid**  
This is a fierce, authentic take on feminism, power and friendship set on an Australian university campus.
- **17 June: *Unfinished Woman* by Robyn Davidson**  
This is a moving memoir by the bestselling author of *Tracks*, tracing a life shaped by loss, independence and transformation.
- **16 September: *I Didn't Do the Thing Today* by Madeleine Dore**  
A gentle, insightful guide to letting go of productivity guilt and embracing the hidden value in our daily lives.
- **3 December: *The Sense of an Ending* by Julian Barnes**  
Winner of the Man Booker Prize, this literary gem examines memory, time and the unreliability of our own narratives.

With four virtual meetups throughout the year, the book club offers a flexible and welcoming way for alumnae to stay connected to each other and to College life, wherever they are.

Whether you're an avid reader or simply curious to connect, we invite you to turn the page with us and be part of this growing community of alumnae. Join the conversation, wherever you are.

← Avid readers Emma Robinson (1994 – 1995) and Olivia Williamson (1999 – 2003).



To join the Online Alumnae Book Club, please complete [the EOI form](#) or scan the QR code.





# Sharing Alumnae Perspectives



↑ The Honourable Penelope Wensley AC (1964 – 1967), former Governor of Queensland and 1967 Student Club President (left), and Sallyanne Atkinson AO (1960), former Lord Mayor of Brisbane (right).

*Following the success of last year's 110 Alumnae Stories legacy project, The Women's College has created a new video series that will continue to embrace the stories and anecdotes from our diverse and esteemed alumnae.*

*Alumnae Perspectives* showcases former residents as they share memories, stories, and insights from their time at College and with life beyond.

In our inaugural episode, we were honoured to feature The Honourable Penelope Wensley AC, an alumna from 1964 to 1967 and former Governor of Queensland. During her residency, Penelope served as the 1967 Student Club President. In this episode, Penelope fondly recalled how her role as the 1967 Student Club President influenced her career pathway in diplomacy and government.

Our newest episode featured former Lord Mayor of Brisbane Sallyanne Atkinson AO, who resided at the College in 1960. To date, Sallyanne has been the only woman to have held the lord mayoral role in Brisbane. Sallyanne's time at Women's and at university in the 1960s shaped her attitudes around being a pioneer of politics. In her episode, Sallyanne also shared her memories of the traditions for students at College.

“College really encouraged people not to be shy about succeeding ... I think those values and principles of reaching for excellence became more strongly embedded in me and set me on the path to my career.”

*The Hon. Penelope Wensley AC*

“Well, I think the challenges for all students in the '60s was being at the university and really having to be a self-starter. But where Women's College was so fantastic for us, we could come home here and we could share the challenges.”

*Sallyanne Atkinson AO*



To watch *Alumnae Perspectives*, visit [womens.uq.edu.au/alumnae-perspectives/](https://womens.uq.edu.au/alumnae-perspectives/) or scan the QR code.





← At March's Back to Women's birthday celebrations, The Hon. Penelope Wensley AC went on a tour of the College with Cultural Convenor Ainhua Fernandez Santalla (left). Together, they visited Resident Assistant Jasmine Harris' room in Cuppidge Wing (New Wing building), which was also where Penny's room was in the 1960s.



↑ Sallyanne Atkinson AO (pictured seated in the middle) was one of our panellists at the Women of the World Q&A Networking Dinner in April 2025. The evening provided current students and young alumnae with the opportunity to network with and hear from panellists who have forged careers in government and politics. As a former Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Senior Trade Commissioner to France, representative to the International Chamber of Commerce, and representative on the Australian Olympic Committee, Sallyanne provided guests with a unique insight into her career. Sallyanne is pictured with (standing L – R) Florence Kearney (Head of College), Katelyn McManus (Resident Assistant), Lauren Ward (2020 – 2022), Phoebe Lingard (2021 – 2023), (sitting, L – R) Izzy Nolke (2022 – 2024), Zimena Furey (2022 – 2024), Caitlin Brittain (Student Club President) and Maddy Cook (Second Year Resident).

# Honouring Excellence

## 2025 Alumnae Awards

*Celebrating alumnae who lead, inspire and create impact in their fields and communities.*

We were delighted to recognise the winners and finalists from the 2025 Women's College Alumnae Awards at the Academic Dinner & Alumnae Awards in March. Our annual Alumnae Awards honour the outstanding achievements of past residents, from those who are experienced in their careers to those who are just embarking on their new professions.

The 2025 winners and finalists are exceptional women whose achievements exemplify excellence, leadership and service. They are making a lasting impact in their professions and communities.

**Alumna of the Year:** Dr Ruth Dill-Macky (1981 – 1983) is a Professor in the Department of Plant Pathology at the University of Minnesota, specialising in disease management for wheat and barley. Alongside research, Ruth has also supervised many graduate students who have gone on to establish careers.

**Inspirational Alumna Award:** As CEO of The Parenthood, Georgie Dent (2000) is a leading advocate for families, children, women's empowerment and gender equity. Georgie is a sought-after speaker and media commentator, and her memoir, *Breaking Badly*, was published to critical acclaim in 2019.

**Community Alumna Award:** Joanne Bergamin (1992 – 1994) is a Co-founder and Chair of the national WISER (Women in Sustainable Energy & Resources) network, and is driving women's visibility and leadership in energy and resources. In the lead-up to the 2025 Federal Election, Joanne ran Senator Susan McDonald's Office.

**Young Alumna Award:** Izzy Graham (2013 – 2014) is a Flight Nurse in the field of midwifery for the Royal Flying Doctor Service, and is a Nurse Education Officer – Aeromedical for the Charleville Base. She also supports rural and remote women in Queensland through volunteering.

**Finalist:** Medina Handley (1999– 2001) has been a Town Planner for more than 20 years, and has actively given back to the planning profession for most of her career. Medina is passionate about mentoring young planners, and actively promotes the planning profession to high school students.

**Finalist:** A breast cancer diagnosis in her twenties led Monique Correy (2011) to step away from the corporate world and pursue her passion for the arts as a self-taught full-time painter. She has now exhibited across multiple galleries in Australia and internationally.

The legacy of leadership, innovation and service by these remarkable alumnae will continue to be celebrated by The Women's College throughout the year.

⇒ Next page: Top to bottom, left to right.

Fiona Dixon (1985 – 1987), Ruth's niece Alice Dixon (Third-Year Resident), 2025 Alumna of the Year Ruth Dill-Macky and Dr Elizabeth Dill-Macky (1977 – 1979).

College Council President Emeritus Professor Carol Dickenson AM presents Izzy Graham with the 2025 Young Alumna Award.

2024 Inspirational Alumna Award Winner Nikki Parkinson (1985) presented this year's winner Georgie Dent with her finalist certificate.

Head of College & CEO Florence Kearney, Stephanie Duggan Hameus (1992 – 1994), 2025 Community Alumna Award Winner Joanne Bergamin and Fellow of the College Sallyanne Atkinson AO (1960).

2025 Alumna Awards finalist Monique Correy.

Dr Dionne Litton (1999 – 2000), 2025 Alumna Awards finalist Medina Handley, and Medina's mother, Shafia Hasan.







## *In Their Words: Meet the 2025 Alumnae Awards Winners through these personal reflections*

### Dr Ruth Dill-Macky (1981 – 1983), 2025 Alumna of the Year

"My years at The Women's College shaped me in ways that still resonate today. The residential community provided a foundation, teaching me the value of authentic connection and mutual support. Intercollegiate sports taught me discipline, teamwork and resilience – qualities that guide my approach to challenges now. The friendships I forged, built on shared experiences of growth and discovery, remain treasured. Academic support from tutors improved my grades and taught me that seeking help is a strength, not a weakness. Most importantly, The Women's College showed me what it means to be part of a community where everyone lifts each other up. That spirit of collaboration and encouragement continues to influence how I navigate both personal and professional relationships today."

### Georgie Dent (2000), Inspirational Alumna Award Winner

"Women's College gave me confidence, independence and the belief that women's voices matter. Being surrounded by smart and driven women showed me that ambition isn't something to hide – it's something to celebrate. I saw women leading unapologetically, and that left a mark. It shaped how I see myself and my place in the world. It gave me the foundation to speak up, back myself, and back other women too."

### Izzy Graham (2013 – 2014), Young Alumna Award Winner

"My time at The Women's College encouraged my confidence, and reiterated the importance of community while supporting my education. Living with a diverse group of women forged long-lasting friendships and mentors that I still have today. The Women's College fostered an environment where education was paramount, a value I continue to carry with me both personally and professionally. The importance placed on education during my time at College has fuelled my appetite for continuous learning and education. I feel the personal growth gained through mentoring programs during my times at The Women's College guides my leadership style in my current professional role."

### Joanne Bergamin (1992 – 1994), Community Alumna Award Winner

"At Women's, I found a circle of friends who supported me through the joys and challenges of entering adulthood. Their strength and character continue to inspire me as I develop the WISER (Women In Sustainable Energy & Resources) network."







# Where Are You Now?

*The Women's College is proud to spotlight our global alumnae community: a network of trailblazing women who are making their mark in cities near and far.*

*In this issue, we share stories from alumnae based locally in Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast, as well as those living abroad in England and New York. Each story reflects the spirit of Women's: resilience, connection and lifelong curiosity.*

*Thank you to the alumnae who shared their journeys with us.*



*If you would like to share your story with your alumnae community in the next issue of FREDa, please scan the QR code or email [advancement@womens.uq.edu.au](mailto:advancement@womens.uq.edu.au).*

**Dr Beulah Castan (1976 – 1978)**

**I'm currently in:** Brisbane, Queensland

**I studied:** M Education and M Psychology at UQ

**My current field of work is in:** Authoring children's books

In March last year, I published my first children's book, *L'tle Cuddle Bear*, a story for children aged 5 – 10 years. Since then, I've visited three schools to read this story aloud to children. If you turn to the back of the book, it reads: "Come and meet L'tle Cuddle Bear, he is quite different from what you think, jumping high and free with paws a bright pink." This book not only tells the story of L'tle Cuddle Bear but quietly shows every child they are special just as they are.

The next book to be published is called *Yes, You Can... But The Impossible Takes A Little Longer*, and gives each child the powerful message that there are no limits in exploring one's imagination.

It is very exciting seeing my first two stories published. Another four in the series are now being considered for publication.

**Dr Helen Utting (née Ling; 1959 – 1962)**

**I'm currently in:** Shenfield, England

**I studied:** Medicine at UQ

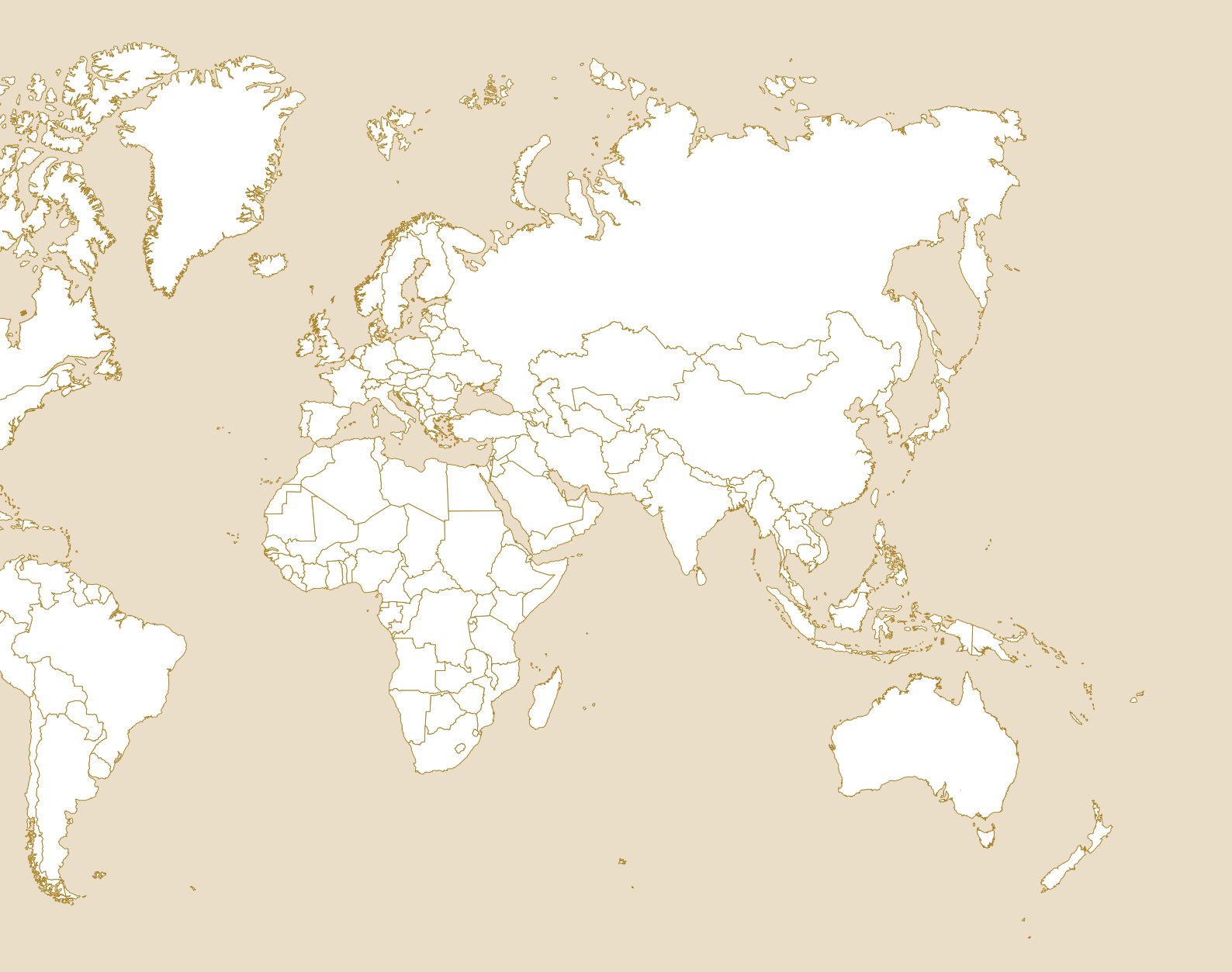
I remember my time at The Women's College with great affection, especially the girls I got to know there, who were all doing many different subjects and who came from all over country Queensland. It was a happy time. I remain in contact with my friends, including Dr Margaret Anderton (née McKeague; 1960 – 1962), Geraldine McKerrow (née Walden; 1960 – 1963) and Ann Bullock (1960 – 1962).

I graduated at UQ in medicine in 1964. After a year working at the Royal Brisbane – then as a registered MBBS – I left for England, and ended up as a Senior House Officer in anaesthesia at King George Hospital in Ilford (Essex). After successfully passing my primary exam, I then worked at The London Chest Hospital Bethnal Green for chest and heart surgery anaesthesia experience. After that, with my Fellowship of the Royal College of Anaesthetists examination completed, I moved to The Royal London Hospital. I then eventually moved to Manchester with my family and worked there in several specialities and hospitals. I then spent more than 30 years working at Basildon Hospital and in Orsett, where I remained until I retired aged 65.

I now live in Shenfield, about ten minutes walk from a busy train station and only 20 minutes travel from London. My husband John and I have a busy life, even now. I have two living children, both girls, and I have six grandchildren.

*Helen was the 1962 Student Club President.*





**Gretchen Keelty (1997 – 1999)**

**I'm currently in:** Sunshine Coast, Queensland

**I studied:** B Science at UQ

**My current field of work is in:** Art

If you dream it, you can do it. I have been designing and co-creating a huge interactive community creative project that will be unveiled on Friday 13 June 2025 at Kawana.

Working with Monte Lupo Arts and their supported artists, students from Buddina State School, Undumbi Culture, Liquid Lyrics, Roxanne McCarty O'Kane, and PodSpot we designed a huge interactive mural that tells visitors about First Nations history, the local ecology, Turtle Care Sunshine Coast's 20-year anniversary, and the local beach culture. This project also includes sound files with a First Nations greeting and meditation, a message from Turtle Care, and poetry that has been written by groups of Year 6 students.

**Bianca Zacharin (née Watt; 2012 – 2014)**

**I'm currently in:** New York City, USA

**I studied:** B Arts / B International Hotel and Tourism Management (Economics/ Management) at UQ

**My current field of work is in:** Tech industry (big tech)

I started working for Uber for the launch of Uber Eats while studying at The University of Queensland. While still studying, I moved to Sydney to work full time, flying back to sit my exams in Brisbane, before I eventually graduated in 2019. From there, I worked at several high-profile tech companies – including Uber, Canva, and DoorDash – before moving to New York City to work at Stripe (a major online payments company).

Never did I imagine that just 10 years after moving out of Women's, I would be working on Wall Street!

*Bianca was a panellist at the 2023 Women of the World Q&A Networking Breakfast – Women in STEM.*

# Stories, Laughter and Legacy at Back to Women's

*The 16<sup>th</sup> of March holds a special place in our hearts: it is the date when The Women's College was founded. Each year, we mark this milestone with our much-loved Back to Women's celebration.*

In 2025, alumnae from across the decades returned for our Champagne High Tea to reconnect, reminisce and celebrate the legacy of Women's. It was a joyful afternoon with shared memories and renewed friendships, held in honour of the College's 111<sup>th</sup> birthday. This year, we were also thrilled to recognise milestone reunions for alumnae who resided at the College in 1955, 1965, 1975, 1985, 1995, 2005 and 2015.

A highlight was an In Conversation between The Hon. Penelope Wensley AC (1964 – 1967), former Governor of Queensland and 1967 Student Club President, and 2022 Community Alumna Award winner Alison Kubler (1991 – 1992). Penelope spoke candidly about her Women's experience, reflecting on how her time at College helped shape her leadership journey and diplomatic career.

The event also featured the launch of *Alumnae Perspectives*, which you can read more about on page 8.

Back to Women's continues to be a popular event in our calendar – a testament to the lifelong connection between alumnae and College life.

⇒ Pages 16, 17 and 18: Photos from Back to Women's.



↑ The Honourable Penelope Wensley AC (1964 – 1967) in conversation with 2022 Community Alumna Award Winner Alison Kubler (1991 – 1992) during the Back to Women's High Tea.

↓ Leigh McCready (1995), Penelope Wensley AC (1964 – 1967), Ella Reddaway (Deputy Senior Resident Assistant) and Milla Uechtritz (Student Club Secretary) cut the College's 111<sup>th</sup> Birthday cake.













# Long Lunch

At The Women's College



## *Reignite Connections. Empower Women's Futures.*

Gather your friends, fellow alumnae and College supporters for an elegant afternoon of conversation, celebration and connection – all in support of the next generation of Woozas.

Hosted within the College grounds, the Long Lunch will feature gourmet seasonal fare, fine wine, meaningful storytelling, and a shared sense of purpose.

All proceeds will support the Alumnae Awards and Mary Wooza Scholarships, providing life-changing opportunities for Women's students to thrive academically and personally.

Saturday 23 August 2025, 1:00pm – 5:00pm

Early Bird Tickets: \$129pp | Standard: \$149pp

Includes a glass of French champagne on arrival and two-course shared platters.

*One afternoon. One community. A lifetime of impact.*



Register now

For more information, scan the QR code  
or visit [womens.uq.edu.au/events](https://womens.uq.edu.au/events)

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# Coming Home to Women's

*Alumnae reflect on their return to College and the memories, meaning and connections that still endure.*



↑ Alumna Dr Naomi Tracey (1993 – 1995) with her daughter, Giselle, who has applied to The Women's College for 2026.

Recently I returned to The Women's College for the first time since my university years. My daughter is currently in Year 12, and I accompanied her on her tour of Women's.

So many aspects of the College were familiar, however it was lovely to see the expansion of the College, with the beautiful Maureen Aitken Garden – Maureen was Principal in my time – and the new wings.

My mind was drawn to my memories of the three years that I spent at Women's; the camaraderie of shared activities such as formal dinners, regattas on sunny Sundays by the river, choir rehearsals and – dare I say – watching *The Bold and the Beautiful* in the Freda Bage Common Room!

I really enjoyed my walk down memory lane.

**Dr Naomi Tracey (1993 – 1995)**



↑ Ella Honeycombe (2016 – 2017) at the Career Mentoring Formal Dinner with her mentee, Katelyn McManus (Resident Assistant).

Returning to Women's for the launch of the 2025 Career Mentoring Program was incredibly special. Sitting at the Formal Dinner and seeing new generations of students brought back fond memories of the friendships, support and opportunities that shaped me in many ways during my formative years. The sense of camaraderie was palpable, and I felt a deep sense of gratitude to have been a part of a community that gave me so much.

Although things have evolved, the heart of the College has remained the same. Experiencing the College's spirit again – eight years on – made me realise that I took for granted how much the College really had to offer. It's one of those things you just don't realise at the time. I'm both excited and grateful to have the opportunity to give back to a community that continues to nurture and inspire so many young women like it did for me.

**Ella Honeycombe (2016 – 2017)**





↑ Clare Heitkonig (2012 – 2014) at the Career Mentoring Formal Dinner with her mentee, Student Club President Caitlin Brittain.

Stepping back into Women's College felt like coming home again. I had an immense sense of nostalgia as I walked into the Dining Hall for the first time since 2014. From seeing the stained glass windows to the same High Table I used to sit at, to hearing how Women's was still leading in the ICC, it was as if nothing had changed. The current residents were so warm and welcoming, a reminder that the spirit of the College is alive and well.

I was a Resident Assistant at Women's during the College's centenary year in 2014. I remember taking many alumnae for tours around the College during the centenary events that year. One of the greatest joys of that year was hearing the stories from women who had attended the College many years ago. I remember thinking how exciting it must be for those women to share such fond memories of their time at Women's with women who can truly relate. I got to experience this same feeling recently, and I have to say, there's nothing like telling a Women's story to a Women's girl – it truly is something only we can understand.

**Clare Heitkonig (2012 – 2014)**

→ Catherine Gilmour (2001 – 2002) with her year group photo in the College gallery.



Returning to The Women's College after 23 years was nothing short of extraordinary. The moment I walked through its familiar halls, I was struck by how little had changed in the essence of the place – warm, welcoming, and filled with the same lively energy that shaped some of the most defining years of my life.

One of the most powerful moments was stepping into the Freda Bage Room. Instantly, I was flooded with memories of learning our Fresher Dance; of the laughter, the missteps, the determination to get it right and, most importantly, the friendships that began to take shape in those early days. The bonds we formed during those first weeks were far more than fleeting connections – they became lifelong friendships, ones I still cherish today.

While the College campus has evolved, with exciting new developments enhancing the student experience, what struck me the most was what hadn't changed: the atmosphere. That same sense of belonging and the camaraderie – it was all still there. As groups of girls arrived for lunch, their conversations and laughter filled the air, and in that moment, I was transported back to my own college days. It was this vibrant, shared experience that reminded me why The Women's College remains such a special place.

**Catherine Gilmour (2001 – 2002)**



Have you come back to Women's recently? We would love to hear your story. Share it with us for a future issue of *FREDA* by sending an email to [advancement@womens.uq.edu.au](mailto:advancement@womens.uq.edu.au).

# From Veterinary Science to Global

## Notable Alumnae

In this issue of *FREDA*, we celebrate two outstanding alumnae whose careers began in the field of veterinary science but whose journeys have led them far beyond traditional paths. Dr Donna Bennett (1979 – 1980) and Dr Margie Bale (1991 – 1994) both transformed their veterinary foundations into remarkable global careers – from negotiating international agricultural trade agreements to pioneering new industries in camel medicine. Their stories are a powerful reminder that curiosity, courage and adaptability can open unexpected doors, creating careers that are as unique as the individuals themselves.





# Impact



*First, we meet Dr Donna Bennett, whose diplomatic work as Australia's Agriculture Counsellor is helping to shape global markets and secure vital opportunities for Australian farmers and exporters.*

**You're currently based in Dubai (United Arab Emirates) as Australia's Agriculture Counsellor to the Middle East and North Africa. What does a typical day look like in this diplomatic and trade role, and how do you balance government representation with fostering industry partnerships?**

Being based in the Middle East region means there is no typical day as the Agriculture Counsellor. One day it could be resolving an issue of a detained consignment of goods from Australia; or representing Australia as a speaker at an international forum; or negotiating a trade and market access opportunity. Being 6 – 7 hours behind Australia, my day always starts with communications with Canberra and its priorities. Balancing the diplomatic role with industry imperatives can sometimes be challenging; however, I approach these issues with good planning and, of course, communication is key. Representing Australia's interests can sometimes lead to a disappointing result for an importing country wanting to gain access to Australia for certain commodities that would have grave concerns for our biosecurity protections. Explaining our strict biosecurity systems has actually led to respect and confidence in our trade systems. ➡



**You've played a key role in securing extended shelf-life agreements for Australian red meat across the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. How has this negotiation improved Australia's global competitiveness, and what does it mean for our farmers and exporters?**

Securing the extended shelf-life for Australian chilled red meat has been an absolute game-changer for Australian farmers as well as the meat establishments that process and export these commodities into the GCC, which includes the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait and Oman. It has allowed Australia to be more competitive for the supply of these products due to the nature of the transport via temperature-controlled shipping containers, which cost a lot less than air freight. The GCC is very influential in the region, so other countries including Jordan have also accepted these shelf-life requirements. The reliability and traceability systems of the Australian red meat supply chain means these countries trust our provenance and food safety systems to meet their food security needs.

**From camels and racehorses to chickpeas and barramundi fingerlings, your work spans a wide range of agricultural products. What's one of the most unexpected or rewarding trade opportunities you've helped develop for Australia in the region?**

One of the most unexpected market access opportunities was the acceptance of Australian sheep meat into Morocco – a difficult market to crack with high tariffs and competition from other countries. Whilst presenting animal health protocols during a face-to-face meeting with the Moroccans, I mentioned the opportunity of red meat exports from Australia. One month later, the Moroccans had dropped their tariff for Australian red meat access to zero. It goes to prove that building trusting relationships and seizing opportunities is pivotal to this role and that meeting in person goes a long way towards these outcomes.

**The UAE and neighbouring countries import up to 95% of their food. How is Australia positioning itself as a trusted supplier for food security in such a high-demand, high-stakes region?**

Australia is perfectly positioned to meet the Middle East and North African region's food security needs. Our food safety systems, traceability, provenance and unique biosecurity protections means Australia is a global leader, and many of these countries want the very best of which we deliver time and time again. From live queen bees to gold-standard manuka honey; from seeds to high-quality fruit and vegetables; from animal genetics to final meat

products and to the top-quality racehorses and camels – Australia is able to meet stringent importing country requirements and food security needs.

**Representing Australia on the global stage is no small feat. What does it mean to you – personally and professionally – to be a voice for Australian agriculture in this part of the world?**

Representing Australia is an absolute honour and the pinnacle of my career. Having started my career as a veterinarian in private practice and then most recently with two overseas postings with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has been an amazing journey where I have grown both professionally and personally. The next chapter is just around the corner!



*Meanwhile, Dr Margie Bale has carved out a unique path closer to home and abroad, transforming curiosity into a thriving career focused on developing Australia's emerging camel industry and sharing her expertise worldwide.*

**How curiosity can launch your career**

I never had pictures of camels on my walls when I was a child. Yes, I loved animals and whilst I had assembled quite a menagerie at my home in Toowoomba, I did not have James Herriot coursing through my veins.

Scientific research was my dream, yet I chose a fairly unconventional route, starting with a Veterinary Science degree at The University of Queensland. I soon realised that it was indeed a perfect fit – a unique mix of scientific method and practical problem solving.



For 23 years I worked as a Production Animal Veterinarian in Australia and overseas. Production animal medicine is a stream of veterinary science that focuses on farm animals; e.g., cattle, sheep, goats and camelids (alpacas and llamas).

Specialist cattle medicine had been my first focus as a veterinarian; however, a chance newspaper article sent me down an industry rabbit hole and inspired a huge career pivot.

### The spark

Camels in Australia have been considered a pest species by many agricultural authorities. In 2015 with Australia in the claws of drought, I read an article reporting on the "Australian Cattle industry in peril". Within the same article, the author mentioned that camels are reproducing and "running wild" in these drought-stricken regions. It seemed so obvious to me; we needed to think differently. Australian producers had spent years changing the environment to suit the animal – we should flip that and look at suiting the animal to the environment. Australia is one of the driest continents on Earth, with a large swathe of country classified as arid/semi-arid. The traditionally introduced species of cattle, sheep and goats have been run in these areas historically, however the impact of these species on this marginal country was taking a toll.



Camels, also an introduced species to Australia,

thrive in this marginal, fragile country and whilst others saw them as a problem and competition, all I saw was an opportunity: an opportunity for a new industry.

### Opportunity meets endeavour

They say luck is where opportunity meets endeavour. I got to work and created my own luck. My focus was to develop an Australian camel industry best practice management that would tap into the expanding world market demand for protein, utilising our unique "disease free" biosecurity status.

I have a long-sighted vision. The goal is to manage these animals – as we do for the traditional livestock species – to create a regulated consistent product. However, industry needs infrastructure. A robust and sustainable production industry relies on an integrated systems approach.

For example, the dairy industry feeds into the beef industry, and the wool industry feeds into lamb markets. I utilised this systematic approach when developing a camel industry model. All aspects of farming camels has to add value – including meat and milk – and, as I came to learn, their unique physiology has uses in medical research. Yes, the camel has a unique immune system that when challenged can create nanobodies that are at the frontier of human cancer research, radiotherapeutics and pharmaceuticals.



This exciting work now takes me all over the world. Camels may be a "new" industry here, but in other countries they are a cultural touchstone.

The initial spark of curiosity and fuel of work ethic combined to ignite an entire business and career that I could not have imagined when I was a fresh-faced fresher in Lower Philp. Back then, the camel industry did not exist and no one could have foreseen this was a path for me.

I am consistently revitalised every time I visit the College. The collective potential energy of the young women is palpable and electric.

Our careers and lives are many and varied, however it is not achievements that unite us; it is the shared experience of being a Wooza that makes us a part of every Wooza's story.

*In celebrating the achievements and excellence of Dr Donna Bennett and Dr Margie Bale, we are reminded that a foundation of curiosity, courage and innovation can lead to extraordinary impact – wherever the journey begins.*

# Women who Lead, Change and Inspire

## Notable Alumnae

*From science and diplomacy to education, public service, the arts and beyond, Women's College alumnae are shaping the future in diverse and dynamic ways. In this special feature, we profile a group of remarkable alumnae whose stories reflect bold thinking, public impact and the enduring values of Women's. Their journeys remind us that leadership takes many forms, and begins with the courage to chart your own course.*

### Leading Queensland and Beyond

As one of The Women's College's most distinguished alumnae, The Hon. Anna Bligh AC was formally recognised in 2025 with the College's highest honour: a Fellowship. Fellowships honour persons of eminence and high achievement in the community.

Anna resided at The Women's College in 1978, during her first year of studying a Bachelor of Arts degree at The University of Queensland. After graduating, Anna worked for various community organisations.

She was then first elected to the State Parliament in 1995. In July 2005, Anna was promoted to Deputy Premier, and was subsequently promoted to Queensland Premier in 2007. In office from 2007 to 2012, Anna served as the 37th Premier of Queensland. After retiring from politics, Anna was appointed as Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Banking Association in 2017.

Following the Fellowship Ceremony, Anna delivered the guest speaker address and presented prizes to a number of recipients. One of these prizes was the Anna Bligh Prize.

An initiative from Anna, this prize is awarded to a resident who has demonstrated exceptional community service and/or sustained leadership contributions.



Anna's story is a tribute to her remarkable career and continuing contribution to the Women's community.

### Giving Back, One Drop at a Time

Thea Sala (1997 – 2000) recently achieved the milestone of 225 plasma donations for the Red Cross, and shares her journey through this unique way of giving back.

"I started donating blood when I was 16. Dad used to come in from the work shed and walk with me up to the hospital in Proserpine (Qld), where we would donate together. I naively tried to beat him in filling the bag first, thinking it was a race.

Later, when I was at university, I'd make the occasional donation when the mobile van was parked nearby. After graduation, my first teaching placement took me to Moranbah (Qld), where opportunities to donate were few and far between. It wasn't until I moved back to Brisbane that I became a regular donor again, switching between plasma and platelet donations.

In 2004, my Dad passed away from cancer. After that, donating became more than just a routine – it became

a mission. I knew that blood donations helped save countless lives, especially for those battling cancer. Each time I donate, I think of Dad or people like him who might be relying on that very donation to keep fighting.

There's something powerful about knowing your donation has made a difference. The text message from Lifeblood telling me my blood has gone to a hospital in Queensland, or has been turned into lifesaving products, always gives me a boost. It's a simple but profound way to help others, and while sitting in the donor chair, I take a moment to reflect on how lucky I am.

If you've ever considered donating, I encourage you to give it a go. It doesn't take long, but it has the power to change – and even save – lives."





### Changing the Face of Agriculture

Rachel Mackenzie (1991 – 1993) is the Chief Executive Officer of Berries Australia and has been working in the horticulture sector since 2006. She recently represented Australia at an international agricultural event in China, and shared the following story.

"Earlier this year, I was honoured to be the guest speaker at the Women in Agriculture Lunch in Beijing, hosted by the Australian Embassy.

This annual event is an opportunity to showcase the efforts of women in both China and Australia who work in the agriculture sector, and is well-attended by local women and members of the diplomatic community.

In my speech, I reflected on how privileged I am to be a third-generation university-educated female. In a nice connection, all three generations in my family attended The Women's College.



During this visit, I also had the opportunity to meet with the Australian Ambassador to the People's Republic of China, His Excellency Scott Dewar."

### Stepping into Public Life

Leigh McCready (1995 – 1997) shares her journey in government and politics with *FREDA*, as she continues to give back to her local community.

"During a 2018 campaign to re-start our local surf lifesaving club, I realised the significance of the impact our elected representatives have on outcomes in our community. I decided to get involved and join a party that aligned with my values, and in the intervening years I've learned a huge amount about how our political system works.

I've managed Party Units, grown membership, volunteered for election day polling booths, and hosted many leaders of our State and Federal parliaments at events. Probably most importantly, I've learned how policy is developed, prosecuted and voted on – the essence of democracy.

My positive experience culminated in me putting myself forward to run as a Councillor in the 2024 local government elections. This was a wonderful experience, with the outcome very close – I fell 126 votes short of gaining a Councillor position. Shortly after this, I was offered a role in a federal government electorate office and then following the state government election in October, I was offered a role in the Ministerial Office of



a Minister of the Queensland Government. In this new role, I have put my 25 years of experience as a business and people manager and my Master's degree in Human Resources to good use, supporting businesses to employ people and grow the economy while ensuring our workforce has the skills they need for a bright Queensland future, including with the upcoming 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Thinking back to my time at The Women's College, I never would have imagined doing what I do now, but I feel very fortunate to have found my calling."

*Leigh was the 2023 recipient of the Community Alumna Award, and was a panellist in this year's Women of the World Q&A Networking Dinner – Women in Government & Politics.*



## Breaking Ground, Breaking Ceilings

Alex Atkins (1992 – 1994; Resident Assistant 1993 and 1994) recently became a Fellow of the Governance Institute of Australia. Here, she shares her journey in her words.

"I started my career in mining in the mid-1980s after graduating from the WA School of Mines (WASM) in Kalgoorlie with a Bachelor of Engineering (Mineral Exploration & Mining Geology) 2A Honours degree. I was immediately sent to work in the gold mines of Central Queensland and was subsequently accepted at UQ to obtain my Bachelor of Engineering (Mining) degree, finishing in mid 1994. This was my first brush with being told that I "can't do something" and finding a way to do it. I wanted to study mining engineering at WASM but was discouraged by the Dean of School, even though my common first-year engineering grades and leadership qualities – highlighted by the fact I was School Captain and Sports House Vice-Captain during high school – satisfied the pre-requisites! For context: women were not legally permitted to work in underground mines in Australia until 1987.

My career has been a chain of events that basically followed from being told "No – you can't do that!"

- "You can't be an underground mining engineer! Women don't belong in the mines!" ☒ Watch me.
- "You can't be a miner! Women are not legally permitted to work underground!" ☒ and to make a

point, I did air legging – a drilling technique in mining where a large manually operated drill is used to break down rock.

- "What do you want to get your First Class Mine Manager's Ticket for? You'll never be a mine manager!" ☒ I was a Deputy Mine Manager, relieving my boss when he took breaks. This was when female mine managers were as rare as hen's teeth!
- "You can't have a career in mining and have kids!" ☒ I have two children and I raised them myself.
- "You'll never be a District Inspector of Mines!" ☒ I was the first female WA District Inspector of Mines, and this was before the requirement to have First Class Mine Manager' Tickets was removed.
- "You'll never be a Company Director on Boards. You have to be a CEO and have corporate finance experience!" ☒ After completing an MBA (Finance) and working at Deloitte, I started my own company.
- "You can't make a difference on boards because you're not commercial!" ☒ With more than six years' experience on boards for ASX-listed mining companies and working hard to sound commercial when I speak – including getting a coach and connecting with many industry professionals, attending events, and educating myself – now, at the age of 57, I'm starting my PhD on board assurance of critical controls with an investment



banker for my supervisor (as well as a wonderful female engineer from UQ).

- "Do you think you should be a Non-Executive Director?" This refers to incumbents discouraging competition. I recently achieved Fellow status at the Australian Institute of Governance, so ☒ yes!

My milestone accomplishment is that I'm still here; I'm still fighting "no" and reaching the pinnacle of my career as a company director and Fellow within most of my professional associations, including the Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy, Engineers Australia, Governance Institute of Australia, and hopefully soon the Australian Institute of Company Directors. On top of all that, my kids are now 18 and 21 and are equally determined to pursue their life purpose, even if they have to swim against the current. My life purpose is to make mining better through positive culture, engineering and technology. I am driven by my desire to see an end to fatalities and value destruction in the mining industry."

*Women Who Continue to Lead: Across industries and across decades, these notable alumnae show us the power of determination, innovation and connection. Their stories are more than professional milestones; they are reminders of the bold and curious spirit that defines Women's.*



# Mark Your Calendar

From book clubs to keynote lectures and College traditions, the second half of 2025 is packed with opportunities to connect and celebrate. Be sure to check your inbox for invitations and event updates or visit [womens.uq.edu.au/events](https://womens.uq.edu.au/events) for the latest details. (All dates are subject to change.)



## Tuesday 17 June: Online Alumnae Book Club

Our second book club of the year features *Unfinished Woman* by Robyn Davidson, a moving memoir from the author of *Tracks*, exploring loss, transformation, and independence.



## Friday 5 September: Family Night

Current families are invited to reconnect with their daughters and experience College life firsthand. Enjoy musical performances by our Woozas and a vibrant community atmosphere.



## Sunday 3 August: Open Day

Experience life at Women's during the UQ Open Day. Students considering applying for 2026 and 2027 – along with their families – are warmly invited to explore the campus and meet current residents.



## Tuesday 16 September: Online Alumnae Book Club

This reflective read by Madeleine Dore explores how to let go of productivity guilt and embrace the hidden value in everyday life. A thoughtful conversation for our third virtual meetup of 2025.



## Thursday 14 August: Dinner with a Wooza

Prospective students and families are invited to join alumnae Zimena Furey and Izzy Nolke (2022 – 2024) for a special evening at Women's. Attend Formal Dinner, hear student stories, and get a feel for College life.



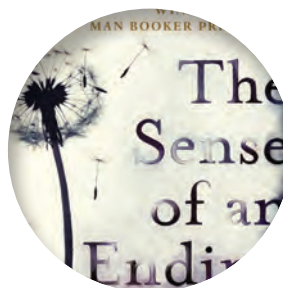
## Wednesday 24 September: Helen McBride Annual Lecture

Distinguished alumna and plant pathologist Professor Ruth Dill-Macky (1981–1983) will deliver the inaugural Helen McBride Annual Lecture – an inspiring evening exploring global food security and the future of agriculture.



## Saturday 23 August: Long Lunch

Enjoy an afternoon of delicious food, great wine and good company – all while supporting the Alumnae Awards and Mary Wooza Scholarships. Early bird tickets are now available.



## Wednesday 3 December: Online Alumnae Book Club

Our final selection of the year features Julian Barnes' *The Sense of an Ending*, a Booker Prize-winning novel about memory, responsibility, and how we construct our own narratives.

# Signature Events that Unite Generations

## Empowering Connections

*Across the year, The Women's College hosts a dynamic program of engagement events that bring alumnae and students together in meaningful ways. From academic recognition and professional networking to leadership discussions and family traditions, these events highlight the vital role our alumnae play in shaping the student experience – as mentors, speakers, panellists, supporters and role models. Through shared stories, career insights and intergenerational connection, these signature events celebrate the lasting bond between past and present Woozas.*

### Academic Dinner & Alumnae Awards



↑ First row: Barbara Page-Hanify (1951 – 1953) with Anna Proud, recipient of the Barbara Page-Hanify Prize; Nikki Parkinson (1985) with Claire Asquith and Katelyn McManus, recipients of the Alumnae Awards Scholarship; and Kim Lyons (2001 – 2005) with Sophie Posselt, recipient of the Women's College Standing Committee Prize.

Second row: Dr Alison Bruce (1970 – 1972) with Libby Hughes, recipient of the Lisbeth Hopkins Prize; Dr Nadine Garraway (1984 – 1986) with Yazmin Morwood, recipient of the Suellen Topfer Prize; and Jo Harris (1990 – 1992) with Ariella Paliza and Laura Camilleri, recipients of the Mary Wooza Scholarship.

The Academic Dinner & Alumnae Awards is an annual celebration of achievement, community, and philanthropy. This year's event honoured scholarship recipients and prize winners whose academic, leadership and community contributions reflect the College's values. The event also acknowledged the generosity of alumnae donors and the inspiring accomplishments of our 2025 Alumnae Award winners. The evening also marked a historic milestone, with The Honourable Anna Bligh AC (1978) receiving a Fellowship of the College – the highest honour we bestow.



## Women of the World Q&A Networking Dinner: Women in Government & Politics



↑ The panellists and facilitator of the Women of the World Q&A Networking Dinner: Women in Government & Politics (pictured left to right) Sallyanne Atkinson AO, Cr Dr Rebecca Vonhoff, Kerry Petersen, Georgina Robinson, Dr Leonora Risse and Leigh McCready. Panellist Donna Bennett was, unfortunately, unable to attend the event but pre-recorded her answers when she visited Brisbane.

The Women of the World Q&A Networking Dinner: Women in Government & Politics brought together a panel of trailblazers committed to public leadership and civic service.

With panellists including former Lord Mayor Sallyanne Atkinson AO, state and federal advisers, and government representatives, students and young alumnae gained firsthand insight into the opportunities, challenges and rewards of careers in the political and public sector.

Through honest discussion and practical advice, the evening empowered attendees to consider how they too might shape society through service.

“I wanted an hour with each of these women. Their experiences and candid reflections on success and failure made for rich conversation with the young women at The Women’s College”

*Georgina Robinson,  
Women in Government & Politics Q&A Facilitator*

## Women's Industry Night



↑ The Round Table Discussion panellists (rows 1 and 2) and exhibitors (rows 3 and 4) at Women's Industry Night.

Round Table Discussion panellists: Lili Anderson (2021 – 2023), Maria Borres (2019 – 2021), Katie Campbell (2017 – 2019), Maddy Clark (2020), Eliza Goodchild (2017 – 2019), Hannah McKee (2014 – 2016), Georgina Robinson (2000), Rebecca Sullivan (1999 – 2001) and Amie Willis (2014 – 2016).

Exhibitors: Annika Boyland (1998 – 2000), Kyla Brose (2006 – 2007), Zoe Cornwell (2014 – 2026), Christine Fairweather (2022), Biran Kokulan (2019 – 2021), Anna McDougall (2011 – 2013), Georgia Mulveney (2014 – 2016), Kate Thorogood (2012 – 2014), Kate Turner (1994 – 1996) and Bree Zannes (1999 – 2002).

Women's Industry Night is one of the College's most transformative career events – an evening of connection, confidence-building and discovery.

Now in its fourth year, the event welcomed alumnae and industry professionals across fields such as law, health, business, STEM, media and the arts. With exhibitor booths and Round Table Discussions, students explored career pathways, refined their networking skills and heard real-world insights from inspiring women.

This event continues to open doors and ignite ambition – one conversation at a time.



## Mother & Daughter Dinner



The Mother & Daughter Dinner is a cherished tradition that celebrates the intergenerational bonds woven through The Women's College. This year's event featured a panel of multi-generational alumnae and their daughters, who shared stories of tradition, transformation and legacy. With more than \$8,000 raised for the Alumnae Awards and Mary Wooza Scholarships, the dinner exemplified how community spirit and philanthropy come together in powerful ways.

*A Connected Community: These events are a testament to the power of connection at Women's. Whether inspiring future leaders or rekindling lifelong friendships, our engagement events reflect the values that define us – curiosity, courage and community.*

## Celebrating Legacy

*At the heart of the Mother & Daughter Dinner is a deeper story – one of enduring connection, shared experience, and generations of Woozas who continue to shape College life. Here, we honour the Multi-Generational Families who represent the strength, continuity and spirit of Women’s across time.*

One of the most meaningful aspects of Women’s College life is the legacy of connection that passes from one generation to the next.

In 2025, we were proud to celebrate the many families whose daughters, mothers and grandmothers have shared the Women’s experience. Whether attending the Mother & Daughter Dinner, supporting scholarships, or simply sharing memories, the alumnae continue to shape the story of Women’s in powerful and personal ways.

We honour these families for the traditions they uphold and the inspiration they provide to future generations of Woozas.

⇒ Pictured on the next page are our 2025 Multi-Generational Families and 2025 Q&A Panel Facilitator Dr Margie Bale in the Sallyanne Atkinson Building (Old Wing), showcasing the intergenerational bonds that define The Women’s College.

Generations of Woozas		
Grandmothers and current students	Kathleen Murray (1965 – 1967) & Georgia White (1 <sup>st</sup> Year Resident)	Judith Nave (1961 – 1964) & Jessica Tuttle (1 <sup>st</sup> Year Resident)
Mothers and current students	Leisa Chapman (1988 – 1990) & Mathilda Chapman (2 <sup>nd</sup> Year Resident)	Joanne Colahan (1990 – 1992) & Lucy Colahan (1 <sup>st</sup> Year Resident)
Fiona Dixon (1985 – 1987) & Alice Dixon (3 <sup>rd</sup> Year Associate)	Emily Gordon (1991 – 1993) & Sarah Gordon (2 <sup>nd</sup> Year Resident)	Kristenne Hacker (1989 – 1991) & Rebecca Teahen (1 <sup>st</sup> Year Associate)
Peta Jamieson OAM (1989 – 1991) & Reese Dart (1 <sup>st</sup> Year Resident)	Megan Jantke (1995 – 1996) & Katie Jantke (2 <sup>nd</sup> Year Resident)	Alison Kubler (1991 – 1992) & Phoebe Zavros (2 <sup>nd</sup> Year Associate)
Michelle Lien (1993 – 1994) & Jessica Gavin (2 <sup>nd</sup> Year Resident)	Georgina McKeown (1986 – 1989) & Henrietta McKeown (2 <sup>nd</sup> Year Resident)	Nina Petroff (1992 – 1994) & Madeline Cook (2 <sup>nd</sup> Year Resident)

↑ These families represent the living legacy of Women’s, where the College experience is not only remembered but lovingly passed on.







# Voices That Inspire

## Guest Speaker Program

*Alumnae guest speakers share wisdom, spark ambition and strengthen the spirit of Women's. Our Guest Speaker Program brings learning to life – connecting students with real-world voices who embody leadership, resilience and purpose. From Formal Dinners and mentoring events to specialised round tables, alumnae share personal stories and professional insights that inspire students to think big, lead boldly and make their own mark.*

### Nikki Parkinson (1985)

Semester 2 Commencement  
Formal Dinner  
Thursday 25 July 2024



A former journalist turned fashion and lifestyle entrepreneur, Nikki shared her career reinvention journey – from the newsroom to launching her nationally recognised brand, Styling You. With humour and honesty, she encouraged students to embrace change, back themselves, and bring their whole selves to every chapter of life.

### Professor Susan Moloney (1981 – 1983)

Community Formal Dinner  
Tuesday 17 September 2024



A respected clinician-educator, 2023 Alumna of the Year Professor Susan Moloney returned to Women's to share stories from her career in children's health. Her message about compassion, leadership and lifelong learning inspired students to lead with both head and heart – and to never stop being curious.

### Lili Anderson (2021 – 2023)

Dinner with a Wooza  
Thursday 8 August 2024



A young alumna, Lili returned to speak alongside Ellen Moroney, offering a fresh perspective on transitioning from College to career. Her reflections reassured current students that every pathway is unique – and the Women's network remains a source of support well beyond graduation.

### Dr Kay Strom (1981 – 1983)

Mentor and guest speaker  
Various events



2023 Community Alumna Award recipient and a medical educator, Kay returned to Women's to support students through mentorship, advocacy and honest dialogue, from health education to life lessons. Her voice is a cherished constant at College events.

### Ellen Moroney (2021 – 2023)

Dinner with a Wooza  
Thursday 8 August 2024



As 2023 Student Club Vice President, Ellen brought energy and leadership to her time at College. Currently studying Law and Journalism at QUT, she returned to share her Women's story and encouraged future Woozas to seize every opportunity that life at College offers.

### Joanna Jenkins (1982 – 1984)

Pro Bono Law Round Table  
Thursday 10 October 2024



A former partner at an international law firm and now an acclaimed author, Joanna delivered a discussion with law students on the value of pro bono work with Ros Williams, Practitioner in Residence at UQ Law School.



**Karina Holden (1994)**

Semester 1 Commencement  
Formal Dinner  
Thursday 27 February 2025



An award-winning filmmaker and media leader, Karina shared lessons from a career at the intersection of storytelling, science and advocacy. She urged students to lead with heart and use their voice, especially in spaces where change is needed.

**Tess Feller (2022 – 2024)**

Career Mentoring Program  
Formal Dinner  
Thursday 10 April 2025



Tess and her alumna mentor, Dr Kay Strom, shared the impact of their mentorship journey through the College's Career Mentoring Program. Tess' leadership on the Voices of Influence podcast and her nursing studies highlight her dedication to helping others thrive.

**The Hon. Anna Bligh AC (1978)**

Academic Dinner & Alumnae Awards  
Thursday 13 March 2025



As the 2025 Fellow of the College, Anna's keynote was a moving tribute to leadership, public service and the enduring influence of Women's. Her insights into political life and personal purpose inspired students to pursue their own bold journeys.

**Dr Sylvie Giguere (2013 – 2015)**

Women's Health Q&A  
Formal Dinner  
Thursday 15 May 2025



Sylvie is a GP with a passion for holistic and preventive care. Drawn to general practice for its relational care model, she spoke to students about women's health and sexual health, highlighting the power of knowledge in helping patients take control of their wellbeing.

**Izzy Graham (2013 – 2014)**

Formal Dinner  
Wednesday 26 March 2025



Izzy – our 2025 Young Alumna Award winner, a Flight Nurse, and a midwife – shared her journey from Women's to the skies with the Royal Flying Doctor Service. Her story exemplifies courage, purpose and service – values that deeply resonate with our community.

**Juliet Biemann (2019 – 2021)**

National Reconciliation Week  
Formal Dinner  
Thursday 29 May 2025



A proud Kuku Yalanji woman and 2024 graduate of UQ Law, Juliet's words were a powerful call for justice, cultural pride and intergenerational change. As a First Nations Outreach Officer at the ACCC, her work embodies leadership rooted in community.

# Young Alumnae Making Their Mark

## Next Chapters

*From film sets and classrooms to podcast studios and digital start-ups, our young alumnae are forging bold paths across industries and continents. In this edition, we spotlight Woozas pursuing creative careers, launching businesses, and using their voices to lead and inspire - each one carrying the confidence and connection built at Women's into their next chapter.*

### Eleanor Swan (2022 – 2023)

Filmmaker & screenwriter

*Since leaving Women's, Eleanor has pursued her passion for screen storytelling, graduating from Griffith Film School and beginning postgraduate study at NIDA. Her short film *The Lifeguard* recently screened at the prestigious St Kilda Film Festival – a milestone moment in her emerging career. We asked Eleanor to share more about the experience and where her creative journey is heading next.*



↑ Eleanor Swan (2022 – 2023) wrote and directed *The Lifeguard*, a short film that screened at the St Kilda Film Festival in June 2025.

#### What was the process of writing and directing *The Lifeguard* like, and what does it mean for your film to be featured at the St Kilda Film Festival?

*The Lifeguard* was my graduate project, which I wrote and directed alongside my peers. It is one of my favourite things that I have done, and to come away from such a welcoming and fun process with a film that we're proud of is very special. It took a year to create, from writing the script in late 2023 to its completion in late 2024. The film was definitely a marathon, and in the end I took on the roles of writer, director, choreographer and musical director.

The film's acceptance into the St Kilda Film Festival feels like an incredible achievement. I am so excited to share the film with an audience of fellow film-enthusiasts, and to see *The Lifeguard* in all its bubblegum pink glory on the silver screen in June.

#### Where has life taken you since valedicting from The Women's College?

Since leaving The Women's College in 2023, I have graduated from my Bachelor of Film and Screen Media Production at the Griffith Film School. I have moved to Sydney to study a Masters of Fine Arts in Dramatic Writing at the National Institute of Dramatic Art, and I work as a design assistant on *Play School* at the ABC. I'm writing a lot of projects, and hoping to start producing more of my own work as a playwright and filmmaker.

#### What's coming up next for you?

Hopefully St Kilda is the first of many film festivals we see *The Lifeguard* selected into.

For the moment, I am working on my next creative projects, completing my Masters, and co-chairing the Australian Theatre for Young People's Youth Advisory Board. I am really enjoying reading scripts, attending performances and making new creative connections.





**Alexandra (Lexie) Murray**  
(2016 – 2017)  
Founder, Be Seen Socials

Lexie launched her business, Be Seen Socials, at the age of 21, and in just five years, she has built it into one of Australia's most exciting digital marketing agencies, earning her a place on the Forbes 30 Under 30 – Asia – Media, Marketing & Advertising 2024 List. Be Seen Socials specialises in curated social media strategies and mentoring from its in-house photo studio. "Murray's all-women staff has worked with Meshki, Blingz and Runway The Label," wrote *Forbes*.

Lexie has also been a Young Entrepreneur of the Year – Sydney nominee, and her agency was named on the *Australian Business Journal's* Marketing Agencies to Watch list in 2024. She's spoken at Macquarie University Business School and on Pretty Little Thing's Entrepreneurial Women in Business Panel.

The Women's College looks forward to welcoming Lexie back as keynote speaker for the Semester 2 Commencement Dinner later this year.



↑ Sarah Pearce and Phoebe Lingard.

**Phoebe Lingard**  
(2021 – 2023)  
Podcast guest

2023 Student Club President Phoebe Lingard kicked off the 2025 Voices of Influence podcast series in a heartfelt and honest conversation with current Communications Representative Sarah Pearce.

In the episode titled *College 101 – Stereotypes, Building Connections, and Making Memories*, Phoebe reflects on her three years at Women's – from navigating friendships in communal living to managing party culture and overcoming homesickness.

With warmth, humour and vulnerability, Phoebe offers practical advice for current students and young alumnae, and reminds listeners of the power of connection, community, and being true to yourself.

[Click here](#) or scan the QR code to listen to the episode on our website.



↑ Zoe Garraway at the UK high school where she currently teaches, and at the Cliffs of Moher in Ireland.

**Zoe Garraway (2019 – 2021)**  
Teacher, living and working in the UK

After completing her Bachelor of Education (Secondary) at UQ, Zoe taught science and physical education for two years and then made the leap to teach overseas in the UK. "Living in the UK has given me a great opportunity to travel and explore other countries."

# Alumnae Stories of Friendship and Reunions

## Connected For Life

*Wherever life takes our alumnae – from Queensland to Central America – the connections made at Women's remain strong and lasting. In this edition, we share moments of reconnection, celebration and reflection that speak to the enduring bonds of friendship and shared history.*

### Celebrating 50 Years – A Melbourne Milestone

*Women's friendships that span cities, decades... and generations to come.*



↑ Pictured left to right: Philippa Askham (1992 – 1993), Emma Williams (née Hulme; 1992 – 1994), Glenda Castles (née Negus; 1992) and Dr Nina Petroff (1992 – 1994).

Recent milestone birthdays have become a treasured chance to reconnect – and also to plan for the next generation of Woozas.

This photo was taken at Philippa (Philly) Askham's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration in Melbourne, where she now lives after two decades abroad in New York and London.

We reflected on the incredible friendships we made at Women's – and how those friendships continue to shape our lives. Now, we're imagining our daughters forming their own College memories in the years ahead.

Dr Nina Petroff (1992 – 1994)

### Reconnecting from Belize

*Ruth Moloney (1982 – 1984 [pictured below left]) recently returned to Women's and caught up with fellow alumna and friend Joanna Jenkins (1982 – 1984 [pictured below right]) at Family Day, our special event welcoming First-Year students and their families during O Week.*



"I live in Belize, so visiting Women's in February felt like an out-of-body experience. For a start, I was not wearing farm clothes or wondering if the power was going to go off! My return reminded me of when I arrived at Women's for the first time in 1982, after an 18-hour card game on the Sunlander train from Bowen, ready for O Week. My sister Susan Moloney was a year ahead of me at Women's and showed me the ropes. 2025 was very different!"

Ruth reflects that while the paths of her College friends have varied greatly, the connection remains strong: "I'm still very close to a lot of women who I met in that first week over 40 years ago. We've taken very different paths, but we all share that strong Women's connection. You can pick up the phone and it's like we saw each other only last week. That's something I cherish every day."

Ruth Moloney (1982 – 1984)



Have you caught up with fellow Woozas recently? Share your story with us for the next edition of FREDa – we'd love to hear from you! Email [advancement@womens.uq.edu.au](mailto:advancement@womens.uq.edu.au).



# Celebrating New Chapters

## Wooza Weddings

*On behalf of the Women's College community, FREDa extends our warmest congratulations to the following alumnae who recently tied the knot.*

### Bianca Zacharin (2012 – 2014; née Watt)

Bianca married Albert Zacharin on 10 May 2024 in an intimate ceremony on Sydney Harbour – the very place they first met in 2018.

After a lovely honeymoon in Vietnam, the couple have now settled in New York City.



### Georgina Hopson (2009 – 2011)

Georgina married Andy on 1 February 2025 in a beautiful garden wedding at her parents' home in Toowoomba.

A celebrated star of Australian musical theatre and 2023 Young Alumna Award winner, Georgina's next role may be her most joyful yet.



Recently married? Share your celebration! We'd love to mark this milestone with you in the next issue of *FREDa*. Email your story and photos to [advancement@womens.uq.edu.au](mailto:advancement@womens.uq.edu.au).

# In Memory

## Honouring the Lives and Legacies of our Alumnae



Liz Alexander (1991 – 1992)

It is with deep sorrow that we remember Liz Alexander, 51, whose impact extended far beyond her distinguished career in agriculture.

Liz's journey began as Central Highlands Regional Manager at Cotton Australia from 2001 to 2004, where she pioneered the adoption of Best Management Practices (BMP) in the Emerald and Theodore regions, laying the foundation for sustainable agricultural practices.

Her leadership continued as a Director on the Cotton Australia Board and through pivotal roles in organisations like the Cotton Research Development Corporation (CRDC) and Plant Health Australia. Liz's unwavering dedication to agricultural innovation and regional development earned her respect and admiration across the industry.

Liz passed away in July 2024 from complications related to her cancer treatment.

In a fitting tribute to Liz's groundbreaking contributions to the agricultural technology (AgTech) sector, the Queensland Government has announced a bursary in her honour. The bursary celebrates Liz's leadership in fostering innovation within Queensland's agricultural industry and supports the next generation of AgTech pioneers who will continue her mission to enhance productivity and sustainability across the sector.





### Allana Smith (1999 – 2001)

Allana Smith, 42, tragically lost her battle with Triple Negative Breast Cancer in September of 2023. Lani – as she was known to the thousands of people whose lives she touched – was the great social connector and glue that held together many dispersed friend groups across Australia and overseas. She was vivacious, fun, social, brave, intelligent, curious, loving and successful in everything she did. Her smile lit a room and her friendship to many Woozas of that vintage was central to their lives.

She sadly passed six weeks before her Wooza friends had organised a 400-person ball in her honour at Howard Smith Wharves. The ball continued in Lani's absence, an event for everyone to come together and celebrate her life, and with the help of prizes donated by The Women's College and many others, we raised \$85,000 for Triple Negative Breast Cancer Research for the Peter McCallum Cancer Centre, the place that had cared for her during her long battle.

Lani is missed and thought of every day.

*Alumna Sally McPherson (1999 – 2001) and a group of Wooza friends have organised a plaque in the new Wellbeing Precinct in memory of Allana.*



We remember with affection the alumnae who have passed and honour their impact. If you would like to share a tribute for a future issue, please email [advancement@womens.uq.edu.au](mailto:advancement@womens.uq.edu.au).



**The Women's College**

within The University of Queensland

ready to lead



# Helen McBride Annual Lecture

Microscopic Challenges, Global Impact:

*Defending the World's Cereal Crops against Microbial Adversaries*



**Professor Ruth Dill-Macky**  
(1981 – 1983)

Join us for the inaugural **Helen McBride Annual Lecture**, welcoming back to the College distinguished alumna **Professor Ruth Dill-Macky** (1981 – 1983) for a powerful keynote address on global food security and the future of agriculture.

Based at the University of Minnesota, Professor Dill-Macky is a world leader in plant pathology. Her work on cereal crop diseases – including Fusarium Head Blight and Bacterial Leaf Streak of wheat – plays a critical role in protecting the world's food supply. In addition to her role as a University Professor, she currently serves as Co-Chair of the United States Wheat and Barley Scab Initiative.

In her address, Professor Dill-Macky will explore:

- » The ongoing threat that microbes pose to food production
- » The cooperative approach used to understand and control plant diseases
- » The importance of mentoring the next generation of researchers

**Invisible threats. Global consequences. Discover why this fight matters to us all.**

**Wednesday 24 September 2025 | 6:30pm – 8:30pm**  
College Playhouse, The Women's College

To secure your seat, scan the QR code or visit [womens.uq.edu.au/events](https://womens.uq.edu.au/events)

