



WILDERNESS
SCHOOL

Head of *Advancement*

→ CANDIDATE PACK MAY 2026





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Background *information*

Established in 1884, Wilderness School is Adelaide's *oldest independent girls' school*.

The Wilderness School was established in 1884 by Miss Margaret Hamilton Brown.

MISSION

To enable every girl to be the best she can be throughout her life.

VISION

Wilderness School will be a world leader in girls' education. We will equip each girl to succeed in her personal and professional life.

As the School grew, the younger Brown sisters became involved. Miss Margaret was Headmistress, Miss Wynnie was in charge of the Kindergarten, Miss Annie took on the role of housekeeper and the care of the boarders, and Miss Mamie, the first pupil, joined the teaching staff in 1898. The School thus became known as 'The Misses Brown's School'. In 1918 the name became 'The Wilderness', partly because of the wilderness-like nature of the grounds and partly because of the biblical connotation of challenge and renewal in the wilderness.

The School has continued to thrive under the guiding hand of the Council of Governors. Although the running of a school today bears little resemblance to the administration of a small private school at the turn of the last century, the Brown traditions have been kept alive in a happy and caring family atmosphere, combined with academic excellence of which they would have been proud.

Today, Wilderness School is a globally leading day and boarding school for girls from ELC to Year 12. The legacy of the Misses Brown lives on through the progressive education we deliver and through the young Wilderness women who lead lives of compassion and social justice.

OUR VALUES

The following values guide every part of Wilderness School's culture, relationships, teaching and learning programs and practices. At Wilderness School we promote, enable and nurture:

Adventurous Learning invites students to step beyond what is familiar, to take intellectual risks and to embrace challenge as part of growth. Course selection is one of the first significant opportunities for a student to back her curiosity and pursue what genuinely captivates her.

True and Courageous Self asks students to make choices that reflect who they are, not who they think they should be. We encourage every girl to listen to her own strengths, interests and aspirations, and to make decisions with honesty and self-knowledge.

Respectful Relationships sit at the heart of good decision making. Students are supported by teachers, Heads of Department, the Careers and Pathways team, and their families. These conversations matter, and the trust built through them helps each student navigate her choices with confidence.

Responsible Citizenship reminds us learning prepares students for a life of contribution. The pathways our students choose equips them to engage thoughtfully with the world, to lead with integrity, and to use their skills and knowledge for the benefit of others.



Strategic plan

We know that it is a *privilege* and a *responsibility* to *educate* the girls in our care. We believe that each girl is entitled to an education that *equips her with the knowledge, skills and values* needed to embrace the *opportunities and challenges* she will encounter in her personal and professional life.

With this in mind, we are delighted to share with you the strategic priorities that will guide us in achieving our vision for our girls. We look forward to sharing the journey.

AN EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION

Learning at Wilderness is guided by curiosity, integrity and high expectations. This work focuses on teaching and learning that is rigorous and responsive, values growth over time and challenges girls to think deeply. Evidence, data and purposeful partnerships are used across the School to support achievement, aspiration and meaningful progress for every girl.

CULTIVATING CAPABILITIES

Girls are known as individuals and supported to grow with confidence, resilience and care for others. This work prioritises wellbeing, respectful relationships and leadership, recognising that success takes many forms and that strong character and connection underpin lifelong learning. Students are nurtured to contribute thoughtfully to their communities and the world beyond school.

OUTSTANDING PROFESSIONALS

Professional expertise, integrity and collaboration sit at the heart of the School's success. This priority area builds a culture of trust, reflection and shared practice. Continuous learning, wellbeing and leadership are supported and nurtured at all levels. By deepening professional growth and practice, Wilderness sustains excellence in teaching and support, contributes to local, national and global education conversations, and continues to attract and develop outstanding educators and staff.

A CONNECTED COMMUNITY

Strong relationships underpin connection and belonging across the School community. Students, staff, families and community members feel known, seen and cared for, working in partnership to support our students and shared values. Our history and values are honoured and enacted and intergenerational relationships are cultivated. We celebrate our community's successes and are inclusive, purposeful and responsive in our communication and engagement.

RESPONSIBLE GOVERNANCE

Long-term strength and sustainability are built through thoughtful planning and principled leadership. This priority area focuses on future-focused decision-making that supports student learning, community confidence and the School's continued excellence in girls' education. Ethical leadership, sound financial and operational management, careful stewardship of infrastructure and a strong culture of philanthropy work together to safeguard student wellbeing, strengthen enrolment and secure the School's future.



Our community

Each student, parent, family, donor and old scholar whether past, present or future is a *valued member* of our Wilderness community.

FOUNDATION

The Wilderness School Foundation was established in 1985. Since then, it has assisted the School in transforming not only the landscape of Wilderness, but the lives of our students. The Foundation, being a separate legal entity to the school, has been instrumental in helping to fund many of our important capital works projects. With this support, the School has been able to create a learning environment that enables our girls to develop the skills they will need to succeed well into the 21st century.

As an independent school, we are reliant upon the philanthropic generosity of the wider community.

Led by an extremely talented and dedicated team, the Foundation Board comprises current and past parents as well as Old Scholars.

The Board is supported by the Head of Advancement and the Foundation Events Committee. In addition, the Foundation is the corporate Trustee of the Scholarship Fund, a separate Trust with DGR status.

OLD SCHOLARS

Each Wilderness girl is grafted into the family tree upon graduation, automatically receiving membership to the Wilderness Old Scholars' Association, a network of over 4,500 vibrant members who span the globe. Encompassing decades from 18 years of age and including several centenarians, our old scholars represent a multiplicity of experiences and backgrounds across personal and professional pursuits.

An enduring bond with the School and other past students enriches and nourishes the Wilderness spirit and we highly value the contribution our graduates bring to our community and to the generations that follow them.

Our long standing and thriving Old Scholar community is partly attributed to the many events and opportunities offered throughout the annual calendar. These occasions allow past students the opportunity to stay connected and continue to contribute to and enrich the life of the School.

PARENTS AND FRIENDS

Our Parents and Friends Association plays a vital role in strengthening intergenerational friendships, building upon Wilderness' strong community spirit and bringing together parents, staff and friends of the School.

All parents with a daughter at Wilderness are welcomed as members of our community.

Our enthusiastic Parents and Friends Association sponsors and/or hosts various functions throughout the year, including parent socials, coffee mornings, class gatherings and parent guest speaker programs. They also volunteer at School events and student performances.

There are many opportunities to volunteer or join a committee that supports each family's lifestyle and interests. Volunteering provides the opportunity to meet other parents and make a meaningful contribution to the life and fabric of the School.

For further information about Wilderness School, visit:

wilderness.com.au



Head of *Advancement*

Role *purpose*

The Head of Advancement is a key member of the School community. Working in close consultation with the Principal, they are responsible for leading the School's philanthropic program – including major gift fundraising, alumni engagement, the School Archive and the Annual Giving program.

POSITION TITLE

Head of Advancement

TENURE

3 Years, with a potential for renewal

REPORTING TO

Principal

A central priority for this role is leading a three-year philanthropic campaign to fund the School's new gymnasium facility. Wilderness School has already undertaken a campaign readiness assessment with Marts & Lundy, providing a strong foundation from which the successful candidate will develop and execute a multi-phased campaign strategy, engage and steward major donors, and drive the campaign through to a successful conclusion.

This role is also responsible for establishing and managing effective systems and processes to underpin all advancement activities, facilitating long-term, sustainable relationships that grow the School's philanthropic capacity well beyond the campaign.





Key responsibilities

CAMPAIGN LEADERSHIP – GYMNASIUM

The gymnasium campaign is the immediate priority of this role. The successful candidate will:

- Draw on the findings of the Marts & Lundy campaign readiness assessment to develop and gain endorsement for a three-year campaign plan, including a phased solicitation strategy, rated prospect pipeline, case for support, and agreed income targets and milestones for each phase.
- Lead the planning and execution of all campaign activity, including prospect identification and rating, donor engagement and cultivation, solicitation, recognition, and stewardship.
- Develop a campaign action plan within the first 60 days that translates existing groundwork into clear priorities, timelines, and donor engagement strategies.
- Maintain campaign momentum over the three-year cycle, managing donor relationships and organisational commitment to sustain engagement and income throughout.
- Experience translating campaign readiness findings into actionable plans, priorities, and donor engagement strategies is essential.

PHILANTHROPIC STRATEGY

- In consultation with the Principal, develop and implement a philanthropic strategy and operating model that underpins the Wilderness School Strategic Plan and supports both the capital campaign and long-term giving culture.
- In consultation with the Principal and Business Manager, develop, implement and evaluate campaigns and initiatives including targets, programs, timelines and methodologies to generate and grow fundraising income. Continually review and integrate best practice including trends and research in the philanthropic sector.

DONOR, BEQUEST AND PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

- Build and develop positive relationships with donors and benefactors, managing a personal portfolio of principal and major gift prospective donors.
- Implement a donor management plan that cultivates relationships and migrates donors across engagement platforms.
- Develop and manage funding and donor events, campaigns, corporate partnerships, and recognition strategies.
- Support and expand the bequest program by nurturing Green Door Society members and identifying new prospects.
- Plan, implement and review the Annual Giving program and capital campaigns for the School.
- Assist the Principal with the nomination and selection of recipients for internal scholarship offerings.

FOUNDATION BOARD AND SCHOLARSHIP TRUST

- In consultation with the Principal and the Business Manager (Public Officer of the Foundation), develop, present and implement a strategic plan for the Foundation Board, identifying opportunities to increase philanthropic and annual giving income.
- Prepare papers and participate in all Foundation Board meetings and functions.
- Assist the Business Manager in preparing AGM presentation information.

ALUMNI AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Build strong, mutually beneficial community programs with Old Scholars and community groups.
- Nurture relationships with Old Scholars by overseeing the School's alumni engagement strategy and providing strategic support to the Old Scholars Association.
- Collaborate with the Foundation Board and Events Committee to generate community engagement in fundraising from major events.
- Provide direction and coaching to the Advancement team in relation to events such as Founders Day, Old Scholar reunions and other activities, as well as publications and social media.
- In conjunction with the Communications and Marketing team, provide regular content for school publications and community profiles.
- Support all community groups by attending committee meetings and events, as required.



Key responsibilities

ARCHIVES

- Oversee the Archivist and their work.
- Investigate ways to use the archives for community and philanthropic purposes.
- Oversee the completion of the digital archives catalogue.

REPORTING AND PERFORMANCE

- Develop and implement a KPI framework and reporting rhythm that provides the Principal, Business Manager and Board with regular visibility over pipeline health, campaign progress and phased income targets.
- Regularly evaluate program outcomes, reporting against planned and actual results.
- Ensure budgets are met by achieving set revenue targets and managing controllable costs.
- Oversee the administration of donations with the Advancement team, to ensure an accurate and current donor database.
- Oversee the annual update to the Donor Honour Boards, derived from fundraising membership levels.
- Ensure compliance with all relevant legislative and regulatory requirements.

LEADERSHIP

- Share and model ownership of the Vision, Mission and Values of the School.
- Provide coaching, mentoring and development of staff, fostering a high-performing Advancement team.
- Facilitate accountability, responsibility and ownership of staff for the goals and priorities of the School.
- Encourage open communication and create an environment where ideas are shared and contributions valued.



KEY CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS

After 12 months in post, the successful candidate will have:

- Translated the Marts & Lundy campaign readiness assessment into an endorsed three-year campaign plan, including a phased solicitation strategy, rated prospect pipeline, compelling case for support, and agreed income targets and milestones for each phase of the gymnasium campaign.
- Secured a number of leadership gifts or pledges that demonstrate strong early momentum in the campaign's first phase.
- Built trusted, authentic relationships with the Principal, Foundation Board, and key donor prospects – being recognised by the School community as a credible and values-aligned Advancement leader.
- Reviewed and, where necessary, strengthened donor data, stewardship frameworks, and database systems to ensure they are fit to sustain a multi-year campaign.
- Established clear KPIs for the advancement function and a reporting rhythm that gives the Principal, Business Manager and Board ongoing visibility over pipeline health and campaign progress.
- Begun to build a broader culture of giving across the school community, laying the groundwork for mid-level and annual giving programs that will run alongside and support the capital campaign through its three-year lifecycle.
- Established themselves as a known and respected Advancement professional within the South Australian independent school and philanthropic community.



Key requirements

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE – ESSENTIAL

- Formal qualifications in fundraising, business, marketing, communications or a related field, or equivalent demonstrated experience.
- Demonstrated experience leading or playing a senior role in a multi-year capital campaign, with the ability to maintain momentum, donor engagement and organisational commitment across an extended campaign cycle.
- Proven track record of securing major gifts from individual donors, with experience managing a personal portfolio of principal and major gift prospects.
- Experience translating campaign readiness findings (such as a Marts & Lundy assessment) into actionable plans, solicitation strategies and donor engagement priorities.
- Extensive experience in the fundraising and philanthropic sector with a track record of contributing to measurable results.
- A strong understanding of a range of income streams including major donors, trusts and foundations, bequests, individual giving and capital campaigns, together with alumni engagement.
- Proven success in developing and executing strategies and business plans, including financial management and performance measurement.
- Demonstrated experience as a leader with the ability to build strong relationships based on trust and collaboration.
- Demonstrable experience working with boards or foundation committees.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE – DESIRABLE

- Experience in bequest program development, stewardship frameworks, or donor recognition models.
- Understanding of contemporary trends in philanthropy, including impact measurement, donor journeys and philanthropic psychology.
- Knowledge of the independent school environment in South Australia and/or nationally.

PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Relationship Management: collaborative in approach and builds strong rapport with a diverse range of stakeholders; is respected for their approach to achieving results.
- Specialist Expertise: a deep knowledge of the fundraising and philanthropic market.
- Leadership: acts as a role model, inspires others, coaches and mentors the team.
- Communication: highly developed written, verbal, listening and presentation skills; promotes open communication.
- Integrity and Confidentiality: demonstrates high levels of confidentiality and cultivates credibility and honesty.
- Resilience: able to sustain energy, focus and relationships across a multi-year campaign cycle.
- Adaptability: adjusts to changing environments and competing demands with a positive mindset.
- Commercial Acumen: understands the financial levers of a campaign and manages within agreed budgets.

CONDITIONS

- Some out-of-hours work is an essential component of this role.
- Work from any other metropolitan location as required.
- Some interstate and intrastate travel is a requirement of this position.
- The School reserves the right to modify and adjust position descriptions to meet its operational and strategic needs.
- The successful applicant will be required to undergo a Working with Children Check and Responding to Risks of Harm, Abuse and Neglect Training, and must adhere to the School's Child Protection Policy.





Next steps

TERMS

A competitive salary will be offered and negotiated with the successful candidate

Wilderness School promotes flexible working and, as such, this position can be offered on a full-time or part-time basis, four days per week. Options might include a compressed week, nine-day fortnight or term-time only.

The terms of this arrangement will be negotiated on an individual basis with the successful candidate.

Some out-of-hours work is an essential component of this role.

HOW TO APPLY

Applications should consist of:

- A comprehensive curriculum vitae giving details of relevant achievements in recent posts, as well as your education and professional qualifications.
- A covering letter that summarises your interest in this post, providing evidence of your ability to match the criteria outlined in the Person Specification.
- Details of your notice period and names of two referees, together with a brief statement of the capacity in which they have known you and an indication of when in the process they can be contacted. Please note, we will not contact your referees without your express permission.
- Telephone contact numbers, preferably daytime and evening/mobile, which will be used with discretion.

As we have a rolling model of recruitment there is no closing date for this role, and we recommend you apply as soon as possible.

To apply, please [click here](#), or for a confidential discussion, please call Judith Marks or Richard Green at NGO Recruitment on **02 8243 0570**.

Receipt of your application will be acknowledged and you will receive updates as you move through the process, including if you have been selected for interview.





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