

FAIRHOLME COLLEGE
FOCUS



BEYOND THE TARTAN
2025



Our Story | At Hogans, we've been crafting bespoke fine jewellery since 1945. From humble beginnings in Griffith and Leeton, to our state-of-the-art showroom and workshop in Toowoomba, Hogans has always been committed to providing quality fine jewellery and profound service. The result culminates in breathtaking pieces that can be cherished for a lifetime and passed down through generations to come.



Celebrating 80 Years | In 2025 Hogans Family Jewellers celebrated 80 years of exceptional craftsmanship and service, a milestone that honours the passion, artistry and dedication of three generations. Over the decades the Hogan family has had the privilege of celebrating life's most meaningful moments alongside their clients, from engagements and weddings to anniversaries and milestones passed down through generations. Each piece crafted within their workshop reflects the skill, care and creativity that have defined the Hogans name since 1945.

Read More



Caitlin Hogan - Marketing Manager | Caitlin Hogan, a proud Fairholme Old Girl and third-generation member of the Hogan Family, works in the company as Marketing Manager. Her blend of professional expertise, family tradition, and Fairholme values ensures our brand has a strong future for growth. Her work is a beautiful continuation of her family's story, infused with the warmth and values that shaped her at Fairholme.

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Published by Fairholme College

Editors and Writers Helen Lange, Katie Craymer, Sarah Richardson | Layout and Design Helen Lange | Advertising Enquiries Communications 07 4688 2341



FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Generations of Greatness

The Power of Fairholme Old Girls

Dr Leigh Hobart

As Principal, I am continually inspired by the enduring legacy of our Old Girls and the profound impact they continue to have on the life of our College.

Whether they return to work directly with students, share their wisdom through mentorship, help in the archives, or live out the values instilled during their time here – Christ-centred faith, excellence, collaboration, respect and joy – our Old Girls remain a vital part of our community.

Their contributions are woven into the fabric of our College. They are quiet leaders, the passionate creatives, the dedicated educators, and the joyful servants who remind us that the spirit of Fairholme College does not end at graduation – it flourishes in the lives they lead and the ways they give back.

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*...the spirit of
Fairholme College does
not end at graduation
- it flourishes in the
lives they lead and the
ways they give back...*

One shining example is Georgina Hopson, a rising star in the Australian theatre scene.

Georgina has taken centre stage as Anya in the Australian premiere of *Anastasia*, a role she describes as a childhood dream come true.

Her journey – from our classrooms to national stages – embodies the value of excellence and the power of nurturing artistic talent.

Georgina's success is not only a testament to her own dedication and artistry but also a reflection of the College's commitment to the Arts and the encouragement she received here.

Her story is one of many. Across our campus, a number of Old Girls have returned as exceptional teachers, choosing to invest their gifts in the next generation.

These educators bring a unique depth of understanding to their roles, having once been students themselves.

They model respect and joy in their classrooms, collaborate with colleagues and guide students with a faith-filled heart.

Their presence is a powerful reminder of the transformative nature of education and the strength of our community. Supporting this pathway is our Step Up to Teach initiative, which encourages students to explore teaching as a vocation.

Through mentoring, practical experience and leadership opportunities, we are seeing more students – many of whom are inspired by Old Girls – consider careers in education.

This initiative not only strengthens our teaching pipeline but also reinforces the values we hold dear, ensuring that future educators are grounded in purpose and passion.

The Old Girls' Association continues to play a vital role in fostering these connections.

Through reunions, guest speaker events, and mentoring programs, FOGA helps bridge generations and sustain the spirit of collaboration.

These opportunities allow current students to learn from those who have gone before them, and for Old Girls to remain actively involved in shaping the future of the College.

This year, we were thrilled to see this spirit of generosity expressed in a tangible way through the refurbishment of the FOGA foyer.

Thanks to the incredible financial support of our Old Girls – a gift of \$20,000 – this cherished space has been revitalised for future generations to enjoy.

This area stands as a symbol of connection and continuity, a place where stories are shared and friendships renewed.

Your generosity ensures that this space remains a welcoming hub for our community, a place of history, and we are deeply grateful for your commitment to preserving our heritage.

As we look ahead, I am filled with gratitude for the many ways our Old Girls continue to enrich our community.

Their stories – like Georgina's, and those of our dedicated teachers – are a source of inspiration and a reminder of the lasting impact of a values-based education.

To all our Old Girls: thank you. Thank you for living the values of the College in your daily lives, for returning to share your gifts, and for continuing to shape the hearts and minds of our students.

You are treasured part of our story, and we are proud to walk alongside you.

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I am filled with gratitude for the many ways our Old Girls continue to enrich our community... Their stories are a source of inspiration and a reminder of the lasting impact of a values-based education...







NEW SOUTH WALES
POLICE FORCE

NEW SOUTH WALES
POLICE FORCE

ANSTO

ANSTO

Championing Diversity in Sciences

Nikki Deery | 1998 | Black House | Border

When Nikki Deery opened an email just days before Christmas a few year's ago, she had no idea it would mark a defining moment in her career. After two unsuccessful applications in previous years, she had applied once more for the prestigious Superstars of STEM program - and this time, she had been selected.

'This recognition is a testament to the resilience, dedication, and passion that have defined my STEM journey,' Nikki reflects. 'After two unsuccessful applications, being invited for an interview this year felt like a breakthrough, and I was determined to make it count.'

The official announcement was later made by the then New South Wales Minister for Industry and Science, The Hon Ed Husic MP, but until that moment, the news was under embargo.

'It was tough not being able to share,' she admits. 'But it made the moment even more special when it finally became public.'

The Superstars of STEM program, run by Science and Technology Australia, elevates leading women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics to increase their visibility in media and public life. For Nikki, the selection represented more than personal recognition — it was about broadening the narrative of who belongs in STEM.

'I shared a vision with STA to ensure the program championed greater diversity by including women in operational and enabler roles, not just research or PhDs,' she explains. 'It reflects a truly well-rounded community of professionals. That message resonated, and the persistence and purpose paid off.'

Currently working at Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) as a Radiation Protection Advisor, Nikki supports scientists to work safely with ionising radiation while they conduct life-changing research. Alongside her role, she is studying Health Physics and continuing to advocate for nuclear science as a force for good.

Since graduating from Fairholme in 1998, Nikki's career has taken her across continents and into some of Australia's most high-profile investigations. 'It's been such a cool journey!' she laughs.

Highlights include working abroad in Oxford, UK including serving on the London 2012 Olympics Drug Control Centre team. She later returned home to join the Australian Federal Police National Crime Scene team in Sydney, contributing to major criminal investigations.

After marriage and children, she pivoted careers again, joining ANSTO's Nuclear Forensics team. There, she advanced forensic capability through nuclear security projects and coordinated radiological crime scene exercises with law enforcement agencies.

A recent milestone was assisting the Australian Border Force with Australia's first Nuclear Security Investigation, a case that set a legal precedent.

Today, her work centres on radiation safety, ensuring scientists can push the boundaries of innovation securely and responsibly.

Nikki's motivation for applying to Superstars of STEM was grounded in a desire to refine her communication skills and amplify her impact.

'The program gives us exposure to a wide range of communication platforms,' she says. 'It allows us to experiment and find what works best for our style.'

One standout experience was spending a day with journalists at SBS. 'It was both insightful and exciting,' she says. 'But delivering a TED-style talk? That was absolutely terrifying and definitely took me out of my comfort zone.'

Another highlight was Science Meets Parliament, an initiative connecting scientists with federal parliamentarians to better understand how to create impact in politics. Through it all, Nikki says the greatest growth has been internal.

'This program is helping me build confidence, overcome imposter syndrome, and find my authentic voice. Working

alongside 60 incredible superstars from across Australia has been inspiring.'

A passionate advocate for the next generation, Nikki frequently speaks at schools and public forums including reconnecting with Fairholme through events such as Presenting Fairholme.

'I truly valued my time at Fairholme and the lifelong connections I made there,' she says. 'I want to give back to the community that gave so much to me.'

Her message to young people (especially young women) is clear: 'Science is for everyone. It's a broad, transferable profession that can take you on incredible journeys and create real impact in our communities and our country.'

But she is honest about the challenges. 'We still have obstacles as women in this field. While we're seeing more traction, with support from programs like Superstars of STEM and the Department of Industry and Science data, only 16 per cent of STEM roles in Australia are held by women. We still have a long way to go.'

That is why visibility matters. 'You can't be what you can't see,' she says, echoing the words often shared by trailblazing former Australian Chief Scientist, Cathy Foley. 'Young women need visible role models. Seeing women doing amazing things shows them that anything is possible.'

Nikki credits much of her scientific passion to her years at Fairholme. 'What made my education memorable wasn't just the teaching staff, but the year group I had, we were all keen learners and genuinely enjoyed school.'

She fondly remembers Chemistry with Mr Mark Ash. 'I have vivid memories of him running around the classroom a million miles an hour. He was so energetic and passionate and it was through learning from him that I knew science was it for me.'

Maths teacher, Mrs Margaret Brown, also played a pivotal role, helping her see STEM subjects as viable and exciting career pathways.

When Nikki returns to Fairholme, she brings more than stories - she brings science to life. On a recent visit, she spent time with Junior School students discussing radiation safety and forensics, running small workshops to spark curiosity.

'When I talk about radiation, I use detectors and props like uranium glass to make it interactive and fun,' she explains. 'From there, I walk through the peaceful applications of nuclear science to shift the conversation toward positive uses, rather than the fear often associated with it.'

Her goal is simple but powerful: 'Even just getting them talking over the dinner table about science is the end goal.'

After a year of intensive media and communication training, Nikki is ready to step further into the spotlight. 'I'd like to push my comfort zone and jump on opportunities to speak more publicly about what we do at ANSTO and advocate that nuclear science is safe.'

With Channel 9 expressing interest in a *Women in Nuclear* feature, the next

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Young women need visible role models. Seeing women doing amazing things shows them that anything is possible...

chapter could see her demystifying radiation for audiences across Australia. 'I'm hopeful next year will present more opportunities to get out there and show all the benefits this incredible science has for Australians.'

For Fairholme girls considering STEM but feeling unsure, Nikki's advice is practical yet empowering: 'Get online and explore. Identify role models. Email them. Ask the questions you're curious about. Attend university open days. Seek internships and graduate programs. The more knowledge you gather, the more informed your choices will be.'



The Power of the Mentor

Amelia Ramia | 2024 | Black House | Day Girl

I first heard about Nikki when I was in Year 8. Fairholme did an article on her career in Forensics with the Australian federal Police (AFP). I remember reading about it and thinking how interesting her work sounded. Going into Year 11, I was able to reach out to her and find out a little bit more about the Bachelor of Forensic Science. Then in my final year at

Fairholme, Nikki was the guest speaker at Presenting Fairholme and I caught up with her to talk more about university and career options.

Going into Year 12, I had a few ideas about what I wanted to study, and at the top of my list were Marine Biology and Forensic Science. As I thought about it more, and talked to Nikki about her time at university and with the AFP, I realised that forensics was what I really wanted to do.

Nikki has been a huge help to me. Without the initial inspiration and ongoing support from her, I'm sure I would be doing something completely different this year. She spent a lot of time talking me through the different majors and what some of my classes might

look like. It has been so helpful to have someone who can give me an idea of what to expect in my degree.

I think Old Girl mentoring is so important. There are so many years of girls who have graduated from Fairholme and pursued any career you can think of. It really is a great way to connect with like-minded people who are willing to help. I would love to be able to help girls the way Nikki has helped me. You really can't understand how amazing that network is until you start connecting with women who have been where you want to go and done what you want to do and have mountains of advice to give.

Thanks to Nikki, I started my Bachelor of Forensic Science in Sydney this year and I am studying at the same university she did and I have chosen the same major. I hope to continue following in Nikki's footsteps and get a job with the AFP after finishing my degree. I would really encourage younger girls to seek out mentoring relationships with Old Girls because it is truly so helpful. I am so grateful to Nikki for all her help and I am looking forward to catching up with her in Sydney!



Healing Through Her Words

Lexi Crouch | 2005 | Black House | Boarder

When Fairholme Old Girl Lexi Crouch speaks to a room full of students, there is one message she hopes echoes long after she leaves the stage: “You are enough.”

It is a message born not from theory, but from experience, which now forms the heartbeat of her book, *Renourish*.

For Lexi, writing *Renourish* was not originally part of a grand career plan. It was a promise. ‘*Renourish* was definitely birthed by the desire to give back and help others,’ she explains. ‘I didn’t think I was ever going to make it out of the eating disorder and made a promise that if I ever did, I would go on to help others.’

That promise became a powerful collaboration. Written alongside her friend Dr Warren Ward, a compassionate psychiatrist dedicated to working in the eating disorder space, the book combines clinical expertise with lived experience. Together, they set out to make the complex world of diet culture, eating disorders and disordered eating both relatable and understandable.

‘We combined our skills of medical, clinical and lived experience expertise to write *Renourish* to really make it relatable and try our best to help bring understanding about diet culture, eating disorders and disordered eating,’ Lexi says.

Putting her story into print was both confronting and healing.

‘I am still pinching myself that it is out there in the world,’ she admits.

‘The most challenging part of putting my story into words was really trying to capture how different life can be beyond having an eating disorder and previously a poor relationship with yourself.’

Recovery, she explains, is something that can truly only be experienced. Yet in writing about it, she discovered perspective.

‘While I was in recovery, I felt like I wasn’t reaching the typical milestones my friends were for that point of life,’ she reflects. ‘Looking back while writing, it became so evident that embarking on recovery - how hard and painful it was at the time - would go on to be the most fundamental time of my life for personal growth.’

In revisiting that season, Lexi found healing. What once felt like lost time revealed itself as the foundation of her strength.

Lexi’s heart is firmly set on the wellbeing of young women navigating a world saturated with comparison and unrealistic expectations.

‘I hope readers take away that it is absolutely possible to have a healthy relationship with yourself,’ she says. ‘Life is so much more than just food, weight and shape as determining factors of your life. Health is all about balance. It is not an all-or-nothing approach, and it includes your happiness as well.’

She speaks passionately about the need to strengthen a young woman’s inner world in an age dominated by social media and diet culture.





'It is so important for a young person to strengthen their inner world and self-esteem. You are never too much. In fact, this is such a starting point to realise your full potential and go out into the world and shine.'

For Lexi, the work is about helping young women learn to quiet external noise - whether from social media, body image pressures or cultural messaging - and to instead cultivate embodied strength and kindness.

'You can do hard things and walk through the world with embodied strength and kindness,' she says. 'You are never ineffective as a person no matter what challenges life throws your way.'

There was a time when Lexi wanted nothing to do with the world of eating disorders. Shame kept her silent. 'I had a lot of shame when I had an eating disorder, and I was really embarrassed about it,' she shares. 'When I first recovered, I didn't want anything to do with that world at all.'

But something shifted. 'In time, I realised I wanted to shorten the experience for others or at least help them feel less alone.'

When emails began arriving from readers in New York City, Indonesia and across Australia, the impact of her vulnerability became undeniable. 'Shame dies when it is

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We live in a time where diet culture and body image is rife especially with social media, and I think the way my story landed for some girls is quite close to home. It is often a silent struggle, and it doesn't need to be.

spoken about, and it no longer has power,' she says. 'There was a moment I realised I did so much healing that the eating disorder was just an experience I had, and using my voice to help others feel less alone, there is no greater connection.'

Talking about connection, the McLaren tartan and the ties



that bind it, she reflects on the enduring Fairholme experience. 'Fairholme has shaped me to become the woman I am today and I feel so blessed for my schooling experience. As a boarder, it ingrained such strong values in me and the importance of integrity, kindness, showing up for myself even when it is hard, leadership and just being human, which can be so lost in the world we live in today.

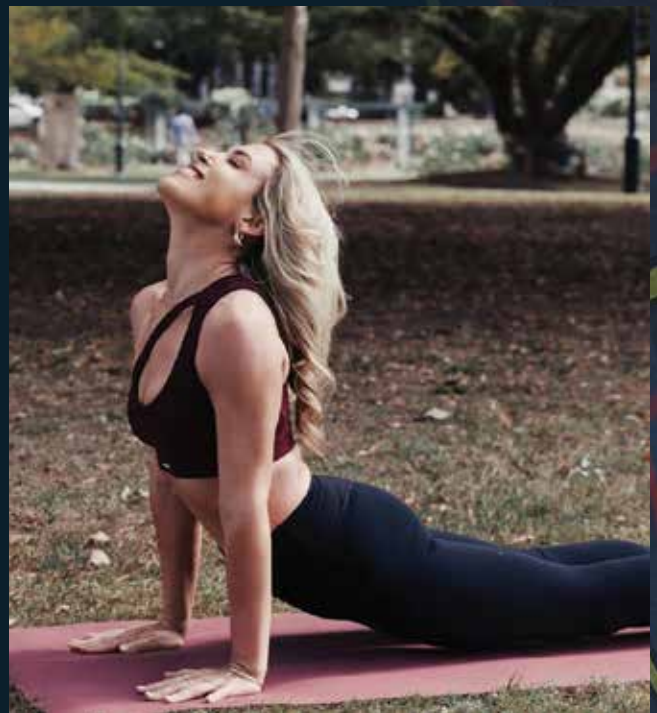
'At Fairholme I was given a voice and so many opportunities as a woman of the world to go out and live my dreams. Having such a great education helped me to be such a deep thinker and to be so articulate stepping out into the world. It was such a real, nourishing and uplifting experience, one that contributed greatly to my path.

'While I experienced an eating disorder in my childhood and throughout school, Fairholme was such a happy and safe place for me. I am still friends with the girls I went to school with, and we all caught up at the reunion last year. Since then, I have been lucky enough to be a bridesmaid at my best friend's (Lisa Braden nee Wason) wedding and our girls both being born a month apart, who also have a special bond when they get to spend time together.

'Sister Heather Harrison also was such an important figure in my life at Fairholme too. I was no stranger to sickbay with everything going on, and Sister Harrison was like family away from home for me. She just had so much compassion, care and nonjudgement, I think the best combination for someone going through something so heavy which was so misunderstood at the time. It was so nice to see her last year at the Spring Fair and let her know the important role she played in my life. She might have been the first person to have really noticed what was going on.



Lexi Crouch with fellow Fairholme Old Girl and mentor, Heather Harrison.



My biggest driving force is to let others know they are not alone. Approximately 1.1 million Australians are living with an eating disorder, and it is not spoken about enough.

The reality is everyone experiences mental health, and yet for so long this part was not acknowledged without stigma attached to it.

I wanted to make a change that this is a real issue that could happen to anyone; eating disorders do not discriminate. I believe speaking up when you have a strong voice and it is a moral responsibility to help others feel seen and know a full recovery is possible.

I hope this gives others hope when they might feel alone in the dark.

It has surprised me as to just how many young girls can relate. We live in a time where diet culture and body image is rife especially with social media, and I think the way my story landed for some girls is quite close to home. It is often such a silent issue to struggle with, and because it takes a grip on such functional people, often speaking about it or even asking for help doesn't come easily.

When I have spoken to these young girls, I see the brightest, inspiring and incredible humans and I want them to know my story like theirs is just the starting point to truly develop a deep and understanding relationship with yourself that you can take on in the years to come.

I want them to know they are enough. Your worth and happiness will never be dependent on external factors such as other peoples' comments and that learning to really empower and build a relationship with yourself is going to be some of the most important work you do in life.

Fairholme Foundations and National Influence

Jade Hawkins | 1994 | Stephens House | Day Girl

‘When it comes to public service, it really does give you a sense of purpose and at the higher levels, to make decisions that have a huge impact for the better on the lives of Australians.’

For Fairholme Old Girl, Jade Hawkins, that sense of purpose isn’t abstract, it has led her to an extraordinary career at the Australian Taxation Office (ATO), where she currently serves as an Assistant Commissioner leading the ATO’s Criminal Law Program nationally.

In a world where leadership is often measured by titles and visibility, Jade measures hers by impact. The decisions made around boardroom tables and policy briefings may not always make headlines, but they shape the economic security, stability and wellbeing of Australians every single day.

‘Public service isn’t always glamorous,’ she explains, ‘but it is meaningful. You know that the work you’re doing contributes to something bigger than yourself.’

In her role, Jade oversees the most serious and complex fraud matters affecting Australia’s tax and superannuation systems. ‘The area focuses on the most extreme types of fraud on tax and super systems,’ she says.

Leading a team of around 200 staff, including criminal investigators, prosecutors and forensic accountants, she is responsible for setting strategic direction, determining priorities and guiding high-stakes decisions under

constant public scrutiny.

She has been in the role for almost four years, following previous Assistant Commissioner positions across the ATO’s Tax Counsel Network, Private Wealth and Individuals, and Indirect Taxes.

From her earliest days at Fairholme, Jade was encouraged to think independently and with conviction. The school’s culture of academic rigour and strong values laid a foundation that would later serve her well in the complex world of governance.

‘Fairholme taught me to back my judgement and to speak up. That confidence has been invaluable in environments where decisions carry real weight.’

Looking back to her time at the College, Jade recognises the seeds of leadership were planted early. As a Prefect, House Captain and Public Speaking Captain - as well as a passionate debater - she developed the skills that would later define her leadership style.

‘I was fortunate to have had leadership roles as a Prefect, House Captain, Public Speaking Captain and the President of the Interact Club. I was also heavily involved in debating. I feel like these roles were the start of my exposure to what it takes to lead and to bring people on your journey.

The public speaking and debating have also been key foundations to not just be the leader I am, but the ability to

gain authority from others and to be persuasive, whether I am dealing one-on-one with clients or presenting at a forum of thousands.’

She also credits Fairholme with preparing her for complex and traditionally male-dominated environments. She recalls an early settlement negotiation where opposing lawyers presumed she was there to serve tea rather than lead proceedings. Her response? ‘Gracious, calm but clear and strong. There’d have been no point blowing the settlement so my ego got a lift. It was better to politely advise I was lead officer, try not to smirk when they realised their faux pas, then go on to negotiate one hell of a deal.’

Her pathway to senior leadership at the ATO, however, was anything but linear. Jade completed her schooling at Fairholme before she had even turned 17.

Rather than head straight to university, she took an unconventional step repeating Year 12 at a school in Spain.

‘I didn’t speak Spanish at the start, so it was a steep learning curve!’ she laughs. ‘However, I did come home speaking the language fluently, and dreaming in Spanish was surreal.’

That experience not only cemented her love of language and international affairs, but built adaptability at a young age.

She later accepted a scholarship to Bond University, completing a double





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I was fortunate in my time at Fairholme to have fantastic male and female teachers and role models who never questioned our ability to be anything we wanted to be...

degree in Law and Arts, majoring in International Relations and Spanish. During the final stages of her studies, she took a role at the ATO, intending to stay for just a year.

‘I thought I’d get some experience and then leave,’ she admits. ‘However, opportunities kept presenting themselves and I never left.’

For Jade, it is responsibility that fuels her commitment. ‘When you see policy translated into real-world outcomes, when you know a decision has improved efficiency, fairness or opportunity - that’s incredibly rewarding. It reinforces why I chose this path in the first place.’

Over the course of her career, Jade has represented Australia on the international stage, including at the OECD in discussions on base erosion and profit shifting, and most recently acting as Australia’s Joint Chief on Global Tax Enforcement in Ottawa. Receiving the Commissioner’s postgraduate scholarship to complete her Masters was another milestone.

Yet perhaps her most pivotal moment came when she almost walked away entirely. ‘Midway through my career I decided I would leave the ATO and train to follow my passion and become a chef,’ she says.

‘Alas, the chef school I’d enrolled in

burnt to the ground the day before I was due to start... I took that as a sign that perhaps the universe was telling me I had more to give in the public service.’

Jade identifies three principles that guide her. ‘Be authentic. There’s a great Oscar Wilde quote: ‘Be yourself as everyone else is taken’. Every person is unique and it is important that you act in a way true to yourself.’

She adds, ‘Listen to understand, not to respond. When it comes to navigating complex, high-stakes problems, it is essential to listen first to all views in the room.’

And finally, ‘Treat everyone you work with, with the utmost respect regardless of level or authority. In a long career, there’s swings and roundabouts but your reputation always precedes you.’

Working at the ATO requires a strong sense of integrity and public trust, and her leadership role is one she approaches with responsibility and weight.

Jade believes her time at Fairholme helped shape this values-driven approach.

‘There was always an expectation that you would aim high, not just for yourself, but in how you contributed

to others,’ she says. ‘That idea of service and responsibility was embedded early.’

As a senior leader, she is also aware of the importance of representation and mentorship.

‘Young women absolutely belong in decision-making spaces,’ Jade says firmly.

‘We need diverse perspectives at the table because it leads to better outcomes. I’ve always believed that if you have the capability and the work ethic, you shouldn’t hesitate to step forward.’

‘I was fortunate in my time at Fairholme to have fantastic male and female teachers and role models who never questioned our ability to be anything we wanted to be.’

Her advice to current Seniors?

‘It’s so hard to know what you want to do with the rest of your life. My advice would be to invest in what you enjoy as you have a long working life ahead. You also tend to excel if you follow things you are good at or mean something to you.’

‘You can’t choose what people say to you, but you can choose how you react. React with the drive, dedication and spark to know you can become, and be, anything.’

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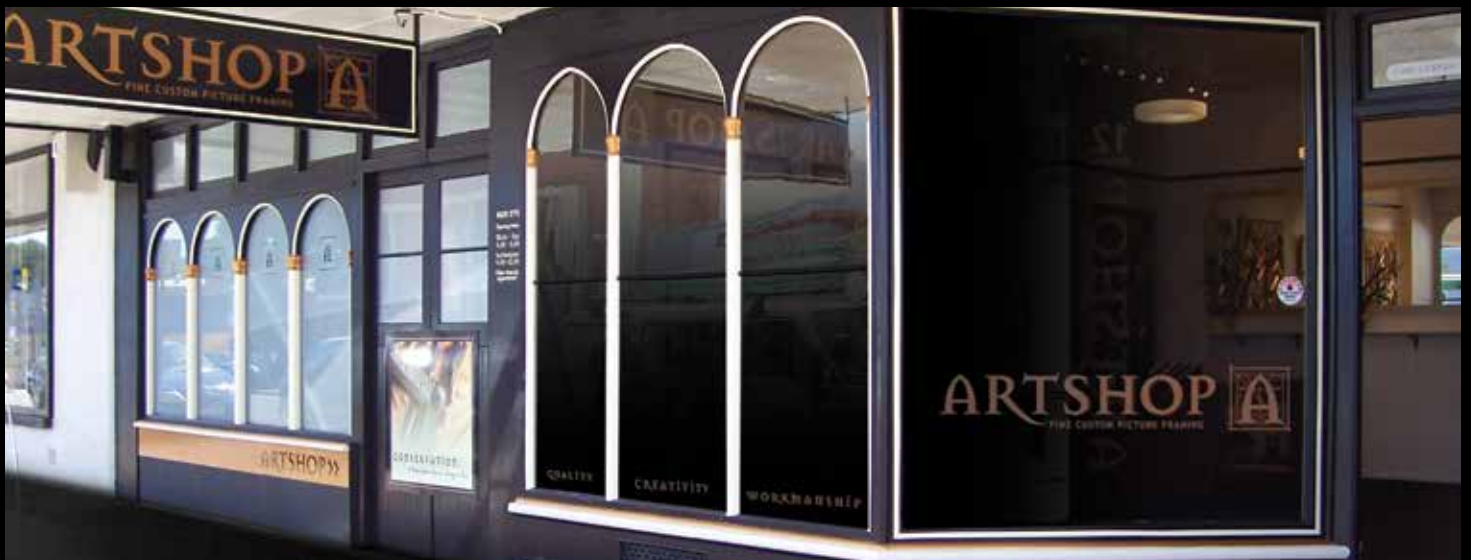


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Fairholme Boarding: A Holme away from Home

Kiris Megaw | 2014 | Stephens House | Boarder

When Kiris Megaw reflects on her time at Fairholme, it's not just throwing her Panama hat in the air celebrating the end of Year 12 that stands out.

She says it's the lessons, the discipline, the resilience, and the standard set for excellence that have shaped the woman and business owner she is today.

'I often think back to my days at Fairholme, mostly the friendships, the laughs, and the sense of community we built along the way,' she says. 'But something I've become increasingly grateful for as I've gotten older is the standard that was set for us.'

At the time, nightly prep at Boarding School didn't always feel like a gift. 'As much as nightly prep sometimes felt like a drag, it taught me discipline, routine, and the importance of consistently showing up for the things you want to achieve.'

Back then, it was about assignments and exams. Today, it's about running a thriving digital marketing agency across two countries.

'That foundation of consistency has stayed with me,' she reflects, 'and it's one of the reasons I approach my work the way I do today.'

Certain classrooms left a lasting impression. Economics with Mr Cawcutt was a favourite. 'I loved those classes. They sparked a genuine interest in understanding how things work behind the scenes, and I still find myself referring back to some of those learnings even now.'

And then there was Sess. 'He had such a positive influence on so many of us. He pushed us to aim high and work hard, but also reminded us to enjoy the process.'

That balance - striving for growth while

enjoying the journey - has become a cornerstone of her professional life.

'In business, I'm constantly stepping out of my comfort zone, upskilling, meeting new people, learning new systems, and embracing change rather than fearing it. His approach helped shape that mindset.'

Another lasting influence was former Principal, Dr Linda Evans. 'The way she carried herself - her professionalism, her presence, her commitment to continual learning - left a lasting impression,' Kiris says.

Watching her complete a doctorate while leading with strength and grace was formative.

Recently, Kiris revisited one of Dr Evans' speeches and was struck by the quote: "Watch your character; it becomes your destiny."

'I couldn't agree more,' she says. 'Business has taught me that you are what you attract. When you work genuinely hard, deliver your best, and stay true to your values, you naturally attract clients who respect you and the craft you bring to the table.'

Boarding school life instilled something even deeper: grit.

'If boarding school teaches you anything, it's resilience and endurance. Even on the days when homesickness hit hard, you had to keep going and that shaped me more than I realised at the time.'

Boarding also taught her independence and confidence in her own decision-making. So when life presented bigger leaps - moving overseas, launching a business full-time, navigating lockdowns - they felt challenging but not impossible.





'Moving overseas, starting a business from scratch, navigating lockdowns, and building a client base in a new country all felt a little less daunting because of the resilience and tenacity I learned at Fairholme.'

After graduation, Kiris returned to Toowoomba to study a Business, Management and Marketing degree at the University of Southern Queensland, working in the university's Social Engagement and Marketing Team for four years.

She progressed from Social Marketing Assistant to Social Performance Officer - roles that laid the groundwork for her future.

During that time, she met her now-husband, Hilton, who owns a dairy farm in New Zealand. After two years of long-distance, she made the move across the ditch in 2020.

'I gave myself two days to settle in, buy a laptop, and go full-time in my digital marketing agency, which at that point had only two or three clients,' she laughs.

If moving countries and starting a business weren't enough, she was also completing a Graphic Design degree online through the Billy Blue College of Design, a qualification someone once told her she would "never use."

'Luckily, I've learned to trust my own judgement over those who think they know what's best for me.'

Since then, life has been full in the best way. In 2023, Kiris and Hilton were married at Gabbinbar Homestead in Toowoomba. They have renovated their farmhouse, purchased another dairy, travelled through Europe, and continued building their careers.

If she had to sum up the journey in one word? 'Resilience.'

What began as a side hustle in 2018 is now a flourishing full-service agency. KA Digital Marketing (KADM) services more than 15 full-time clients across Australia and New Zealand, offering social media management, graphic design, website builds and rebuilds, copywriting, and data analysis. 'Growing the business to the point



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You don't need permission to pursue what you want... just keep showing up, keep learning, and keep working hard...

where I could no longer do everything myself and bringing on a staff member was a really meaningful milestone,' she says. 'It was a moment of realisation that KADM had grown into something bigger than me.'

Among many proud achievements, one recent highlight stands out: being personally invited by skincare guru Emma Lewisham to interview her about her globally recognised skincare brand. The feature became the primary editorial piece in Rise Community Magazine, which Kiris co-edits and designs. 'It's one of those moments 14-year-old me would be very proud of,' she says. 'Owning a business was something I always dreamed of, so in many ways, every day feels like an achievement.'

But what matters most isn't the accolades, it's the trust.

'Marketing plays such a large role in a business's performance. Being entrusted with sizeable budgets and long-term strategy year after year is something I never take lightly. Being part of another business's growth is the most rewarding part of what I do.'

As a young woman running her own business, Kiris has faced her share of assumptions. 'Instead of letting that discourage me, it's fuelled me,' she says. 'You don't need permission to pursue what you want. You don't have to buy into others' opinions or doubt... just keep showing up, keep learning, and keep working hard. Let your results speak for you.'

For those considering a career in marketing, her advice is refreshingly grounded.

'Be prepared to work hard, genuinely hard. Marketing isn't just pretty graphics and fun content; it's strategy, long hours, quick turnarounds, and constant upskilling.'

And don't be distracted by the curated aesthetic. 'Focus on your craft, build real skills, and your work will speak for itself.'

Kiris believes young women today need confidence - not the performative kind, but simply self-belief.

'We have more access to technology and resources than ever before, but what really makes a difference is resilience and the encouragement to follow what genuinely interests us.'

To current Fairholme students, especially those entering Year 12, she offers simple advice: 'Good luck and soak up every minute, because it goes by so quickly. Do your best, but don't let grades become your whole identity.'

'A strong work ethic, curiosity, and the willingness to learn are far more valuable than a single mark on a page.'

And if she could speak to her Year 12 self? 'I'd tell her: congratulations! Everything works out exactly the way it's meant to. I'm proud you trusted your instincts, worked hard, and didn't give up. All of it has, so far, paid off.'

ON THE STAGE

A Teacher's Proudest Encore

Libby Munro | 1998 | Powell House | Boarder

'As an Arts teacher, you hope to give your students the same memorable, magic experiences your own drama teachers once gave you.'

For Fairholme Drama teacher, Mrs Katrina Bailey, that hope came full circle recently when she watched a former Fairholme student, Fairholme Old Girl, Libby Munro, take centre stage in The Empire Theatre's *The Great Gatsby*.

Mrs Bailey said Libby, who boarded at Fairholme from Charleville, embraced every opportunity during her school years. After graduating, the aspiring actor initially began a Bachelor of Business at the University of Queensland, before ultimately following the creative path that had long called to her. This earned her a coveted place at the prestigious National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA).

Her success came quickly. Libby's first role after graduating from NIDA was in *Venus in Fur*, a performance that saw her awarded a Matilda Award for Best Female Actor in a Leading Role, which was an extraordinary achievement for an emerging artist.

Now starring in *The Great Gatsby*, Libby is firmly establishing herself as one of Queensland's exciting theatrical talents.

For Mrs Bailey, seeing Libby perform was not just a proud professional moment, but a personal one.

'We had such an opportunity recently, with an excursion of a large group of Fairholme students, to see the play which was a collaboration between Queensland Theatre and Shake & Stir Theatre Co,' she says. 'After experiencing the musical, set in the Jazz Age and so well suited to Toowoomba's Empire Theatre, our girls waited in the foyer for the opportunity to meet with one of the cast - Old Girl, Libby Munro.'

When Libby appeared, the moment was one Mrs Bailey says she will never forget. 'She walked straight over to Mrs Wighton (*Libby's drama teacher at Fairholme*) and told the girls that she was the woman who had inspired, encouraged and championed her throughout her years at Fairholme. Libby only stepped out of the embrace long enough to take a photo with the students.'

'It was incredibly special,' Ms Wighton says. 'Even more meaningful was when Libby generously told the girls that any Fairholme student considering a creative career should feel free to reach out to her for guidance or support.'

The Great Gatsby

PHOTOGRAPHER: Joel Devereux

WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

Bold Enough To Lead

Viv McCollum | 1987 | Cameron House | Boarder

A career in agriculture was never simply a profession for Old Girl, Viv McCollum. It was a calling to the country life she grew up in and to a confidence that she discovered during her school years. Today, she stands as a national leader in AgTech and rural innovation, working to ensure the future of Australia's agricultural sector is sustainable and inclusive.

'I've built a career in agriculture and AgTech, combining my passion for rural communities with innovation and sustainability,' Viv said. 'My journey has taken me from on-farm research to leading national projects that connect technology, science, and people to shape a more resilient agricultural future.'

Viv's foundations were planted early. Growing up on the family farm, holidays meant freedom, fresh air, and a convoy of Fairholme friends in tow. 'I could not wait to get home! I was usually with a group of Fairholme day girls and we would jump on my horse or motorbike and relish in the freedom that country life brings,' she says. But even as a teenager, she recognised the challenges ahead. 'A career in agriculture was really deemed by society to only be for boys. As a girl growing up in the mid-80s, change was on, and I decided I wanted to be part of that.'

Her love of the land intertwined naturally with her passion for science. 'I was totally in love with biology and science at school, so it seemed natural to combine this with my love of the farm and the agricultural industry.'

Viv said Fairholme played a pivotal

role in shaping the leader she would become. 'My time at Fairholme was full of experimenting with the development of my character - some good, some more challenging,' Viv says. 'But the opportunities and friendships I gained nurtured my confidence and curiosity.'

Many of those friendships remain a grounding force today: 'All of them are incredibly honest, grounding, and above all else, trusted.'

One of Viv's earliest leadership experiences blossomed right on campus. 'The first time I understood that I had leadership abilities was in Year 11, when my peers voted me in to be the coordinator of the annual Fairholme fashion parade,' she recalls. 'It highlighted my ability to bring people together to create a vision, work out the how and who, and then roll out the final product. The 1986 Fashion Parade at the Spring Fair was a great success and something our whole year was very proud to present.'

Since then, Viv has spent decades working across agricultural industries, leading innovation programs that unite farmers, researchers and technology developers. These experiences taught her the power of purpose-driven collaboration. 'I've learned that credibility comes from knowledge, integrity, and results. By leading with collaboration and confidence, I've been able to open doors for other women and help shift the perception of what leadership in agriculture looks like.'

Her advocacy is backed by data. 'Companies with gender-diverse leadership teams are 21% more

likely to experience above-average profitability,' she notes. 'Female founders deliver 35% greater returns on investment than their male counterparts, yet just 15% of STEM jobs in Australia are held by women, and only 2.1% of venture capital funding in 2022 went to female-led startups.'

It's statistics like these that drive her determination to create change. 'Women bring empathy, collaboration, and strong communication skills to agricultural leadership - qualities that foster trust and connection,' Viv says. 'Diversity brings better decision-making and more innovative solutions, ultimately strengthening the resilience and sustainability of our industry.'

But despite progress, she acknowledges that 'there is still a long, long road to achieve true gender equity opportunities.' Barriers persist, limited access to capital, networks, and mentorship; the weight of community and family responsibilities; and unconscious bias in traditionally male-dominated environments.

That's why Viv recently stepped into a major new role. 'One of the main reasons I put my hand up - and was elected as Chair of Country to Canberra - is because its mission is to empower young women and non-binary people from regional, remote, and rural Australia to reach their leadership potential. I am so excited that this year's Queensland winner of the organisation's Leadership Program is Fairholme girl Mariam Nabizada.'

Viv is equally passionate about programs paving clearer pathways

for women in agriculture, including the National Farmers' Federation DiALP and Farmers2Founders TekWomen programs, both of which she completed in 2025.

'Support such as this is enabling me to now take on board and leadership roles within the industry.'

Her message to today's Seniors is one from her own experience: 'Be curious and open-minded. Agriculture today is so much more than what happens on-farm. It's a dynamic, sophisticated mix of science, technology, sustainability, and innovation.'

'Seek mentors, take opportunities that stretch you, and never underestimate the value of integrity, hard work, and genuine relationships: they're the foundations of a rewarding career in this industry.'

Viv continues to champion the next generation of rural women, 'Especially for those bold enough to lead.'

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Ag today is is so much more than what happens on-farm. It's a dynamic, sophisticated mix of science, technology, sustainability and innovation.





PHOTOGRAPHER: @crowwithasword
DESIGNER: Madison Cusumano | @maddieleigh.fashion

The World Behind The Runway

Gracie Lange | 2022 | Cameron House | Day Girl

Looking back, the signs were always there. "As a young girl, I would change outfits four or five times before leaving the house," Fairholme Old Girl, and recent Fashion Design graduate Gracie Lange, remembers. 'They were definitely not good outfits at the time! I had to learn my fashion taste, which I'm still doing now.'

Fast forward 15 years, and Gracie's early love of fashion and clothes and accessories has seen her graduate from the prestigious Whitehouse Institute of Design with a Bachelor of Fashion Design.

Clothing was never just something to wear, it was something to play with, she says. Growing up surrounded by women who loved fashion, particularly her mother and aunts, Gracie was drawn to the transformative power of clothing. Learning to sew from her late Aunt Margie introduced her to another dimension of fashion: creation. 'It was a very simple and basic introduction to clothes construction, but it really sparked my curiosity about making garments and designing clothes, not just wearing them.'

The defining moment came in Year 11, when a familiar cultural event unexpectedly revealed a future she could see herself in. Watching the annual Met Gala in 2021 sparked her obsession.

'I had watched the Met Gala every year, but that year something

just clicked,' she says. 'I started researching designers and fashion schools straight away and very quickly set my heart on Whitehouse. From that point on, fashion became my focus.'

Turning that moment into a reality, Gracie credits much of her creative confidence to the encouragement she received during her time at Fairholme College.

'Having teachers who genuinely believed in me made such a difference,' she says. 'Fairholme gave me the space to explore ideas, experiment and make mistakes without fear. That encouragement helped me trust my instincts and take my creativity seriously.'

Several teachers played a particularly important role in shaping her direction.

Head of Fashion, Ms Mandi Meise, and Ms Suzanne Chaney were instrumental in nurturing her creative thinking and encouraging her to pursue fashion seriously. 'They constantly supported me and believed in my ability, even when I doubted myself,' Gracie says. 'When I told them I wanted to pursue fashion, they were incredibly excited and even helped me prepare my portfolio to apply for university.'

Her careers advisor, Ms Arlie Hollindale, also helped transform what might have seemed like an uncertain dream into a tangible plan.

'Fashion can mistakenly and unfairly sometimes be seen as an unrealistic or 'silly' career,' Gracie says. 'But Ms Hollindale encouraged me to pursue it seriously and helped me map out a pathway to get there.'

Gracie's 2025 Graduation Collection from Whitehouse Institute of Design, titled NAKD ARMOUR, reflects the confident, experimental design perspective she developed during her studies at both Fairholme and university. 'It has been a full circle moment for me.'

She says her collection explores the tension between vulnerability and strength through bold silhouettes and richly textured fabrics. Using suede, wool and denim, Gracie plays with contrasts - softness and structure, luxury and utility - to create garments that feel both powerful and expressive. Much like Gracie herself.

'NAKD ARMOUR embodies a raw, rebellious energy,' she explains. 'It's about exploring what it means to be open and vulnerable while also feeling protected and confident. I wanted the clothing to feel like both a statement and a shield.'

Alongside her teachers, Gracie's parents have been a constant source of support, championing her ambitions every step of the way. 'Mum and dad were always both so supportive of my decision to go to fashion school. I think they knew that was always where my heart was, and whenever I wavered, they held me

up and kept encouraging me.'

She says a creative or arts career is not the easiest path, nor is it the most traditional, but 'their support has always meant the world'.

During her time at Whitehouse, Gracie's work has already begun attracting industry attention. One of her proudest moments came when a design from her collection was selected as a finalist in the Melbourne Cup Derby Day Emerging Designer Awards, presented by Vogue Australia.

'I don't think I fully comprehended it at first,' she says. 'When I received the email I called my mum straight away. We were both so excited!'

Travelling to Melbourne with her design, Gracie was stunned when it was announced as one of the top ten finalists. 'I was in complete shock. Standing onstage alongside the other finalists with my work was surreal,' she says. 'It actually made me fall in love with the design all over again.'

Another highlight came when she placed third in the Driza-Bone Emerging Designer Competition alongside fellow student, Tilly Walker, earning a \$2,000 prize for their innovative women's jacket design, which was a modern-take on the traditional and iconic Australian trench coat.

Back to where it all began, Gracie credits Fairholme's fashion program with giving her invaluable hands-on experience and insight into the industry.

Through the subject, students had opportunities to attend fashion events in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane, and even work backstage at a runway show on the Gold Coast helping dress models and witnessing the intricate preparation required behind the scenes.

'That experience was so exciting and eye-opening,' she



says. 'I saw firsthand how much work goes into a runway show.'

The technical skills she developed during these classes also proved invaluable when she began her studies at Whitehouse. 'When I started fashion school, I realised how valuable that foundation was,' she says. 'Many people in my class had never sewn before or used an overlocker or done any pattern making. Already having those skills from Ms Meise and Ms Chaney at Fairholme gave me a huge advantage.'

Looking back, even her earliest projects at school now feel like the beginning of her design journey. Recently rediscovering her old portfolios, she was struck by how many imaginative designs she had already been developing during her Fairholme years. One standout memory is entering the Fairholme Fashion Parade competition in Year 11 with a matching turquoise tweed top and shorts set inspired by the classic aesthetic of Chanel. 'It was simple but super cute,' she says. 'I received the Encouragement Award, which I was really proud of. That experience made me start thinking, 'Okay, maybe I could actually be good at this.'"

As she enters the fashion industry, Gracie is embracing the unknown. Her personal style, like her design aesthetic, continues to evolve, shaped by experimentation and new influences. 'I always want to try new aesthetics,' she says. 'Fashion is constantly changing and evolving, so personal style does, too. I just want people, me included, to feel confident in what they wear.'

What excites her most is the creative process itself. 'Watching an idea move from sketchbook to garment to a fully-realised editorial image. Seeing a design come to life in a photoshoot is the most fulfilling part,' she says.

And while she is open to wherever her career may lead, one dream has remained constant. 'A goal I've always set myself is to either design an outfit for the Met Gala, walk the Met Gala carpet, or organise the event itself,' she says with a smile.

For now, though, she is simply embracing the journey. 'I like to think of this stage as the origin story,' she says. 'Not everything will go to plan, and not everything will look the way you imagined straight away. I don't know where this will take me, and I think that's something a lot of people my age can relate to. But I am also excited.'

Her advice to current Fairholme students considering creative careers? 'Be weird, be bold and keep an open mind,' she says. 'Creative careers are subjective, and everyone has their own taste. Trust your instincts and go after what feels right.'

Because sometimes, the dream that begins with changing outfits four times before breakfast turns into something far bigger.



PHOTOGRAPHER: Rowan Ahearn | @rowlilyahearn



PHOTOGRAPHER: Molly Imeson | @mollyji_studio



Shaping The Future of Law

Sarah-Jane MacDonald | 2009
Powell House | Day Girl



When Old Girl Sarah Jane MacDonald learned she had been elected Deputy President of the Queensland Law Society, her first response was not fanfare, it was humility.

‘Honestly, it feels like a huge honour,’ she says. ‘To have the support of regional practitioners, and to have city practitioners see the value that someone with my background will bring to the role, is a huge honour.’

There is still, she admits, a sense of disbelief. ‘I am honestly still a little shocked, and certainly a little nervous, but I think that will wear away quickly and I will be able to just get on with getting the job done.’

And getting the job done is exactly what Sarah-Jane is known for. Her appointment marks an important moment - not only personally, but for women in the legal profession. ‘I am so fortunate that my background, skills and knowledge have led me to this position,’ she reflects. ‘I honestly stand on the shoulders of giants who paved the way for a young woman like me to be able to have an opportunity like this.’

She speaks with respect for those who have gone before her, acknowledging the generations of women who worked

tirelessly to open doors in what was once a heavily male-dominated profession. Now, she hopes to bring something distinctly her own. ‘I hope to bring a fresh energy to the role, which is only possible because of the unique blend of my age, gender, background, knowledge and skillset.’

Looking back to her years at Fairholme, Sarah-Jane sees more than academic preparation. She sees something more formative. ‘I look back fondly at my time at Fairholme and I am struck by the opportunity that Fairholme afforded me,’ she says. ‘Not just the opportunity for education, but really the opportunity for a safe place to fail.’

It is a powerful reflection, particularly from someone who now holds one of the most respected leadership positions within Queensland’s legal community.

‘Failure is one of those things that will happen to all of us in our lifetime,’ she explains. ‘But it also breeds learning. Learning who you are, what you value, and the yardstick to measure your life.’

Without those moments of trial and error, she believes, she would not be the person she is today, nor value the things she values most. If there is one thread that runs consistently from her school years to her professional life, it is

participation. ‘Fairholme moulded me into a person who participates,’ she says.

Whether it was netball, water polo, choir, musicals or drama, being involved was simply part of the culture. ‘It didn’t really matter what it was because participating was something that we all did at Fairholme.’

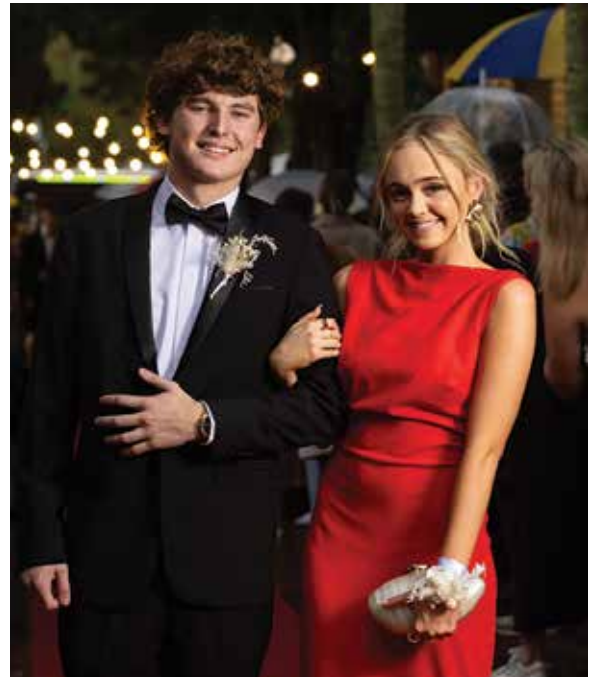
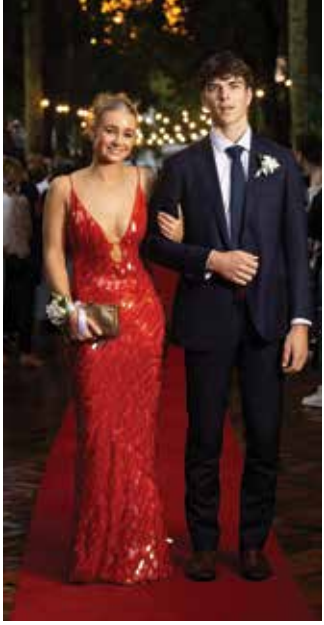
That spirit has never left her. Today, participation takes the form of pro bono work, advocacy for policy reform and representing the legal profession at the highest levels. ‘I still participate and try to give my time generously,’ she says. ‘If I truly reflect, I know that this passion to participate was encouraged at Fairholme and has shaped so many decisions since I left.’

As Deputy President of the Queensland Law Society, Sarah-Jane steps into a role that requires balance - between regional and metropolitan voices, between tradition and innovation, and between experience and emerging perspectives. Her regional roots, combined with her professional expertise, offer a viewpoint that resonates across the profession. For current Fairholme girls watching her journey unfold, her story offers reassurance: leadership does not require perfection. It requires courage, participation and a willingness to learn from failure.

FAIRHOLME FORMAL 2025









FROM A NEW OLD GIRL

Discovering an Old Girl at Holme

Rori Zimmerman | 2025 | Powell House | Boarder

In 13 years of schooling the biggest question every student faces is “What do you want to be when you get older?” For me, a bright eyed, curious primary school student the answer was always simple: a teacher.

My favourite place was always school, and I never imagined myself anywhere but in the classroom. When Mum and Dad sat me down and told me that we were going to go have a look at schools in Toowoomba for me to go to in high school I was most definitely apprehensive but as always excited to see something new.

The moment I sat down in Dr Evan’s office in 2019 I knew Fairholme was the school for me. Her wisdom and her words inspired more than I knew back then, and they still continue to lead my life to this day.

And so it goes, I found myself in a tartan dress that basically touched my ankles and a Panama that covered my eyes standing in between my parents for my first boarding drop in photo, taken by the one and only Sess. From that moment onwards my world got a little bigger every day I spent at Fairholme and my eyes became a little brighter with every



new goal I dreamed. Fairholme truly became the place where I could flourish and discover so much more about myself than I thought possible.

Before I knew it, I was entering my senior years and the future away from the only place I had ever known became more scary than I thought it would be. Suddenly the question "What do you want to be when your older?" was one that I no longer knew how to answer.

After many Set Plan meetings where little progress was made about where or what I would study Dr Evans asked me a new question: "Who do you want to be?" Those six words were a pivotal turning point in my journey.

I vowed to myself to embrace every single opportunity that Fairholme gave me and I could never have imagined the amazing things I was able to achieve in my final two years of schooling.

I achieved my six-year long goal of performing at assembly, and not just any assembly, at Graduation where I learnt what it means to feel wholeheartedly supported by a community. I tried countless sporting teams and through

the setbacks I still continued to find the joy in the lifelong friendships I made along the way. Most importantly I learnt the privilege of leadership.

I was honoured to work as a Boarding Prefect with an amazing group of leaders alongside me to transform the Boarding House into the home away from home that we always longed for.

I mentored 15 Junior School girls in a sport some of them had never played before, fostering skills, confidence and most importantly enjoyment. I completed all three levels of the Duke of Edinburgh's award, participated in debating grand finals, played netball at a club and regional level and maintained a high order of academic achievement receiving a Summe Cum Laude award this year.

But after all of these achievements are said and done, my biggest achievement is discovering who I want to be when I grow up. I want to be the love of Mrs Nicholls, the family fostered by Mrs Wallis, the care shown by Miss Currie, the support shown by Mr Payton and the wisdom of Dr Evans.

I want to lead a life where I leave the places I enter better than when I found. I want to help people and change others lives for good, which is a passion I discovered when my perspective on the world changed over the 10 days I spent in Cambodia with Raw Impact last year.

So maybe I still don't know what I want to do when I grow up. But next year and beyond I aspire to continue to dream big and discover how I can become the person I want to be while studying a Bachelor of Psychology, Philosophy and Neuroscience at the Australian National University in Canberra.

Fairholme has taught me so much more than excellence in the classroom, it has provided me an environment where I have been able to flourish and grow towards the person that I want to be.

Celebrating Creativity: Coming Home to Curate

Fairholme Open Art Prize | 2025

Fairholme welcomed back Old Girl Georgia Hayward (2016), who joined the Fairholme Open Art Prize team as the special guest Curator. Her return to the College marked not only a homecoming, but a celebration of the artistic leadership and innovation she continues to bring to Queensland's creative industries.

A Meanjin-based artist, curator and arts worker, Georgia holds cultural connections to the Maranganji people in West Queensland. She completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Visual Arts) and a Bachelor of Business (Management) at the Queensland University of Technology, a combination that has strengthened her ability to navigate both the creative and organisational dimensions of the arts sector.

Georgia's career has seen her contribute to several influential arts organisations, including the Caboolture Regional Art Gallery, Toowoomba Regional Art Gallery, and most recently as Exhibitions Coordinator at Outer Space.

Alongside her institutional work, she has independently curated numerous exhibitions and public programs, building a reputation for thoughtful, socially engaged arts practice. Her creative focus centres on the ways public space shapes contemporary social dynamics and community development.

Through social, spatial, and digital practices, Georgia explores polyphonic and polycentric readings of place, inviting collaboration and conversation as key elements of artmaking. Her curatorial approach brings these principles to life, making her leadership of FACETS 2025 a natural fit.

Last year's Supporters of Fairholme Arts (SOFA) Current Student Art Award, showcased as

part of the FACETS exhibition, highlighted the incredible talent flourishing within our student community.

The Overall First Prize was shared between two outstanding young artists:

Kaylah Daniel-Stafford, for her evocative work, *Everywhere All at Once*, and Indianna Hitchcock, for her dynamic piece, *The Camp Draft*.

Third Prize was awarded to Matilda Paffey for her beautifully rendered graphite drawing *En Pointe*, while Year 6 student Poppy Doyle received a well-deserved Encouragement Award for her striking photographic entry, *Skies the Limit*.

Under Georgia's guidance, last year's FACETS exhibition celebrated creativity, courage and community, values rooted in the Fairholme experience. We are proud of our young artists, grateful for the support of SOFA, and inspired by the achievements of Old Girls like Georgia, whose contributions continue to inspire pathways for the next generation.





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I've never walked into a room and thought, 'I'm the only female here'. I've walked in thinking, 'How can I add value?'



The Fast Track To Supercars

Ella Johnston | 2022 | Stephens House | Day Girl

At an age when many students are still mapping out their career plans, Ella Johnston is already calling the shots at some of Australia's biggest motorsport events. In a high-pressure, high-performance industry traditionally dominated by men, she hasn't just found her place - she's accelerated straight past expectations.

'If you wait until you feel completely ready, you'll miss the opportunity. I've learned to back myself first and figure it out second.'

In the final six months of 2025, Ella completed an internship with Supercars Championship in the accreditation event sector. While it is a male-centric industry, Ella never once thought she didn't belong.

'Motorsport has always been male dominated, but that's never once made me question whether I belong there.'

What began as a learning opportunity quickly became something much bigger. After staying in contact with her supervisor, she was offered paid work at the iconic Bathurst 12 Hour - an international endurance event featuring motorsport legends and current Supercars drivers, run in the lead-up to the racing season. The week was intense and unforgettable.

'The 4am grid walk was a pinch-me moment - exhausting, but incredibly exciting. Working a 12-hour endurance event pushes you physically and mentally, but that's when you grow the most.'

From delegating passes for contractors to conducting grid walks on race day, Ella experienced the fast-paced demands of elite motorsport firsthand.

'There were definitely moments of doubt and very little sleep, but I knew the short-term sacrifice would be worth it.'

Working at a 12-hour endurance event was exhausting, but it was what happened the next morning that changed everything for her - she was offered a full-time role with the Supercars Accreditation Team.

Ella admits she briefly wondered whether the lack of sleep had brought on delusions. 'When they offered me the full-time role the next morning, I genuinely thought the lack of sleep was playing tricks on me.'

'Getting offered a role like this before graduating, felt surreal. It's the job I hoped I might land one day - just a lot sooner than expected.'

Balancing internships, university and work, she pushed through those long days and even longer nights to secure what many graduates would consider a dream role, with still one year left to complete her degree.

'Juggling it all taught me resilience. You can do hard things... you just have to commit.'

In her new position this season, Ella will work across nine events - three solo - with opportunities to travel to New Zealand and destinations across Australia she has never before experienced. It's a remarkable

achievement at such an early stage of her career.

'If another young girl sees me in this industry and thinks, "Maybe I could do that too," then I've done something right.'

For Ella, stepping into male-dominated spaces is nothing new. From playing rugby at Fairholme to pursuing motorsport after graduation, she has consistently chosen arenas where women are underrepresented. What sets her apart is that she has never questioned whether she belonged.

'Being young and female in this role isn't a disadvantage, it's part of what makes me different.'

She credits her schooling at Fairholme for instilling a deep-seated belief that "women can do anything" - an attitude that meant she never once doubted her place in the industry. That confidence now sees her thriving in a role where she often has the final say, something she admits she enjoys.

'Fairholme instilled in me that women can do anything — and I've tried to carry that mindset into every room I walk into.'

Ella hopes this is only the beginning. Determined to continue climbing the ranks, she is equally passionate about advocating for other young women pursuing careers in male-dominated fields. If her trajectory so far is any indication, the glass ceiling doesn't stand much chance. 'The glass ceiling only exists if we accept it. I'd rather just keep climbing.'



EVENTS 2025







EVENTS 2025







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NEXT GEN OF FEMALE ATHLETES

Taking Women's Sport to a Global Audience

Dom Du Toit | 2014 | Cameron House | Day Girl

When Dom Du Toit (2014) reflects on her journey through elite sport, one thing becomes clear. The drive that once pushed her toward Olympic dreams hasn't faded – it's simply taken on a new purpose.

From World Cup wins to representing Australia at the Olympics, Dom has spent more than a decade competing at the highest level in Rugby Sevens.

Now, she's helping shape the future of women's sport through her work with The Female Athlete Project.

The organisation, founded by Dom's close friend and former teammate Chloe Dalton, is dedicated to celebrating and advocating for women in sport. For Dom, becoming part of the project felt like a natural next step.

She played Rugby Sevens with Chloe for a number of years before she went on to play in the AFLW. When she started the project, she was doing almost everything herself, and as it began to grow, she asked if I'd like to come on board as the social media manager while I was finishing my Bachelor of Media and Communications.'

It was an opportunity Dom embraced without hesitation.

'Knowing what The Female Athlete Project stands for and the work it does in supporting, uplifting and advocating for women's sport made it an easy decision,' she says.

'As a female athlete myself, particularly in sports that have traditionally been male-dominated, the work it does is incredibly important. I feel really proud to play even a small part in it.'

Today, Dom manages the organisation's social media presence, sharing stories that celebrate the achievements and resilience of female athletes around the world.

Working remotely with flexible hours allowed her to continue pursuing professional sport while also building experience beyond it – a balance she says was invaluable.

'Chloe was always incredibly supportive of that balance,' Dom says. 'It meant I could begin working outside of professional sport before I transitioned away from being an athlete, which made that move into 'normal' life much smoother and far less daunting.'

Through platforms like TikTok, Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn, Dom helps bring women's sport to a global audience.

'As a team we're constantly sharing women's sports news in our group chat throughout the day,' she explains.

'My job is to decide how we present those stories and turn them into content for our platforms.'

For Dom, The Female Athlete Project represents far more than just a media platform.

'It's a space where women are recognised not only for their achievements, but also for their perseverance in the face of adversity,' she says. 'It celebrates how far women's sport has come, while also reminding us that there is still more work to be done.'

After years immersed in the intensity of elite competition, stepping away from professional sport brought its own challenges. 'One of the

biggest challenges after retiring was suddenly losing that clear purpose and goal I had been working towards for years,' she reflects. 'For so long my focus was winning an Olympic gold medal. While I fell short of that, I'm still incredibly proud of what I achieved and the journey I went on chasing that dream.'

Yet the competitive spirit that drove her as an athlete continues to shape her future.

'I'm not someone who is content just coasting,' she says. 'Having experienced the level of work and discipline required in elite sport, many of the challenges outside of it don't feel quite as daunting. It's also made me want to keep pushing myself and contribute to progress in women's sport in whatever way I can.'

That mindset began during her years at Fairholme, where she says she was encouraged to pursue both her sporting and academic ambitions.

'At Fairholme I was always encouraged to pursue both my sporting goals and my studies,' Dom recalls. 'There was never a ceiling placed on what I could achieve or what was possible. That environment allowed me to dream big and work towards goals that might have seemed ambitious.'

Looking back, she says the college helped build the confidence that would later carry her through elite sport.

'Fairholme helped give me the confidence to set big goals, chase them, believe in myself and learn how to

balance different parts of life.'

Now, as a role model for young athletes, Dom approaches the responsibility with humility.

'It still feels a bit strange because I feel like I'm still that young girl who was looking up to other women,' she says.

'But I know how much of an impact those role models had on me, especially when they took the time to talk or offer advice. Because of that, I always try to make time for students or young athletes who want to chat.'

Her advice for girls dreaming of competing at the highest level is simple:

'Go for it!' she says. 'If you're willing to put in the hard work, even on the days you don't feel like it, then you already have what it takes to chase that dream.'

She encourages young athletes to take every opportunity to learn and grow.

'Don't let anyone else's opinion stop you from pursuing your goals. Get to training early, stay late and put in time on your own. Take every opportunity to learn from people who are better than you and soak up as much knowledge as possible.'

Dom's own career has been defined by adaptability. After retiring from Rugby Sevens, she hadn't planned to return to professional sport, but an unexpected opportunity with the Cronulla Sharks NRLW team changed that.

'It was a transition I never planned on making,' she laughs. 'Halfway through the 2024 NRLW season the Sharks had a number of injuries and reached out after

the Olympics to see if I would join them for the back end of the season.'

Despite having no rugby league experience, Dom embraced the challenge.

'It definitely showed early on in my NRLW career,' she admits.

'But it was also really fun stepping into a new sport without the pressure and learning new skills and strategies.'

As she looks toward the future, another exciting chapter awaits.

'I'm incredibly excited about becoming a mum,' Dom says.

'Motherhood is something I've always dreamed about, and being able to experience it alongside my fiancé Bart makes it even more special.'

Pregnancy, she says, has already deepened her appreciation for the strength of women.

'My body helped me compete at the highest level of sport for more than ten years, and now it's growing a whole new human,' she says. 'That's pretty amazing.'

Above all, Dom hopes her journey encourages the next generation of female athletes to believe in themselves.

'I would love for young girls to have big, wild dreams and feel confident chasing them,' she says.

'Sometimes all someone needs is one person who believes in them first.'

Through her work with The Female Athlete Project and the example she continues to set, Dom Du Toit is helping ensure that belief keeps growing.





On the Global Stage

Kirsten Storey | 2005 | Powell House | Day Girl

When Kirsten Storey walked out of Fairholme's gates for the final time, she didn't have a perfectly mapped-out plan, only a want to see the world.

Today, she is serving as First Secretary for Human Rights at the Australian Permanent Mission to the United Nations in Geneva, representing Australia in some of the most complex and consequential human rights discussions on the global stage.

However, her journey from here to there has been anything but linear.

'When I was in Year 12 in 2005, I was at a loss as to "what to do" in my career,' Kirsten said.

'What does an accountant "do" day-to-day? How about a water engineer or a graphic designer? How could I possibly make the most important decision of my life based on such little information?

'For me, hearing from a range of people (women!) in different careers opened my mind to the breadth of choice out there.'

In the years since her graduation, Kirsten watched as the women from her year followed different paths: teachers, doctors, pilots, farmers, physios, lawyers, software developers and entrepreneurs.

But she said, there's no one path that suits everyone. 'For me, I made choices that would allow me to do the things I enjoy: talking to people, learning languages and seeing the world.'

Enter a career in diplomacy.

After trying her hand at a few different

career pathways, Kirsten now serves as a diplomat at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. 'For my first missions, I worked in Papua New Guinea where I worked on assisting PNG during COVID, and Fiji, where I was on the observer mission to monitor elections.

'Currently, I'm in Geneva, where I'm the First Secretary for Human Rights at the Australian Permanent Mission to the United Nations. I represent Australia at the UN Human Rights Council which means I spend my days negotiating with other countries on how we can address the worst human rights situations around the world. We recently established a new mechanism to investigate human rights abuses in Iran (particularly since the Women, Life, Freedom movement). We also delivered statements to the Council on torture and hostage-taking and called out Iran's use of the death penalty particularly against women. It can be pretty heavy subject matter, and it often feels like we're not doing enough. But it's important to keep trying.'

After graduating from Fairholme, Kirsten took a gap year in Poland, teaching English at a school for the visually-impaired, an experience that combined service with adventure and which set the tone for a career defined by purpose and global engagement.

'I wasn't sure what I wanted to do after I finished school, except that I wanted to travel first. That was the only thing I knew I really wanted to do,' Kirsten said.

Returning to Australia, she studied Arts/Law in Sydney, majoring in French, before beginning her professional life as a graduate lawyer at a corporate law firm. It didn't take long to realise the role wasn't the right fit. 'It just didn't feel right for me at the time,' she said.

Instead of staying on the predictable path, she pivoted taking up a position as a judge's associate at the New South Wales District Court. 'I dove straight into an internship with the defence team at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague.'

She essentially put into practice her studies in one of the world's most significant international courts. Determined to pursue international law, she applied for a graduate role at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). 'But I didn't get the job. So I did something else,' she said simply.

She joined the ACT Government Solicitor, working on human rights cases in Canberra representing clients, cross-examining witnesses and running her own hearings. 'It was so much fun,' she recalls. Later, she reapplied to DFAT for a legal role, and this time, she was successful.

From there, her career expanded across the globe. She represented Australia in negotiations with Russia and the Netherlands following the downing of Malaysia Airlines MH17, served as a Judicial Fellow at the International Court of Justice in The Hague, monitored elections in Fiji, and worked at the Australian High

“

Everyone has the right to be free from torture, arbitrary detention and deprivation of life. These rights are under threat globally, and Australia is standing up for them. I am proud to be part of that...



Commission in Port Moresby during the height of COVID-19.

Today, she represents Australia in Geneva on critical human rights issues at the United Nations. ‘There are a thousand ways to end up here,’ she reflects. ‘This was just one path.’

But the path that never strayed, was her friendships she forged at Fairholme, which she says are ‘for life’.

When asked what she carries with her from her school years, her answer is immediate: friendship and courage. ‘Some of my greatest, longest, truest friends are from my Fairholme years.’

She also credits her first French teacher, Madame Leanne Grams, for instilling a love of language (and a firm grasp of verb endings!) skills she now uses daily while living in Switzerland. Her two-year-old daughter attends a French crèche, and French has become part of daily family life. ‘Merci beaucoup, Mme Grams!’ she laughs.

For Fairholme girls aspiring to careers in diplomacy, international law or human rights, her advice is honest: ‘Follow your nose. Make bold choices. Usually the one that scares you the most is the one to go for. ‘You don’t have to make

‘sensible’ decisions just to look good on your resume.’

Internships, exchanges, learning new languages... these are the experiences that open unexpected doors. ‘Once you’re somewhere new, new doors open. Walk through them too.’

Looking back at her younger self, she offers one final reassurance: ‘There are at least 10,000 interesting jobs out there. You can’t go wrong. Careers need not be linear, certainty is not required, and courage, curiosity and conviction can carry you further than any carefully constructed plan.’

Rugby Honours and Ardens Sed Virens

Taleah Ackland | 2022 | Stephens House | Day Girl

When Taleah Ackland first strapped on her now-iconic headgear, she had no idea she was stepping into a sport that would shape her future. 'I thought, "Yeah, why not, I'll give Rugby 7s a go. How hard could it be?"' she laughs.

Introduced to the game through her sister Jordanna, who played with the Toowoomba Bears, Taleah had long been curious about rugby. But it wasn't until 2018, when the late John Sessarago, affectionately known as Sess, invited her to join the Fairholme U14s team, that she truly took the leap. 'I had been playing touch football since I was eight, so I had the ball skills and fitness. All I needed to learn was tackling.'

Her first game was a blur of 'love, terror and confusion,' but one feeling stood out above the rest. 'I knew I loved the fast pace, the contact and especially the feeling of scoring tries.'

That spark has since grown into a blazing career with the Queensland Reds 7s program. Taleah's pathway began with Fairholme competing in the Southwest 7s series before she moved into club rugby with the Toowoomba Bears. Representative selection for the Darling Downs soon followed.

A turning point came in 2021 at the Fraser Coast 7s Tournament, where she was awarded Player of the Tournament while representing Fairholme. In the crowd that day was Lachlan Parkinson, Head of Pathways for Rugby Australia. He took notice. An invitation to join the Queensland Reds development squad soon followed. At just 15 years old, Taleah was making three to four trips to Brisbane each week to train.

'In less than a year, I was invited into the Women's Queensland Reds squad, fighting for a position against girls almost 10 years older than me.'

In 2022, she debuted for Queensland against NSW - a moment that shifted her perspective. 'I realised with hard work and determination, I could turn my love for the game into a career.'

Since that debut, Taleah's career has continued to accelerate. In 2022, she represented Queensland U18s at the Australian U18 School Rugby Union Championships in Sydney, earning Players' Player of the Tournament and selection in the Australian U18s Meritorious Team.

More recently, in 2025, she received the Inaugural Charlotte Caslick Award - the Players' Player of the Year for Reds Women's 7s. That honour led to an invitation to train and represent Australia in matches against the USA and New Zealand - in her hometown. 'It was definitely a pinch-me moment,' she says.

In the same year, she also debuted for the Queensland Reds 15-a-side Women's team against NSW in the open flanker position, proving her versatility across formats.

Taleah credits much of her mindset to her time at Fairholme. 'Psychologically, Fairholme taught me the value of discipline and consistency,' she says. 'I was always taught that 'you play how you train,' so I committed to that process every session.'

Her final year saw her awarded Fairholme Prefect for Sport. She represented the College across multiple sports - touch, AFL and rugby - but leadership, she says, was about more than performance. 'Leadership means more than directing or being the best on the field. It's about collaboration and empowerment, supporting your teammates on and off the field.'

She still carries Fairholme's core values of collaboration, respect and the pursuit of excellence into every training session and game. The College motto, Ardens sed Virens Burning yet Flourishing, resonates deeply.

'There are moments in training and games where you're physically exhausted and soaked in discomfort and pressure. But in those moments, there is also growth and tenacity.'

While match days bring adrenaline and applause, the preparation is relentless. Taleah travels from Toowoomba to Brisbane three afternoons a week for training from 5pm to 8pm, often staying overnight at her sister's

apartment to complete early Friday sessions before returning home to work. During representative season, that commitment increases to up to five trips a week, plus interstate travel for competition. 'It makes for very long, exhausting weeks,' she admits.

So, what keeps her going? 'My family have always been my greatest supporters. They celebrate the highs and help me through the lows.'

Game days begin with texts from her grandparents, and before kickoff, her mum's advice is consistent: 'Go hard, go fast, be dynamic, and please be safe.'

'Knowing I have their support drives me to be my best,' she says. 'Training all year becomes exhausting both physically and mentally, and without my family I wouldn't have been able to manage the struggles athletes go through.'

As women's rugby continues to grow, Taleah is conscious of the platform she now holds. 'I hope to have a positive impact both on and off the field for young women in all sports,' she says.

'As a proud Toowoomba girl, it's important to me to represent and inspire girls from similar communities to pursue their goals - even when their pathways may feel limited.'

Her message to Fairholme girls dreaming of elite sport - or any unconventional pathway - is grounded and honest. 'Success isn't always linear. Your progress is built quietly through discipline, dedication and grit.'

She draws inspiration from Australian sporting icon Ash Barty, quoting her words: 'A lot of the time your greatest growth comes from your darkest time.'

'Learn, practice and master your skill,' Taleah advises. 'Surround yourself with positivity but be open to criticism so you can strive for excellence. Above all, love what you do.'

Looking back, Taleah remembers the moment rugby ignited "the fire in my belly." She worked tirelessly to turn that spark into reality - and credits Fairholme with instilling the values she needed to succeed.

'Whatever your dream may be,' she says, 'you, too, can achieve greatness.'



The Year That Was From the FOGA President

ACTING PRESIDENT Caitlin Crowley | 2006 | Powell House | Boarder



2025 was a year of change and new beginnings for both Fairholme College and our Old Girls' Association. It began with many heartfelt goodbyes as we reflected on the impactful leadership of Dr Linda Evans, and the welcoming of Dr Leigh Hobart as she started a new chapter in the College's history as Principal.

FOGA was delighted to begin working closely with Dr Hobart on initiatives that strengthen the connection between past and present students and support the ongoing success of the College.

One of the most visible outcomes of

this collaboration was the renovation of the Old Girls' Foyer. This refreshed space is designed to be more than a physical room; it's somewhere to meet, belong and enjoy. It now stands ready to host Old Girls and current students alike, providing a place where stories are shared, connections are formed and the Fairholme community continues to grow.

I started this year as our Vice President, ready to continue the strong momentum built by President Georgia Stafford.

Following a sudden change in circumstances, Georgia was required to step back from her FOGA duties.

Our committee and volunteers responded with generosity, flexibility and commitment, ensuring the Association continued to move forward with purpose and I am deeply grateful for their support.

A significant focus of 2025 was discussion about the future of FOGA and asking what it means to be a fit for purpose Old Girls' Association for women in today's world. We have reflected on how FOGA can best

serve women across all stages of life, supporting current students, engaging recent graduates, reconnecting Old Girls, and offering meaningful opportunities for networking, mentoring and shared experience.

Importantly, we have recognised that we don't need to try and replicate what other schools do. Instead, our goal is to build something that is uniquely Fairholme, shaped by our values, our community and the needs of our Old Girls.

These conversations have directly informed our renewed focus on connection and engagement. Throughout the year, FOGA prioritised opportunities to build relationships between past and present students.

Highlights included spending time with boarders during a baking afternoon in the boarding house and welcoming returning students at Spring Fair, a reminder of the joy and belonging Fairholme continues to inspire long after school days have ended.

I was also delighted to speak with Year 11 students as part of their Careers Morning, with many more opportunities for mentoring planned for 2026.

These moments illustrate the potential of FOGA as a living, connected network; one that supports women, opens doors, shares wisdom and strengthens the Fairholme experience for current students and families.

We know Fairholme is a place that stays with you, and FOGA offers a way to remain part of that story. We

invite Old Girls, including parents whose daughters are currently at the College, to engage with the Association through events, connection and contribution.

We are always keen for fresh ideas, new perspectives and ways to give back to the college community.

Together, we can build a supportive and meaningful network that honours our shared history while creating opportunities for the generations of Fairholme girls to come.

Interested in organising a reunion? Stay connected with the Alumni and Old Girls' Association. Update your details on the Fairholme Website or contact Helen Lange, Alumni Officer FOGA@fairholme.qld.edu.au
T 4688 4614

- Caitlin Crowley (2006)
FOGA Acting President



Fairholme Old Girls' Association 2025

President, Georgia Stafford

Acting President, Caitlin Crowley

Vice President, Katie Murray

Secretary, Sarah-Jane MacDonald

Treasurer, Naomi Aird

Patroness, Marie Cameron

The FOGA connection is about more than honouring our past; it's about keeping that legacy meaningful and vibrant in the present day. We are sincerely thankful to the committee for their tireless work, steadfast commitment and dedication to safeguarding the story and spirit of FOGA. Their efforts are instrumental in ensuring the heart of Fairholme continues to thrive.

We look forward to the future with great optimism, eager to strengthen the bonds between Fairholme Old Girls, foster a sense of belonging, and create memories and a legacy that will endure for generations to come. - Caitlin Crowley, FOGA Acting President



Stay connected with the Old Girls' Association. Update your details by scanning the QR code, or visit the Fairholme website



W fairholme.qld.edu.au
E FOGA@fairholme.qld.edu.au
T 4688 4614



The Story Behind a Fashion Label

Monica Bolton | 2007 | Black House | Day Girl

For Fairholme Old Girl Monica Bolton, creativity has always been the thread running through her life.

During her years at Fairholme, she gravitated naturally toward the arts, immersing herself in every creative subject she could. It was here that her instinct for design began to take shape.

'I always loved anything creative,' Monica says. 'At school I took every opportunity I could to explore art and design.'

But it was a gap year in 2008 that crystallised what had long been simmering beneath the surface. Fashion was not simply an interest, it was the path she wanted to follow.

Soon after, Monica enrolled in Fashion at QUT, drawn to the world of bridal design. 'There's something really special about bridal,' she explains. 'You're designing something connected to one of the most meaningful days in someone's life.'

Her early career unfolded through hands-on experience with Brisbane designers before a move to Melbourne, where she accepted what she believed would be a dream job. When the opportunity didn't unfold as expected, it became a defining moment. 'At the time it felt like a setback,' she reflects. 'But it actually pushed me to rethink what I really wanted and that ultimately led me to start my own business.'

In 2017, Monica took a leap of faith, launching Bessette Bridal, a luxury bridal rental studio tucked inside a modest Fortitude Valley space. 'I started small, but I believed in the idea,' she says. 'I wanted to create something a little different in the bridal space.'

From the outset, Bessette Bridal was built on hard work, long hours and a willingness to evolve. When the pandemic arrived, an unexpected shift began to emerge. Former brides started reaching out, eager to sell their gowns through the boutique... a concept



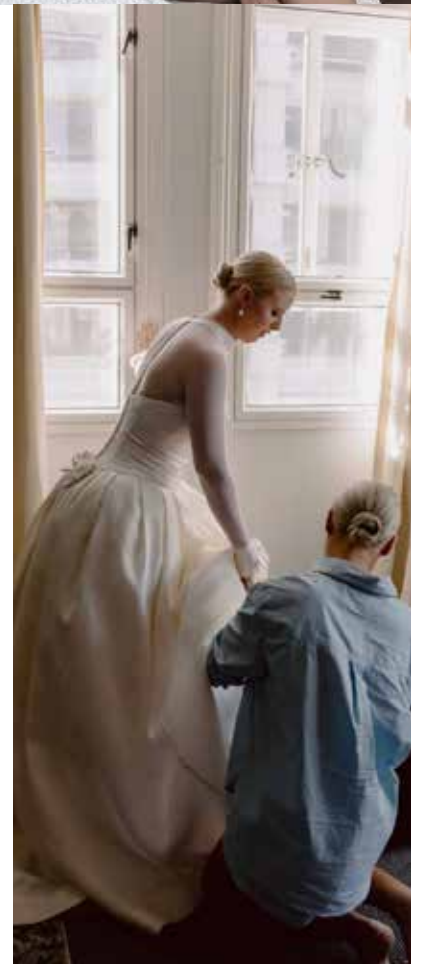
Monica initially resisted. 'I wasn't convinced about consignment at first,' she admits. 'But the requests kept coming.'

In 2021 she decided to embrace the idea, introducing a consignment collection alongside Bessette's established rental offering. What began as a small addition quickly reshaped the business, with consignment eventually accounting for around 70 per cent of sales.

The momentum continued. In 2022 Monica expanded into a larger boutique in New Farm. The following year marked a particularly memorable chapter: she married - wearing an iconic 1995 Vera Wang gown - and Bessette Bridal received a coveted feature in Vogue Australia.

'It pays to be niche and do things differently,' she says. 'They liked our brand and what it stands for.'

In 2024 Monica welcomed her first child, Lawrence. Balancing motherhood



with running a business has, she says, been 'the ultimate challenge'.

'Becoming a mum while running a business definitely pushes you in new ways,' she says.

Once again, she chose to evolve.

In August this year, Besette underwent its most significant transformation yet, transitioning entirely online to become a dedicated global marketplace for buying and selling wedding dresses.

'I realised the future of the business could be much bigger online,' Monica explains. 'Now brides from all over the world can access these incredible gowns.'

Today, Besette connects brides globally with beautifully curated preloved gowns, championing a more sustainable approach to bridal fashion.

Looking back, Monica credits Fairholme with nurturing the confidence and determination that has shaped her journey.

'At school, I was definitely a dreamer, and Fairholme encouraged us to go for it,' she says. 'I wasn't the most academic, but I was consistent and really passionate about what I wanted to do. Here I am, hustling and not afraid to pivot.'



WHERE ARE THEY NOW

Fairholme Old Girls In The News



Alice Milson | 2009

Old Girl, Alice Milson, has always carried a connection to the Fairholme community - shaped during her years as a boarder from Year 8 to Year 12, and strengthened further when she returned to Fairholme to work in the Boarding House in 2014 and 2015.

Today, that same commitment continues to guide her life and career in remarkable ways.

This year Alice was awarded the prestigious Tamworth Regional Council Local Legends Award for Excellence in Sustainability for her region, recognising her outstanding contribution to the Tamworth Water Security Alliance.

Her work has focused on advocating for a secure and sustainable water supply for the Tamworth, Moonbi and Kootingal communities.

She has also been instrumental in community education initiatives, including organising the National Water Week 2024 Tamworth Open Gardens Trail which is an event

designed to showcase how beautiful, low-water gardens can flourish even in challenging environments.

Based in Tamworth, Alice is celebrating several other exciting milestones.

She recently became engaged to her long-time partner, Mark Booth.

The pair, who have been together for 12 years, are looking forward to their wedding this year. Professionally, Alice has stepped into an inspiring new role as the School Archivist at Calrossy Anglican School.

Immersed in the stories, records and relationships that shape a school's identity, she is thriving in the opportunity to preserve history while strengthening connections with alumni - a role that aligns with her passion for heritage and people.

For years, Alice has worked in the boarding community in the region sharing her enthusiasm for sustainability by introducing students to op shopping and encouraging the donation of unused stationery to those in need.



Photo: Calrossy Anglican School



The FOGA Foyer | 2025

The Fairholme Old Girls' Association (FOGA) Foyer has recently undergone a thoughtful refurbishment, creating a space that is both beautiful and functional while honouring the legacy of Fairholme Old Girls.

The project was made possible through the shared support of Fairholme College and the Old Girls' Association, reflecting the strong partnership that continues to connect past and present members of the Fairholme community.

Designed to be welcoming and practical, the refreshed foyer now provides an elegant setting for FOGA meetings, gatherings and events. More than simply a meeting space, it stands as a place where stories are shared, friendships are rekindled and the enduring connection between Old Girls and the College is celebrated.

The updated space also recognises the important role Old Girls play in the life of the College, honouring generations of women who have walked the halls of Fairholme and gone on to make their mark in the world.

Fairholme College Principal, Dr Leigh Hobart, unveiled the new space to the FOGA executive last year. 'The refurbished FOGA Foyer is a fitting reflection of the spirit of the Old Girls' community - proud of its history, connected in the present and looking forward to the future.'



Annabelle Ronnfeldt | 2017

PUMA ambassador and Fairholme Old Girl, Annabelle Ronnfeldt (2017), never thought she'd become a social media star.

She never dreamed of running a marathon, either. And she certainly never imagined she'd be on the cover of Women's Health.

Now that she's done all three, she's learning to embrace every new challenge, take opportunities as they come and trust where life takes her.

In the inaugural issue of Women's Health Digital Running Issue, Annabelle talks about her love of running and her fitness journey.

'I love showing people how powerful fitness can be,' she said.

Annabelle, who was always a competitive athlete at school, always knew she wanted to be in the health and fitness industry.

After starting a chiropractic degree at uni, she switched to training and encouraging others to become the healthiest, strongest version of themselves... and she hasn't looked back.

'There's something really powerful about finishing a tough run or workout and knowing you gave 100 per cent.

'It's a reminder that you can still show up for yourself.'

Mairna Tanous | 2018

For one Fairholme Old Girl, returning to Toowoomba has marked the beginning of a new chapter and the carrying forward of a family legacy.

After graduating from Fairholme in 2018, Mairna Tanous pursued a Bachelor of Pharmacy (Honours) at the Queensland University of Technology, a path that blended her love of science and health with a desire to support and care for others.

This past year, she achieved a major milestone: receiving her full registration as a pharmacist.

What makes the achievement even more special is where her journey has led her: back home. Now an early-career pharmacist, she works at Moreton and Coote Pharmacy, her family's community pharmacy that has served Toowoomba for nearly two decades.

Mairna said stepping into this space has been both humbling and rewarding. She says each day offers an opportunity not only to honour the work her family has poured into the local community, but also to make her own mark through service

and compassion.

'Being part of a pharmacy that's been supporting Toowoomba for almost 20 years is incredibly meaningful,' she said.

'It's a privilege to continue the legacy my family built and to care for the community that has always felt like home.'

Mairna said Fairholme has stood out as a foundational influence. She said the College instilled in her the values that have become cornerstones of her professional life: hard work, integrity, and a commitment to serving others.

'Fairholme shaped so much of who I am,' she says. 'Every day in my work, whether I'm helping a family manage their health or offering advice to someone who just needs support, I'm drawing on the lessons I learned there.'

For her, coming back to Toowoomba hasn't just been a return, it's been a way of giving back. It's a chance to support the very community that shaped her, and to live out the values that began forming in her Fairholme years.

'And for that I'll always be grateful.'





Kathryn Parkinson | 2000

Fairholme Old Girl, Kathryn Parkinson (2000), ran a cracking pace at the 2025 Toowoomba Wellcamp Airport Marathon to take out first place in the Women’s category.

Kathryn, a Prefect and the Cross Country Captain in her Senior year at Fairholme College, took out her win with a race record-breaking time 2:51:42. Later in 2025, Kathryn shattered the EVA Air Brisbane Marathon course record with an incredible 02:43:44.

25 years after her graduation, Kathryn’s love of running has earned her a place in the world rankings on the athletics circuit and her remarkable performances over the past few years have established her among Australia’s elite marathon runners. More than two decades after leaving Fairholme, the Marathon and Half Marathon runner continues to demonstrate that her passion is stronger than ever!



Madison Buckley | 2012

Baby Amelia Cooper was born to Madison Cooper (nee Buckley) and husband Matthew in July 2025.



Ali Lewin | 2006

Dermatologist Ali Lewin gave birth to Winston Walter Lewin earlier last year.



Jenny Dale | 2009

Jenny Dale and partner Aaron welcomed baby boy, Walker Edward Osbar, in July. This is the first grandbaby for Jenny’s mum, another Old Girl, Robin Dale (nee Penfold, 1978).



Kristen Sedger (Currie) | 2014

A special Fairholme reunion in Port Douglas as Old Girl and current teacher, Kristen Currie, celebrated her wedding surrounded by her closest school friends from her school days. Amongst the Fairholme Old Girls at the wedding were Georgina Loxley (Rackemann), Alexandra Gee, Zoe Vagg (Smith), Alice Rathie, Meg Jakins, Sarah Aljassim, Dom du Toit, Grace Selkirk, Alexandra Walker-Bell and Annabelle Perrignon (singer).



Global Connections

It's often said that once you are part of the Fairholme community, the connection lasts a lifetime - no matter where in the world you may be.

During a recent fashion study tour, a group of Fairholme students were soaking up the atmosphere of Paris, strolling along the iconic Champs-Élysées, when they experienced an unexpected moment of connection.

Quite by chance, they crossed paths with Fairholme Old Girl Sarah-Jane MacDonald.

What began as a simple moment

of recognition quickly turned into a warm and enthusiastic reunion, proving just how far the Fairholme network can reach. Halfway across the world, in one of the most famous streets in Paris, the shared bond of being a Fairholme girl instantly brought the group together.

It was a reminder to the students travelling abroad that the Fairholme community stretches far beyond the school gates - and that wherever life may take them, they will always be part of a global sisterhood.

Moments like this show that Fairholme connections truly can be found anywhere in the world!



Margot McKinney OAM | 1976

Toowoomba-born, Fairholme Old Girl and one of Australia's most celebrated premium jewellery designers has taken her Brisbane-based business to new heights on the international stage in 2025.

In March, she was invited to exhibit her jewellery for the first time at TEFAF Maastricht in the Netherlands, the art fair convened by The European Fine Art Foundation and universally regarded as the world's premier event for fine art, jewellery and antiquities.

Later the same month she opened her first boutique in the United States, located in Beverly Hills, California; and is currently preparing to open her second, on the prestigious 5th Avenue in New York City.

In May, one of her masterworks – the fabulous Marina collier – adorned Dame Helen Mirren on the red carpet at the Cannes Film Festival.



MARKETING FORCE

Lasting Connections From Holme

Joumanna Haddad | 2014 | Cameron House | Day Girl

Joumanna (Jo) Haddad arrived at Fairholme College in her final years, stepping into an already tightly woven community. But it didn't take her long for the College to leave its mark.

'I transferred late in my schooling to Fairholme (on a music scholarship in Year 11), but the lessons of those days still remind me to be diligent, considerate and compassionate. I have, thankfully, been taught to give things a go, take measured risks and possibly most importantly rely on my friends and colleagues,' Jo said.

These days, Jo runs her own marketing agency. 'I run a marketing agency, Nuage Marketing. We work with businesses across Australia, and internationally, on brand strategy and marketing campaigns. The team provides services in social media, graphic design, websites, email

marketing, Meta and Google Ads, and the broader marketing strategy. 'I started down the path of self employment as again and again I observed most marketing businesses miss the mark. They were hard to get hold of, slow to act, and quite removed from the businesses they were working with. It always felt disconnected. I knew I could approach the job differently,' she says.

At the same time, Jo is in her final subject of my Master of Marketing, which she chose to pursue to strengthen the thinking behind the work she does in the agency. 'It's not something that's necessarily required in this industry, but it was important to me to build a stronger strategic foundation and really understand the "why" behind what we're doing.

'At Fairholme, there was always a strong emphasis on valuing education; and that definitely has shaped how I approach both my work and the business. My approach has always been, if you don't know, find someone smarter than you. I think I learned that hands on advice in the school yard as well.'

Jo holds happy memories from her time at Fairholme, and like a lot of girls, the March Pasts were a highlight! 'The roar of the students banding together and the feelings of camaraderie. I will never forget that.' She says in those moments, she wasn't just an individual, she was part of something larger, something alive. 'The beating heart of Fairholme is the community,' she says. 'I relished the opportunity to feel part of something bigger than myself.'

At Fairholme, she says showing up was not optional. Whether in the classroom, on the sporting field, or in the music hall, there was an unspoken expectation: be present, be accountable, give your full self. 'There was always an emphasis on showing up,' she said. 'The focus is your undivided presence and unyielding sense of personal responsibility. At Fairholme you were expected to follow through, contribute, and hold yourself to a certain standard.'

She carried that with her. 'I was taught to give things a go, take measured risks,' she said, 'and possibly most importantly rely on my friends and colleagues.'

She said Fairholme taught her that success is rarely solitary; it is built alongside others and strengthened by the people who stand beside you when things are uncertain. 'The journey of life is not walked alone but in the company of people of whom you will need' she reflects. 'The trust that there will be those with the grace to help is something I learned at Fairholme.'

Even now, long after those final school days, the connection remains. 'I somehow, and somewhat serendipitously, seem to find a Fairholme girl almost everywhere!' she said. Through Old Girls' events and chance encounters, that sense of belonging continues. Because as she said being a Fairholme girl is never just about the years spent at school. 'A continuation of the feeling that I felt during march past whilst screaming my head off,' she says. 'That connection? It's invaluable.'

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REUNIONS 2025





A New Chapter in Leadership

On a day steeped in tradition, Fairholme College welcomed a new era of leadership as Dr Leigh Hobart was officially sworn in as the College's 15th Principal. The Induction Ceremony, held on Founders' Day, blended our College's rich heritage with the promise of a visionary future. It was an occasion marked by reverence, celebration, and community.

Dr Hobart's appointment follows an impressive career shaped by her commitment to educational excellence, her belief in the transformative power of girls' education, and her passion for nurturing confident, compassionate young women. Known for her warmth, intellect, and dedication to excellence in education, she steps into the role with humility and ambition.

As she stood before students, staff, Old Girls, families, and distinguished guests, Dr Hobart spoke of her admiration for Fairholme's legacy and her excitement to guide the College forward. Her words echoed the values that have defined the College for generations - faith, family, integrity, and resilience - while also signalling her desire to empower students to thrive in an ever-changing world.

The ceremony itself honoured tradition: the procession of student leaders, the blessing of her leadership, the symbolic passing of the College Charter, and the collective affirmation of the school community. Founders' Day has always been a moment to remember the women who shaped Fairholme's beginnings; this year, it also became a moment to look confidently ahead.

As Fairholme embarks on this new chapter, the community stands united behind its new Principal. With Dr Hobart at the helm, the College steps into its next season with strength, clarity, and purpose.







CONDOLENCES

PAST STUDENTS

Denise Alick (Hutton)	1957-1958	Marjorie Neil (Harford)	1946-1947
Margaret Bell (Furness)	1942-1943	Margaret (Peggy) Norman (Cary)	1946-1947
Valerie (Val) Bennet (Rennick)	1951-1952	Gwen Roderick (Pearce)	1943-1944
Daphne Curtis (Anderson)	1945-1947	Patricia Savage (Wright)	1940-1941
Mary (Joy) Dibble (Johnston)	1952-1953	Tamar Smith	1987-1991
Jessica Foy	1994-1996	Valerie Stewart (McQuaker)	1947-1948
Clare Fury (Faragher)	1980-1981	Jean Sturgess (Beitz)	1947-1948
Jean Garson (Cossart)	1952-1953		
Susan (Sue) Henzell (Moore)	1962-1965		
Helen Hogan (Wilson)	1961-1964		
Helen (Anne) Jackson (Wearne)	1963-1964		
Joyce (Joy) Lee	1948-1951		
Chaseley MacDiarmid (Wright)	1936-1938		
Daphne MacLean (Parker)	1941-1942		

COMMUNITY

Bruce Tyson	Fairholme P & F
Bruce Manning	Fairholme Board 1980-1999

STAFF

Suzie Collyer	Humanities	2022-2025
Rod Egerton	Music - strings	1998-2023



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